



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. AMBROSE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

SPEKE

Inspection Date 4 June 2019

Inspectors Mrs Pat Peel Mrs. Julia Ashton

Unique Reference Number 3413601

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Acts 2005 and 2011

Type of School Catholic Primary

Age range of pupils 4 - 11

Number on roll 245

Chair of Governors Mrs. Amanda Patmore

Executive Headteacher Mr. Matt White

School address Alderfield Drive
Speke
Liverpool
L24 7SF

Telephone number 0151 425 2306

E-mail address sbm@stambroseprimary.co.uk

Date of last inspection June 2014

Introduction

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Acts 2005 and 2011

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 Team and their associates approved by the Archbishop of Liverpool for this purpose.

Information about this school

- St. Ambrose is an average sized Catholic Primary School situated in Speke serving the parish of St. Ambrose.
- There are 245 children on roll of whom 194 are baptised Catholic, 12 come from other Christian denominations, 17 from another faith or religious tradition and 22 have no religious affiliation.
- There are eleven teachers. Eight of which teach Religious Education. Nine teachers are baptised Catholic. Eight teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education.
- Since the last inspection there has been significant changes in the school. A new Executive Headteacher and Deputy Head of School have been appointed and a large proportion of the Governing Body are in the process of being replaced.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires Improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

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Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

St. Ambrose is a good school in providing Catholic Education.

CATHOLIC LIFE

The extent to which the pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school

- The extent to which the pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school is good.
- Pupils appreciate, value and actively participate in the Catholic Life at St. Ambrose. They know their Mission Statement, 'Follow the example of Jesus'. Pupils in Year 4 have worked with a photographer to produce a montage of images depicting the Mission Statement being lived out in the school, this is displayed in the entrance porch.
- Pupils show respect for themselves and others as made in the image and likeness of God. The behaviour of pupils is good. They are kind and considerate to each other. Pupils know to speak to teachers if they need to and they will be listened to.
- In proportion to their years they show an ability to listen, to give thanks, to forgive and be forgiven. They are quick to congratulate others and have a good understanding of right and wrong.
- Pupils embrace the demands that members of the school community entails such as becoming school councillors, ambassadors, buddies, house captains, prefects and peer advocates. The school has appointed a head boy and head girl and subsequent deputies.
- They take a leading role in those activities which promote the schools' Catholic Life and mission both within school and in the wider community such as fundraising for numerous charities e.g. CAFOD, Nugent, MacMillan Cancer Research, British Legion Poppy Appeal, *Sal's Shoes* to name but a few. Within the locality they support Radio City's Cash for kids. They are alert to the needs of others and seek justice for all.
- Pupils value and fully participate in opportunities provided by the school including a range of after school clubs e.g. choir, dance and a range of seasonal sports.
- The school choir supports at many school and parish events and have attended the 'Young Voices' concert in Manchester. They have performed in the local community e.g. Morrisons and at the local nursing home.
- Pupils take full advantage of the opportunities the school provides for their personal support and development they have a good sense of belonging. As a result, they are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of physical, emotional and spiritual growth. On the day of inspection, they said that they really appreciated the opportunities that the school provides for them.
- Pupils, appropriate to their age and capability, have begun relationships and sexual development lessons within the context of a Christian understanding however this is in its infancy and needs further developing across the school year. Their work on 'No Outsiders' has had a massive impact in the school. Pupils commented, *"No-one is left out here as everyone has a right to be here."*
- Pupils benefit from opportunities to go on residential trips. Year 6 pupils visit the Isle of Man, Years 4 and 5 visit the Kingswood Centre in Colomendy and Year 3 pupils visit Barnstondale Education Centre on the Wirral. For the first time next year pupils from across Key Stage 2 are being enabled to go Skiing with the Liverpool Primary Ski Association.

- Pupils embrace a holistic approach to education, understand what it means to have a vocation and recognise the importance of using their gifts in the service of others and they enjoy having the opportunities to do this.
- Pupils are rewarded with house points, and 'star of the week' certificates at their weekly assemblies.
- Pupils value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the parish community and the Archdiocese. They respect and are involved with parish celebrations and activities, irrespective of their own faith commitments. They have attended St. Oswald's as part of the Year of Mercy celebrations and the Metropolitan Christ The King Catholic Cathedral as part of the annual Advent Nugent service.
- Pupils benefit from an outside 'Prayer Garden and memorial bench' which has been lovingly developed and maintained. It was blessed by Bishop Williams during a Spirituality Day in 2018.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school

- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is good.
- The existing Mission Statement at St. Ambrose, '*Follow the Example of Jesus*' is known and lived by everyone at the school. However, the school has recognised that this needs to be reviewed and further developed over the coming months.
- Staff are committed to its implementation across the curriculum. They participate in school activities which reflect the Catholic Life and mission of the school.
- There is a very good sense of community at all levels, evident in the quality of relationships and the centrality of prayer to the whole community.
- The school environment reflects its mission and identity through concrete and effective signs of the school's Catholic character. The displays, classroom focal areas and prayer spaces support St. Ambrose's catholicity and ethos. Investment has been made on '*All are welcome*' signage in the entrance porch and this has been replicated throughout the school along with a display celebrating the diversity within the school and the richness that brings to St. Ambrose school community.
- Staff promote high standards of behaviour and are good role models of mutual respect and forgiveness for pupils inside and outside of the classroom.
- The curriculum reflects a commitment to Catholic Social Teaching, to care for our common home and to the dignity of every human person through its fundraising, eco stewardship and developing outreach opportunities. This needs to be continued and strengthened further. In addition to the website, a portfolio of evidence needs to be created and kept up to date of the valuable contributions the school makes in these areas.
- The school provides opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of all pupils and staff through prayer and continuous professional development opportunities such as attendance at Archdiocesan in-service days for the subject leader. After a period of instability, this needs to be further developed now by accessing guidance and training for other members of staff.
- The Family Support Worker has an important role within in the school. Clear policies and structures are in place which provide good levels of pastoral care for pupils and their families and there is an explicit and concrete commitment to the most vulnerable and needy in both policy and practice. The school has worked with the Anthony Walker Foundation and various other groups to support local issues.
- The parish priest is a regular visitor to the school and presides at the celebration of Mass throughout the school year. He is fulsome in his praise of the school community.

- The school supports the pupils and their families undertaking the With You Always Sacramental programme alongside the parish priest and catechists from the parish of St. Ambrose.
- The school has made a commitment to support Relationships and Sex Education alongside Personal, Social and Health Education and all the relevant current documentation is in place. This is an area the school has recognised needs to be further developed to embed it fully into the curriculum across the school year and for it to be mapped out accordingly.
- The school uses *No Outsiders* which supports Equality and Diversity and *Jigsaw* to support Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) alongside *Journey in Love* in Relationships and Sex Education lessons.
- The school provides a breakfast club throughout the year. This is popular and well attended.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school

- Leaders and governors are good in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- The executive leadership team is fully committed to the Church's mission in education. The development of the Catholic life of the school is viewed as a core leadership responsibility. It is recommended a full review of the current Mission Statement, its aims and objectives, takes place led by a member of the Christian Education Team, to reflect where the school is now. This needs to incorporate the views of all who form part of the school community including pupils, parents, teaching and non-teaching staff and governors to ensure it underpins every aspect of school life moving forward at St. Ambrose.
- The provision for the Catholic Life of the school is given priority by the executive leadership team. The school is using the new Self Evaluation Document, but this is still in its infancy and not yet accurate or rigorously monitored enough to be wholly effective. Moving forward the school's own self-targets are realistic and they now have the capacity to be actioned successfully.
- Relationships at every level are very good across the school and the executive leaders, newly appointed governors and staff are working together as a cohesive team.
- Leaders and governors have shown a commitment to training and further development of staff. Continuous Professional Development focusing on the Catholic Life of the school takes place regularly for the subject leader but needs to be rolled out across the school. As a result, staff understanding of the school's mission, which is currently good, will be enhanced further following the Mission Statement review process.
- There is a link governor with responsibility for Catholic Life and Religious Education. She is also a member of the Archdiocesan Christian Education Team and actively supports St. Ambrose in lots of ways. She is keen to ensure that she undertakes her role effectively in supporting the subject leader. However, it is recommended that other newer Governors also undertake training on the 'Effective Governance in a Catholic School,' to support their role and contributions to St. Ambrose's mission and subsequent ethos.
- The school has developed successful strategies for engaging with parents and carers to the benefit of pupils. The school offers an open-door policy, sends out regular newsletters and has an up-to-date website and supporting blog. As a result, parents and carers have a good understanding of the school's mission and are very supportive of it.

- The school responds well to Archdiocesan policies and initiatives and promotes the Archdiocesan vision throughout the school. Some policies need to be standardised with 'appendices information' as they come up for renewal to ensure they are cross referenced appropriately.
- Leaders and governors have made a commitment to further develop Relationships and Sex Education throughout the school alongside Personal, Social and Health Education. It is recommended that the school undertakes Relationships and Sex Education lessons across the school year not just in a weekly block in the summer term.
- Leaders need to begin mapping out Relationships and Sex Education to show when and how this is being delivered across the whole school curriculum.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

- The extent to which pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is good.
- Pupils, from their varied starting points, make good progress in each key stage.
- Groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making progress comparable to the progress of other pupils.
- Pupils, relative to their age and capacity, are becoming more religiously literate and engaged young people; they are beginning to use their knowledge, understanding and skills, to reflect spiritually, and to think ethically and theologically. Pupils are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
- During lessons and interviews pupils were articulate about both their learning in Religious Education and aspirations for themselves and the school. They said they were "*...proud to be a part of St. Ambrose,*" and that they recognised the work of the new executive leadership team and teachers in supporting them.
- Pupils are actively engaged in lessons and are committed to improving their knowledge, understanding and skills to further develop as competent learners.
- Pupils concentrate well and understand how well they are doing. This can be improved further by teachers and other adults using the language of the standards i.e. driver words more routinely during lessons and when questioning to challenge pupils thinking.
- Pupils approach their lessons with interest and enthusiasm. This was evident as pupils quickly settled to tasks and responded positively throughout.
- Pupils enjoy a range of activities and respond well to tasks which extend their learning when given the opportunity. Pupils say they enjoy Religious Education and disruptions in lessons are unusual. This was observed on the day of Inspection.
- Pupils have studied Judaism as part of their Other Faith and Religions topics. This helps to promote tolerance and respect for those who think differently to themselves.
- The quality of pupils' current work, orally in class and in written in books, is good. Presentation in books is good and pupils take pride in them.
- Pupils attainment, as indicated by teachers is good. Most pupils achieve at least average attainment with some achieving higher.
- Pupils' are undertaking formal assessment in line with Archdiocesan guidance and evidence is kept.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education is good.
- On the day of inspection there was some good and outstanding practice observed. Some teachers and other supporting adults need to use the language of the standards i.e. driver words more as part of their repertoire to further engage and challenge pupils in their thinking and learning.
- Most teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and have a good understanding of how pupils learn. However, they need to provide much more opportunities for greater depth and challenge by using the driver words throughout lessons.
- Teachers employ a range of appropriate strategies, including individual, paired and collaborative work. Consequently, pupils are interested, motivated and concentrate well in lessons.
- In some books there is evidence of continuity in lessons and across sequences of lessons. However, teachers do not always plan good lessons, and this is not always linked to pupils' current assessment. Consequently, some pupils do not learn well enough and progress is limited.
- In the best lessons observed teachers used questioning techniques very well. However, there was limited open ended and adapted explanations using the language of the standards i.e. driver words catering for the needs of all pupils. These need to become routine practice in all classes.
- High quality resources e.g. *Come and See* website, *God's and Church's Story*, audio and visual media, John Burland music etc. are employed to engage pupils in their learning.
- Other adults are mostly used effectively to optimise learning for pupils who need their intensive support. In some lessons other adults were given minimal direction from the class teacher which in turn impeded the pupils in their learning.
- The Parish Priest visits school and supports teachers when delivering aspects of the *Come and See* programme e.g. Ordination.
- Evidence in books shows that marking is always positive but not always linked concisely enough to the lesson objective. In some lessons the lesson objectives are not clear and does not match the activities the children have been set. Occasionally, next steps are used. These inconsistencies will diminish as staff become much more adept at planning succinct lesson objectives from the *Come and See* programme which is focussed on the new standards in Religious Education.
- In the best lessons achievement and effort are celebrated immediately leading to very good levels of motivation from pupils. This was particularly evident in Year 1 where pupils were eagerly awaiting to take part in their role play activities without the class teacher's direction. They talked animatedly about their task and had no problems in achieving successful outcomes. Working collaboratively in small groups ensured they were stimulated, keen and highly focussed on their challenging activity leaving the class teacher and other adult to scaffold, praise and affirm them appropriately as necessary.
- The school has created 'learning journals' for all classes to enable staff to evidence all aspects of the *Rejoice* week of the of the topic culminating in the class celebration itself. These are being used and are a celebration of the work being now being produced in this aspect of the topic.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

- Leaders and governors are requiring improvement in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Religious Education.
- Leaders and governors are now ensuring that the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. However, this needs to be more rigorously monitored to ensure that children are receiving their entitlement to quality Religious Education in full parity with other core curriculum subjects. All the relevant documentation is in place.
- Since the last inspection and monitoring visit evidence suggests the *Come and See* programme has not been fully implemented and monitored across the school and was not given full parity with other core curriculum subjects. Therefore, its efficacy until recently had been somewhat lost and the focus of teaching and learning was directed elsewhere.
- Leaders and governors' current self-evaluation of Religious Education is not an accurate reflection of assessment, tracking, monitoring, analysis and self-challenge over time which has informed current best practice in Religious Education. However, the school now has the backing of the executive leadership team and governors with the capacity to ensure that Religious Education is the core, of the core subjects in the school. Following the inspection visit the Self Evaluation Document will be revised accordingly to reflect the findings, advice and guidance given to ensure it is a purposeful, working document.
- The subject leader regularly attends Archdiocesan in-service training to support planning, monitoring, evaluation and assessment of the subject. In the past this has not always been effectively cascaded to staff to bring about improvements in teaching and learning and raise standards in Religious Education. However, the subject leader is now given the time and support to enable him to effectively bring about radical improvements in the school with the unequivocal support of the executive leadership team.
- The subject leader for Religious Education is enthusiastic, has made a commitment to undertaking his role effectively and he has now got a meaningful action plan in place. He has already begun to enable staff to plan for improvements to teaching and learning in Religious Education. He has begun to make more effective use of planning, assessment and moderation by clustering with other schools in the locality to support on-going teaching and learning and those green shoots are beginning to appear on the ground.
- Whole school tracking is not yet fully in place and accurate enough to predict outcomes for pupils however, it is directly linked to the changes to the interim standards in Religious Education and will begin to be used more widely in the school from September 2019.
- A commitment has been made by the executive leaders and governors to ensure that there is a link governor for Religious Education who can effectively support the subject leader in his role. It was suggested that Standards in Religious Education are shared and more importantly, the impact of them, discussed regularly at every governor meeting going forward to ensure the vision for the subject is maintained.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship

- Pupils response to and participation in the school's Collective Worship is good.
- Pupils act with reverence and are keen to participate in Collective Worship.

- They sing joyfully, reflect in silence and join in community prayer appropriately and with confidence.
- Pupils are involved in preparing and leading worship with confidence, enthusiasm and a degree of independence.
- Pupils are not yet routinely evaluating Collective Worship, either as a leader or a participant. This needs to be further developed across the school.
- Pupils use a variety of approaches to prayer which includes scripture, religious artefacts, liturgical music and other forms of prayer.
- Pupils value and participate voluntarily in liturgy. Pupils say that they really enjoy these experiences.
- Pupils do not have a very good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons and feasts. However, they celebrate together at Mass at key times of the year as part of the parish community.
- The school has introduced prayer bags for the children to take home like the Posada, travelling crib, at Christmas time. At the moment, the focus for the bags is Mary, throughout the month of May. This has been welcomed by the pupils who are encouraged to record or photograph them being used. Pupils commented that they *"loved to pray with Mary at home with their families."* They value those experiences of being together as one as a family.
- The experience of being a part of a praying community has a positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of pupils, irrespective of ability or faith background.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is good.
- Whilst acts of Collective Worship are planned and resourced, most other aspects of school life until recently were given greater priority; as a result, Collective Worship is at best good with some examples adequate but is routine, lacking in variety and interest. Most members of the school community speak well of Collective Worship but have no examples of inspiring or engaging occasions to offer by way of planning which reflect that it is happening regularly on a daily basis.
- Spaces have been created around the school to encourage acts of spontaneous prayer from both pupils and staff and are valued by the pupils. Whilst these are adding to the overall prayer life of the school, they do not replace Collective Worship which is an integral piece of school life with a specific structure which needs to be maintained and followed to create time with God in an appropriate and meaningful way.
- On the day of Inspection leaders of Collective Worship routinely 'questioned' pupils and invoked a 'hands up' response rather than using rhetoric to help pupils to reflect more deeply on the Word. What was observed was an interactive mini-lesson rather than a reverent, silent and reflective quality Collective Worship experience.
- Staff benefit from using the *'Come and See for Yourself'* Collective Worship materials prior to beginning a new Religious Education topic led by the subject leader.
- Until recently, prayer experiences and worship were not given a high priority in the school. Collective Worship needs to become routinely evaluated by pupils and staff both as a leader of worship or as a participant.
- Relevant staff have a very good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and they need to ensure that pupils have good quality experiences of the Church's liturgical life.
- Opportunities are planned in a manner that facilitates attendance by other adults associated with the pupils and the school. Parents and parishioners are welcomed to worship within the school community during 'Rejoice' assemblies and 'stay and pray'.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship

- Leaders and governors are requiring improvement in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Collective Worship.
- Leaders and governors know how to provide policies and guidelines to plan and deliver quality Collective Worship and these are in place. However, since the last inspection and monitoring visit evidence suggests that Collective Worship has not been happening routinely on a daily basis across the school or has been monitored effectively enough.
- Leaders and governors' current self-evaluation of Collective Worship is not an accurate reflection of monitoring, evaluation and self-challenge over time which has informed current best practice in Collective Worship. However, the school now has the backing of the executive leadership team and governors with the capacity to ensure that Collective Worship is central to the life of the school. Following the Inspection visit the Self Evaluation Document will be revised accordingly to reflect the findings, advice and guidance given to ensure it is an up to date, purposeful, working document.
- The subject leader has recently attended Archdiocesan enhanced Collective Worship training and has cascaded this to staff. However, it is highly recommended that the whole staff undertake beginners Collective Worship training delivered by a member of the Christian Education Team to ensure that they are modelling best practice.
- Leaders and governors have a very good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts.
- A commitment has been made by executive leaders and governors to ensure that there is a link governor who can effectively support the subject leader in his Collective Worship role. She has the expertise to ensure that his action plan is fully in place and being monitored accordingly. This information needs to be shared at Governor meetings to ensure the Bishops' requirements are being met in this area.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Further develop the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education by:
 - ensuring teachers and other adults routinely develop the language of the standards i.e. driver words into their day to day repertoire to more accurately support pupils throughout the plan, teach, review, assess cycle;
 - continuing to embed the new tracking system which supports assessment, reporting and monitoring of Religious Education for the new interim standards.
- Further develop the work being undertaken in Catholic Life by:
 - undertaking a full review of the Mission Statement led by a member of the Christian Education Team with pupils, staff and parents to ensure it meets Archdiocesan guidance;
 - continuing to embed 'Journey in Love' lessons to support Relationships and Sex Education across the school year;
 - beginning to develop a curriculum map for Relationships and Sex Education.
- Further develop the work being undertaken in Collective Worship by:
 - undertaking Archdiocesan training for the whole staff in planning, leading and modelling quality Collective Worship experiences.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	2
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CATHOLIC LIFE

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	2
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school	2
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school	2

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	2
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	3

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	2
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	2
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	3

Key to judgements: Grade 1 is outstanding, Grade 2 is good, Grade 3 Requires Improvement and Grade 4 Inadequate