



## ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST AUSTIN' S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

LIVERPOOL

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Wednesday 20 May 2009

Inspectors Ms Nora Finnegan Mrs Sue Bannister Mrs Angela Paget

URN 104643

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	480
Chair of governors	Mr Mike McGuinness
School address	Riverbank Road, Liverpool, Merseyside. L19 9DH
Telephone number	0151 427 1800
E-mail address	austins-head@st-austins.liverpool.sch.uk
Date of last inspection	28 March 2006
Headship Team	Mr Noel O' Neill and Mr John Carney

## 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 Austin's is a larger than average sized Catholic Primary School situated in Liverpool. It serves the local parish of St Austin and St Bernadette. The majority of the children come from relatively advantaged backgrounds. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals is below average as is the percentage of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Almost all children speak English as their first language and a few are from minority ethnic groups. None of these are at an early stage of learning English. Children enter the school with skills that are average for their age.

There are 480 children on roll of whom 469 are baptised Catholics and 8 come from another Christian denomination. Three children are from another Faith tradition. There are 22 full-time members of staff, 20 of whom are Catholic. Seventeen of the 20 teachers who teach Religious Education have a Religious Education qualification and 4 teachers are currently undertaking the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies.

There are two subject leaders and a joint headship with two headteachers sharing the position.

## 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 Austin's Catholic Primary is a good school with many outstanding features. It is very obviously a living Christian community "where everyone is treated as special" and where the staff and governors, in the spirit of Jesus, are excellent role models of service. This encourages children to give of their best and establishes a very positive climate for work. Living the values of Jesus, especially mutual respect, is at the heart of this community. Positive relationships 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. Assessment is good and has begun to provide clear guidance on learning. Through its use of creative teaching and learning strategies the school is outstanding in meeting the Religious Education curriculum needs and interests of learners. Children's behaviour is outstanding. They also make an outstanding contribution to the school community. The Religious Education subject leaders provide outstanding leadership and support to staff. The leadership and management are outstanding in developing the Catholic life of the school through the Mission Statement. This is evident through their clear understanding of the mission of a Catholic school. They are aware of the school's strengths and have a vision of how to meet developmental needs. The commitment of the governors enables them to discharge their responsibilities in an outstanding manner. The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding overall. The provision for learners' spiritual and moral development is outstanding. Both curriculum Religious Education and Collective Worship make an outstanding contribution to this. The school is outstanding in promoting community cohesion. This is evident by the strong links fostered with the parish and both the local and wider community.

**Grade: 2**

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

The school had one key issue from its last Section 48 Inspection in March 2006. Since then, monitoring of Religious Education has been developed to include scrutiny of planning, workbooks and displays. Lessons have been observed and good practice shared to ensure greater consistency throughout the school. Areas for further development have been highlighted and in-service provided. Developmental marking has been introduced. Delivery of Religious Education has been enriched by the introduction of more creative teaching and learning strategies. The monitoring process recently highlighted differentiation as a main area for development. This is now being addressed through use of challenging questions and tasks. A *Here I Am* newsletter has been introduced to keep parents fully informed about Religious Education topics. The process of updating resources has begun. Time and finance have been provided for the development of the new coordinator. Teachers understanding of *Here I Am* topics and the new formal assessment procedures has been developed through sharing of information from Topic days. Documentation has 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 self-evaluation is comprehensive and its view of its overall performance is mostly accurate. It is recommended that when updating the self-evaluation the school is more comprehensive in outlining development strategies and the projected timescale. 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**

- ensure that outstanding practice is shared to ensure consistency throughout the school and raise standards 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 about that expected nationally. The number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Most learners, in relation to their capability and starting points, make good progress in the school. Standards in Religious Education are good overall with many children in Year 6 exceeding expectations. There are no significant differences in performance by learners of different gender or ethnic background. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in Religious Education with the help provided by other adults and differentiation of tasks to meet their needs. Differentiation, through outstanding use of challenging questions, enables more able children in all classes fulfil their potential. Some classes have also begun to provide differentiated tasks during the *Reflect* and *Relate* stages of the topic. The school, through its monitoring process, has identified that this good practice needs to be developed further throughout the school. The school checks on the progress made by all children through good use of informal assessment and the expectation statements Children's work is marked with positive challenging comments. A good start has been made on formal assessment of Religious Education. The ongoing use of the information gathered through the monitoring of planning, teaching and learning and analysis of the information from formal assessment will enable the school to raise standards further.

Children are very confident in discussion and feedback and have a very good knowledge of the subject and it's relevance to their lives. They show real enthusiasm for Religious Education. The behaviour of children throughout the school is outstanding. The children are enabled to make a good contribution to the school community e. g. School Council, Play leaders, Reading Buddies etc.

### **Grade 2:**

# Quality of Provision for Religious Education

## Teaching and learning

The evidence in planning and workbooks, together with the observation on the day of inspection, show that teaching and learning is good overall. Ten outstanding lessons were observed on the day of inspection. Where teaching is outstanding lessons are very well planned taking account of the needs of different learners within the class. Teaching is very precise and clearly focussed on the learning objective. This enables the children to understand clearly what they are learning about. Teaching is confident and enthusiastic and the lesson is well paced. Use is made of a range of resources to challenge and stimulate the children. The learning needs of all children, including those who are more able, are addressed through use of creative teaching and learning strategies. Challenging, differentiated questions and tasks, together with good support for those less able, ensures that all children are enabled to make good progress. Learning is summed up very effectively during the plenary session and related to the objective. In some classes children are also given time to reflect at a deep level in order to relate their learning to their everyday lives. Sharing of all the above outstanding practice, through the monitoring process, will enable the school to raise standards further. It is recommended that use of self- assessment is introduced to enable learners check on their own progress and celebrate their new knowledge and skills. In all classes lessons are well planned taking account of the needs of most learners, including those who are less able. In some classes the needs of more able children need to be addressed more fully through use of challenging tasks. The work given enables the children to work well independently and collaboratively. Children's religious literacy is developed very well e.g. exploring what "consequences" mean.

In a few classes the pacing of the lesson needs to be faster. In most classes *Here I Am* displays are used very effectively to support teaching and learning. Good use of the formal assessment tasks provided by the Archdiocese has been made. Analysis of formal assessment, by the leadership team and subject leaders, will highlight what the school needs to do to improve standards further.

Parents and carers involvement in their children's Religious Education is good. They are sent a *Here I Am* newsletter each term which gives them detailed information about the topics being studied and information about celebrations. This enables them to become involved in their children's Religious Education. Parents/carers are also invited to 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 learners through use of creative teaching and learning strategies. Those children who are less able are very well supported by adults. Outstanding use of challenging questions is made in all classes to enable more able children fulfil their potential. The good practice of providing

differentiated tasks, which was observed in some classes, needs to be more consistent throughout the school.

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. This ensures complete Religious Education entitlement for each child and meets national and diocesan requirements. Ten per cent of total curriculum time is allocated to Religious Education. This fulfils the requirements of the Bishops of England and Wales. The leadership of the school ensures that quality time is given to the positioning of Religious Education on timetables. Children are given opportunity to apply their learning to their own lives e.g. “what do I need to think about when I am making a choice?” The use of role play, hot-seating, music, information communication technology and other creative activities enrich the delivery of the Religious Education curriculum.

The parish clergy make a good contribution to the Religious Education curriculum e.g. school chaplain and deacon supporting staff and children during topics. The Religious Education curriculum makes an outstanding contribution to learners’ spiritual and moral development. Children have a good sense of right and wrong and are given opportunities during topics to develop this e.g. how “the choices I make have consequences for me and other people”. The school has statements to support spiritual and moral development. These are very obviously lived out in the daily life of the school.

**Grade: 1**

## **Leadership and Management**

### **Religious Education**

Leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education are outstanding. There is a clear vision for the subject within the mission of the school with a focus on raising standards. The Religious Education coordinator, supported by the prospective subject leader, provides outstanding leadership for the staff who share a commitment to the subject’s aims and values. Both show a genuine enthusiasm for their role and are fully committed to their task. An excellent handbook guides and directs all staff in their delivery of Religious Education. Coordinators’ meetings and Topic days are attended on a regular basis and information is disseminated to all staff during staff meetings or in-service time.

Performance in Religious Education is monitored through observation of teaching and learning, scrutiny of planning, workbooks and displays. This enables the school to share good practice and further raise standards. St Austin’s is socially inclusive by providing equality of access and of opportunity for all learners to make progress. Of the 19 staff teaching Religious Education 17 have a suitable qualification and 4 teachers are currently undertaking the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. Other adults are planned for and are very involved in supporting teaching and learning during lessons. Priorities for the subject are clearly identified and targets set. Religious Education is funded on par with other core subjects and resources have been updated since the last inspection. The headteacher and the Religious Education

coordinators keep governors fully informed of the strengths and areas for development relating to Religious Education. The commitment of the governing body enables them to discharge their responsibilities in an outstanding manner.

**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 Austin's is very obviously a living Christian community in which the values of Jesus, especially respect for one another, are very much at the heart of the community. The Mission Statement is known and owned by all as all members of the school community have been involved in its development. "In our school where everyone is special we love and serve as Jesus taught" has been translated into Spanish and made into a prayer which is used daily. This encourages children to give of their best in all areas of school life. The Mission Statement is supported by clear aims and practical objectives which show how it is lived out in the daily life of the school. It informs all school policies and is central to all that happens in the school community.

Regular reviews of the Mission Statement enable the governors and staff to effectively monitor and evaluate the Catholic life of the school.

**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, whole school or key stage gatherings. This fulfils government and Archdiocesan guidance.

A good policy supports the planning and delivery of Collective Worship wherever and whenever it takes place. Since the last inspection in-service has been provided to develop teachers understanding further. The school has adopted the planning format provided by the liturgy office to ensure that all Collective Worship is an enriching experience. Teachers and children plan and deliver Collective Worship.

When possible, parents/carers are invited to participate in celebrations. Acts of worship include various forms of prayer, scripture, powerpoint presentations, reflection, joyful singing and other elements that support liturgical information.

Worship stimulates reflection on spiritual and moral issues and on personal beliefs. The Collective Worship observed was outstanding.

Children and adults actively participate in acts of worship. In many classes they are also given quality time for reflection at the end of Religious Education lessons. Collective Worship makes an outstanding contribution to 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. 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. Children have had opportunity to explore the beliefs and values of other faiths: Judaism, Islam and Sikhism. St Austin's has very strong links with the parish and local community e. g. Deacon leading Collective Worship , celebrations in Church to which parishioners are invited, links with John Moore's University etc. 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. CAFOD, Nugent Care, Ugandan project etc.

**Grade: 1**









