



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. WILLIAM OF YORK CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

THORNTON

Inspection date	Tuesday 23 March 2010
Inspectors	Mrs. D. Hegarty Mrs. M. Buckley
Unique Reference Number	104934
Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005	
Type of School	Catholic Primary
Age range of pupils	3 -11
Number on roll	190
Chair of Governors	Mrs. J. Kavanagh
Headteacher	Mr. D. Ryan
School address	St William Road Thornton Liverpool L23 9XH
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Date of last inspection	26 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 William of York School is an average sized Catholic primary school situated within the Sefton Local Authority and mainly serves the parish of St. William of York, Thornton. The catchment area surrounding the school is one of social and economic disadvantage. Recently, there have been a significant number of children admitted from a local community school which has to close due to falling numbers. This has had major impact on class sizes, space and resources at St. William of York. Currently, there are 190 learners on role of whom 107 are baptised Catholics, 17 come from other Christian denominations and, following the closing of the community school, there are now 66 learners who have no faith tradition. The vast majority of pupils are from a White British heritage. The number of learners eligible for free school meals and the number of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are both above average. Of the 12 teachers who teach Religious Education, 8 are Catholic and 3 have a Religious Education qualification. One teacher is in the process of obtaining the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. Two teachers and a teaching assistant have been redeployed to St William of York, from the school that is closing. They are committed to the Catholic ethos of the school and both of the teachers have recently accessed training provided by the Archdiocese. The headteacher is at present on a phased return to work following illness.

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. William of York is a good Catholic school that serves the community well in an inclusive manner. The Mission of the school, underpinned by the Gospel values of kindness and consideration, is evidently lived in every aspect of school life. This is apparent in the caring relationships that exist within the school. Religious Education is effective and delivered well to meet the needs and interests of the children. Standards are good. Learners achieve well, enjoy their lessons and make good progress through the school. Children's behaviour is good – they strive to show respect and co-operation with each other. Overall, teaching is good. There are good methods of assessment undertaken. Adults present in school provide excellent role models for the children and give outstanding care, guidance and support. The quality of Collective Worship is good as is the provision for learners' spiritual and moral development. Both curriculum Religious Education and Collective Worship make a significant contribution to this development. The co-ordinator provides good leadership, guidance and support to staff. Parents are invited to support their children's learning and are welcome into school. There is good leadership in developing the Catholic life of the school through the school's Mission Statement. This is evident through leaders' understanding of the mission of a Catholic school. The school is good at promoting community cohesion. Leadership at all levels has an awareness of the school's strengths. Monitoring systems inform the school self-evaluation process and enable the self-evaluation document to be useful and accurate. The governors are very supportive and discharge their duties and responsibilities outstandingly. The school has a good capacity to improve.

Grade: 2

Improvement since the last inspection

Following the last Inspection in April 2007, good steps have been taken to keep up to date and to address the previous areas for development. The School's Mission Statement and Motto were reviewed to include the community assimilated into the school as a result of the impending closure of another local school. Great care has been taken to give guidance and support to the new members of staff to enable them to understand and deliver the Religious Education Programme and participate and lead Collective Worship. All archdiocesan and national initiatives have been put in place. New initiatives have been shared at staff meetings and training sessions. Assessment procedures are embedding and regular moderation meetings have ensured that standards are consistent across the school. Monitoring of work, planning, teaching and assessments have taken place. Suitable resources have been purchased to enhance Religious Education and Collective Worship. Inservice sessions provided by the Christian Education Department and North West Catholic Diocese have been well attended.

Grade: 2

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation document is accurate. Any additional areas for development identified in this report should now be included. Given the commitment shown by the headteacher, the Religious Education co-ordinator, governors and all staff members, there is good capacity for further improvement.

Grade: 2

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure planning is thorough, identifies groups of learners and shows how work is differentiated to meet individual needs. This will include having higher expectations of the more able pupils and providing them with more challenging tasks;
- Ensure assessments undertaken provide clear guidance on learning by informing future planning.

Achievement and standards

Learners' attainment on entry to the school is slightly below that expected with above average numbers of learners having additional needs. Learners make good progress and standards in Religious Education are good by the end of Key Stage 2 with most children meeting the learning objectives and outcomes set according to their age and stage of development. There are no significant differences in performance by learners of different genders. Children with special educational needs, ably supported by teaching assistants, also make good progress. Work is recorded in a variety of different ways. Planning of the topics is generally limited and does not cater for the full range of ability in the classes. Work needs to be more consistently differentiated to ensure that the learning needs of all the children, including higher achievers, are fully met. All children worked enthusiastically on the day of inspection and were confident in their discussions, demonstrating sound knowledge and understanding of the subject. Children throughout the school enjoy their work and behave well. They know, understand and follow their Motto, have a good sense of right and wrong and work well together showing mutual respect, collaboration and co-operation. The children make a good contribution to the school, local and wider community where they are engaged in activities such as acting as buddies to the more vulnerable, and undertaking work to support charity. They are good ambassadors for the school.

Grade: 2

Quality of Provision for Religious Education

Teaching and learning

Overall the quality of provision for Religious Education is good. The learning needs of all children are addressed through the use of different teaching and learning strategies, and by additional support from teaching assistants. Children are enabled to work both independently and collaboratively. In their interview, they spoke confidently and with enthusiasm about all the topics covered this year and were able to relate the relevance of their life experience to the Christian understanding of the topics. Some good use was made of Information Communications Technology to engage learners and this could be shared and used more consistently throughout the school. Children should also have more opportunities to use their own skills within the subject. Good links are frequently made with other subjects and cross curricular opportunities taken. The school checks on the progress made by all through rigorous assessment procedures and assessment of learners' work is good. In order to raise standards, information gleaned from assessments should now be used more effectively to inform planning. Using the driver words from the levels of attainment to support formative assessment in the planning stage should help teachers to match work more accurately to the children's ability and also ensure more able pupils are given challenging and demanding tasks.

Parents and carers are enabled to become involved in their children's Religious Education in an outstanding manner through the provision of termly newsletters, by the close links that teachers have forged with them through provision of homework tasks for Religious Education, and by invitation into school to assemblies, services etc. Annual reports sent home concerning the children's achievement and progress, are very informative.

Grade: 2

Curriculum

The Religious Education curriculum meets the needs and interests of learners well. 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 thus fulfilling the requirements of the Bishops of England and Wales. Overall the Religious Education curriculum makes an outstanding contribution to learners' spiritual and moral development. Opportunities are often taken for reflection on what has been learned in the plenary sessions at the end of lessons.

Grade: 2

Leadership and Management

Religious Education

Leadership and management are good at raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education. There is a clear vision for the subject within the mission of the school. The Religious Education co-ordinator provides good leadership and shows great commitment to the subject. Co-ordinators' meetings have been attended regularly and information given disseminated effectively during staff meetings. Good documentation guides and directs staff in the subject and this should be updated. Systems for the monitoring of planning, teaching, assessments and scrutiny of work are in place and are effective. St. William of York is socially inclusive by providing equality of access and of opportunity for all learners to make progress. Of the 12 teachers who teach Religious Education, 8 are Catholic and 3 have a Religious Education qualification. One teacher is in the process of obtaining the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. The school promotes the continuing professional development of staff by accessing training sessions provided by the Christian Education Team to keep their knowledge, skills and understanding of the process and the programme up to date. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively in Religious Education lessons to support children. The budget for Religious Education is good. This has enabled resources to be purchased and deployed to raise standards and to enhance teaching. The governors are kept fully informed and up to date on matters relating to Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school through the Head Teacher's termly reports, through information given by the Religious Education. Governors undertake their duties diligently. They are regular visitors to school, are actively involved in school life and discharge their responsibilities outstandingly.

Grade: 2

Catholic Life of the School

There is good leadership and management in developing the Catholic Life of the school through the Mission Statement. St. William of York is a happy, caring school which serves the community well. This is particularly evident through the school's welcome and provision for the large number of learners admitted from the local community school. The Mission Statement is reviewed annually at the start of each academic year and this has enabled the governors and staff to monitor the Catholic Life of the school effectively. The Mission Statement itself is good. It is at the heart of everything that happens in the school. It informs school policies and plans, is displayed and is lived out by the school community. A set of appropriate aims that come from the Mission Statement have been developed and practical objectives indicating how each of these are lived out by the school community have been identified. The children know, own and try to live their inclusive motto. Relationships within the school are outstanding.

Grade: 2

Collective Worship

The quality of Collective Worship is good. The school provides Collective Worship in a variety of ways for each child daily, in class, as a key stage or whole school. Throughout the year Collective Worship provides a variety of experiences for pupils. This fulfils government and Archdiocesan guidance. A policy that states the nature and purpose of Collective Worship has been produced and has guidelines that support the planning and delivery. An appropriate format and planners are used. There is a focus area in each classroom and some good use is made of music, ICT and resources to enhance delivery. Children are prayerful and respectful during Collective Worship and freely share their opinions and views. Some monitoring has taken place and this should be continued and good practice shared. Collective Worship undertaken stimulates reflection on spiritual and moral issues and on personal beliefs. These are also further strengthened through the regular visits to the school by the 'Assembly Team' who provide many opportunities for Bible stories to be brought to life for the children. This provision is greatly valued by all members of the school community.

Grade: 2

Community Cohesion

The school is good at promoting community cohesion. 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. This has been apparent recently in the very smooth transfer and assimilation of pupils into the school. The school has a Community Cohesion Officer who works with local networks and partnerships in the promotion of community cohesion. The use of the Religious Education Programme, *Here I Am*, provides outstanding support to community cohesion. Learners have had opportunity to explore the beliefs and values of other faiths: Judaism and Islam. Collective Worship celebrates, reflects and respects the diversity of belief within the community. The children regularly make visits to church and each class attends Mass there in turn on Fridays.

Parents and carers are made aware of what is happening in the school community as they are invited to celebrations; receive regular newsletters and copies of the Wednesday Word. The school council plays an important role in the life of the school. The school community shows a concern for the well being of those less fortunate than themselves in their support of local, national and global charities e.g. in their donations to CAFOD, Nugent Care, Jospice etc. Within the school, there are *Rainbows* and *Sunbeams* programmes in place to help support vulnerable children. Breakfast and After School Clubs are provided within the school and are accessible for all the children in the community. The school hosts a tea dance for the elderly and have invited local pensioners in to school as part of a World War II History topic celebration. Musical productions held at Easter and Christmas time help members of the community to understand the significance of these seasons.

Grade: 2