



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. AIDAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

WIGAN

Tuesday 22 April 2008

Inspectors Ms. Nora Finnegan Mrs. Denise Hegarty
 Mr. Mike Halford

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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| Type of School | Catholic Primary |
| Age range of pupils | 3 -11 |
| Number on roll | 337 |
| Chair of Governors | Mr. David Shirley |
| School address | Holmes House Avenue, Winstanley, Wigan, Lancashire, WN3 6EE. |
| Telephone number | 01942 223544 |
| E-mail address | enquiries@admin.saintaidans.wigan.sch.uk |
| Date of last inspection | 19 April 2005 |
| Headteacher | Mrs. Christine Mason |

Introduction

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

The report of the inspection is produced for the Archbishop of Liverpool (Code of Canon Law 804 and 806) and for the governors of the school.

The inspectors are members of the Christian Education Department and their associates approved by the Archbishop of Liverpool for this purpose.

Description of the school

St. Aidan's is a large Catholic Primary School situated in the Winstanley area of Wigan, an area of slightly more advantage than the national average. It serves the parish of St. Aidan's. The proportion of learners eligible for free school meals and the percentage with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below national average. Most children are of White British heritage. Very few of the pupils who come from minority ethnic groups are at the early stages of learning to speak English. Standards on entry to the Nursery are broadly within national expectation. There are 337 children on roll of whom 310 are baptised Catholics and 27 come from another Christian denomination. There are no children from an *Other Faith* tradition. There are 18 members of staff, 14 of whom are Catholic. Fifteen of the 18 teachers who teach Religious Education have a Religious Education qualification and two teachers are currently undertaking the *Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies*.

Key for inspection grades

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| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

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Overall effectiveness of the school

St. Aidan's is a good Catholic school with many outstanding features. It is a vibrant, inclusive community underpinned by a very strong Catholic ethos where the unique dignity of every person is treated with care and respect and life in all its fullness is nurtured. This encourages children to flourish in all aspects of their development and establishes a very positive climate for work. Positive relationships, which are a real strength of the school, have been established by working in genuine partnership with home, parish and the local community. Standards are good. Learners achieve well and make good progress. Teaching and learning are good overall with six examples of outstanding teaching observed during the inspection. Assessment is good and provides clear guidance on learning. The school is outstanding in meeting the Religious Education curriculum needs and interests of all learners. Learners' behaviour is outstanding. The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding. The provision for learners' spiritual and moral development is outstanding. The school is outstanding in promoting community cohesion. The Religious Education subject leader, supported by the deputy head, provides outstanding leadership and support to staff. The headteacher's leadership of the Catholic life of the school through the Mission Statement is outstanding. This is evident through her excellent understanding of the mission of a Catholic school. She has high expectations, is aware of the school's strengths and has a clear vision of how to meet development needs.

Grade: 2

Improvement since the last inspection

The school had no key issues from its last Section 23 Inspection in April 2005. Since then it has continued to develop further. The Religious Education coordinator, supported by the deputy headteacher, has worked hard to ensure a consistent and rigorous approach to planning, delivery and assessment of Religious Education. The use of creative teaching and learning strategies, through using first hand experiences, artefacts and information communications technology has been developed to a very high standard. Monitoring of planning, teaching and learning is done on a rota basis. Time and finance have been provided for whole staff in-service. The Mission Statement has been formally reviewed. Opportunities for spiritual development across the curriculum have been highlighted and moral development has been related to the school Mission Statement. The Religious Education handbook, the Collective Worship policy and Spiritual and Moral policies have been updated. Parents/carers are given detailed information about what is taught in Religious Education and are invited to participate in celebrations. Resources have been updated. Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school are evaluated on a regular basis.

Grade: 1

Capacity to improve

The school's view of its overall performance is accurate due to its outstanding self-evaluation and monitoring process. The priorities for both the improvement of Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school stem from the self-evaluation and will be influenced by the findings of this inspection. The leadership has a very clear understanding of what needs to be developed and is fully committed to improvement. There is outstanding capacity and eagerness for further improvement.

Grade: 1

What the school should do to improve further

- continue to implement the targets set out in the school self-evaluation documentation.

Achievement and standards

Learners' attainment on entry to the school covers the full spectrum but overall is broadly within that expected nationally. The percentage of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Learners make good progress in the school with some children exceeding expectation. Standards in Religious Education overall are good. There are no significant differences in performance by learners of different gender or ethnic background. Learners with special needs make good progress in Religious Education through use of tasks suited to their needs and with the help provided by teachers and teaching assistants. The school checks on the progress made by all and gives learners clear guidance on improvement through good use of assessment and positive marking. Good use is made of self-assessment to enable children to monitor their own progress. In all key stages learners are confident in discussion and ask very good questions showing knowledge and understanding of Religious Education. Throughout the school learners' work is recorded in a wide variety of ways. Learners in Key Stage 2 write very well independently in a variety of styles.

Catholic beliefs and values are at the heart of children's Religious Education development. Children throughout the school show real enjoyment of Religious Education. They have a very good understanding of the life and teaching of Jesus and are given opportunity to apply his teaching to their own lives and experiences. Learning about *Other Faiths* has led children to an awareness of how other religions make sense of the world, and the need for tolerance and respect. Children's behaviour throughout the school is outstanding. Achievement in all areas of school life is celebrated through a variety of systems in classes and at 'Hexagon Assemblies'. Religious Education enables children to make an outstanding contribution to the school community. e.g. School Council, Play leaders, Healthy Schools team.

Grade: 2

Quality of Provision for Religious Education

Teaching and learning

Overall teaching is good. On the day of inspection teaching observed was good overall with six outstanding lessons. All lessons are very well planned taking account of the needs of different learners within a class and using a wide variety of resources to enhance delivery. Very good support is given to those less able and in many classes more able learners are challenged in a variety of ways. This good practice needs to be shared throughout the school. Outstanding use is made of teaching assistants to support learners. All teachers use a wide variety of teaching and learning strategies that capture and retain learners' interest and involvement. They ensure that past learning is recalled, learners understand the learning objective and keywords are introduced and explained. Outstanding use is made of information communication technology to enhance delivery of the topics. In all classes learning is summed up very effectively during the plenary session and related to the objective and to real life. Learners are enthusiastic and show real enjoyment in Religious Education lessons. All teachers ensure that the tasks set meet the learning objective and learners are thoroughly engaged. Good use is made of homework, when relevant, to enrich learners' understanding. Children are given opportunity to self-assess their learning and good use of both informal and formal assessment is made to inform future planning. All teachers make outstanding use of quality display and focus tables to enhance delivery of Religious Education. Teaching and learning are monitored on a rota basis. Feedback is given to staff and the information is also used to identify in-service needs. This ensures quality delivery of Religious Education. Parents and carers are sent an information booklet which gives them detailed information about the topics being studied. This enables them to become involved in their children's Religious Education. Parents/carers are also invited to *Rejoice* celebrations. They receive regular verbal and written reports of their child's progress.

Grade: 2

Curriculum

The school is outstanding in meeting the Religious Education curriculum needs and interests of all learners. Through using the *Here I Am* programme recommended by the Archdiocese the school meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Religious Education. A whole school approach is used and appropriate levels of the programme are being followed in different classes. Provision is made for those learners with additional educational needs by use of appropriate tasks and support. This ensures complete Religious Education entitlement for each child and meets national and diocesan requirements. More than 10% of total curriculum time is allocated to Religious Education. This fulfils the requirements of the Bishops of England and Wales.

Very strong links are made with home, parish and the local community. The Religious Education curriculum makes an outstanding contribution to learners'

spiritual and moral development. The policy statements supporting the development of learners' spiritual and moral development have been recently updated and contain clear aims and practical objectives. It is very obvious that these are lived out in the daily life of the school.

Grade: 1

Leadership and Management

Religious Education

Leadership and management in Religious Education are outstanding. There is a clear vision for the subject within the mission of the school with a focus on very high standards. The Religious Education coordinator, with the support of the Deputy Headteacher, provides very strong leadership for the staff who share a commitment to the subject's aims and values. She shows a genuine enthusiasm for her role. The governors have also demonstrated their commitment to and understanding of the shared vision of the school. An excellent handbook guides and directs all staff in their delivery of Religious Education. Performance in Religious Education is monitored on a rota basis through scrutiny of planning, workbooks and assessment, lesson observations, questioning of learners and monitoring of displays. This enables the school to share good practice and further raise standards. St. Aidan's is socially inclusive by providing equality of access and of opportunity for all learners to make progress. Of the 18 staff teaching Religious Education 15 have a suitable qualification. Two teachers are at present undertaking the *Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies*. Teaching assistants are planned for and effectively deployed during lessons. The subject leader attends coordinators' meetings and topic days. Information is disseminated to all staff during staff meetings or in-service time. Time and finance are allocated for development of all staff. Priorities for the subject are clearly identified and targets set. Religious Education is funded on par with other core subjects and resources are kept up to date. The headteacher keeps governors fully informed of the strengths and areas for development relating to Religious Education. Governors discharge their responsibilities very effectively and are very involved in the life of the school.

Grade: 1

Catholic Life of the School

There is outstanding leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school through the Mission Statement. St. Aidan's is a place in which the Mission Statement is at the heart of the community and the Gospel spirit of love and respect permeates every aspect of its life and work.

All members of the school community were involved in the formal review of the Mission Statement. The statement has clear aims which highlight the philosophy of education in this Catholic school. These are supported by practical objectives, which show how it is lived out in the daily life of the school. It informs all school policies and plans and is displayed in all

classrooms and around the school. Children are very familiar with the message of the Mission Statement as they are given regular opportunities to explore it e.g. develop their own class promises. Staff and governors are given opportunity to reflect on the Mission Statement and monitor and evaluate the Catholic life of the school at the beginning of each academic year. This is followed by a service of commitment to living out this mission in the daily life of the school. The Mission Statement is also shared with new parents.

Grade: 1

Collective Worship

The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding. The school provides Collective Worship in a variety of ways for each child daily, in class, key stage or whole school gatherings. This fulfils government and Archdiocesan guidance. An outstanding policy, which gives very clear guidelines to support the planning and delivery of quality Collective Worship wherever and whenever it takes place has been developed since the last inspection. Teachers and children plan and deliver Collective Worship. Parents/carers are invited to participate in *Rejoice* celebrations. Acts of worship include various forms of prayer and scripture, power-point presentations, reflection and other elements that support liturgical formation. Collective Worship stimulates reflection on spiritual and moral issues and on personal beliefs. The Collective Worship observed was outstanding overall. Children respond well and actively participate in acts of worship. All classes make use of quality focus tables to enhance delivery of class Collective Worship. Collective Worship makes an outstanding contribution to learners' spiritual and moral development.

Grade: 1

Community Cohesion

The school is outstanding in promoting community cohesion. There is a shared vision and commitment to serve the common good. Leadership at all levels respects difference, values diversity and ensures equal opportunities. Parents and carers are involved in decision-making and the life of the school. They are invited to celebrations, receive regular newsletters and have opportunities to share their views e.g. questionnaires, consultation about Code of Conduct and Sex and Relationship policy. Collective Worship celebrates, reflects and respects the diversity of belief within the school. The use of the Religious Education Programme *Here I Am* provides outstanding support to community cohesion. Pupils have had opportunity to explore the beliefs and values of other faiths: Judaism and Sikhism. St. Aidan's has strong links with the local special school through an integration programme. Pupils from Hope School join St. Aidan's community on a regular basis. The school community shows a concern for the well being of those less fortunate than themselves in their support of local and global charities e.g. Nugent Care, CAFOD, Help the Aged, Samaritan's Purse, the Luncheon Club.

Grade: 1

