



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

LIVERPOOL

Tuesday 3 July 2007

Inspectors Ms. Nora Finnegan Mrs. Pat Cooney

URN 104631

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Catholic Primary
Age range of pupils	4 -11
Number on roll	98
Chair of governors	Mr. P. Fitzpatrick
School address	Earp Street, Garston, Liverpool, Merseyside, L31 5 PD.
Telephone number	0151 427 7515
E-mail address	assisi-ht@st-francisofassisi.liverpool.sch.uk
Date of last inspection	19 October 1999
Headteacher	Mrs. Frances Fraser

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. Francis of Assisi is a smaller than average Catholic primary school which serves the parish of St. Francis. The school is situated in Garston, Liverpool an area of mixed housing. Part of the area has been identified by government statistics as being socially and economically disadvantaged. Most children are of white British heritage. A small minority of children do not speak English as their first language. More than half of the children are eligible for free school meals. There are a very high percentage of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school also has a resource provision for children with complex learning needs. Attainment on entry to the school covers the full spectrum but overall is below national expectation. There are 98 children on roll of whom 62 are baptised Catholics, 29 come from another Christian denomination and 7 are from an *Other Faith* tradition. There are 8 members of staff, 6 of whom are Catholic. Seven teachers teach Religious Education.

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. Francis of Assisi is a good Catholic school with some outstanding features. It is a very inclusive caring community underpinned by a strong Catholic ethos where children are respected and affirmed. This encourages them to grow in all aspects of their development. Relationships, at all levels, are good. Standards are good overall. Learners achieve well and make good progress with some learners in Key Stage 2 exceeding expectations. Teaching is good overall with two examples of outstanding practice. Good assessment strategies are in place to assess learners' progress and inform future planning. The curriculum is well planned and owned by the school. Learners' behaviour is outstanding. The quality of Collective Worship is good. The provision for learners' spiritual and moral development is outstanding. The quality of the school's Mission Statement is good. The Religious Education coordinator, supported by the headteacher, provides good leadership of the subject. The headteacher and the senior management's leadership of the school are good. They have a clear understanding of the mission of a Catholic school, are aware of the school's strengths and have a vision of how to meet development needs. The governors discharge their responsibilities effectively.

Grade: 2

Improvement since the last inspection

Since the last Section 23 Inspection in October 1999 the school has reviewed the Mission Statement and added clear aims, which now include the Christian dimension. Whole school in-service has been provided to support the ongoing development of planning, teaching and learning and assessment in line with all new guidance given by the Archdiocese. The Religious Education handbook has been updated to give staff clear guidance in their delivery of *Here I Am*. A new Collective Worship policy and practical guidelines has been developed. Monitoring of teaching and learning and workbooks has been introduced. The spiritual and moral policies have been updated to include clear aims and practical objectives. Links with the parish have been further developed.

Grade: 1

Capacity to improve

The school's view of its overall performance is mostly accurate. During inspection it was graded higher in a few areas. 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 clear understanding of what needs to be developed and is fully committed to improvement. There is good capacity for further improvement.

Grade: 1

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide whole school in-service on the *Here I Am* programme to ensure that outstanding practice is shared and there is consistency throughout the school;
- Continue to implement the targets set out in the self-evaluation document and the school development plan.

Achievement and standards

Learners' attainment on entry to the school overall is below national expectations. The number of children with special educational needs and /or disabilities is above the national average. The school also has a resource provision for children with complex learning needs. Learners make good progress in the school and by Key Stage 2 some children exceed expectation. Standards in Religious Education overall are good. 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 with the help provided by teachers and the very good teaching assistants. Children's work is marked with positive and challenging comments. In all key stages learners are confident in discussion, ask good questions showing knowledge and understanding of the subject. Throughout the school learners' work is recorded in a variety of ways. Some learners in Key Stage 2 write well independently in a variety of styles.

Catholic beliefs and values are at the heart of learners' spiritual development. The school celebrates achievements in lessons and assemblies. They have a very good understanding of the life and teaching of Jesus and are able to apply his teaching to their own lives and experiences. Learning about *Other Faiths* has been most enjoyable and has led children to an understanding of how people of *Other Faiths* make sense of the world. There are a wide variety of systems in place to reward effort and good behaviour. Learners have a good sense of right and wrong. Children's behaviour and respect for each other is outstanding. The provision which enables children's spiritual and moral development is outstanding.

Grade: 2

Quality of Provision for Religious Education

Teaching and learning

The quality of provision for Religious Education is good. Teaching is good overall with two examples of outstanding practice. The majority of teaching was confident and enthusiastic in its exploration of the topic. A variety of teaching strategies, that enable children to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding, were used. Lessons are well planned to meet the needs of all

learners. Most lessons had good pace and timing, which maintained learners' interest and concentration and kept them focussed. The learning objective was highlighted at the beginning of the lesson and learning related to it during the plenary session. Less able learners were well supported and, in a few classes, the more able were challenged in a variety of ways. It is essential that all of the above good practice is consistent throughout the school in order to raise standards further. Learners are enthusiastic and show real enjoyment of Religious Education. Learners work well independently and collaboratively undertaking a wide range of activities. Relationships are outstanding and learners are continually affirmed and encouraged. Good use is made of regular assessment to monitor learners' progress and to inform future planning. The provision of homework, when relevant, enables parents and carers to become involved in their children's Religious Education.

Grade: 2

Curriculum

The Religious Education curriculum is well matched to the needs and interests of the majority of learners. 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 diocesan requirements. Of the total curriculum time 10% is allocated to Religious Education. This fulfils the requirements of the Bishops of England and Wales. Good 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 for spiritual and moral development have been updated and contain clear aims and practical guidelines.

Grade: 2

Leadership and Management

Religious Education

Leadership and management in Religious Education are good. There is a clear vision for the subject within the mission of the school with a focus on high standards. The Religious Education coordinator, supported by the headteacher, provides good leadership and support to staff who share a commitment to the subject's aims and values. He shows a genuine enthusiasm for his role. A good handbook guides and directs all staff in their delivery of Religious Education. Performance in Religious Education is monitored through scrutiny of planning, teaching and learning and workbooks. St. Francis of Assisi is socially inclusive by providing equality of access and of opportunity for all staff and learners. All of the seven staff teaching Religious Education has a suitable qualification. Teaching assistants are planned for and utilised well during lessons. The Religious Education coordinator attends

coordinators' meetings and in-service provided by the Department for Christian Education. Information is disseminated to all staff during staff meetings. Priorities for the subject are clearly identified and targets set. Religious Education is funded on par with other core subjects. Resources have been recently updated and deployed well to achieve good standards. The headteacher and Religious Education coordinator keep governors fully informed on matters relating to Religious Education. Governors discharge their responsibilities effectively.

Grade: 2

Catholic Life of the School

Leadership and management are good in developing the Catholic life of the school through the Mission Statement. St. Francis of Assisi is a place in which the gospel spirit of love and respect permeates every aspect of its life and work. The Mission Statement clearly expresses the philosophy of education in this Catholic school. Since the last inspection it has been reviewed and clear aims developed. Practical objectives, which show how it is so evidently lived out in the daily life of the school, now need to be added. The Mission Statement is used to inform and direct all school policies and plans. The school has identified the need to give children opportunity to explore the Mission Statement at their own level. Reflection on the Mission Statement and its clear aims and practical objectives will provide an effective system by which to monitor and evaluate the Catholic life of the school on a regular basis.

Grade: 2

Collective Worship

The quality of Collective Worship is good overall. The school has identified this as an area that needs further development to ensure consistency throughout the school. The school provides Collective Worship in a variety of ways for each child daily, in class, or key stage gatherings. This fulfils government and Archdiocesan guidance.

A good policy supports the planning and delivery of Collective Worship. In some classes teachers and learners are involved in the planning and delivery of Collective Worship both in class and during *Rejoice* celebrations but this is not consistent throughout the school. Acts of worship include various forms of prayer, scripture, music 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 good with some outstanding elements. All learners respond well and participate in acts of worship. The school has introduced the use of focus tables to support delivery of class Collective worship. The use of quality artefacts would greatly enhance this. When appropriate, school Masses and other liturgical services

are celebrated. Collective Worship makes an outstanding contribution to spiritual and moral development.

Grade: 2