



## ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

### INSPECTION REPORT

## St GERARD'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY and NURSERY SCHOOL

### WIDNES

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Inspection Date 16<sup>th</sup> June 2015

Inspectors Mrs Maria Eves Mr Dave Williams

Unique Reference Number 111391

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

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Type of School Catholic Primary

Age range of pupils 3 - 11

Number on roll 179

Chair of Governors Mr Peter Finney

Headteacher Mr Karl Landrum

School address Lugsdale Road  
Widnes  
Cheshire  
WA8 6DD

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Date of last inspection 16<sup>th</sup> November 2010

# 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 Gerard's school is a smaller than average sized Catholic Primary School situated in Widnes serving the parish of St Wilfred's and the former parish of St Marie's.
- There are 179 children on roll, of whom 115 are baptised Catholic, 61 come from other Christian denominations and 3 from other faith or religious traditions.
- There are 11% of children in the school who have English as an additional language. The school has the highest EAL within the local area.
- There are 13 teachers including the headteacher of whom 10 teach Religious Education and 7 have a suitable qualification with 4 currently studying for the CCRS. Four teachers are baptised Catholic.
- Since the last inspection there have been significant changes in personnel at the school. At the previous inspection the current headteacher had just been appointed. The deputy headteacher is new to the school and is also Religious Education subject leader. The majority of teachers have been appointed since the last inspection.

### Key for inspection grades

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

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## Overall effectiveness:

St. Gerard's Catholic Primary school is an outstanding school in providing Catholic Education.

## Inspection Judgements

**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. The school exudes a strong sense of spiritual purpose. There is a focus on teamwork, achieving high standards and creating a nurturing welcoming environment where Gospel values permeate every aspect of school life.
- Pupils know and understand the school's mission statement "Guided by God, we learn to hope, dream and achieve". Pupils understand the part they play within the mission of the school and are actively involved in evaluating the mission statement and regularly refer to it in lessons and discussions. An array of impressive art work, floor books, photography and sculptures have been produced by the children, depicting how they live the mission statement on a daily basis.
- Pupils have a strong sense of belonging to the school community and value and respect others. St. Gerard's is a place where worship, faith, education, and practice are central to school life.
- Pupils are encouraged to take on roles of responsibility in the school and wider community. There is an active school council who meet regularly and impact positively on the life of the school. For example, the children spoke with enthusiasm about the school council's in-put into the development of the grounds. They greatly appreciated this "fun and relaxing outdoor space". Year 6 are trained as play leaders, supporting and encouraging positive play at break and lunchtimes and are trained as Sports Ambassadors to enhance sport provision across the school.
- Pupils are actively involved in developing the Catholic character of the school by the way they confidently lead and participate in collective worship, school assemblies and community events with great enthusiasm and a strong sense of togetherness. They join together with other Halton schools to perform concerts for the parishes and community. The very positive feedback received confirms how much the community appreciates this. This also increases the children's confidence and self-esteem.
- Pupils benefit from participation in away days and retreat activities. Children, in years 2, 5 and 6 all have a residential at Kingswood and annual trips are made for individual year groups to Wigg Island, Chester Zoo, National Museum of Liverpool and Liverpool Cathedral of Christ the King. This enables the pupils to further develop responsibility and independence and to demonstrate care, consideration and respect for all.
- Behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils enjoy school; have positive attitudes to learning and a good sense of right and wrong. They show respect for each other's views and take an increasing responsibility for themselves and their actions.
- Education for pastoral care and personal relationships has fostered positive attitudes in pupils. This is a strength of the school. The learning mentor is an accredited 'Kidsafe' mentor and provides valuable support for vulnerable children and families.
- Pupils praise and acknowledge the contribution of others. They show a readiness to embrace and celebrate their lived experiences.
- Pupils are encouraged to meet their potential in all aspects of school life and readily embrace and appreciate the many opportunities offered to them through the school's many enrichment activities including the breakfast club which is free to all children.

- Pupils are involved in service to the local faith and religious communities. Pupils have an impressive understanding of the importance of service and support for those in need. They are growing in their understanding that the call to justice and service is part of being a member of a Catholic community. A number of different charities are supported throughout the year including Cafod, Nugent Care, Shoe Box Appeal and Macmillan Cancer Research. The school also generously supports Widnes Food Bank and the Sisters from Seel Street. A “Minnie Vinnies” group has been developed and this will support the work of the S.V.P. Strong links have been developed with a school in Calcutta and this year exchange visits between staff took place. Two teachers from the Indian school visited St. Gerard’s in May and spent time with the children sharing their culture and experiences. The children talked about these visitors with great excitement, reverence and respect.
- Pupils show great respect, awareness and understanding of other faiths and religions.

### **How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education**

- Pupils’ achievements in and enjoyment of Religious Education is outstanding.
- Their attainment in Religious Education is good.
- They make outstanding progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities.
- On entry to school many children have a limited knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith.
- There is no difference in performance between pupils of different gender.
- Outcomes for pupils with additional or special needs are outstanding.
- Analysis of assessments undertaken provides evidence of pupils generally attaining the appropriate level for their age and stage of development in each key stage.
- Pupils are becoming increasingly more religiously literate. Their knowledge, understanding and skills are developing appropriate to their age or capacity. During the inspection pupils were able to articulate and discuss Religious Education with enthusiasm and confidence.
- They are developing the skills that enable them to reflect spiritually, think ethically and theologically and are becoming more aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
- Pupils’ engagement in and enjoyment of their learning is outstanding as shown by their interest, enthusiasm and behaviour.
- Pupils are encouraged to work independently and collaboratively.
- Pupils are eager to learn, enjoy school, have positive attitudes to learning and approach their work with enthusiasm, determination and increased resilience as they become independent learners.

### **How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship**

- Pupils’ response to and participation in Collective Worship is outstanding.
- They show interest, respond well and actively participate in Collective Worship.
- They act with reverence and are keen to participate in a variety of gatherings.
- Pupils’ knowledge of prayer and liturgy is increasing.
- They become familiar with a variety of prayer styles. They appreciate and are open to the Word of God in the scriptures.
- Pupils recognise that St. Gerard’s Primary School is a prayerful community. Its Catholic character is reflected through prayerful displays and artefacts and the creation of beautiful sacred places around the school, especially the development of the outdoor prayer garden. Pupils sing joyfully, reflect in silence and join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence.

- Pupils confidently plan, evaluate and lead whole school and class based Collective Worship.

### **The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education**

- The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education is good overall with evidence of some outstanding teaching. In the outstanding lessons teaching was characterised by a wide range of stimulating activities, with tasks well matched to individuals' abilities and punctuated with opportunities to reflect on learning.
- Teachers display good subject knowledge and deploy a wide range of teaching styles to motivate and inspire pupils. Lessons observed provided evidence of high teacher expectations. 'Talking Partners' role play, research using information technology, together with open questioning motivated, challenged and supported pupils enabling them to make excellent progress.
- Teaching is good with some teaching outstanding because all teachers use their subject knowledge to plan learning which is pitched at the correct level, so that pupils of all abilities can make at least good progress.
- Teaching encourages pupils' enjoyment of and enthusiasm for Religious Education.
- Teachers take into account pupils' prior learning and ensure differentiated tasks when planning so that the work consolidates, builds and extends their knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to work independently and collaboratively. Good use is made of time and resources. Teaching Assistants are highly effective in the way they support pupils' learning with sensitivity, encouragement and challenge.
- Teachers mark and assess pupils' work regularly, thoroughly and constructively identifying clear targets for improvement and next steps for learning. As a result most pupils know how to improve their work and are able to respond actively to feedback and avail of opportunities to advance their skills and knowledge. Pupils' achievements are recognised, praised and valued and because of this every child flourishes.
- The assessment of pupils' work in Religious Education is thorough and has greatly improved since the last inspection.
- The school now has rigorous assessment strategies, including regular pupil progress meetings for Religious Education, which provide accurate and detailed information on the achievement of all the pupils.
- Teachers are able to identify how well pupils are achieving and tackle underachievement.
- Teachers enable and encourage pupils to evaluate their own work.

### **The extent to which the Religious Education Curriculum promotes pupils' learning**

- The extent to which the Religious Education Curriculum promotes pupils' learning is outstanding.
- The curriculum is outstanding in meeting pupils' needs.
- The school, using the *Come and See* programme recommended by the Archdiocese, meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Religious Education. Appropriate levels of the programme are being followed in different classes. This ensures complete Religious Education entitlement for each child and meets National and Archdiocesan requirements.
- Of the total curriculum time 10% is allocated to Religious Education. This fulfils the requirements of the Bishops of England and Wales.
- Planning ensures full coverage of the Religious Education programme. Imaginative and well planned strategies are deployed to enrich pupils' learning.

- The school implements new curriculum developments as appropriate and has successfully implemented robust and rigorous assessment and tracking systems.
- Enrichment activities have a positive impact on the curriculum.
- The Religious Education curriculum provides outstanding opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral development and vocation.
- The curriculum is customised to meet the needs of groups and individuals.
- Children have explored the beliefs and values of other faiths and religions. This helps to promote tolerance understanding and respect for those who think differently.

### **The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.**

- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding. It reflects the Catholic character of the school and takes into account the variety of faith backgrounds among the pupils.
- Collective Worship has a high profile and is central to the life of the school.
- Collective Worship plays a key part in meeting the spiritual needs of the pupils. Opportunities are provided to enable full, active and conscious participation of the whole school community.
- Children are enabled to pray formally and informally using a variety of prayer methods and styles.
- The school provides opportunities for staff to develop the skills in planning, leading and evaluating Collective Worship.
- The teachers provide the necessary resources and opportunities to help children to develop the skills necessary to plan, lead and participate in Collective Worship and to evaluate it effectively.
- Opportunities are provided for parents, carers and the local and wider faith communities to participate in a variety of celebrations of the *Come and See* programme and the Church's liturgical year.

### **How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.**

- The headteacher, R.E. co-ordinator, leadership team and governors are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Catholic life of the school and demonstrate a deep understanding of and commitment to the mission of the Church in the way they plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils. The dedicated and highly committed headteacher, RE co-ordinator and governors all have great ambition, high expectations and enthusiasm for Religious Education. This inspires staff and there is a vibrant vision for the subject in which achieving the best for pupils is at the centre. All have worked hard since the last inspection to successfully secure improvements.
- This is reflected in the School's own Mission Statement. All who form part of the school community including parents, clergy, governors and children were involved in the development and review of the Mission Statement. Its aims and practical objectives direct and guide every aspect of school life and are a useful tool by which the school evaluates its effectiveness. The planned review of the Mission Statement will ensure that all new staff have opportunity to contribute to its development.
- The Leadership Team, inspired by the Headteacher and supported by governors, has worked successfully to tackle the areas for development identified in the previous inspection. Actions have resulted in highly effective monitoring and assessment procedures impacting routinely on pupils' attainment and progress.

- Overall the school's self evaluation of its performance is accurate. The evaluation informs an effective development plan which clearly and correctly identifies their priorities for improvement and development.
- Staff are well supported in their teaching through in-service training and continuous professional development. The school provides good induction for staff and four members of staff are currently completing CCRS.
- The quality of Collective Worship is a strength of the school. It is effectively monitored and evaluated by leaders, governors and children. An up to date policy is in place.
- A range of opportunities for spiritual and moral development are provided for staff and pupils. Pupils recently produced models depicting what they would do if they were a world leader to ensure all children, across the world, benefitted from an education. Their ideas were thoughtful and inspirational and the local M.P. has taken them to share with the Prime Minister.
- Leadership at all levels respects difference, values diversity and ensures equal opportunities for all.
- Prayer, worship and the liturgical life of the school reflects and respects the religious diversity within the school.
- There are positive relationships at every level within the school.
- Parents are consulted regularly and involved in a variety of ways in the life of the school. They attend assemblies and school celebrations and the school arranges free transport for the parents, if this is necessary. Parents are very supportive of the school and appreciate the efforts the school makes to work in partnership with them.
- Governors are a real strength of the school and are outstanding in fulfilling their responsibilities. They are very knowledgeable about the school's strengths and priorities for improvement in Religious Education. The new link governor for Religious Education. is enthusiastic and highly committed. Bishop John Rawsthorne is invited into school regularly and both the school and the Bishop commented on how beneficial and enjoyable these visits are. Governors are hard working and they provide a good balance of support and challenge and are ambitious for the continued success of the school.

**How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Religious Education of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.**

- Leaders, governors and managers are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Religious Education of the school and in the way they plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.
- There is a thorough system of regular data gathering in which teachers are fully involved and the progress of individual pupils is discussed in pupil progress meetings. This ensures that support is quickly put in place if needed. Regular observations by leaders, discussions with pupils and book scrutiny ensure that all groups of pupils make at least good progress and have equal opportunities to succeed. Monitoring data is used effectively to evaluate the school's performance and plan for future improvements.
- There is a robust programme for the monitoring and evaluation cycle.
- Teaching and learning is monitored regularly and appropriate feedback and support given as necessary. Good practice is shared and celebrated.
- Continuing professional development opportunities are provided for all.
- Assessment information is collated and tracked by the subject leader and shared with the leadership team, governors and parents.
- Formal assessment tasks are undertaken in line with Archdiocesan guidance.

- The subject leader is outstanding in guiding Religious Education. She shows great determination and commitment and introduces new initiatives when appropriate. Good documentation guides and directs all staff in the delivery of the subject. This is updated as necessary.
- The self evaluation document is rigorous in identifying targets, timescales and lines of accountability.
- Curriculum outlines are provided for parents who are consulted on different issues depending on the topic being covered.
- Achievement and effort are celebrated.

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

- Continue to implement the areas for development identified in the school's own self evaluation document, particularly to:
  - undertake the planned review of the Mission Statement involving all stakeholders. This will further strengthen the shared vision and ensure ownership by all who make up the school community;
  - continue working with the cluster group sharing good practice.



# INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	1
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## **OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS**

<b>How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils</b>	
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	1
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	1
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	1

## **PROVISION**

<b>How effective the provision is for Catholic Education</b>	
The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education	2
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning	1
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	1

## **LEADERS AND MANAGERS**

<b>How effective leaders, governors and managers are in developing the Catholic Life of the School</b>	
How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	1
How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	1

<b><i>Key to judgements: Grade 1 is outstanding, Grade 2 good, Grade 3 requires improvement and Grade 4 inadequate</i></b>
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