



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. MONICA'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

BOOTLE

Inspection Date	Tuesday 18 October 2011
Inspectors	Mrs. Denise Hegarty, Mrs. Patricia Deus, Mrs. Sue Banister
Unique Reference Number	104905
Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005	

Type of School	Catholic Primary
Age range of pupils	3 – 11 years
Number on roll	441
Chair of Governors	Mr. George Foster
Head teacher	Mr. Paul Kinsella
School address	Kelly Drive, Bootle, Liverpool, L20 9EB.
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Date of last inspection	Tuesday 4 November 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. Monica's school is an above average sized Catholic Primary School situated in Bootle in the Sefton district of the Archdiocese and serves the parish of St. Monica's and St. Richard's, Bootle. The catchment area is one of high socio-economic disadvantage. There are 441 number of children on roll of whom 415 are baptised Catholic, 23 come from other Christian denominations, and 3 from other faith or religious traditions. There are 20 teachers at the school of whom 15 teach Religious Education 18 are Catholic. Sixteen teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education. Since the last inspection the impact the new building is having on the Catholic life of the school is clearly evident. Following promotion of key staff to other schools, Religious Education is lead by a team of four people headed by the headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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**

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main Findings:-

St. Monica's is an outstanding Catholic Primary School. The clear vision for Catholic Education is driven by the inspirational, deeply committed head teacher and embraced by the whole school community. This vision is clearly manifest in the school's Mission Statement and permeates every aspect of school life. Through the faith and the values they share, this school is at the very heart of the community it serves in such an exemplary manner.

Since the last inspection the school has securely maintained and built on previously outstanding performance. Self evaluation is comprehensive, rigorous and accurate. Outcomes for pupils are outstanding. There is no significant difference in performance between groups of pupils and outcomes for pupils with additional or special needs are also outstanding. The school is very successful in addressing the areas it has identified for improvement. The leadership team is deeply motivated, highly committed and consistently communicates its high expectations and aspirations to staff in order to secure improvement. Staff are affirmed and supported in their roles. Realistic and challenging plans stem from the accurate analysis obtained through monitoring and are being used effectively to improve outcomes. Any underperformance is challenged.

The school environment is warm and welcoming. There are bright, vibrant displays throughout the whole building that reflect the Catholic nature of the school and show how proud members of the school are of their achievements.

Given the loyalty and dedication of leadership, the commitment to continuing professional development of staff and governors, the rigorous nature of self evaluation and drive for improvement, the school has an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Give the children opportunities to develop skills to plan and lead Collective Worship by:
 - providing opportunities and direction for pupils to have a higher level of active participation consistently throughout the school in an age and stage appropriate manner.
- Improve the Self Evaluation Document by:
 - making it a sharper, more focused document that can be used as a working tool to monitor improvement more effectively.

- Continue to implement other targets set out in the school's Self-Evaluation Document. That includes:
 - preparing for the implementation of a new programme for Religious Education;
 - facilitating the parish's family catechesis programme for the preparation of the sacraments of initiation.

How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils

Achievement and attainment in Religious Education are outstanding. Pupils make excellent, rapid progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities. They thoroughly enjoy coming to school and are very positive and enthusiastic about their learning. Analyses of assessments undertaken provide evidence of pupils generally attaining appropriate or higher levels for their age and stage of development in each key stage. There is no difference in performance between pupils of different gender. Outcomes for pupils with additional or special needs are outstanding. Pupils are becoming increasingly more religiously literate as they assimilate the key words from the topic, retell stories from Scripture and relate their own life experiences to the Christian understanding of the topics. Their knowledge, understanding and skills are developing appropriate to their age and capacity and some exceed expectations. 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 identified and challenged. Pupils are encouraged to work independently and collaboratively. Children show pride in their work and produce written work is of a very high quality. They are highly motivated to learn and have positive attitudes towards their lessons. Portfolios of work are of a high quality and show how pupils thoroughly enjoy their Religious Education lessons. This is also evident in the enthusiasm shown and in their outstanding behaviour. Children work well together showing each other encouragement, kindness and co-operation.

Pupils are actively involved in developing and evaluating the Catholic character of the school e.g. by breaking down the Mission Statement and its aims into ways which are meaningful to them and through their involvement in Scripture days. They have a real sense of belonging to the school community and value and respect other members. They know, understand and live out their Mission Statement and have celebrated it in many ways e.g. through their artwork. The children have a real understanding of the values from the Gospel especially in the way they show love and care for others.

Pupils are encouraged to take on roles of responsibility in the school and wider community. Children from Years 5 and 6 benefit from participation in away days and retreat activities provided by the local High School. These also ease their transition to the next stage of their education. Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong and apply this in their personal relationships. Education for personal relationships has fostered positive attitudes in pupils. Pupils take an increasing responsibility for themselves and their actions. They praise and acknowledge the contribution of others and show a readiness to embrace and celebrate life.

Pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship very well. 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 confidently. 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 and they show confidence and togetherness in the way they participate in celebrations and liturgies. They are becoming familiar with a variety of prayer styles, are open to the Word of God in the Scriptures and live out the Gospel message in their lives. They appreciate that God is always with them and loves them unconditionally.

How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils	
How well pupils achieve in Religious Education	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pupils' standards of attainment in Religious Education 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the quality of pupils' learning and their progress in Religious Education 	1
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	2

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

The quality of teaching is consistently very effective in ensuring that pupils are interested, engaged and make outstanding progress. Teachers take into account pupils' prior learning and ensure differentiated tasks when planning so that the work consolidates, builds and extends their knowledge and understanding. They provide opportunities for pupils to work independently and collaboratively. Good use is made of time and resources e.g. information and communication technology. Teaching assistants and additional adults are knowledgeable and make a significant contribution to the children's progress. Teachers and others use a variety of strategies to sustain and motivate pupils. Marking celebrates achievement and progress and pupils are given opportunities to discuss their work. To be even more effective, marking should be developed to enable pupils to understand the next steps to take in their learning.

The assessment of pupils' work in Religious Education is outstanding. The school has outstanding assessment strategies which provide accurate and detailed information on the achievement of all the pupils. Teachers are able to identify how well pupils are achieving and tackle any underachievement. Some teachers enable pupils to evaluate and assess their own work and this should be applied consistently across the school. Formal assessment tasks are undertaken in line with Archdiocesan guidance. Informal assessments, for example through the use of concept mapping, are used effectively at other times. Assessment information is collated by the subject team and shared with the school leaders, governors and parents. Achievement and effort are celebrated. Pupils are affirmed and know how well they are doing.

The curriculum is outstanding 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 at least 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. Some imaginative and well

planned strategies are deployed to enrich pupils' learning. 'Home and School Together' letters are provided for parents to inform them of how they can play their part in supporting the Religious Education of their children. They are consulted regularly on different issues depending on the topic being covered and children are frequently given tasks to complete at home with their families. The school implements new curriculum developments as appropriate. Enrichment activities such as visits and visitors have a positive impact on the curriculum. The Religious Education curriculum provides outstanding opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development.

The Collective Worship provided reflects the Catholic character of the school and takes into account the Faith backgrounds of the pupils very well. Good resources, including the use of ICT, are provided to enhance worship and are kept up to date. An excellent policy and guidelines are in place. 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 are beginning to provide the necessary resources and opportunities to help children to develop the skills necessary to plan and lead in Collective Worship, themselves. Many opportunities are provided for parents, carers the local and wider Faith communities to participate in a variety of celebrations of the '*Here I Am*' programme and the Church's liturgical year. Family celebrations take place at the end of each '*Here I Am*' topic

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education	
The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education	1
The effectiveness of assessment in Religious Education	1
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs	1
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 are outstanding in promoting and developing the Catholic life of the school and show an outstanding commitment to, and understanding of the Mission of the Church. They have high expectations and aspirations for all members of the community. This is reflected in the school's own Mission Statement which was developed and is regularly reviewed by the whole the school community including parents, priest, governors and children. Its aims and practical objectives direct and guide every aspect of school life and are a useful tool by which the school evaluates its effectiveness. The Mission Statement is at the very heart of everything that goes on in the school – it is known owned and lived out by the whole community who are all utterly committed to its sentiments. Opportunities are provided for the staff and pupils to play an active part in Catholic life and Mission of the school e.g. through the annual days of renewal which are enjoyed and remembered by all.

There is deep commitment and drive for improvement demonstrated by the head teacher and subject leadership team. Ongoing self evaluation ensures that

continuous improvements are made in all aspects of the Catholic life of the school. The Self Evaluation Document, although lengthy, provides evidence of the schools monitoring, searching analysis and self challenge. Their analysis provides a basis to celebrate the school's strengths and outlines areas for development. The school has an excellent self evaluation process which has proved its success over a number of years. There is regular consultation with key members of the school community and a 'Review and Preview' cycle which is embedded in the improvement strategy and ensures a shared vision.

There is good induction for new teachers and continuing professional development for all staff to enable them to understand the Church's Mission in Education, how to play their unique part in it and how to deliver the 'Here I Am' programme effectively. All staff members are actively encouraged to keep their knowledge and understanding of the subject up to date through courses and in-service training provided by the subject leaders and the Archdiocese. A range of opportunities for spiritual and moral development are provided for staff and pupils such as the **wonderful** Scripture Day held at the start of the year. This had a significant impact on the way pupils respond to the Word of God and was enjoyed by all who took part.

Leaders and managers use monitoring data extremely well to evaluate the school's performance, celebrate, and plan future improvements. There is a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation programme undertaken for teaching and learning, planning, children's work and assessments. The findings contribute to the Religious Education Action Plan and this is monitored carefully throughout the year. The subject leadership team fulfil their role in an outstanding manner with enthusiasm and great commitment. Archdiocesan briefings and training sessions are well attended. New initiatives are introduced when appropriate, best practice shared and support given to colleagues as required. Reports are regularly delivered to the Governing Body to keep them fully informed. Excellent documentation guides and directs all staff in their delivery of the subject. This is updated as necessary.

Governors fulfil their roles and responsibilities in an outstanding manner. They have effectively helped to shape the direction of the school through setting challenging targets and providing support to all. They are regular visitors and are fully involved in the life of the school. They have ensured there is an effective budget to fund Religious Education and provide resources to enhance the Catholic life of the school. The school tracks pupil achievement in Religious Education, and governors have the data to be able to analyse the school's performance in the subject and to monitor what needs to be done to further raise standards.

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 beliefs and values of all. There are positive relationships at every level within the school. This is a tightly knit community where every person is truly valued for the gifts they bring to the school and in turn is dedicated to playing their particular part for the good of all.

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 Judaism and Hinduism and will study Islam this year. Members of the Hindu and Jewish faiths have visited the school and visits

have been made by pupils to a Synagogue. This helps to promote tolerance and respect for those who think differently. Dialogue and collaboration is encouraged with people who hold different beliefs and values. The school has a strong partnership with a school in China and has enjoyed staff and pupil exchange programmes for a number of years. They also participate in the Comenius project and some staff and pupils attended an international children's conference in Berlin through the project.

Parents are consulted regularly and involved in a variety of ways in the life of the school. Their views and opinions are valued. 'Parents as Educators' courses and other courses for parents and members of the local community such as NVQ and GCSE are offered. Information is regularly sent to them by text message or email and regular curriculum updates are provided in the school's 'Home and School Together' forms. The 'Wednesday Word' is provided by the school and distributed for the families to share together at home. This is proving very popular with parents, staff and children. Breakfast and after school clubs are provided at reasonable costs to provide wrap around care for the children as needed.

The school has good links with the parish and the priest is a frequent visitor to the school. He is often involved in Religious Education lessons throughout the school and encourages the involvement of children's liturgies and services in church. Parish catechists guide the children through their sacramental preparation programme.

The pupils are developing an understanding of the common good and an awareness of global responsibilities. The whole community shows a concern for the well-being of those less fortunate than themselves both by becoming better informed and by raising funds and resources for local, national and global charities e.g. in their donations to the Good Shepherd fund for Nugent Care and CAFOD. Following the school's Harvest Festival celebration, the Year 6 pupils recently distributed food parcels to local parishioners.

St. Monica's is preparing children to become confident, caring future citizens of the world who have a sound knowledge and understanding of how a community works together to love and support every one of its members. This is exemplary.

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic Life of the School	
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	1
How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	1
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	1
How effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion	1