

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. Oswald's is a large three-form entry Catholic Junior School situated in Old Swan serving the parish of St. Oswald, King and Martyr and St. Brendan's Shrine. There are 301 children on roll of whom 274 are baptised Catholic, 23 come from other Christian denominations, and 4 from other faith or religious traditions. There are 16 teachers of whom 11 teach Religious Education. Eleven are Catholic. Six teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education with a further 4 currently undertaking the Catholic Certification in Religious Studies. Since the last inspection the school has undergone a significant change to the leadership team with a new headteacher, deputy and subject leader being appointed.

Key for inspection grades

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

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Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school.

Inspection Judgements

Overall effectiveness:

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main Findings:-

St. Oswald's is a good Catholic Junior School with many outstanding features. 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 good 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. 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.

Overall the school has good capacity for sustained improvement.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Raise the standards of attainment in Religious Education further by:
 - embedding the use of the driver words into planning and differentiating for groups of children across the whole school;
 - ensuring differentiation is by both task and outcome.
- Further develop the work being done in assessment, monitoring and tracking of children's progress by:
 - improving the consistency and rigour of moderation across year groups;
 - embedding 'I can...' targets across the whole school.

How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils

Pupils' achievement in Religious Education is good. Many of the children have a limited knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith. Pupils' attainment in Religious Education is good. Pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities. 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. Any underachievement is challenged. Pupils are encouraged to work independently, in pairs and collaboratively in small groups. Pupils' enjoyment of their learning is outstanding

as shown by their interest, enthusiasm and exemplary behaviour. Pupils are actively involved in developing and evaluating the Catholic character of the school. All pupils know, understand and live out the school Mission Statement. One pupil quoting their Golden Rule “...we do our best in work and play, pleasing God in every way.”

Pupils’ have an outstanding sense of belonging to St. Oswald’s community and value and respect others. Pupils are encouraged to take on roles of responsibility in school e.g. becoming councillors, prefects, peer advocates etc and in being ambassadors when out in the wider community singing for shoppers or in the local care homes and playing instruments at St. George’s Hall. Pupils benefit from participation in residential outdoor pursuits to Ullswater in the Lake District. Pupils are considerate and caring of others both in school and the wider community and support many charitable causes through fundraising including CAFOD, Nugent Care and Clatterbridge Hospital etc. Pupils also undertake sponsored walks and support the Samaritans Purse in the collection of shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. Pupils have an excellent sense of right and wrong and apply this in their personal relationships. SEAL materials, circle time and Rainbows are used effectively to support pupils in this area and St. Oswald’s benefits from a ‘quiet sensory room’ which is used successfully to support vulnerable pupils. The education for personal relationships has fostered positive attitudes in pupils. Pupils take an increasing responsibility for themselves and their actions. They readily praise and acknowledge the contribution of others. Pupils show a readiness to embrace and celebrate their lived experiences and evidence in books shows that they are growing in their ability to relate Religious Education to their own lives.

Pupils are outstanding in responding to and participating in the schools Collective Worship. They are becoming increasingly more confident preparing and leading worship however pupils need more guidance to ensure that appropriate scripture is used in the ‘Listen’ aspect of Collective Worship. They act with reverence and are keen to participate in a variety of gatherings. They 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. Pupils’ knowledge of prayer and liturgy is increasing. They become familiar with a variety of prayer styles. They appreciate and are open to the Word of God in the scriptures.

| How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils | |
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| How well pupils achieve in Religious Education | 2 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pupils’ standards of attainment in Religious Education | 2 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the quality of pupils’ learning and their progress in Religious Education | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school | 1 |
| How well pupils respond to and participate in the school’s Collective Worship | 1 |

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

The quality of teaching at St. Oswald’s is consistently effective in ensuring that pupils are interested and engaged and make very good progress. Evidence suggests an over-reliance on differentiation by outcome and teachers must

ensure they differentiate tasks when planning so that the work consolidates, builds and extends pupils knowledge, skills and understanding. Greater use of the driver words in planning will aid this process. In the best lessons excellent use is made of time and resources e.g. learning support assistants, interactive whiteboard, audio and visual media clips, digital camera, visual timers, God's and Church's Story etc. Teachers and others use a variety of strategies to sustain and motivate pupils e.g. praise and affirmation, creativity, quizzes, challenges and rewards i.e. team points, star of the week etc. Pupils are informed of their progress and how to improve both orally and through marking. There is some evidence of pupils' 'next steps' and target marking however it is in its infancy and this needs further development across the whole school. Pupils are given opportunities to discuss their work and progress.

The assessment of pupils work in Religious Education is good. Formal assessment tasks are undertaken in line with Archdiocesan guidance. St. Oswald's has assessment strategies in place which provides information on the achievement of all the pupils however, a more rigorous and consistent approach is needed when marking to ensure accurate, quality provision across the whole school. To aid this process a portfolio of levelled work needs to be built up and maintained to enable quality assurance during moderation. Both teacher and pupil expectations need to be raised when undertaking assessment tasks. Teachers need to provide a range of assessment opportunities that create greater depth and challenge especially for the more able pupils. The introduction and use of 'I can...' targets across the school and 'next steps' marking using the language of the level descriptors will help to focus clearly on objectives set and raise attainment. The newly appointed subject leader has begun to track pupil progress but the impact of this cannot be measured as there is insufficient data. Analysis of assessments undertaken last year provides evidence of pupils generally attaining the appropriate level for their age and stage of development. Some teachers enable pupils to evaluate their own work. Assessment information is collated by the subject leader and shared with the leadership team and governors although this is very much in its infancy and needs further development. Pupils are affirmed and know how well they are doing. Achievement and effort are celebrated and whole school 'merit' assemblies are held weekly.

The curriculum is very good in meeting pupils' needs. St. Oswald's 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. Teachers plan together in year groups and 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. The school implements new curriculum developments as appropriate. Enrichment activities such as sports, choir, chess, sign language, ICT and International club have a positive impact on the curriculum. The Religious Education curriculum provides very good opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development.

The Collective Worship provided is very good in reflecting the Catholic character of the school and taking 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. The school provides opportunities for Staff to develop the skills in planning and leading Collective Worship. The teachers provide the necessary resources and opportunities to help children to develop the skills necessary to plan, lead and participate in Collective Worship.

| How effective the provision is for Catholic Education | |
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| The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education | 2 |
| The effectiveness of assessment in Religious Education | 2 |
| 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 school

Leaders and managers are very good in promoting and developing the Catholic life of the school and show a thorough understanding of and commitment to the Mission of the Church. This is reflected in the Schools own Mission Statement *"Together, in St. Oswald's, we will Love God, Love learning and Love each other."* All who form part of the school community including parents, carers, Priest, governors and children were involved in the development of the Mission Statement. Its aims and practical objectives direct and guide every aspect of school life and are a useful tool by which the school evaluate its effectiveness. Excellent 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 and subsequent Religious Education Action Plan provide evidence of the schools monitoring, searching analysis and self challenge. Their analysis provides a basis to celebrate the schools strengths and outlining areas for development. The school provides excellent induction and in-service training to enable staff to further understand the Church's Mission in Education and play their unique part in it such as attendance at Archdiocesan Topic and Newly Qualified Teacher days and staff undertaking the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies etc.

Leaders and managers at St. Oswald's are good in the way they use monitoring information to evaluate the schools performance, celebrate, and plan future improvements. An action plan has been drawn up but it is too early to judge the effectiveness and impact of the strategies that have been put in place especially with regard to assessment and pupil tracking. The newly appointed subject leader is good in guiding Religious Education. He shows enthusiasm and commitment to the role and regularly attends Archdiocesan co-ordinator training, In-service and Topic Days. He introduces new initiatives when appropriate. Good documentation guides and directs all staff in the delivery of the subject. This is updated as necessary.

Governors at St. Oswald's are good in fulfilling their responsibilities. The recently appointed chairperson has shown a real commitment to the school having been a

Foundation Governor and vice chairman for a number of years. Governors have effectively helped to shape the direction of the school through their involvement in the development of the Mission Statement and in their total commitment to the Catholic life of the school. They have the expertise to meet the school's needs and the chairperson is about to undergo training in his new role. They are frequent visitors to the school and support staff and pupils at all levels.

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 within the school. Leaders and managers facilitate pupils' involvement in service to the local neighbourhood served by the school and the wider community through the Comenius project. The parish priest is a regular visitor to the school. Throughout the Church's liturgical year Mass is celebrated in school to which parishioners, parents and carers are invited. Opportunities are also provided for pupils on a rota to attend regular daily Mass in church. Excellent opportunities are provided for parents and carers to participate in a variety of celebrations of the 'Here I Am' programme. On the day of inspection a Year 4 Signs and Symbols 'Rejoice' assembly took place to which parents and carers were invited.

A real strength of St. Oswald's is the work that it has undertaken to further develop the partnership between home, school and parish. The school operates an 'open door' policy and parents are consulted regularly and involved in a variety of ways in the life of the school e.g. workshops, newsletters, parent mail, drop ins etc. The school has an active Parent, Teacher and Friends Association which organises and raises funds through events such as the summer fair, raffles, discos and adult social evenings etc in support of the school. P.T.F.A. members also provide and serve refreshments before and after events in school. The use of the 'Here I am' programme promotes community cohesion. Dialogue and collaboration is encouraged with people who hold different beliefs and values. Children have explored the beliefs and values of other faiths and religions i.e. Judaism, Islam and Hinduism. This helps to promote tolerance and respect for those who think differently.

| How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic Life of the School | |
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| 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 | 1 |