



## ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

### INSPECTION REPORT

## ST. JOHN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

### LIVERPOOL

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Inspection Date 8<sup>th</sup> November 2011

Inspectors Miss Julie Lockett  
Mrs Denise Hegarty Mrs Sue Banister

Unique Reference Number 132796

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 305

Chair of Governors Mr Robert Gittins

Head teacher Miss Denise Maudsley

School address Fountains Road,  
Kirkdale,  
Liverpool,  
L4 1UN

Telephone number 0151 922 1924

E-mail address [johnsi-ht@st-johns-inf.liverpool.sch.uk](mailto:johnsi-ht@st-johns-inf.liverpool.sch.uk)

Date of last inspection 17<sup>th</sup> June 2008

# 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.

## Information about the school

St John's is a larger than average Catholic Primary School. St John's is situated in Kirkdale, Liverpool, an area of significant social and economic hardship, serving the parish of St John's. Since the last inspection, there is a new head teacher who has been in post since September 2010. There is a new vibrant, purpose built school building. There are 305 children on roll of whom 260 are baptised Catholic, 15 come from other Christian denominations, and 17 from other faith or religious traditions 13 have no religious affiliation). There are 18 teachers of whom 16 teach Religious Education. Twelve are Catholic. Eight teachers have a suitable qualification in religious education.

### Key for inspection grades

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

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# Inspection Judgements

**Overall effectiveness:  
How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education**

2

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

1

## **Main Findings:-**

St John's provides good Catholic Education. There is a clear vision for Catholic Education which is embraced by the whole school community. Since the last inspection the school has securely maintained and built on previous performance. Self evaluation is rigorous and accurate. Outcomes for pupils are good. There is no significant difference in performance between groups of pupils. Outcomes for pupils with additional or special needs are very good. The school is successful in addressing the areas it has identified for improvement. The leadership team is deeply motivated and consistently communicates its high expectations to staff in order to secure improvement. There is a strong Religious Education Team to drive forward improvements. Staff are affirmed and supported. Teachers are provided with in-service to support their ongoing development. Realistic and challenging plans stem from the accurate analysis obtained through monitoring and are being used effectively to improve outcomes. Any underperformance is challenged.

Overall the school has an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement. There has been exceptional recent improvement. St John's has maintained and built on its performance. There is rigorous self evaluation and comprehensive action plans for improvement are in place. Leaders and managers inspire others are passionate about improvement in standards and have an ambitious and realistic vision for the future of the school. Morale is high and successes are continuing to be celebrated.

## **What the school needs to do to improve further**

Improve planning and assessment by:

- Pairing skilled leading teachers across key stages;
- Developing differentiation through driver words, to raise expectations for higher ability children;
- Developing context sheets as a useful tool to aid pupil assessment;
- Moderation of work;
- Tracking across the school to highlight specific needs.

Develop Collective Worship by:

- Giving pupil's responsibility in preparing and leading Collective Worship.

Continue to encourage continuing Professional Development of staff by:

- Encouraging attendance for Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies.

## **How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils**

Pupils' achievements in Religious Education are good. On entry to school many children have a limited knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith. There is excellent use of teaching support for pupils and across the school there are excellent behaviour management strategies in place. Children with special and specific needs are very well catered for and achieve very well. Good progress of children's understanding is evidenced across year groups within workbooks. Pupils' attainment in Religious Education is average and improving. Pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities. Analysis of assessments undertaken provides evidence of pupils generally attaining the appropriate level for their age and stage of development in each key stage. There is very good understanding by the Religious Education coordinator of levelling work appropriately. There is no difference in performance between pupils of different gender. Pupils are becoming increasingly more religiously literate. Their knowledge, understanding and skills are developing appropriate to their age or capacity. They are developing the skills that enable them to think spiritually, ethically and theologically and are becoming more aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. Pupils are encouraged to work independently and collaboratively, in particular through - talking partner work and enthusiastic feedback from their learning. The pupils at St John's are very honest, enthusiastic and hard working. They show a great enthusiasm for lessons across the school and want to apply themselves and give full commitment to learn as much as they can. Pupils praise and acknowledge the contribution of others. They show a pride in their learning and progress as they know how well it will be received and praised. Their behaviour is outstanding.

Pupils are very actively involved in developing and evaluating the Catholic character of the school. They have recently been involved with the renewal of the schools Mission Statement, 'Christ is the centre of our community, where we live, love and learn together'. Pupils could talk confidently about and had a good knowledge of their Mission Statement. They know how central it is to their school life. Pupils have a real sense of belonging to the school community and value and respect others. They feel it is their school. Pupils are encouraged to take on roles of responsibility both within the school and wider community by raising funds and caring for those less fortunate such as CAFOD, Poppy Appeal, and Harvest Food Festival parcels for the elderly and homeless, carol singing in care homes. The children are encouraged to react to events that need support, for example raising money for Cancer Research by planting bulbs. They are aware of what they have, yet what they can offer to others is measured by the very generous donations made to the Operation Christmas Child boxes. St John's raises children's sense of self worth and standing within the school and surrounding community. They set an example to others. Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong and apply this in their personal relationships. This was very evident from a lesson taught about Commandments. The children were fully aware of how rules are set for their own lives and could develop discussion as to why the Commandments were still important. Education for Personal Relationships has fostered positive attitudes in pupils. Pupils take an increasing responsibility for themselves and their actions for example through their active role as School councillors. At interview one of the pupils was heard to say, 'We make peace with one another and forgive'. They show a readiness to embrace and celebrate their lived experiences. Children at St John's welcome others, speak out, and are honest and very inquiring. They welcome visitors to the

school with warmth and are proud to share who they are and what they do. Very strong foundations have been laid for children to take on more responsibility and leadership within the school.

Pupils are good in responding to and participating in the schools Collective Worship. The children are developing ideas and are spontaneous when contributing to their worship. They use relevant themes well to link what they hear in Scripture to their own lives. They act with reverence and are keen to participate in a variety of gatherings. Children sing joyfully, reflect in silence and join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence. No-one is expected to act in a manner contrary to their beliefs and all show mutual respect. St John's is an inclusive community for all. Pupils' knowledge of prayer and liturgy is increasing. They become familiar with a variety of prayer styles and appreciate and are open to the Word of God in the Scriptures. Provision should now be further enhanced by children taking leading roles in preparing a space for worship and choosing suitable readings, prayers and hymns more consistently across the school.

<b>How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils</b>	
How well pupils achieve in Religious Education	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pupils' standards of attainment in Religious Education</li> </ul>	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the quality of pupils' learning and their progress in Religious Education</li> </ul>	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	2
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	2

## **How effective the provision is for Catholic Education**

The quality of teaching is consistently effective in ensuring that pupils are interested and engaged and make good progress. Teachers take into account pupils' prior learning and are working towards consistent differentiated tasks when planning so that the work consolidates, builds and extends their knowledge and understanding. There is strong evidence of differentiated activities that suit the needs of most pupils; however, teachers should develop these to include pupils of higher ability in order that they too can be challenged. By strengthening differentiation through the use of the driver words in planning and teaching, moderating work across the year groups and tracking pupils' progress, the attainment levels should become more consistent. Special needs pupils are targeted very well. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to work independently and collaboratively. Good use is made of time and resources e.g. for instance Judaism artefacts were used excellently to ensure children's understanding. Teachers and others deploy a variety of strategies to sustain and motivate pupils e.g. the use of teaching assistants across key stages ensure all pupils are engaged and interested in their work. Marking is a key strength throughout and gives children opportunities to reflect on their learning. By building on this good practise, progress should be made by including individual self assessment through written work. Imaginative ways are planned to enable pupils to develop their understanding of other faiths. Good use is made of the interactive whiteboards and this could be further enhanced by pupil's involvement interactively. Pupils are informed of their progress and how to improve. Very

effective use is made in plenary sessions of feedback from pupils and suggestions are made to further their learning. Opportunities to discuss their work and progress are also evident through - talking partners and pupils are encouraged to voice their ideas and opinions. There is some evidence of whole class self assessment within plenary sessions and success criteria is shared. Teachers' subject knowledge is developing with a real heightened commitment towards all teachers gaining a Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. Staff work in pairs when planning to ensure good practise and this could be further developed by pairing leading teachers to ensure skills in teaching are consistent across key stages.

The assessment of pupils' work in Religious Education is satisfactory with some good features. The school has satisfactory assessment strategies which provide information on the achievement of all the pupils informally through evaluation of planning and through marking strategies. Teachers are making good steps to identify how well pupils are achieving and are beginning to tackle underachievement. Formal assessment tasks are undertaken in line with Archdiocesan guidance and the levelling of work is good. The subject leader is working hard to improve this area. The school has begun class tracking and following this, tracking should be collated across the school. The subject leader, head teacher and assessment manager are due to attend an assessment day this year provided by the Archdiocese to build on their practises. Achievement and effort are always celebrated. Pupils are affirmed, know how well they are doing and know what they need to do to improve further.

The curriculum is good in meeting pupils' needs. The school using the '*Here I Am*' programme recommended by the Archdiocese, 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 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. Imaginative and well planned strategies are deployed to enrich pupils' learning. Curriculum outlines are provided for parents who are consulted on different issues depending on the topic being covered. There is a Religious Education and a 'Home and School Together' newsletter that both support the curriculum at home. The school implements new curriculum developments as appropriate. St John's ensures that Religious Education is the heart of the school. Enrichment activities such as day trips linked to their work and after school clubs have a positive impact on the curriculum. The Religious Education curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development.

The Collective Worship provided reflects the Catholic character of the school well 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 active and conscious participation of the whole school community. Children are enabled to pray formally and informally. The school provides opportunities for staff to develop the skills in planning and leading Collective Worship. The teachers provide very good resources and opportunities to give children good examples of how collective worship is delivered. There are very good focus tables throughout the school and settings

are very inviting for children and visitors. The children are ready now to develop their own skills to plan, and take more of a leading role in Collective Worship. Very good opportunities are provided for parents, carers the local and wider Faith communities to participate in a variety of celebrations, services and assemblies throughout the year.

<b>How effective the provision is for Catholic Education</b>	
The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education	2
The effectiveness of assessment in Religious Education	3
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	2

### **How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic Life of the schools**

Leaders and managers promote and develop the Catholic life of the school well and show a good understanding of and commitment to the Mission of the Church. This is reflected in the school's own Mission Statement. All who form part of the school community including parents, governors and children were involved in the development and recent review of the Mission Statement. The school is currently taking the next steps to evaluate the aims and practical objectives that direct and guide every aspect of school life. These 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 Catholic life and Mission of the school. The Self Evaluation Document provides evidence of the school's monitoring, searching analysis and self challenge. Their analysis provides a basis to celebrate the schools strengths and outlines areas for development. The School Evaluation Document is an accurate working document that impacts significantly on the Catholic life of St John's. The school provides good induction and in-service training to enable staff to further understand the Church's Mission in Education and play their unique part in it e.g. staff have received Collective Worship training, led by members of the Christian Education Department. Staff have attended topic days provided by the Archdiocese for 'Here I Am' topics. The promotion of Catholic life is a high priority and is driven by the Leadership Team. A range of opportunities for Spiritual and Moral developments are provided for staff and pupils who join together in prayer. The members of staff are good role models for the children in following their Mission Statement. They work closely together for planning and build good relationships. In-service and days led by the Archdiocese enable opportunities for exploring their Spirituality.

Leaders and managers use monitoring data well to evaluate the school's performance, celebrate, and plan future improvements. There is systematic monitoring and appropriate evaluation showing strengths and developments. Key areas are tackled and St John's shows good focus for celebrating and in particular sharing good practise not only within the school but has begun a partnering with other local schools to share good practises. The subject leader guides and directs Religious Education very well. She shows full commitment and introduces new initiatives when appropriate. She is fully supported through the backing of a Religious Education Team, which enables her to push forward ideas, for example sharing good practises from partner schools, levelling work

and team planning. Very good and comprehensive documentation guides and directs all staff in the delivery of the subject. This is updated as necessary.

Governors are very good in fulfilling their responsibilities. They have effectively helped to shape the direction of the school and ensure the high profile of the school's Catholic character. They actively support how welcoming and inclusive the school is in the surrounding community. The Governing body has within it fields of expertise that ensures a broad and balanced level of support and challenge. They have a good picture of how pupils are achieving, by their involvement in book monitoring days, monitoring meetings, curriculum updates and self evaluation. Governors ensure that the budget is appropriate for curriculum needs, display materials and focus table resources. A strong commitment for a number of teachers to achieve the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies has been made and money from the budget set aside for this purpose. There is a Religious Education link governor that works closely with the coordinating team, by sharing the vision of the Religious Education curriculum, monitoring and developing the Catholic life of the school. Governors set an example to parents by providing social events and are encouraging parents to take active roles in their Parent Teacher Association thus ensuring that parents feel valued members of the school community. The governors have over the past few years, been on a journey that has tested and in turn developed their skills in holding leaders in school accountable. Now they support and uphold all that is good. They take pride in themselves being a critical friend, reflect closely on their performances and are influential in bringing necessary improvements.

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 and there are positive relationships at every level. Leaders and managers facilitate pupils' involvement in service to the local Faith community through partnerships with neighbouring schools and celebrations with the local Church of England community. The school works very closely with the Parish and were deeply affected by the recent death of their Parish Priest. A new priest has been appointed and has already started his work with the school community. There are plans in place to further develop the use of St John's church as a place for everyday events, such as Collective Worship. This will enable St John's parish to be an extension of the school through learning and spirituality.

St John's is a very inclusive community. Dialogue and collaboration is encouraged with people who hold different beliefs and values. Parents are consulted regularly and involved in a variety of ways in the life of the school through newsletters and an open door policy. Feedback from parents' questionnaires about Catholic life and Religious Education are very positive. One parent wrote, 'St John's is a fantastic school with teachers who really care about the welfare and development of each student. The use of the *'Here I Am'* programme promotes community cohesion. St John's invites and is actively encouraging parents to be more fully involved by providing class assemblies and whole school celebrations. Children have explored the beliefs and values of other faiths and religions including Judaism and Islam. This helps to promote tolerance and respect for those who think differently. They invite visitors to school and hold an annual visit to the Synagogue in Liverpool.

<b>How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic Life of the School</b>	
How well leaders 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 and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	2
The extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school so areas needing development are addressed decisively and responsibilities met	2
How effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion	2