



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. JOHN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

SKELMERSDALE

Inspection Date 22 November 2017

Inspectors Mrs. Pat Peel Mrs. Maria Eves

Unique Reference Number 119586

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 187

Acting Chair of Governors Mr. Peter O'Dowd

Headteacher Mrs. Angela Aspinwall-Livesey

School address
Flamstead
Birch Green
Skelmersdale
Lancashire
WN8 6PF

Telephone number 01695 721323

E-mail address head@st-johnsrc.lancs.sch.uk

Date of last inspection 20 November 2012

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. John's is an averaged sized Catholic Primary School situated in Skelmersdale, Lancashire serving the parish of St. Richard's.
- There are 187 number of children on roll of whom 88 are baptised Catholic, 58 come from other Christian denominations, and three from other faith or religious traditions. 38 have no religious affiliation.
- There are twelve teachers in the school. Eight are baptised Catholic. Nine teach Religious Education. Eight teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education with a further three currently undertaking the course.
- Since the last inspection a new Religious Education Co-ordinator has been appointed.

Key for inspection grades

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

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OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

St. John's School is outstanding 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 truly appreciate, value and actively participate in the Catholic Life at St. John's. They know, own and live out their Mission Statement and motto derived from it *'To live in love'* on a daily basis. Their Code of Conduct helps pupils to actively reinforce this in all aspects of school life.
- 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. They have an outstanding understanding of right and wrong and use restorative justice effectively when the need arises.
- Pupils enthusiastically embrace the demands that members of the school community entails such as becoming school councillors, eco squad, pupil parliamentarians, playground leaders, and monitors etc. Pupil voice is a real strength of the school.
- 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, Children In Need, NSPCC and Water Aid. They are alert to the needs of others and seek justice for all. Within the locality they collect for the local foodbank.
- Pupils value and fully participate in opportunities provided by the school including a range of after school clubs such as brass instruments, construction, quilling, science, crafts, sewing etc. The school supports outdoor educational visits; Year 6 pupils visit Tower Wood Outdoor Education Centre, Cumbria.
- Pupils take full advantage of the opportunities the school provides for their personal support and development they have an outstanding sense of belonging. On the day of inspection, a child commented that , *"Everybody loves coming to school, we are listened to and teacher's make our learning fun!"*. As a result, they are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of physical, emotional and spiritual growth.
- Pupils, appropriate to their age and capability, have begun relationships and sex education within the context of a Christian understanding but this is in its infancy and needs to be embedded further into school life.
- Pupils 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. The 'celebration assembly' is a key part of recognising this. Pupils suggest and change awards.
- Pupils value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the parish community and the Archdiocese. As a result, they respect and are involved with parish and diocesan celebrations and activities, irrespective of their own faith commitments. Pupils have attended the local church and the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ The King.
- Pupils feel able to express a pride in their own religious and cultural identity and beliefs. They have been visited by a Jewish speaker and have visited a synagogue.

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, its aims and objectives express the educational mission of the Church but needs to be reviewed and refined to ensure that it meets Archdiocesan guidelines. It underpins and is regarded by all as the spine which runs through every aspect of school life at St. John's. The motto derived from it '*To live in Love*' is known, owned and lived by everyone in the community.
- All staff are fully committed to its implementation across the curriculum. They enthusiastically participate in school activities which reflect the Catholic Life and mission of the school.
- There is a keen sense of community at all levels, evident in the high quality of relationships and the centrality of prayer to the whole community. The school is a supportive and joyful community.
- The schools open plan environment reflects its mission and identity through concrete and effective signs of the school's Catholic character. The mosaic which depicts the school badge and motto has pride of place in the school. The artwork depicting beliefs and values, Year of Mercy window, classroom focus' and sacred spaces all create an overwhelming yet calm ambience which exudes St. John's Catholicity and ethos.
- Staff promote high standards of behaviour and are exemplary role models of mutual respect and forgiveness for pupils inside and outside of the classroom.
- The entire curriculum reflects a commitment to Catholic Social Teaching, to care for our common home and to the dignity of every human person through its eco stewardship, fundraising and numerous outreach opportunities.
- The school provides extensive opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of all pupils and staff through continuous professional development opportunities such as attendance at Archdiocesan in-service days, Catholic Schools cluster meetings, and Catholic Certificate for Religious Studies etc.
- 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 school have a team including the learning mentor pastoral worker and outreach worker. Children recognise and value the support staff give them.
- The school is equally attentive to the pastoral needs of members of staff and ensures that every member's needs are understood and catered for.
- All the relevant documentation is in place and the school has made a commitment to purchasing relevant resources to support Relationships and Sex Education alongside Personal, Social and Health Education. The curriculum has begun to be mapped out and planned in readiness to celebrate Catholic teachings and principles in this aspect. This is an area the school has recognised needs to be further developed over the coming year.

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 school's leadership team is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. The development of the Catholic Life of the school is viewed by leaders and governors as a core leadership responsibility.

- The provision for the Catholic Life of the school is given a high priority by leaders. The school's self-evaluation document needs to become more reflective and explicitly focused on the Catholic Life of the school given the richness of opportunities the school provides for the staff and pupils. Planned improvements, often creatively conceived such as the development of the prayer garden with school councillors, to further enhance the Catholic Life of the school need to be added in.
- Continuous Professional Development focusing on the Catholic Life of the school occurs frequently and is engaging, well planned and effective. The leadership team and governors have undertaken a range of training opportunities. They share its purpose and are keenly and actively involved in shaping and supporting it.
- The school has highly successful strategies for engaging with parents and carers to the benefit of pupils, including those who might traditionally find working with the school difficult. The school offers an open-door policy, regular newsletters and website. Views of parents are sought via questionnaires. There is an active parent, teachers and friends association. As a result, parents and carers have a thorough understanding of the school's mission and are very supportive of it.
- Governors make a significant contribution to the Catholic Life of the school and the link governor is committed to her role. The governors are passionate about the school's mission, are actively involved in its evaluation and are ready to challenge as well as support where necessary. Many are active ministers in their own respective parishes.
- The school is enthusiastic in its response to Archdiocesan policies and initiatives and actively promotes the vision for the Archdiocese throughout the school. They have made a commitment to ensure that Relationships and Sex Education is further developed in the school. They have undertaken an audit of current practice and have discussed and ratified a policy and statement and are endeavouring to use the Journey in Love programme.

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 very good progress in each key stage, with many achieving outstanding progress.
- Groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are also making progress comparable to the progress of other pupils. Lessons are planned accordingly, and teaching assistants are used to great effect to enable this to happen.
- 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. They are fully aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
- Pupils are actively engaged in lessons and are committed to improving their knowledge, understanding and skills, further develop as competent learners.
- Pupils concentrate exceptionally well, are resilient and have a clear understanding of how well they are doing, and sometimes what they need to do to improve. In some lessons they can fully articulate how they have made progress however, more assessment for learning opportunities need to be built into lessons across the school.
- Pupils approach lessons with great interest, passion and enthusiasm. Pupils enjoy tackling challenging activities, and respond exceptionally well to opportunities which extend their learning. Behaviour in lessons is outstanding because pupils enjoy Religious Education and they are rarely off task even in extended periods without direction from an adult.

- Pupils' attainment, as indicated by teacher assessment, is outstanding.
- The quality of pupils' current work, both in class and in written work, is outstanding and they demonstrate pride in their work.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education is outstanding.
- Teachers are effective in 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, most teaching is outstanding, and teaching is never less than good. Sharing best practice and expertise in succinct planning using the driver words will develop this further.
- 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 sustained progress.
- 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.
- Teachers ensure some pupils are involved in evaluating how well they are achieving but this is inconsistent. This contributes to their progress and provides them with a high level of confidence in making further improvements.
- Most teachers consistently use time effectively to maximise learning opportunities in lessons and across sequences of lessons.
- Teachers carefully observe and skilfully question during lessons to adapt tasks and explanations, thus maximising learning for every pupil.
- High quality resources such as interaction with the Come and See website, God's and Church's Story, visual and audio media are used effectively. Only the recommended authentic Catholic Good News bibles should be used in Religious Education lessons and on displays.
- Teachers communicate high expectations and passion about Religious Education to their pupils who respond with enthusiasm.
- During most lessons high quality verbal feedback is frequent, leading to high levels of engagement, interest, achievement and progress. Pupils are given the opportunity to respond in a systematic and planned way, which ensures pupils understand of what they need to do to improve.
- Celebration of achievement and effort are central to securing high levels of motivation from pupils. Relationships at every level are strong.

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.
- Leaders and governors ensure that at least the required amount of curriculum time is given to Religious Education in each key stage.
- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education has full parity with other core curriculum subjects including professional development, resourcing, staffing and accommodation. The subject leader regularly attends all Archdiocesan in-service training

and meets together with a cluster of other schools to support monitoring and evaluation of the subject.

- Any additional requirements and policies of the Archdiocese regarding the Religious Education curriculum are embraced and fully implemented. Since the last inspection the Come and See programme has been fully implemented across the school and all relevant documentation e.g. planning, monitoring and tracking are embedded.
- 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 well targeted planning and strategic action taken by the school which lead to outstanding outcomes in Religious Education.
- The subject leader is enthusiastic and committed to the role. Since the monitoring visit she has effectively driven forward the subject and is endeavouring to improve teaching and learning in Religious Education. There is a link governor for Religious Education who supports the subject leader very effectively.
- Developing 'Come and See for Yourself' prayer opportunities for staff before beginning each new topic will further enhance current practice and ensure a greater understanding of the themes being developed through the programme.
- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education is imaginatively and thoughtfully planned to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Current tracking needs to be refined to incorporate the language of the level descriptors e.g. driver words as a continuum rather than in age related expectations which is not built into the Come and See programme.

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.
- Acts of Collective Worship engage pupils' interest and inspire in them deep thought and heartfelt response. There is a genuine enthusiasm for Collective Worship, reflected in the quality of communal singing, in the quality of prayerful silence and the depth of reverent participation in communal prayer.
- Pupils are becoming skilled in leading worship with confidence and enthusiasm. They are creative and resourceful in their planning of liturgy and want it to be the best it can be. Other pupils are visibly uplifted by the worship opportunities created by their peers. Currently pupils are not regularly evaluating their Acts of Collective Worship either as a leader or a participant. This needs to be developed further.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts. Appropriate to their age and ability, they prepare focal areas or lead acts of Collective Worship, which fully reflects this understanding.
- Pupils display confidence in their use of a wide variety of traditional and contemporary approaches to prayer, which uses scripture, religious artefacts and liturgical music.
- The pupils value and regularly participate voluntarily in liturgy and prayer.

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 for all pupils, whatever their own faith background, and forms the heart of every school celebration. Praying together is part of the daily experience for all pupils and staff.
- Collective Worship has a clear purpose, message and direction. The themes chosen for worship reflect a deep understanding of the liturgical season and the Church's mission in education.
- Staff have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts, and are passionate about ensuring that pupils have high quality experiences of the Church's liturgical life.
- Staff are becoming more skilled in helping pupils to plan and deliver quality worship. Leaders have a thorough and comprehensive understanding of the purpose of Collective Worship and the wide variety of methods and styles of prayer. They have undergone in house training to further develop their skills in Collective Worship.
- Opportunities are planned in a manner that attracts and facilitates attendance by other adults associated with the pupils and school and response to this invitation is outstanding.
- The parish priest presides at Mass and celebrations throughout the school and liturgical year.

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.
- They are always able to make these accessible to pupils in a contemporary context.
- Leaders are very visible as leaders of Collective Worship within the school and in the locality. They are models of outstanding practice for staff and pupils.
- They extensively promote pupils' planning and leading Collective Worship in a variety of contexts including on school trips.
- Leaders place the highest priority on the professional development of staff incorporating liturgical formation and the planning of Collective Worship. Leaders and governors have recently undergone further in-house training for Collective Worship.
- Leaders and governors place the highest priority on the school's self-evaluation of Collective Worship with regular reviews of school performance. There is expertise on the governing body to support this.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Further develop the work being undertaken in Catholic Life by:
 - undertaking a full review of the Mission Statement its aims and objectives with support from a member of the Christian Education Team to ensure that it meets Archdiocesan expectations;
 - continuing to develop a curriculum map for Relationships and Sex Education;
 - beginning to embed *Journey In Love* into lessons to support Relationships and Sex Education.
- Raise the standards of attainment in Religious Education further by:
 - continuing to address the areas identified on the Self Evaluation Document.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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