



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. ROBERT BELLARMINE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bootle

Tuesday 24 April 2007

Inspectors Rev. D. Melly Miss. J. Coughlan

URN 104906

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	202
Chair of governors	Rev. P. Harnett
School address	Harris Drive, Bootle, Liverpool, L20 6ED.
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Date of last inspection	18 June 2002
Headteacher	Mrs. M. Dowell

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. Robert Bellarmine is a slightly larger than average sized primary school, which mainly serves the parish of St. Robert Bellarmine although almost half of the learners come from surrounding parishes. It is part of the Sefton Local Authority. The catchment area is one of mixed social and economic circumstances. There are 202 learners on role of whom 182 are baptised Catholics, 18 from other Christian denominations and 2 from *Other Faith* traditions. The proportion of learners eligible for free school meals is above the national average as is the number of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Learners enter the school with attainment that would be below the national average expectations for their age. There are 9 members of staff, all of whom are Catholic. Four of the 9 teachers who teach Religious Education have a Religious Education qualification and five are in the process of obtaining a Certificate in Religious Studies.

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. Robert Bellarmine is a good school with many outstanding features. It is a lively, caring and supportive community. A strong Catholic ethos is evident in the positive climate for learning which has been created both for work and for play. Excellent relationships exist and all are very obviously valued, respected and cared for. Close links are growing between the school, the home and the parish. The development of this work is a priority for the school. Standards are good. Learners achieve well and make good progress. Teaching is good overall with some outstanding lessons being observed. Assessment is well embedded in the life of the school and is an important tool for further development. The curriculum planning is very good and thorough and results in an effective delivery of the *Here I Am* programme. Learners' behaviour is outstanding. The provision for learners' spiritual and moral development through the curriculum, Collective Worship and the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. The headteacher has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and a vision of how to meet development needs.

Grade: 2

Improvement since the last inspection

Following the last Section 23 Inspection in September 2002 the school has taken some effective steps to address areas for development identified in the last inspection. Some training and resources have been provided for the teaching of other faiths and circle time initiatives have been developed. Class led assemblies, to which parents are invited, have been reintroduced. Whole school assemblies in the round have also been introduced and there have been a number of evening celebrations to enable parents to participate more fully. A week has also been set aside to celebrate other faiths and cultures. Here the emphasis has been on drama, song, dance and food and traditions.

Grade: 2

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation is accurate and comprehensive. The priorities for both the improvement of Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school stem from the self-evaluation document and the school's development plan. The leadership has a clear understanding of what needs to be developed and is committed to improvement. There is outstanding capacity for further improvement.

Grade: 1

What the school should do to improve further

- Implement priorities identified in the self-evaluation document and the development plan.

Achievement and standards

Standards are in line with the national average expectations for their age when learners start school. Learners make outstanding progress in the school and by Year 6 exceed the expectations of the *Here I Am* programme. Standards in Religious Education are outstanding. 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 provision of differing tasks and the help provided by the teachers and learning support assistants. The school tracks the progress made by all through assessment. Work is always marked in a positive and encouraging manner and learners are invited to discuss their own progress with the teachers. Learners are extremely confident and articulate in discussion and above all are not afraid of sharing their feelings. They ask very good questions which show knowledge and understanding of Religious Education. Many opportunities are presented for learners to record their knowledge and understanding and express their own thoughts and feelings in a variety of styles. Continued monitoring of planning, teaching and learning, as well as detailed evaluation of assessment to ensure its effectiveness, will help to further raise standards.

Children demonstrated outstanding spiritual and moral development for their age. Catholic beliefs and values are at the heart of learners' spiritual and moral development. The school celebrates achievements in lessons and assemblies. Children, throughout the school, show real enjoyment of their work. Children are aware of events of the life; death and resurrection of Jesus and can discuss the relevance of this for their own lives. Learners' behaviour is outstanding. They have a good sense of right and wrong. The Gospel values of love, respect, honesty, truth, justice and forgiveness underpin the provision for learners' moral development enabling learners to make an outstanding contribution to the school community. Staff and learners show genuine care, concern and respect for each other.

Grade: 1

Quality of Provision for Religious Education

Teaching and learning

The quality of provision for Religious Education is good. Teaching is good overall with three examples of outstanding teaching being observed. Teachers demonstrate a clear understanding of *the Here I Am* programme and this is reflected in their thorough planning and delivery of the topics.

Outstanding teaching shows enthusiasm and creativity, which engages all the children, meeting their spiritual, intellectual and physical needs and evoking an enthusiastic response, which is also empowering. The teachers are confident in their teaching styles and encourage the learners to work well independently and collaboratively. There is very good structure and pace in the majority of the lessons. This helps children to stay focussed. There is some very effective use of music to create a calm, thought provoking atmosphere. Some very good use is also made of information communication technology. Role-play and dance are used to great effect. Where there is careful differentiation the needs of all learners are met, providing them with challenge and support. Monitoring of teaching and learning through observation of planning, lessons and learners' workbooks is in place and is effective. Learning assistants are extremely well used throughout lessons. The sharing of the learning objective with the children at the beginning of the lesson helps ensure that the sharp focus of the lesson is maintained. At times the learning objective is returned to at the end of the lesson. Class displays of children's work are of very good quality. They are alive and are obviously added to as topics develop. They celebrate a wide variety of the skills of both staff and learner. Relationships throughout are excellent. A very respectful atmosphere is created where everyone is included and feels special.

Parents and carers are enabled to become involved in their children's Religious Education. They are now being invited to class and school assemblies and Masses. Newsletters are sent to the homes, which contain information about the topics to be covered in Religious Education. The headteacher is keen to reach out to the parents and the homes and encourage more involvement in the life of the school.

Grade: 2

Curriculum

The school is effective in meeting the Religious Education curriculum needs and interests of learners. Through using the *Here I Am* programme recommended by the Archdiocese the school 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 a good impact on learners' spiritual and moral development.

Grade: 2

Leadership and Management

Religious Education

The leadership and management in Religious Education are outstanding. There is a clear vision for the subject within the mission of the school, which is shared by all and is reflected in the very positive relationships throughout the school. The headteacher, who is also the coordinator, is obviously highly committed. She is making an outstanding contribution in leading and supporting staff and has a clear vision for the further development of the school. She is obviously very committed, highly organised and shows genuine enthusiasm for her role. A comprehensive handbook guides and directs all staff in their delivery of Religious Education. This is to be reviewed as part of the development plan. Monitoring through scrutiny of planning, workbooks, teaching and learning is in place and is effective. Formal assessment is a valued tool in promoting further development and raising standards further. St. Robert Bellarmine is socially inclusive by providing equality of access and of opportunity for all learners to make progress. Four of the nine staff teaching Religious Education have a suitable qualification. The remaining teachers are in the process of obtaining the *Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies*. Learning assistants are deployed very effectively. The subject leader attends coordinators' meetings and information is disseminated to all staff during staff meetings or in-service time. Priorities for the subject are clearly identified and targets set. Religious Education is well funded and money has been well spent providing teachers with the necessary resources to enhance the curriculum and the Catholic life of the school. The headteacher keeps governors informed on matters relating to Religious Education. Governors are very supportive of the school and its work. They discharge their responsibilities in a good manner. It is hoped to encourage them to be more involved in the life of the school in the future.

Grade: 1

Catholic Life of the School

There is outstanding leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school. St. Robert Bellarmine is a place in which the Gospel spirit of love and respect permeates every aspect of its life and work. Relationships are outstanding between staff and children and among the children themselves. The behaviour of all is outstanding. All show a high level of respect and care for each other. A good Mission Statement, which expresses the philosophy of education in this Catholic school, is in place. This is displayed throughout the school and informs all planning and policies. Aims with achievable objectives showing how the aims are to be achieved are in place. At the moment the Mission Statement is being reviewed. All who form the school community, including the parents and governors, are to be involved in the process.

Grade: 1

Collective Worship

The quality of Collective Worship overall is outstanding. The school provides Collective Worship in a variety of ways for each child daily, in class, phase or whole school gatherings. This fulfils government and Archdiocesan guidance. A very good policy to support the delivery of Collective Worship is in place. Acts of Collective Worship keep the children focussed. They are prayerful and meaningful and very much about the learners' own lives and experiences. They include quiet music, candles and a focus to create a prayerful atmosphere. Collective Worship contains various forms of prayer both community and individual. The hymn singing and the songs that are sung are appropriate, relevant and sung with enthusiasm and sometimes with signing. The time, which was given for personal reflection, was very well used. Collective Worship stimulates reflection on spiritual and moral issues to good effect. Learners and staff are fully involved, respond well and actively participate in Acts of Worship. Outstanding use of focus tables is made in classes to enhance delivery of the curriculum and Collective Worship. Children's work around these focuses show their participation.

Grade: 1