



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. MARY MAGDALEN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

PENWORTHAM

Inspection Date 5 February 2020

Inspectors Mrs. Pat Peel Mrs. Joanne Farrimond

Unique Reference Number 119638

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 209

Chair of Governors Dr J Brennan

Headteacher Mrs. D. Gallagher

School address Buller Avenue
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Date of last inspection 20 January 2015

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. Mary Magdalen is a smaller than average sized Catholic Primary School situated in Penwortham mainly serving the parish of St. Mary Magdalen.
- There are 209 children on roll of whom 197 are baptised Catholic, 7 come from other Christian denominations and 1 from another faith or religious tradition. Four children have no religious affiliation.
- There 12 are teachers. Ten of which teach Religious Education. Ten teachers are baptised Catholic. Seven teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education.
- Since the last inspection there has been no significant changes.

Key for inspection grades

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

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OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

St. Mary Magdalen 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 truly appreciate, value and actively participate in the Catholic Life at St. Mary Magdalen. They know, own and live out their Mission Statement, *'Letting the light of Jesus shine through in all we think, say and do'*. They have a prayer linked to it which pupils commented helps them to remember *'to try to be like Jesus all the time'*.
- *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 and have a very good understanding of right and wrong.
- Pupils enthusiastically embrace the demands that members of the school community entail such as becoming head boy and girl, school councillors, buddies, Mini Vinnies and Environmental guardians.
- 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, Samaritans Purse Shoe Box collection. Within the locality they have supported Bags2School, Kings Fold Food Bank, Derian House Children's Hospice through selling 'Christmas Flumps', and by collecting bottle tops to help with a local project to provide a child with a wheelchair.
- Pupils take full advantage of the opportunities the school provides for their personal support and development and as a result, they are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of physical, emotional and spiritual growth. They have an outstanding sense of belonging. On the day of inspection, pupils commented that, *"Teachers help you to learn. Everyone is kind to each other in this school!"*
- Pupils, appropriate to their age and capability, have begun Relationship and Sex Education lessons within the context of a Christian understanding.
- Pupils benefit from undertaking retreats and outdoor residential visits. Year 5 pupils visit Castlerigg Manor Catholic Retreat Centre in Keswick, Cumbria and Year 6 pupils visit Hothersall Lodge Outdoor Education Centre, Longridge, Lancashire.
- 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 school councillors, Mini Vinnies and Environmental guardians are very proactive in the school. In response to Pope Francis' call to 'Laudato Si' through their Eco awareness pupils, staff and their families have all been involved in preparing an underused and overgrown space to create a prayer garden.
- Pupils are rewarded with 'merits' at their Friday celebration assemblies. Pupils are also awarded with lunchtime 'golden tickets' whereby they and a friend of their choice can sit at the top table for lunch in recognition of living out an aspect of the Mission Statement.

- Pupils highly value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with their parish community and the Archdiocese. As a result, they respect and are involved with St. Mary Magdalen's parish celebrations and activities, irrespective of their own faith commitments.

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's Mission Statement, its aims and objectives; *"Letting the light of Jesus shine through in all we think, say and do"* and subsequent motto *'Nurturing hearts and minds'* are a clear expression of the educational mission of the Church. It underpins every aspect of school life at St. Mary Magdalen's.
- All staff are fully committed to its implementation across the curriculum. They enthusiastically participate in 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 relationships and the centrality of prayer to the whole community. The school is an extremely supportive and joyful community.
- The school environment reflects its mission and identity through concrete and effective signs of the school's Catholic character. The displays, classroom focus' and sacred reflective spaces all create an overwhelming yet calm ambience which exudes St. Mary Magdalen's Catholicity and ethos. This is tangible throughout the school.
- 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 fundraising, eco stewardship and numerous outreach opportunities.
- The school provides opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of all pupils and staff through prayer, retreats and continuous professional development opportunities such as attendance at Archdiocesan and the South Ribble family of Schools (WRIST) led in-service days.
- The Pupil and Family Support Worker is a valued member of staff who regularly supports pupils and their families on an individual need basis. Clear policies and structures are in place, which provide the highest levels of pastoral care for pupils, and there is an explicit and concrete commitment to the most vulnerable and needy in both policy and practice.
- The school is equally attentive to the pastoral needs of members of staff and pupils and ensures that every member's needs are understood and catered for.
- The school has a newly appointed parish priest who has built up warm relationships with the pupils and staff. Mass is celebrated for the school community in school and in church across the liturgical year. Catechists drawn from the governing body and parish support the pupils and their families undertaking the With You Always Sacramental programme.
- The school supports Mini Vinnies, the pupils' version of the St. Vincent de Paul Society (SVP). The parish members of the SVP actively support the work of the school in many ways on an ongoing basis.
- All the relevant documentation is in place and the school has made a commitment to support Relationship and Sex Education alongside Personal, Social and Health Education. This needs to be further developed across the school and mapped out.
- The school has an active Parents, Teachers and Friends Association which supports the school with both social and fundraising activities.

- The school is currently redeveloping the Prayer Garden with the support of the Environmental guardians. A 'School Garden DIY SOS' day was recently held with the local community to clear the outdoor space in preparation.
- The school has excellent links with All Hallows Catholic High School and staff regularly support pupils' engagement with sports and other curricular events held there.
- The school hosts a weekly pre-school session for parents to support the early transition into Reception.
- The school provides in-house before and after school provision 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 outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- The schools' leadership is deeply committed to the Church's Mission in education. Leaders are energised by the task and are a source of inspiration for the whole community. 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 priority by leaders and is reflected in the school's self-evaluation document which is a coherent reflection of monitoring, analysis and self-challenge and is clearly focused on the Catholic Life of the school.
- Relationships at every level are outstanding in this very friendly, warm and welcoming school community.
- Continuous Professional Development focusing on the Catholic Life of the school occurs and is effective. As a result, staff understanding of the school's mission is outstanding.
- The Headteacher is an advocate for Mental Health and Well-Being and has been instrumental in introducing Well-Being Circles and delivering mentoring and coaching sessions for staff and governors both in school, the WRIST Cluster family of schools and across the Lancashire Local Authority.
- The school has 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 a daily meet and greet, has an open-door policy, sends out regular newsletters including the Wednesday Word, has an up to date website, Jotter App, Facebook and Twitter feed. As a result, parents and carers have an outstanding understanding of the school's mission and are supportive of it.
- The home, school and parish community links are well forged at St. Mary Magdalen's. The Link Governor with responsibility for Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship is an active member of the parish in this close-knit community.
- As leaders, the governing body is highly ambitious for the Catholic Life of the school and leads by example in the way it emphasises Catholic Life as a school improvement priority. Many of the governors are active in the parish and they make a valuable contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. They are very supportive of the school's Mission.
- The school responds well to Archdiocesan policies and initiatives and promotes the Archdiocesan vision for the Archdiocese throughout the school. The school has been proactive in supporting SYNOD 2020 with pupils and their families.

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 also making progress comparable to the progress of other pupils.
- Pupils, relative to their age and capacity, are religiously literate and engaged young people; they 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.
- Pupils are actively engaged in most 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 because they are becoming familiar with the skills being developed through the driver words.
- Pupils approach their lessons with interest and enthusiasm. This was evident as pupils quickly settled to tasks and responded positively throughout.
- Pupils supported each other throughout lessons and showed great respect in listening to one another's opinions during activities.
- Pupils enjoy a range of activities and respond well to questioning. However, this needs further developing to create depth and challenge to extend their learning especially for the more able.
- Behaviour for learning is good because pupils enjoy Religious Education and disruptions in lessons are unusual.
- The quality of pupils' current work, both orally and written, is good but could be much better in some classes. Presentation in books is not always of a high enough standard and this needs to be addressed. In some books there is an over reliance on worksheets.
- Rejoice celebration books are testament to the wealth of work pupils have undertaken throughout the *Come and See* topics.
- Pupils' are undertaking formal assessment in line with Archdiocesan guidance and evidence kept including exemplars used for moderation purposes.
- Pupils have been taught about Judaism and Islam as part of their *Come and See* lessons. This helps to promote tolerance and respect for those who are different from themselves.

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 outstanding practice observed with the majority of lessons judged to be good.
- Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and have a good understanding of how pupils learn. Teachers' need to provide more opportunities for greater depth and challenge by using the driver word skill set not just in the lesson objective but throughout lessons including in the plenary. This will also enable the most able children to pre-empt the next steps in their learning.
- Teachers employ a range of appropriate strategies, including individual, paired and collaborative work. Consequently, pupils are motivated and concentrate well in lessons.

- In books there is evidence of continuity in lessons and across sequences of lessons. There are inconsistencies in teachers' expectations evidenced by the low quality of work presented in some books.
- In the best lessons observed teachers used questioning techniques very well and the pace is good. Some teachers did adapt explanations to highlight the skills pupils were developing using the language of the new standards, but this needs to be further developed across the whole school to ensure the needs of all the pupils are being met.
- High quality resources e.g. *Come and See* website, God's and Church's Story, audio and visual media are employed to engage pupils in their learning.
- Other adults are used effectively during lessons to optimise learning for pupils who need their support and encouragement to maximise their outcomes.
- The school has adopted their own methods for marking in line with other curriculum subjects including verbal and written. This is effective and not onerous on staff well-being.
- Achievement and effort are celebrated immediately leading to good levels of motivation from pupils.

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

- Leaders and governors are good 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 in each phase and key stage.
- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education has full parity with other core curriculum subjects including professional development, resourcing, staffing and accommodation.
- Leaders and governors have made a commitment to provide staff with the opportunity for Continuous Professional Development by undertaking the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS) and leadership programmes through the Teaching Alliance.
- The subject leader regularly attends Archdiocesan in-service training and meets together with other local cluster schools to support monitoring and evaluation of the subject.
- 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 fully embedded.
- Leaders' and governors' self-evaluation of Religious Education is a coherent reflection of assessment, tracking, monitoring, analysis and self-challenge which is informed by best practice in Religious Education.
- Whole school tracking is in place for Religious Education. The school has developed and begun to adopt a different approach in line with the Bishop of England and Wales directive regarding the draft Interim Standards.
- The subject leader is a real strength in the school. She has an inspiring vision of outstanding teaching and learning and a high level of expertise in securing this vision. She is passionate and highly committed to the role. Since the monitoring visit she has continued to drive forward the curriculum.
- Leaders and governors need to ensure that Religious Education is planned and differentiated to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Using the language of the driver words to develop their skills rather than focussing on the activity will have a much greater impact on Standards across the school.

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 act with reverence and respect and are keen to participate in Collective Worship.
- Pupils sing joyfully with actions. Hymns and music are used to very good effect during Collective Worship and liturgical events.
- Pupils are routinely involved in planning, preparing and/or leading Collective Worship with confidence, enthusiasm and a degree of independence.
- Pupils are not yet regularly evaluating Collective Worship. This needs to be further developed across the school to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity both as a leader and a participant.
- Pupils value and participate voluntarily in liturgy and say that they really enjoy Collective Worship. Pupils are encouraged to write and share their own prayers.
- Pupils early foundations are excellent. Pupils in Reception were able to say and sign the Our Father prayer as part of their Collective Worship.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons and feasts.
- The experience of living and working in a faithful, 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 outstanding.
- Collective Worship is part of the life of the school and prayer is included in all school celebrations.
- Praying together is part of the daily experience for pupils and staff.
- Collective Worship has a clear purpose, message and direction which clearly enables both pupils and staff to experience something of the mystery of God.
- Collective Worship and resourcing are given a high priority in the school. The Wednesday Word and CAFOD's Children's Liturgy resources are used to support whole school Collective Worship.
- Staff have a very good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts.
- The themes chosen for worship reflect a very good understanding of the liturgical seasons and the Catholic character of the school.
- Opportunities are planned in a manner that facilitates attendance by other adults associated with the pupils and school. This could be developed further by introducing 'Stay and Pray' or 'Pick up and Pray' opportunities for parents to join their children in a regular class Collective Worship.

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 know how to provide policies and guidelines to plan and deliver quality Collective Worship. There is an up to date policy in place.
- Leaders have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts. They make these accessible to the pupils in a contemporary context.
- Senior leaders of Collective Worship within the school are excellent models of good practice for staff and pupils.
- The parish priest is also a governor at the school. He presides at Mass for key celebrations throughout the Church's liturgical year. He has been instrumental in welcoming staff and pupils to church and has led sessions to 'get to know her' in an age appropriate way. During Lent and Advent, he offered opportunities for Reconciliation for the pupils from Years 4 to 6. He also supports in class during some Religious Education topics.
- Leaders promote pupils' planning, preparing and leading Collective Worship in an age and stage appropriate way.
- Governors are always invited to school celebrations across the Church's year.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Further develop the work being undertaken in Catholic Life by:
 - continuing to embed '*Journey in Love*' into lessons to support Relationship and Sex Education;
 - to begin mapping out Relationship and Sex Education alongside Personal, Social and Health Education across the curriculum.
- Raise the standards of attainment in Religious Education further by:
 - ensuring teachers and other adults routinely develop the language of the Standards i.e. driver word skill set into their day to day repertoire to more accurately support pupils throughout the plan, teach, review, assess cycle;
 - 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	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	2

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