



## ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

### INSPECTION REPORT

### ST. MARY AND ST. JOHN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

WIGAN

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Tuesday 19 June 2007

Inspectors Ms. Nora Finnegan Mr. Mike Halford

URN 106459

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Type of School	Catholic Primary
Age range of pupils	4 -11
Number on roll	198
Chair of governors	Mrs. Lynn Cottrill
School address	Standishgate, Wigan, Lancashire, WN1 1XL.
Telephone number	01942 206 733
Fax number	01942 513 869
E-mail address	enquiries@admin.saintmaryandjohn.wigan.sch.uk
Date of last inspection	5 February 2002
Headteacher	Mrs. M. Kearsley

## 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. Mary and St. John Catholic Primary School, which serves the parishes of St. John and St Mary, is situated in Wigan. There is a smaller than average proportion of children eligible for free school meals and a similarly small proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Three children have a statement of special educational needs. Nearly all children are of white British heritage. A few children are from minority ethnic families, a tiny proportion of who speak English as an additional language. One hundred and ninety one children are Catholic, 6 come from other Christian denominations and 1 is from an *Other Faith* background. Learners' skills on entry to the school cover the full spectrum but, overall, are broadly average. There are 9 members of staff 8 of whom are Catholic. Seven of the nine teachers who teach Religious Education have a Religious Education qualification and two are currently undertaking the *Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies*.

## Key for inspection grades

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

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## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

St. Mary and St. John is an outstanding Catholic school. It is a vibrant community underpinned by a strong Catholic ethos where everyone is included and nurtured and life is lived to the full. 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 outstanding. Learners achieve well and make outstanding progress. Teaching is outstanding overall. Assessment is outstanding and provides very 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 Religious Education subject leader, the headteacher, provides outstanding leadership and support to staff. The headteacher's leadership of the school is outstanding. This is evident through her excellent understanding of the mission of a Catholic school. She, supported by the leadership team, has very high expectations, is aware of the school's strengths and has a very clear vision of how to meet development needs.

**Grade: 1**

### **Improvement since the last inspection**

Since its last Section 23 Inspection in February 2002 the school has formally reviewed its Mission Statement and added clear aims and practical objectives. It has continued to develop and further improve standards through implementation of all new guidelines given by the Archdiocese. Time and finance have been provided for whole staff in-service. The Religious Education handbook, the Collective Worship policy and Spiritual and Moral policies have all been recently updated. Planning and assessment have been developed in line with Archdiocesan guidelines. Monitoring of teaching and learning and Collective Worship has been introduced. 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 thoroughly evaluated on a regular basis.

**Grade: 1**

### **Capacity to improve**

The school's view of its overall performance is mostly accurate due to its outstanding self-evaluation and monitoring process. During the inspection the school was graded higher in a few areas than it had judged its own performance. 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 document;
- Share good practice with other schools.

## **Achievement and standards**

Learners' attainment on entry to the school covers the full spectrum but overall is broadly average. A small proportion of children have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and three learners have a statement of special educational needs. Learners make outstanding progress in the school with many children in Key Stage 2 exceeding expectation. Standards in Religious Education are outstanding. 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 very able teaching assistants. The school checks on the progress made by all and gives learners clear guidance on improvement through outstanding use of assessment and positive marking. 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 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 learners' spiritual development. Children throughout the school show a 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 wide variety of systems in classes and at a weekly Award Assembly. Learners have an excellent sense of right and wrong. The Gospel values of love, respect, justice and forgiveness clearly underpin the provision for learners' moral development enabling them to make an outstanding contribution to the school community.

### **Grade 1:**

# Quality of Provision for Religious Education

## Teaching and learning

The quality of provision for Religious Education is outstanding. Teaching is outstanding overall with five outstanding lessons. Through the monitoring process the school has identified ways of sharing outstanding practice. Lessons are very well planned. The more able are challenged in a variety of ways and good support given to those less able. Outstanding use is made of teaching assistants to enhance teaching and learning. All teachers use a wide variety of teaching and learning strategies that capture and retain learners' interest and involvement. All teachers ensure that past learning is recalled, learners understand the learning objective and keywords are introduced and explained. 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 meets the learning objective and learners are thoroughly engaged. Outstanding use is made of homework to enrich learners' understanding. Regular assessment of learners' work is outstanding. Detailed records are kept and the information is used to inform future planning. Excellent photographic evidence supports assessment and teacher evaluation. In all classes outstanding use is made of quality display to enhance delivery of Religious Education. Teaching and learning are monitored as part of the whole school monitoring process and feedback is given to staff and governors. The information is used to identify in-service needs and to ensure quality delivery of Religious Education.

Each term parents and carers are sent a *Rejoice* newsletter, which gives them detailed information about the topics being studied in *Here I Am*. This enables them to become involved in their children's Religious Education through support of homework. Parents/carers are also invited to *Rejoice* celebrations. They receive regular verbal and written reports of their child's progress.

## Grade: 1

## 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 differentiation of tasks and also by the support given. This ensures complete Religious Education entitlement for each child and meets national and diocesan requirements. Of the total curriculum time 10% 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 policies supporting the development of learners' spiritual and moral development have been recently updated and contain clear aims and practical objectives.

**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, the headteacher, provides strong and inspirational leadership for the staff who share a commitment to the subject's aims and values. They show a genuine enthusiasm for their role. The governors have also demonstrated their commitment to and understanding of the shared vision of the school. An outstanding handbook, which has recently been updated, guides and directs all staff in their delivery of Religious Education. Performance in Religious Education is monitored 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. Mary and St. John's is socially inclusive by providing equality of access and of opportunity for all learners to make progress. Of the nine staff teaching Religious Education seven have a suitable qualification and two are at present undertaking the *Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies*. Teaching assistants are planned for and are very involved during lessons. The subject leader attends coordinators' meetings and information is disseminated to all staff during staff meetings or in-service time. All staff are given opportunity to attend topic days on a rota basis. Priorities for the subject are clearly identified and targets set. Religious Education is funded on par with other core subjects. 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. Mary and St. John's is a place in which the Gospel spirit of love and respect permeates every aspect of its life and work.

The Mission Statement, which expresses the philosophy of education in this Catholic school, has clear aims and practical objectives which show how it is lived out in the daily life of the school. It is used to inform and direct all school policies and plans and is displayed in all classrooms and around the school.

Since the last Section 23 Inspection the Mission Statement has been formally reviewed by representatives of the whole school community. It is shared with all new parents and staff. Children are given regular opportunities to explore it at their level and to make it central to all that happens within the community of St. Mary and St. John's school. Reflection on the Mission Statement and its clear aims and practical objectives provides an effective system by which to monitor and evaluate the Catholic life of the school on a regular basis.

**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.

Collective Worship is monitored as part of the whole school monitoring programme. 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 recently updated. Each key stage also has clear guidelines to support the understanding and development of prayer with children. Teachers and learners plan and deliver Collective Worship. Parents/carers are invited to participate in *Rejoice* celebrations. Acts of worship include various forms of prayer and scripture, 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. Learners 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**