



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. FINBAR'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

LIVERPOOL

Inspection Date Tuesday 19 November 2013

Inspectors Mrs. Pat Peel Mrs. Maria Eaves

Unique Reference Number 104640

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Acts 2005 and 2011

Type of School Catholic Primary

Age range of pupils 3 - 11

Number on roll 169 including the Nursery

Chair of Governors Mrs Janette Cook-Hannah

Headteacher Mrs. Jan Conley

School address South Hill Road,
Liverpool,
L8 9RY

Telephone number 0151 727 3963

E-mail address j.conley@st-finbars.liverpool.sch.uk

Date of last inspection 2 March 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Acts 2005 and 2011

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.

Information about this school

- St. Finbar's is a smaller than average sized Catholic Primary School serving the parish of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.
- There are 169 children on roll of whom 122 are baptised Catholic, 12 pupils come from other Christian denominations, and 6 from other faith or religious traditions and 11 have no Religious affiliation. There are 18 children in the Nursery
- There are 12 teachers of whom 9 teach Religious Education. Nine are Catholic. Seven teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education.
- Since the last inspection there has been a new Headteacher appointed. The deputy headteacher and Religious Education subject leader are both on secondment from other schools for the duration of this academic year.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires Improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

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Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school.

Overall effectiveness:

St. Finbar's is good in providing Catholic Education.

Inspection Judgements

The extent to which the pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school.

- Pupils are good in the way in which they contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of St. Finbar's. They know and understand the school's Mission Statement and specifically their own motto which is derived from it "*Praising God in every way in all we think and do and say.*" They were very confident speaking about Jesus' love for them and their love for the school.
- Pupils are actively involved in evaluating the Catholic character of the school by showing a real commitment to living out their Mission on a daily basis.
- Pupils have a very good sense of belonging to the school. Its values and ethos are visibly reflected in the exemplary attitudes and relationships between all members of the school community.
- Pupils are encouraged to take on roles of responsibility by becoming councillors and prefects.
- Pupils are actively involved in developing the Catholic character of the school by the work they undertake in fundraising for numerous charities e.g. CAFOD, Nugent Care, Operation Christmas Child and outreach to the local and wider community by collecting items for the Seel Street Mission and an orphanage in India through Mission Together.
- Pupils benefit from participation in annual residential activities. Pupils in Year 6 visit Colomendy Centre for Outdoor Education, Mold.
- Pupils have a very good sense of right and wrong and apply this in their personal relationships. They take an increasing responsibility for themselves and their actions and enthusiastically praise and celebrate each other's achievements at their weekly assemblies. Awards are presented to pupils who demonstrate excellent behaviour and for being a good friend.
- They show a readiness to embrace and celebrate their lived experiences through participation in liturgical events in school and more recently in the parish.
- Pupils embrace opportunities to meet their potential in all aspects of school life. They are reflective and enquiring.
- The learning environment has recently been enriched by vibrant and stimulating displays which aid pupil's sensory experiences. The school now benefits from quiet devotional areas. The pupils commented that they '*really enjoyed working together*' putting displays up around the school and entrance area.
- Pupils are involved in service to the local Faith and religious communities. They readily take part in school and parish liturgies and choral events. They show respect and understanding of another faith and religions.

How well pupils' achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

- Pupils' achievement and enjoyment of Religious Education is good.

- On entry to school many children have a limited knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith.
- The school has embraced the Come and See programme and the needs of the pupil's are being met. On the day of inspection the range of activities provided for continuous provision in the Nursery was used effectively to engage the youngest pupils.
- Pupils' attainment in Religious Education is good. They make good progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities.
- There is no difference in performance between pupils of different gender. Outcomes for pupils with additional or special needs are good.
- Assessments undertaken to date and scrutiny of workbooks provides evidence of pupils generally attaining appropriate levels for their age and stage of development. There is no evidence of pupil's exceeding expectations but this will improve significantly when current practice is embedded.
- Pupils are not currently given Religious Education targets. Until recently there was no consistency in application of the Come and See programme and a whole school approach has only just been adopted. These will be implemented at a later stage.
- Pupils are becoming increasingly more religiously literate as they become familiar with key words from the topics. Their knowledge, understanding and skills are beginning to develop appropriate to their age or capacity.
- They have begun developing the skills to enable them to reflect spiritually, think ethically and theologically and are becoming more aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
- Pupils' engagement in and enjoyment of their learning is good as shown by their interest, enthusiasm and excellent behaviour. A Year 6 pupil commented that they were *'enjoying their RE work now as their teacher was making it fun and interesting.'* This is a real strength of the school.
- Pupils work well independently, in pairs and collaboratively in small groups.

How well pupils' respond to and participate in Collective Worship

- Pupils are outstanding in responding to and participating in Collective Worship and it is central to the life of the school and a key part of the school day.
- They act with reverence and are keen to participate in a variety of gatherings.
- Pupils' knowledge of prayer and liturgy is increasing.
- Collective Worship resources have been purchased and devotional areas and focus tables are being used effectively to promote a sense of awe and wonder in classrooms.
- Pupils are becoming familiar with a variety of prayer styles. They appreciate and are open to the Word of God in the scriptures and make heartfelt responses to it.
- They sing joyfully, reflect in silence and join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence.

The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education

- The quality of teaching and purposeful learning is good in ensuring that pupils are interested and engaged and make progress. However the pace of progress needs to be improved. It is anticipated that once staffing levels stabilise and Come and See is firmly embedded across all classes this will happen. Regular monitoring of teaching and learning will ensure standards continue to rise across the school.

- Teacher's planning is effective in meeting the requirements of the Come and See programme. However, this is in its infancy and time is needed to firmly embed the programme.
- Teaching assistants are used effectively to support the most vulnerable pupils.
- On the day of inspection teachers displayed good subject knowledge and deployed a range of teaching strategies to engage the pupils. Where teaching is outstanding the strategies used enrich pupils' enjoyment of and enthusiasm for Religious Education. This practice needs to be shared.
- Teachers do not always take into account pupils' prior learning and ensure differentiated tasks are set which consolidate, build on and extends their knowledge, skills and understanding. This needs to be addressed through the plan, teach, assess, review and re-plan cycle.
- Good use is made of time, questioning and resources e.g. interactive white board, God's and Church's story, audio and visual media etc. to maximise learning. Excellent use of the iPad, by some of the Year 6 children was observed on the day.
- Pupils are positively affirmed throughout their lessons. Marking informs pupils of their progress and sometimes identifies 'next steps' to inform how they can improve further. This needs to be done consistently throughout the school. Teachers need to ensure a response from pupils if marking includes key questions. Effort and achievement are celebrated.
- The school has recently implemented assessment strategies which have begun to provide information on the achievement of pupils. This is in its infancy and needs time to embed before the impact of it can be measured.
- The tracking of pupils' work in Religious Education needs further improvement. Pupils have Records of Attainment but evidence suggests that data was not being collated either as a cohort, class or whole school. Therefore standards across the school were not being adequately monitored or measured. However, the new subject leader has re-established this and has begun to track pupil performance. It is too early to show impact across the school.
- There is evidence of pupils using assessment for learning strategies in some classes. This needs to be used consistently throughout the school.

The extent to which the Religious Education Curriculum promotes pupils' learning

- The extent to which the Religious Education Curriculum promotes pupils' learning requires improvement.
- The curriculum requires improvement in meeting pupils' needs. Senior leaders and governors see Religious Education as the core subject and at the very heart of the curriculum however due to circumstances beyond their control the school has lacked sufficient stability to ensure this has happened. In recent months an outstanding Religious Education subject leader has been seconded into school to support and lead teaching and learning across the school. Her influence has had a massive impact on the way in which Come and See is now being delivered. However the school still does not have the internal capacity or stability to sustain the much needed improvements.
- The school using the Come and See programme recommended by the Archdiocese meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Religious Education. Appropriate levels of the programme are now being followed in different classes. This ensures complete Religious Education entitlement for each child and meets National and Archdiocesan requirements.
- Of the total curriculum time 10% is allocated to Religious Education. This fulfils the requirements of the Bishops of England and Wales.

- Planning ensures full coverage of the Religious Education programme. Termly newsletters have been introduced for parents and carers.
- Enrichment activities such as cookery, sports and football multi-skills have a positive impact on the curriculum.
- The school operates a breakfast club.
- The Religious Education curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral development and vocation. As part of the topic pupils have interviewed the parish priest about his vocation.
- Children have explored the beliefs and values of another faith and religion. The school has recently covered Judaism and Islam. They were visited by Eric Cohen, a practising Jew, who shared his beliefs across the school. This helps to promote tolerance and respect for those who think differently.
- The school supports the parish 'With You Always' family catechesis sessions.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.

- The quality of Collective Worship provided is good in reflecting the Catholic character of the school and takes into account the variety of Faith backgrounds among the pupils.
- Collective Worship plays a key part in meeting the spiritual needs of the pupils. Opportunities are provided to enable full, active and conscious participation of the whole school community.
- Children are enabled to pray formally and informally using a variety of prayer methods and styles.
- A newly formed prayer team made up of Year 6 pupils is having a great effect on Collective Worship. The Religious Education subject leader is modelling outstanding practice and together they are planning, preparing and leading worship across the school. However, this needs to be cascaded down to ensure that all pupils from the earliest years are actively involved in Collective Worship.
- The subject leader has been instrumental in supporting teachers to develop the skills necessary to plan, lead and participate in Collective Worship. She has introduced weekly staff Collective Worship to both model and support their own spiritual needs.
- Opportunities are provided for parents, carers, the local and wider Faith communities to participate in a variety of celebrations of the 'Come and See' programme and celebrations of Mass throughout the Church's liturgical year. The parish priest regularly visits the school. He is fulsome in his praise of the ethos, mission and work of the school community.

How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.

- Leaders, governors and managers are good in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Catholic life of the school. They demonstrate a commitment to the Church's Mission in education.
- This is reflected in the Mission Statement outlining St. Finbar's as a school founded upon Catholic principles which '*...promotes strong relationships with families and parish, whilst fostering local and wider world awareness*'. Its aims and practical objectives direct and guide all aspects of school life and are a useful tool by which the school evaluates its effectiveness.

- Good opportunities are provided for the staff and pupils to play an active part in the Catholic Life and Mission of the school through prayer, charitable outreach and raising awareness of those in need.
- The Self Evaluation Document is comprehensive and outlines the progress and impact of the actions identified within it. The schools recent rigorous analysis provides a basis to celebrate the schools strengths and ongoing areas for development. The subject leader's Religious Education Action Plan drawn from it identifies key areas which need systematically tackling.
- A range of opportunities for Spiritual and Moral developments are provided for all staff and pupils including Collective Worship, Archdiocesan led Spirituality days and opportunities to join in 'Come and See for Yourself' celebrations at the beginning of each new topic.
- Leadership at all levels respects difference, values diversity and ensures equal opportunities for all.
- Prayer, worship and the liturgical life of the school reflects and respects the religious diversity within the school.
- There are positive relationships at every level leading to a welcoming, happy and caring learning environment for staff and pupils.
- The recent secondment of a highly experienced deputy headteacher has provided welcome support to the subject leader in her monitoring role.
- Following a period of instability the Governors are now well informed and discharge their responsibilities in an appropriate manner. More recently they have effectively helped to shape the direction of the school. They are committed wholeheartedly to the Catholic Life of the school.

How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Religious Education of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.

- The way in which leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is good.
- The school currently monitors and evaluates performance however, this needs to be rigorously analysed and founded on sound data in order for improvements to be made.
- Teaching and learning needs to be monitored regularly and appropriate feedback and support given as necessary. The Deputy will support the subject leader in this role. Sharing good practice will enhance teacher's repertoire and strategies to further enrich pupils' experiences.
- The subject leader is outstanding in guiding Religious Education. She shows real commitment, drive and enthusiasm for the role. She has worked tirelessly with the Religious Education link governor to implement and monitor the Come and See programme and produce documentation which guides and directs all staff in the delivery of the subject. She has updated policies in light of the changes which she has made to the delivery of the curriculum.
- Continuing professional development opportunities are provided for all staff including attendance at Archdiocesan In-service topic days and subject leader days.
- Formal assessment tasks are undertaken in line with Archdiocesan guidance.
- The school has begun to implement and collate assessments in Religious Education. As this is in its infancy the impact cannot be measured fully at this time. It is vital that a reliable method of tracking pupil progress is maintained to ensure that key areas for development are tackled systematically and overall standards improved.

What does the school needs to do to improve further?

- Plan and implement improvement to Outcomes for pupils in Religious Education by:
 - using information gleaned through analysis of assessment data to inform planning and track pupil progress;
 - rigorously monitoring data to evaluate the schools performance in order to plan future improvements;
 - using the language of the level descriptors and 'driver words' when marking to inform pupils next steps.
- Improve the quality of Provision and Outcomes for Collective Worship by:
 - enabling pupils to plan, prepare and lead Collective Worship from the earliest years.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	2
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OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS

How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils	
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	2
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	2
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	1

PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education	
The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education	2
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning	3
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	2

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

How effective leaders, governors and managers are in developing the Catholic Life of the School	
How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	2
How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	2

Key to judgements: Grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 requires improvement and grade 4 inadequate