



## ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

### INSPECTION REPORT

## ST. MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

### LIVERPOOL

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Tuesday 1 December 2009

Inspectors Mrs. Marie Connolly Mr Michael Halford Mrs. Rosemary Purcell

URN 104656

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Type of School	Catholic Primary
Age range of pupils	3-11
Number on roll	294
Chair of Governors	Mrs. J Riley
School address	Guion Street, (off Boaler Street), Liverpool L6 9DU.
Telephone number	0151 263 8460
E-mail address	<a href="mailto:michaels-ht@stmichaels.liverpool.sch.uk">michaels-ht@stmichaels.liverpool.sch.uk</a>
Date of last inspection	1 May 2007
Head teacher	Mr. Anthony Hegarty

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2006.

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. Michael's is a larger than average Catholic Primary School serving the parish of St. Michaels Liverpool. This is an area of extremely high social and economic disadvantage. The school has an above average proportion of pupils from ethnic backgrounds and English as an additional language. It is also an area of significant mobility. There are currently 294 children on roll. 212 children are baptised Catholics and 31 come from other Christian denominations. There are 22 children attending the school from other religious traditions and a further 29 with no specified religious status. Fourteen of the 15 teachers in the school teach Religious Education. Thirteen are Catholic, 11 have a Religious Education qualification. A further member of staff is currently undertaking the *Catholic 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. Michael's is an outstanding Catholic school. It is a most inclusive community, underpinned by an exceptionally strong Catholic ethos, which establishes a positive climate for work. The gospel values of love, care and mutual respect very evidently underpin every aspect of school life. This is a school where the well being of every child is of paramount importance to the dedicated and hard working staff. As the Mission Statement states 'St. Michaels is a community that learns, loves and lives life to the full as members of Christ's family'. Children show real care for each other. Displays and areas all around the school show how this is put into practice. Excellent relationships exist throughout the school. Staff show through their care and concern both for the children and each other that the 'Catholic ethos' is a tangible, living thing. All are made welcome. Achievement and standards overall are good. Learners achieve well consistently and make outstanding progress throughout the school. Overall, teaching and learning is good. Assessment is providing clear guidance on learning. The curriculum is well planned. Learners' behaviour is excellent. The Religious Education curriculum meets the needs and interests of learners well, enabling them to make meaningful connections between life and faith. The provision for learners' spiritual and moral development is outstanding. Both curriculum Religious Education and Collective Worship make a significant contribution to this development. Some imaginative strategies have been employed to enable this to happen formally and informally. The Religious Education coordinator, supported by the home, school parish coordinator and headteacher are all outstanding in the manner in which they leads and manage Religious Education and associated whole school issues. All recognise there is outstanding practice in the school but are realistic in appreciating the hard work and effort that enables such high achievement and standards to be achieved, maintained and developed further. There is whole school commitment to this ongoing development. The provision for Collective Worship is good. The school is outstanding in promoting community cohesion. This is most evident in the inclusive manner in which the school serves the parish, local and wider community.

**Grade: 1**

### **Improvement since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection the school has improved significantly. This outstanding improvement is the result of committed team work and people sharing a common vision. The whole school environment has been transformed despite being in the process of undertaking phased building work. The severe disruption is being managed most effectively to cause as little disruption as possible to pupils. The school sets itself targets in order to maintain and improve standards and meet fresh challenges. Any new initiatives introduced by the Archdiocese have been acted upon promptly and rigorously. The Mission Statement has been reviewed by the whole school community.

**Grade: 1**

## **Capacity to improve**

The school's self-evaluation is excellent. The judgements made in the document broadly match the judgements made in this report. Significant evidence was provided before and during the day of inspection to support this evaluation. Parents and governors are aware of and greatly appreciate the outstanding work being undertaken and the dedicated leadership that directs and guides every aspect of school life. The Religious Education coordinator has a clear vision of what and how to improve and openness to new challenges. There is outstanding capacity for further improvement as shown by the shared commitment to Religious Education issues by all.

**Grade: 1**

## **What the school should do to improve further**

Whole staff in-service should be undertaken to enhance the quality of provision for Collective Worship. This will ensure the greater active participation of pupils in acts of worship. Any minor issues contained in the body of the report, and any new initiatives introduced by the Archdiocese should be included in the new self evaluation document when appropriate.

## **Achievement and standards**

Children's attainment on entry to the school is below that expected. They make outstanding progress in the school. Standards in Religious Education overall are good, with some outstanding and some satisfactory, with pupils meeting learning objectives and outcomes set, according to their age and stage of development. There is no difference in performance by pupils of different gender. Pupils with special needs make good progress in Religious Education with the support provided by excellent teaching assistants and some differentiation of tasks to meet their needs. The school checks on the progress made by all through assessment and some positive but thought provoking marking. Children show a developing confidence in discussion and feedback, and a real knowledge and understanding of the subject and its relevance in their lives. All children show enthusiasm and excitement for the subject when undertaking their work. Standards will continue to rise and further progress be made by the ongoing use of the information gathered through the monitoring of planning, teaching and learning and scrutiny of the formal assessments made each term. Greater use should be made of the findings of assessment when planning to meet the children's varying needs. The behaviour of children throughout the school is excellent. The children are enabled to make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community through initiatives such as the school council which allows the children's 'voice' to be taken into consideration on issues such as planning after school clubs and improving the environment..

**Grade: 2**

# Quality of Provision for Religious Education

## Teaching and learning

Overall, the quality of provision for Religious Education is good. Of the teaching observed and evidence in workbooks a significant amount of the teaching and learning is outstanding, some satisfactory. Teachers show a knowledge of and enthusiasm for the subject. The learning needs of all children, including those with additional needs, are addressed through the use of some challenging and creative teaching and learning strategies, some differentiation of tasks and by excellent additional support provided by teaching assistants. In a minority of lessons children were insufficiently challenged by the task provided. Greater differentiation needs to be undertaken. Sharing outstanding practice through the monitoring process will enable teachers to share where excellence in practice has been identified and will enable ongoing development and greater consistency. Teachers benefit from sharing the '*Before you Begin*' section before taking the topic into the classroom, particularly when more complex religious concepts are being explored in '*Relate*'. Some teaching is very creative. This helps learners engage with the material presented and thoroughly enjoy their lessons. Some good use is being made of information communication technology. This helps to enliven the material being presented and should be put to even greater use. Some well prepared resources enhanced the delivery of lessons. Teachers and assistants provide a creative and stimulating learning environment which supports and challenges all children.

Good planning and a clear understanding of the Religious Education programme directs and guides all staff. All teachers should indicate when planning which tasks are to be differentiated and for whom, which activities will be assessed and where support is being provided. The majority of lessons observed had good pace and timing, which maintained the interest and concentration of learners and kept them on task and focussed. Work is provided that enables pupils to work well independently and collaboratively. All teachers should ensure that pupils understand the purpose of the lesson by sharing the learning objective at the start of the lesson and then re-visit it during the plenary session. Children's religious literacy is enhanced by the identification and use of the key words for each topic particularly during the Relate stage of the process. Formal assessment procedures have been introduced that show clearly what progress is being made and that learners are meeting the expectations in Religious Education. This information needs to inform future planning more rigorously particularly in differentiation. Use of the driver words for each level will also help.

Parents and carers involvement in the children's Religious Education is outstanding. Parents and carers are enabled to become involved in their children's Religious Education by the provision of regular detailed newsletters which outline activities relating to Religious Education and the religious life of the school. Curriculum meetings inform them of children's progress. Parents are consulted on different issues depending on the topic being covered.

Beautiful displays and focus areas in the school related to the children's work in Religious Education are another way of sharing the Catholic life of the school with parents and visitors

## **Grade: 2**

### **Curriculum**

The Religious Education curriculum is outstanding in meeting the needs and interests of pupils. 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. This fulfils the requirements of the Bishops of England and Wales. The leadership of the school ensures suitable positioning of Religious Education on timetables.

Catholic beliefs and values are at the heart of learners' spiritual and moral development. There is evidence of this in every classroom and all around the school. It is very evident in the care that has been shown in creating the whole learning environment. Beautiful displays, quiet areas for prayer and reflection, posters and photographs provide evidence of this excellent practice. Overall the Religious Education curriculum makes an outstanding contribution to learners' spiritual and moral development. Children have a good sense of right and wrong. The school has many pro-active initiatives to encourage the positive behaviour and moral development of all.

The school also provides some outstanding opportunities for spiritual development. Teachers make the curriculum challenging and relevant by creating some stimulating resources. Children have a good understanding of the life and teaching of Jesus. Many creative strategies, including those using information communication technology are used to enable them apply this teaching to their own lives. e.g. drama, role play, and other cross-curricular links with literacy, music, art, dance, technology etc. This needs to be further developed. The work undertaken on *Other Faiths* has helped the children understand how others make sense of the world in which we live and also promotes tolerance and respect for those whose views differ from our own. Inviting visitors from other religious traditions and visiting places of worship helps children make even greater sense of the diversity experienced in living in Britain today. The school invites parents of other faiths traditions and cultures to share their beliefs. This enables children have a greater understanding of their local community. The parish priest is regular visitor to school. He supports both curriculum Religious Education and also the spiritual development of the children formally and informally.

## **Grade 1**

# Leadership and Management

## Religious Education

Leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education are outstanding. There is a clear vision for the subject within the mission of the school with a focus on raising standards even further. The Religious Education coordinator supported by the home school parish coordinator and headteacher provide outstanding leadership and effective and efficient support to all staff. The coordinator shows commitment to improvement. Good documentation guides and directs all staff in their delivery of the subject. There is also excellent evidence of the quality of practice and achievement in Religious Education and associated whole school issues. Documentation is updated as necessary. Coordinators' meetings are attended regularly and information is disseminated to all staff during staff meetings or in-service time. A rolling programme enabling all teaching staff to attend Archdiocesan in-service has further supported them in their planning and delivery of the subject and has deepened their understanding of the underlying theology. Performance in Religious Education is monitored. A programme is in place to ensure all staff have their work observed. Feedback and support is provided. This ongoing scrutiny of planning, workbooks and teaching and learning and effective use of the findings will enable even greater consistency and raise standards even further. Self-assessment is undertaken for each topic by staff and learners.

St. Michael's is socially inclusive by providing equality of access and of opportunity for all learners to make progress. Pastoral care is a real strength of the school. Good support is given to those children with additional learning needs. Of the 15 staff, 14 teach Religious Education, 13 are Catholic and 11 have a suitable qualification in Religious Education. Another member of staff is currently undertaking the *Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies*. Priorities for the subject are identified and targets set. Funding for Religious Education is very good. Some good resources have been purchased or created by members of staff and are deployed to achieve high standards. Other resources such as the CD Rom's for God's Story and the Church's story need greater use throughout the school to further develop the good use being made of interactive white boards, and other technology in Religious Education and Collective Worship. Some excellent use is made of display and photographic evidence that is annotated in portfolios and all around the school. The headteacher keeps the governors informed on matters relating to Religious Education. Governors discharge their responsibilities most effectively. The Chair and other governors are actively involved in the life of the school and are wholehearted in their praise of the school and its role in the local community.

**Grade: 1**

## **Catholic Life of the School**

The leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school through the Mission Statement are outstanding. It is a community that believes and lives its mission. St. Michael's is a highly inclusive community in which the Gospel spirit of love, care and mutual respect permeates every aspect of its life and work. Excellent relationships underpin every activity.

The Mission Statement and the children's motto are displayed as you enter the school, in classrooms, documents and other places around the school. The aims and objectives direct and guide every aspect of school life. The Mission Statement has been reviewed recently by all who form the school community including the children. Their own mission motto 'With Jesus we live, love and learn' enables it to be known and owned by all. St. Michael's is a real community reaching out to the local and wider community. It aspires to 'live life to the full as members of Christ's family'.

**Grade: 1**

## **Collective Worship**

The quality of opportunities and experiences offered for Collective Worship are good. The school provides Collective Worship in a variety of ways for each child daily, in class, year group and whole school gatherings. This fulfils government and Archdiocesan guidance. Guidelines that support the planning and delivery of Collective Worship wherever and whenever it takes place have been produced including a simple format for planning. Planning files are kept by each teacher. These provided evidence of a variety of Collective Worship. Collective Worship stimulates reflection on spiritual and moral issues and on personal beliefs. A focus for worship is provided in each classroom using suitable religious objects and artefacts. These are of good quality. Other resources are stored centrally e.g. suitable materials, books and artefacts to support teachers in their delivery of Collective Worship. Focus tables are used effectively for both Collective Worship and also during lessons. Children need to be encouraged to participate more fully in a meaningful manner both in class and larger gatherings through prayer, poetry, song, dance mime etc. This will enrich their experience. All teachers should ensure that the material presented is pitched at an appropriate level to help children reflect. Use of different types of prayer, music and symbol should be used to support learners' ongoing spiritual and moral development during acts of Collective Worship. A programme of liturgical celebrations is planned and these take place throughout the year. Mass is sometimes celebrated. Parents, governors and friends of the school community are invited to a variety of assemblies and services. This is greatly appreciated. The monitoring of Collective Worship has begun to be addressed by the coordinator. This will continue to help raise the standard of all worship throughout the school. Whole staff in-service should be undertaken to enhance the quality of provision for Collective Worship, and ensure the greater active participation of pupils in acts of worship.

**Grade: 2**

## Community Cohesion

The school is outstanding in promoting community cohesion. The leadership of the school is clearly dedicated to enabling this to happen. There is a shared vision and commitment to serve the common good. Leadership at all levels respects difference, values diversity and ensures equal opportunities. All are made welcome. This is a real strength of the school. Parents, carers and children are involved in the decision making and life of the school e.g. development of the Mission Statement and the opportunity for children to voice their concerns through the school council on issues such as the local subway. The school continues to identify and develop strategies for strengthening community links even further e.g. inviting other parents of other religions in the area to speak. The school makes every effort to support the life of faith with parents and the parish through the work undertaken by the Religious Education and home, school and parish coordinators.

Collective Worship celebrates, reflects and respects diversity. The use of the Religious Education Programme, *Here I Am*, supports well community cohesion. Children have explored the beliefs and values of other faiths. This helps promote tolerance and respect for those who think differently. It has been a most positive experience for the school inviting parents and speakers from other religious traditions and cultures into school to share with the children different aspects of their lives. Visits when possible to places of worship e.g. the synagogue have also supported children's deepening understanding of the community of which they are a part. The school has a clear sense of its mission in reaching out to those who are less fortunate supporting a variety of local, national and international charities both by becoming better informed and by raising funds and resources e.g. CAFOD, Nugent Care, links with East Timor, the shoe box appeal to name but a few. The children also perform in a carol concerts for charities and local care homes. The annual Harvest celebration also provides donated food for those in need locally.

**Grade: 1**