



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

## Information about this school

- St. Sebastian's school is an average sized Catholic primary school situated in the Fairfield area of Liverpool and serves the parish of St. Sebastian's. The school is part of a federation with St. Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School. The schools share the same Executive Headteacher and governing body. Each school in the federation, has a Head of School in post.
- There are 365 children on roll of whom 232 are baptised Catholic. Twenty come from other Christian denominations and 11 are from other faith or religious traditions. Two children have no religious affiliation.
- There are 12 teachers in the school of whom 10 are baptised Catholic. Twelve teach Religious Education and four teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education.
- Since the last inspection, the school has appointed a new Chair of Governors and a new subject leader for Religious Education.

### Key for inspection grades

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

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# OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

St. Sebastian's Catholic Primary School is an outstanding 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 outstanding.
- Pupils are ambassadors of their mission, 'Only My Best Will Do, Be Kind To One Another.' They appreciate, value and actively participate in the Catholic Life and mission of the school. On the day of inspection, children knew their mission and understood how their actions are to be like Jesus and to follow in his footsteps.
- They contribute in a planned and systematic way to the school's evaluation of its Catholic Life and mission and take a lead in planning improvements to it. The children take part in an annual Mission Day. This year children experienced a day dedicated to the Liverpool Archdiocesan Synod under the theme 'Journey with Jesus'.
- Pupils show a deep respect for themselves and others as made in the image and likeness of God. The behaviour of pupils is exemplary. 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.
- Children are praised regularly through a variety of awards, such as, achievement, attendance and behaviour. Key stage award ceremonies celebrate, recognise and reward outstanding effort.
- Pupils regularly attend masses and the parish priest ensures they are part of several liturgical occasions, celebrations, feast days and holy days throughout the year. Pupils and their families are welcomed in the parish for Sacramental preparation classes.
- Pupils value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the parish community and the Archdiocese. Pupils sing at various parish celebrations. They share their understanding of the Sacraments by displaying related artwork in church for the enjoyment and appreciation of the parish community. Children are encouraged to be a part of the after-school church craft club together with parishioners and governors.
- NUGENT visit the children to support those affected by bereavement. Children reflect on this guidance each year by attending a 'Light up a Life' Service of Remembrance at Christ the King Cathedral in Liverpool.
- Pupils enthusiastically embrace the demands that membership of a Catholic school entails and understand the high expectations that are required of them in the service of others. They accept their responsibilities and as a result they take a leading role to become, for example, Peer Advocates, modelling exemplary behaviour and encouraging others to resolve conflicts.
- Year Six pupils have the opportunity to become prefects. They have duties which include, supporting younger children at lunch time, playtime and support the school office in answering the telephone.
- School Councillors are proud of their work and meet regularly to help make St. Sebastian's a happy and safe place to be. They help with fundraising activities such as, a McMillan coffee morning and a "Crazy Hat Day," in support of Claire's House.

- Children enthusiastically 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. They are alert to the needs of others and seek justice for all within and beyond the school community. They support numerous causes for example, CAFOD, Nugent Care and Cancer Research, The Sisters of Mother Teresa at Seel Street Liverpool and local charities, such as Marie Curie Hospice, An Hour for Others and local foodbanks.
- Pupils fully live their Catholic mission. Older children have responsibility of a Good Shepherd Club to serve and support others in the local and wider community by raising funds whilst enriching the curriculum. The majority of children take part in variety of extra-curricular school clubs such as, sport, drama, music. This is acknowledged and celebrated through the Children's University awards.
- Children enjoy residential which promotes their team building, well-being, spiritual, social development and nurtures relationships.
- Pupils enjoy learning about other faiths and religions. They are encouraged to promote acceptance and tolerance within their inclusive, diverse school community. Children are proactive through projects such as, anti-bullying, International week and Positive about Ability week.
- Pupils take full advantage to the outstanding opportunities the school provides for their personal support and development. As a result, they are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of physical, emotional and spiritual growth. The lead pastoral practitioner provides quality interventions and support to the needs of each individual. Children benefit from through programmes such as Rainbows, Think Yourself Great and Cognitive Behaviour Therapy.
- The Relationships and Sex Education programme, *Journey in Love*, recommended by the Archdiocese, has been fully implemented. As a result of this, pupils, appropriate to their age and capability, have an excellent understanding of loving relationships and sexual development within the context of a Christian understanding of the purpose of sexual love.

## **The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school**

- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.
- The school Mission Statement is a clear and inspiring expression of the educational mission of the Church.
- The school environment is rich in its mission and identity through the many concrete and effective signs of the school's Catholic character. Displays of certificates and trophies reflect the many opportunities provided and the outstanding achievements of the school family. A variety of reflective areas give children and staff time to pray. Each classroom door has inspiring, meaningful quotes from St. Matthew's Gospel to reflect, acknowledge and celebrate Scripture in the Year of the Word.
- St. Sebastian's has a strong sense of community at all levels, evident in the high quality of relationships and the centrality of prayer. The school is a supportive and joyful community.
- The school has a high regard for the pastoral needs of staff and members' needs are understood and catered for. The school has 'Workplace Health and Wellbeing Charter' status as well as being recently awarded the Optimus 'Well Being Award for schools.' The school promotes Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health, as an ongoing priority for the whole school community. This is having a great impact for staff who are provided with and have access to a supportive in-service, well-being committee, a staff well-being day and out of school social events. The schools' regular worship opportunities for staff are an outstanding example of their commitment as an inclusive community and a reminder that prayer, self-reflection and contemplation is at the heart of St. Sebastian's.

- All staff are fully committed to the Catholic Life and mission of the school, across the curriculum and the whole of school life. They enthusiastically participate in school activities, such as, staff prayer and Curriculum Professional Development on Catholic Life. They organise local events with partnering schools in Liverpool, encouraging children's participation and self-confidence.
- Staff promote high standards of behaviour and are outstanding role models of mutual respect and forgiveness for pupils. There is an outstanding commitment to Catholic Social Teaching, caring for their common home and the dignity of every human person.
- The school provides an Eco Club to enhance the school environment. On the day of inspection, children expressed the importance of enhancing and preserving not only their school environment but the wider world.
- The school provides many opportunities for children to be Global Citizens, taking part in the 'United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund Largest Lessons', Personal Social and Health Education and Relationships and Sex Education. Class portfolios celebrate their work.
- Transition workshops for children in Year Six with 'Barnardo's' helps to provide the skills to explore how to adapt and enhance their well-being.
- Pastoral programmes are thoughtfully designed, carefully planned, consistently well taught and celebrate Catholic teachings and principles.
- Clear policies and structures are in place, which provide the highest levels of pastoral care to pupils, and there is an explicit and concrete commitment to the most vulnerable and needy in both policy and practice. The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, St. Vincent De Paul Society and Life Skills are amongst the many outreach support networks for children and their families.
- The school has been awarded as a 'School of Sanctuary'. They are an inclusive, diverse school community who through the Gospel values, embrace, recognise and celebrate the many cultures in their school family and community.
- The parish priest is exemplary in supporting and promoting the Catholic Life of the school. He is regularly invited and welcomed into school. He works closely with the school and has recently supported the school with a Year of the Word day. Using Scripture in St. Matthew's Gospel as an opportunity to discover, challenge and be creative. He fully supports the Religious Education programme. When speaking with inspectors, the parish priest praised the school and its staff for their outstanding provision of Catholic life.
- Children's spiritual and moral development is highly effective. Evidence is gathered for Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural using the 'Grid maker' online programme. The school has a cohesive Personal, Social and Health Education which has close links with Relationships and Sex Education and the Religious Education Programme, *Come and See*.
- The school provides parents with a wealth of information regarding the Catholic Life of the school. The school's website and Twitter page expresses the variety of opportunities provided for the children and its successes and celebrations.
- Parents and parishioners are regularly and warmly invited to for example, school masses, International week, Positive about Ability Week and Health & Wellbeing week.

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

- Leaders and governors are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- The Executive headteacher and Head of School are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. They are energised by the task and are a source of inspiration for the whole community.

- St. Sebastian's mission is highly effective and has a great impact on the school community today as it has for previous generations. It is truly loved and lived! To continue living their mission to the full, leaders and governors are keen to not only continue reviewing its mission but to hold a full revision with all stakeholders in time. This will provide an opportunity of revival and refreshment whilst celebrating its effectiveness.
- The provision for the Catholic Life of the school is given the highest possible priority by leaders. This is reflected in the school's self-evaluation which is a coherent reflection of rigorous monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge and is clearly and explicitly focused on the Catholic Life of the school. As the self-evaluation document is reviewed, leaders would benefit from some organisation of the areas of evidence and development points.
- Continuous Professional Development focusing on the Catholic Life of the school occurs frequently and is engaging, well planned and effective. As a result, the staff have an outstanding understanding of the school's mission. They share its purpose and are keenly and actively involved in shaping and supporting it.
- The school has strategies for engaging with parents/carers to the obvious benefit of pupils. Parents/carers understand the school's mission. They are invited to school masses, services, Sacramental preparation, and a variety of fundraising and school events. Regular parent questionnaires enable the school to celebrate its successes and make any future plans. For the inspection, a parent expressed, 'My son is enjoying every aspect of his first year at St. Sebastian's.'
- The parish priest has regular meetings with the school and cluster of schools within the parish to plan for the school and liturgical events. He is invited to attend governor meetings for interview panels and the future of the school. Families are welcomed into church and there is a high percentage of children taking part in Sacramental programmes.
- Governors are highly ambitious for the Catholic Life of the school and leads by example in the way it consistently emphasises Catholic Life as a school improvement priority.
- They make a highly significant contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. They are passionate about the school's mission, are actively involved in its evaluation and are ready to challenge as well as support where necessary.
- On the day of inspection, governors shared their commitment to the school's mission. 'The mission gives empowerment and self-confidence to children. It impacts on prayer and gives community spirit. It helps us to support the welfare of the whole family and it is how we act as a governing body.'
- Governors ensure that there are strong home, school and parish links. They are involved in the school church craft club, Sacramental programmes and celebrate regularly with the school through liturgical events, worship, fundraising and assemblies.
- All policies relating to the Catholic life of the school are up to date and ratified by the governors.
- The school is enthusiastic in its response to Archdiocesan policies and initiatives. Each initiative is planned thoroughly and is highly effective, ensuring the children and the whole school community are part of the Church's mission.
- The school is now ready to map the provision for Relationships and Sex Education identifying links with Religious Education, Science and Personal, Social and Health Education across the school year.

## **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 outstanding.

- Pupils, from their varied starting points, make good progress in each key stage, with many achieving outstanding progress.
- Almost all pupils, relative to their age and capacity, are religiously literate and engaged young people; they use their knowledge, understanding and skills effectively, to reflect spiritually, and to think ethically and theologically. As a consequence, they are fully aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
- Groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are also making progress comparable to the progress of other pupils.
- The extent to which pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is outstanding.
- Pupils are actively engaged in lessons and are committed to improving their knowledge, understanding and skills, in order to further develop as competent learners.
- They concentrate exceptionally well, have a clear understanding of how well they are doing, of what they need to do to improve, and can fully articulate how they have made progress.
- Pupils approach their lessons with great interest and enthusiasm. They enjoy tackling challenging activities and respond exceptionally well to opportunities which extend their learning.
- Behaviour in lessons is outstanding because pupils enjoy Religious Education. They are rarely off task even in extended periods without direction from an adult. On the day of inspection, children spoke about their how they enjoy different ways of learning.
- The quality of pupils' current work, both in class and in written work, is outstanding. Their work is presented to a very high standard, depict a variety of activities and progress is evident across the year groups.
- Pupils workbooks celebrate their achievements. The school is using verbal feedback in Religious Education which is developing children's progress. Pupils benefit from challenges; know how well they are progressing and how to keep improving. They understand the skills they are using in their work and assess their own learning exceptionally well.
- Their Religious Education journals and portfolios reflect and celebrate the rich experiences and opportunities they are given. They are presented to a high standard. The school's Foundation Stage portfolios show the wealth of Religious Education at the heart of the Early Years curriculum.
- All workbooks provide a variety of outstanding evidence of the Religious Education curriculum. In later primary years pupils written work is of a high quality. The pupils, 'Learn and Share' books build strong home and school links.
- Pupils' attainment, as indicated by teacher assessment is outstanding.
- The school's tracking system is outstanding in providing clear indications of the impact of teaching and learning. Evidence of data collated from across the school, shows how Religious Education is affecting different groups of children.
- Collation of data for individual children with end of year predictions and action planning shows how the school is ensuring that every child is planned for. This supports their sustained progress.
- The school is highly successful in using and applying the new Standards in Religious Education. As a federated school with St. Cuthbert's, this work is a beacon of outstanding practice to be shared through the cluster network of schools and with the Archdiocesan Education team. They ensure Religious Education is the core subject comparing progress with all subjects taught, reflected in the school's assessment overviews.

### **The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education is outstanding.
- Teachers have a high level of confidence because of their subject expertise and their understanding of the breadth of teaching methods. Pupils are inspired to learn and make outstanding and sustained progress.

- Teachers are highly effective in consistently planning high-quality lessons linked to pupils' current assessment and their knowledge of the individual, consolidating and extending pupils' knowledge and understanding, so that they learn extremely well. As a result of this, the majority of teaching is outstanding.
- They plan for and use driver words correctly and effectively to differentiate and challenge pupils. This enables them to communicate high expectations. They ensure that data is used to inform their learning objectives to suit the varying learning needs of the children.
- A wealth of creative activities are planned for to engage the pupils. Teachers carefully observe and skilfully question during lessons in order to adapt tasks and explanations, maximising learning for every pupil.
- Teachers employ a wide range of appropriate teaching strategies, including individual and collaborative work. Consequently, pupils are highly motivated and sustain high levels of concentration.
- Teaching assistants provide outstanding understanding and consideration of the specific needs of pupils in their care and encourage progress. They are enabled to optimise learning for pupils.
- Teachers consistently use time effectively to maximise learning opportunities in lessons and across sequences of lessons.
- Celebration of achievement and effort are central to the teacher's assessment strategy, securing high levels of motivation from pupils.
- Quality feedback on the day of inspection was frequent, leading to high levels of engagement, interest, achievement and progress.
- On the day of inspection, plenaries celebrated and gave further challenges to children's understanding. Pupils evaluate their work and can say how well they are achieving. This contributes to their outstanding progress and provides them with a high level of confidence in making further improvements.
- In outstanding lessons on the day of inspection, every opportunity was provided to ensure children understood, explored and acquired new learning. In the Foundation Stage, this was achieved through guided role-play, independent gross, fine motor skills and creative activities. Key workers effectively questioned children throughout their activities. In one lesson, there was clear and exemplary evidence that children are remembering and using their knowledge and understanding by comparing bible stories through their role-play.
- The school's detailed tracking enables teachers to know and plan for the learning needs of every child. This was clearly evident with older pupils using skills they have retained to enable them to widen their knowledge and understanding. A group of children discussed part of St. Matthew's Gospel and with guidance could discuss and begin to identify and explain.
- Pupils enjoy the ambitious challenges offered to them. Teachers encourage and guide children to use their known skills effectively. By continuing to broaden experiences of discussions, debates and inferences, children will continue to broaden and widen their knowledge and understanding with ever growing confidence.

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

- Leaders and governors are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Religious Education.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in every respect and in each key stage.
- They ensure that the required amount of curriculum time is given to Religious Education in each key stage. Religious Education has full parity with other core curriculum subjects, in terms of professional development, resourcing, staffing and accommodation.

- Any additional requirements and policies of the Archdiocese regarding the Religious Education curriculum are embraced and fully implemented.
- Timetabling of Religious Education fully covers the percentage required for Religious Education. Through monitoring, the school can now share support and offer advice to the timings of lessons within each week.
- Leaders and governors' self-evaluation of Religious Education is a coherent reflection of rigorous assessment, tracking, monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge which is well-informed by current best practice in Religious Education. This results in targeted planning and strategic action taken by the school which leads to outstanding outcomes in Religious Education.
- Governors are fully informed of standards in Religious Education and the subject leader regularly reports to governors. They are fully aware of their responsibilities and ratify all policies inked to Religious Education. They know the standards of children's work, the progression across the school and how specific groups of children are progressing. The Religious Education link governor regularly supports learning walks and book monitoring and share their acknowledgment stickers in children's workbooks.
- The Parish priest is fully supportive to staff in their preparation for lessons. He welcomes the invitation to be a teaching resource for children and teachers to deepen their understanding and be closer to the parish and church.
- The Religious Education coordinator is new to the role and is fully supported and works closely with St. Cuthbert's subject leader. Although the new leader is settling into her role, she has shown highly effective knowledge and understanding by sharing her inspiring vision and is successfully evidencing the impact this is having. The subject leader ensures the school's outcomes reflect the school's high-quality work and effective challenge.
- She is a role model of outstanding practice. Monitoring of the curriculum is organised and managed well. This impacts effectively on teaching and learning in Religious Education, resulting in outstanding outcomes. She seeks out ways to continually self-challenge and improve her practices and shares this with a highly effective cluster group of local Catholic schools.
- Parents receive regular updates and newsletters about Religious Education, formal reports on the achievement of their children and there is a wealth of information on the schools' welcoming website. The school's Twitter feed celebrates children's learning. Through parent questionnaires, a parent commented, 'We are well informed about what goes on in school and progress.'

## **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 outstanding.
- Pupils value and regularly participate voluntarily in liturgy and prayer. They display confidence using a variety of traditional and contemporary approaches to prayer, scripture, religious artefacts and liturgical music.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts. Appropriate to their age and ability, they are able to prepare acts of Collective Worship, which fully reflects this understanding.
- The pupils' Collective Worship Committee are given responsibility to create their own prayer tables, write prayers, research resources and prepare visual aids.

- Pupils take the initiative in leading worship with enthusiasm. They are creative and resourceful in their planning of liturgy and want it to be the best it can be. Other pupils are engaged by the worship opportunities planned by their peers.
- There is a genuine enthusiasm for Collective Worship, reflected in the quality of singing, in the quality of prayerful silence and the depth of reverent participation in communal prayer.
- Acts of Collective Worship engage all pupils' interest and inspire in them deep thought and heartfelt response. On the day of inspection, children were reverent throughout their worship. They used signs and symbols from the Mass confidently, such as the Sign of the Cross and blessing themselves before the Gospel. There was a partnership in leading prayer between the teacher and children.
- Children were given time with God, prayed together, sang beautifully and were provided with purposeful go forth messages.
- The experience of living and working in an inclusive, faithful, praying community has a profound and visible effect on the spiritual and moral development of all 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 outstanding.
- Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and forms the heart of every school celebration. Praying together is part of the daily experience for pupils and staff, whatever their own faith background.
- On the day of inspection, staff gathered, as they do regularly, to a liturgy which gave them and the inspectors time with God and to contemplate the day ahead. This outstanding practice is shared across the federation of both schools and should be shared with their wider cluster of schools as one way of highlighting and centralising the prayer life of the school.
- Collective Worship has a clear purpose, message and direction. The themes chosen for worship reflect a deep understanding of the liturgical seasons and the Church's mission in education.
- Themes reflect the rhythms of the liturgical year and ensure that staff are fully supported in their planning of worship which leads to outstanding acts of worship provided with, for the children and the whole school community.
- Collective Worship is given the highest possible priority in terms of planning, evaluating and resourcing. As a result, experiences of Collective Worship are of a high quality, cherished by every member of the community.
- Relevant staff have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts, and are passionate about ensuring pupils have high quality experiences of the Church's liturgical year.
- The parish priest is fully active in the prayer life of the school. He celebrates a variety of liturgical events for the school community for example, Advent and Lent services, St. Sebastian's Feast day and recently launched the Year of the Word.
- Staff are highly skilled in helping pupils to plan and deliver quality worship, when appropriate. They have a thorough and comprehensive understanding of the purpose of Collective Worship and a wide variety of methods and styles of prayer.
- St. Sebastian's takes every opportunity to attract and facilitate attendance by parents/carers associated with the pupils and response to this invitation is outstanding. They are regularly thanked for their attendance at a variety of liturgical celebrations and know they are a part of the parish community.

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

- Leaders and governors are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Collective Worship.
- Leaders have expert knowledge of how to provide policies and guidelines to ensure quality planning and delivery of Collective Worship.
- They have an extensive understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and they are able to make these accessible to the pupils in a contemporary context.
- There are visible leaders of Collective Worship within the school. They are models of outstanding practice for staff and pupils.
- Leaders place the highest priority on the professional development of staff incorporating liturgical formation and the planning of Collective Worship.
- They extensively promote pupils' planning and leading Collective Worship in a variety of contexts.
- Leaders and governors place the highest priority on the school's self-evaluation of Collective Worship with regular and robust reviews of school performance.
- Governors are fully immersed in the prayer life of the school and regularly attend liturgies and celebrations throughout the school year.

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

- Continue to follow targets outlined in the school's Self Evaluation Document.

## OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	1
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## CATHOLIC LIFE

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	1
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school	1

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	1
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	1

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	1
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	1

***Key to judgements: Grade 1 is Outstanding, Grade 2 Good, Grade 3 Requires Improvement and Grade 4 Inadequate***