



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST PAUL OF THE CROSS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

BURTONWOOD

Inspection Date Tuesday 22 June 2010

Inspectors Rev. D. Melly
Mrs. A. Radford

Unique Reference Number 111367

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 189

Chair of Governors Mr. W. Garner

Headteacher Mr. A. Cocker

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Date of last inspection 24 April 2007

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 Paul of the Cross School is a smaller than average Catholic Primary School mainly serving the parish of St Paul of the Cross. It is situated in Burtonwood and is part of the Warrington Local Authority. There are 189 learners on roll of whom 173 are baptised Catholics, 12 come from other Christian denominations and there are 4 pupils from Other Faith traditions. The catchment area is one of mixed social and economic backgrounds. The number of learners eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The number of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average. There are 9 members of staff 8 of whom are Catholic. Eight teachers teach Religious Education all of whom have a Religious Education qualification.

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 Paul of the Cross is an outstanding school. It is a Christ centred, loving and caring, safe and secure community where all 'live and learn as a faith community through the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ'. A very strong Catholic ethos is certainly evident in the positive climate which has been created for work. Outstanding relationships have obviously been established by working closely with home, parish and the local and global community. All are valued, respected, cared for and affirmed. Standards are outstanding. Learners achieve well and make outstanding progress. Teaching is outstanding. Assessment is in place and is outstanding. The curriculum planning is outstanding and results in an outstanding delivery of the *Here I Am* programme. Learners' behaviour is outstanding. The Religious Education programme, Collective Worship and the Catholic life of the school make an outstanding contribution to the learners' spiritual and moral development. The school is outstanding in promoting community cohesion. The headteacher and senior management team have a clear understanding of the school's strengths, a vision of how to meet development needs and the enthusiasm to ensure these are met.

Grade: 1

Improvement since the last inspection

Following the last Inspection in April 2007 the school has taken effective steps to develop planning and assessment of Religious Education.

Grade: 1

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 and the school development plan. The leadership has a clear understanding of what needs to be developed and is committed to improvement. There is outstanding capacity and eagerness for further improvement.

Grade: 1

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to implement the targets set out in the school self-evaluation document and development plan.

Achievement and standards

Learners' attainment on entry to the school is that typically expected of children of their age except in communication and literacy in which their attainment is often below expectations. Learners make outstanding progress in the school and by Year 6 meet or well 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. Learners with special needs make outstanding progress in Religious Education with the provision of differing tasks and the help provided by the teachers and learning support assistants. The school checks on the progress made by all through assessment. This work is very thorough and is outstanding. All learners' work is marked with very positive comments that affirm. Learners are very confident and articulate in discussion. They ask deep thoughtful questions which show good knowledge and understanding of Religious Education and a maturity beyond their years. Learners are given opportunities to record their knowledge and understanding and express their own thoughts and feelings 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. Children throughout the school are confident and obviously enjoy their work. They have an outstanding understanding of the life and teaching of Jesus and His Church and are able and happy to apply this to their own lives and experiences. Learners' behaviour is outstanding. They have a very good sense of right and wrong. They are very polite and courteous and obviously take great pride in their school. The children actually say that it is the best school in the world. The Gospel values of love, respect, justice, and sharing underpin the provision for learners' moral development enabling learners to make an outstanding contribution to the school community. Teachers and learners show genuine care, concern and respect for each other. All are extremely polite and helpful. The overwhelming feeling in the school is one of happiness, love and care. All are obviously happy to be in the school and have a real passion for everything and everyone concerned with St. Paul of the Cross.

Grade: 1

Quality of Provision for Religious Education

Teaching and learning

The quality of provision for Religious Education is absolutely outstanding. Teaching is outstanding. All teachers are exceptionally secure in their knowledge and understanding of the *Here I Am* programme and its relevance to life. This is reflected in their thorough planning and imaginative delivery of the topics and pace of lessons. All teachers are enthusiastic and energetic and are exceptional role models for the children. *Here I Am* is purposefully used to enrich the children's lives. There is a wealth of activities provided to inspire the children to learn and develop both morally and spiritually. It is obvious that the teachers get great enjoyment from teaching the programme, that the pupils share this enjoyment and that all the work is firmly rooted in their lived experience. There are excellent questioning techniques which challenge the learners who respond enthusiastically as they share deep meaningful thoughts. The listening skills of the learners are obviously very well developed. There is some outstanding use made of information communication technology particularly the Interactive White Board, CD's and PowerPoint. Children sing songs with gusto and enjoyment accompanied

with actions, dance, drama and British Sign Language. Exceptionally good use is made of God's Story which has an obvious impact on the children's lives. Outstanding use is also made of hot seating and role play. Drama is a strength of the school where children really excel themselves. Opportunities to take time to think and reflect were very well used. Outstanding use is made of praise and affirmation. This encourages the children and enables them to remain motivated and to have confidence in themselves. Children's behaviour is outstanding in all lessons and outstanding relationships impact on the ethos of the school. The school is obviously one big loving family where everyone does their best for each other. Learners are obviously valued in class and teachers have high expectations of them. They are listened to and treated with respect not just by the teachers and support staff but also by their peers. The children demonstrated great respect for each other's opinions and points of view. This has obviously been role modelled by the adults and has resulted in high levels of learners' self-confidence and self-esteem which impacts on their learning. The pupils enjoyed the activities provided and were totally engaged in their learning. The tasks were creative, challenging, interesting and differentiated. They catered well for the wide spectrum of learning abilities at both ends of the spectrum in each class. Because of this approach the children are able to learn, and make outstanding progress and enjoy themselves. There is outstanding structure and pace to all lessons, which, together with the diligence of the teachers and other adults, helps learners stay focussed. All pupils understand and achieve the Learning Objective. This enables the sharp focus of the lesson to be adhered to. Learners' work is regularly assessed and records are effectively kept. This work is outstanding.

Monitoring of teaching and learning through observation of lessons, planning and learners' workbooks is in place and is very thorough and supportive. Outstanding use is made of support staff who promote positive relationships and encourage children. Parents and carers are enabled to become involved in their children's Religious Education in a variety of ways. Termly newsletters are sent to the homes outlining the religious topics to be covered and how families can become involved in the learning process. Parents are invited to attend school class assemblies and special liturgical celebrations. Homework is sometimes given to enable the children and their parents to share and reflect quietly on the work and stories being taught. The Wednesday Word is sent to the homes weekly. In addition the school also reports on progress in Religious Education. Parents obviously greatly appreciate what the school is doing as shown by the large number of hugely positive questionnaires which were returned.

Grade: 1

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 approximately 10% is allocated to Religious Education, which is a requirement of the Bishops of England and Wales. Religious Education has a very high profile in the school. Strong links are made with home, parish and the local and global community. The Religious Education curriculum makes an outstanding impact on learners' spiritual and moral development enabling them, above all, to be self-reflective.

Grade: 1

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 outstanding relationships throughout the school. The headteacher, Religious Education coordinator and senior management team are extremely enthusiastic and committed. They are making an outstanding contribution in leading and supporting staff. They are excellent role models and have a clear vision for the further development of the school. An outstanding handbook guides and directs all staff in their delivery of Religious Education. Monitoring through scrutiny of planning, teaching and learning and workbooks is in place. This is very thorough and very supportive. Formal assessment is also in place and is outstanding. A great deal of time and effort has obviously gone into this work. Eight of the 9 staff teaching Religious Education have the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. Teaching assistants are very effectively deployed. 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 obviously been well spent. The headteacher and Religious Education coordinator keep governors well informed on matters relating to Religious Education. Governors are extremely keen to discharge their responsibilities effectively and are very involved in the life of the school and most effective. They too are passionate about the school.

Grade: 1

Catholic Life of the School

There is outstanding leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school through the Mission Statement. St. Paul of the Cross is a school in which the Gospel value of love, permeates every aspect of its life and work. The learners are obviously valued, affirmed and respected. This helps them to be confident and happy. An outstanding Mission Statement, which expresses the philosophy of education in this Catholic school, is in place and is displayed throughout the school making it well known. All who form the school community have been involved in the development of the Mission Statement, which is at the heart of all that is done in the school.

Grade: 1

Collective Worship

The quality of Collective Worship 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. An outstanding policy and guidelines support the planning, delivery and nurturing of Collective Worship. Acts of worship are well planned with great attention to detail. Collective Worship included music to create an atmosphere which was still and calm and very conducive to reflection. There were outstanding focuses with lighted candles and appropriate artefacts in place. The themes chosen to celebrate were very much rooted in the children's own experience but encouraged them to reflect more widely. All pupils and adults present were totally involved in the Collective worship. There were numerous opportunities for private and shared reflection not only during the two formal acts of collective worship but at various points throughout the day. These were extremely well used. Appropriate hymns and songs were sung enthusiastically with actions incorporating British Sign Language. Dance and drama were also used to great effect. There was prayer, both formal and informal: Year Five prayed spontaneous bidding prayers which were inspirational. They obviously have a great role model in their teacher. Powerful and appropriate scripture readings were used to develop knowledge and understanding and to inspire further reflection. These were not just read but proclaimed with great confidence, feeling and understanding even by year 2 children. Excellent use was made of the poem 'Best Friends' to aid reflection on life experiences. The learners and adults present responded positively to the warm, affirming experience. Focus tables and displays in each classroom and throughout the school are colourful, attractive and well presented, expressing well the topic of *Change*. These too are inspirational and enhance the delivery of the curriculum and Collective Worship. Collective Worship makes an outstanding contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the children. The garden area, which is being developed and where the pupils are totally involved, will prove to be a very conducive area for Collective Worship and providing opportunities for awe and wonder.

Grade: 1

Community Cohesion

The school's leadership and management in promoting community cohesion are outstanding. There is a shared vision and commitment to serve the common good. Leadership at all levels respects difference, values diversity and ensures equal opportunities for all. It is obvious that every person matters in this school. Close links have been forged with the local community: the school is very much part of the life of the village and not just the parish. Collective Worship celebrates, reflects and respects the diversity of belief within the school. The use of the Religious Education programme, *Here I Am*, supports community cohesion. Learners have explored the beliefs and values of Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam and people from other faiths have even been invited into school to share their own faith with the school. All show a concern for the well being of those less fortunate than themselves in their support of CAFOD, Nugent Care, Mission Together, Alder Hey Children's

Hospital, The Royal British Legion, Marie Curie Cancer Care (Daffodil and Pink), Chernobyl Children's Lifeline and local elderly people (Gifts and performances). Links have also been established with a school in Spain.

Grade 1