

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, serving the parish of St. Sebastian's.
- St. Sebastian's school is federated with St. Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School. The two schools have the same Headteacher and governing body.
- There are 209 number of children on roll of whom 201 are baptised Catholic, 6 come from other Christian denominations, and 2 from other faith or religious traditions.
- There are 15 teachers of whom 10 teach Religious Education and 6 have a suitable qualification in Religious Education. Eleven teachers are baptised Catholic.
- Since the last inspection there is a new chair of governors and Religious Education subject leader.

Key for inspection grades

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

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school.

Overall effectiveness:

St. Sebastian'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.
- Pupils know and understand the school's Mission Statement, *Only my best will do, be kind to one another*, and understand the part they play within it.
- Their behaviour is outstanding; they have a good sense of right and wrong and apply this in their personal relationships. They lead by example and show responsibility for themselves and their actions.
- All pupils are actively involved in developing the Catholic character of the school and embrace opportunities to meet their potential in all aspects of school life.
- Pupils are encouraged to take on roles of responsibility in the school, e.g. through the school council, eco club, prefects and buddies. Buddies are used effectively in each class to model exemplary behaviour in and around school.
- Pupils show wider responsibilities through a variety of fundraising events. Funds are regularly raised for CAFOD, Nugent Care, Sisters of Mercy and the Handicapped Children's Pilgrimage Trust.
- Pupils are involved in service to their local community. They have, for example, performed with their speech choir delivering speeches on significant role models and have also sung for the community in residential care and parish celebrations.
- Respect and understanding of other faiths and religions and all backgrounds and cultures are celebrated by the pupils. The school celebrates an 'International week,' where each class embraces a different country and culture culminating in a global celebration at the end of the week and shared with the school and parish family.
- Many pupils benefit from participation in residential trips, for example, Colomendy in Wales and skiing trips. Two pupils are chosen each year to visit Lourdes, enabling them to share their faith pilgrimage with the rest of the school. There are also many other educational day trips enjoyed by the pupils.
- There are close links with the St Vincent De Paul Society who invite pupils to take part in a residential and donate food vouchers to vulnerable families.
- Older pupils are offered the chance to aid their transition to high school and take time away from school to be led in reflections about changes they will face and how to adapt, enhancing their well-being.
- Education for pastoral care and personal relationships is outstanding and has fostered positive attitudes in pupils.
- There is an invaluable network of support through the Learning Support Manager. There are individual and group programmes for vulnerable pupils and their families. There is a strong network of care and support by the manager and school staff, for example, *Rainbows*, *Nugent Care* and the *SEAL* programme.

- St. Sebastian's praises and acknowledges the contribution of others, evident in their weekly awards recognising outstanding effort. Pupils are proud that their efforts in, for example, attendance, achievement and behaviour are regularly praised.

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

- Pupils' achievements and enjoyment in Religious Education is outstanding.
- Their attainment in Religious Education is outstanding.
- 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 appropriate level for their age and stage of development in each key stage.
- Pupils' standards of work can improve by continuing to moderate pupils work within school and share findings with clusters of local schools. This will raise expectations and encourage further challenge for pupils.
- Pupils are becoming increasingly more religiously literate. Their knowledge, understanding and skills are developing appropriate to their age or capacity.
- 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 enthusiastic when challenged and show a commitment to succeed.
- Pupils are encouraged to work independently and collaboratively.
- Pupils are anxious to learn and improve their knowledge, understanding and skills 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.
- Pupils' knowledge of prayer and liturgy is increasing.
- They are becoming familiar with a variety of prayer styles. They appreciate and are open to the Word of God in the scriptures.
- Pupils sing joyfully and join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence.
- Older pupils are involved in preparing and leading worship. This good practice can continue to improve by using the *Stepping Stones* Archdiocesan guidance for gradual expectations in worship across the school.
- On the day of inspection older pupils acted with reverence, sang beautifully and enjoyed leading worship with their peers. Pupils led well, explaining their focus, using bible readings and asked pupils to respond to what they had heard. Each child knew how to go forth and act on the message they had heard.
- Foundation stage pupils were led in worship in a prayerful atmosphere, given time for reflection and appropriate readings were shared in a joyful, enriching 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. On the day of inspection some of the lessons observed were outstanding.

- It is consistently effective in ensuring that pupils are interested and engaged and make good progress.
- Teaching encourages pupils' enjoyment of and enthusiasm of Religious Education.
- Teachers ensure there is consistency in behaviour and expectations of pupils.
- They provide opportunities for pupils to work independently and collaboratively.
- Teachers display good subject knowledge and deploy a range of teaching styles. There are excellent pupil and adult relationships which encourages pupil discussion. Teachers ensure that pupils are motivated.
- In an outstanding lesson observed there was creative use of the driver words. Pupils graded work so that expectations and levels of challenge were set for the rest of the lesson. Pupils discussed and worked enthusiastically writing their own mission statement with appropriate use of scripture for reference. Success criteria was shared and explained to pupils.
- Younger pupils were beginning to understand signs and symbols in Baptism through excellent use of role play. The teacher provided an animated discussion, using the pupils display and prior knowledge. The Baptism role play was explained and shared so that each member of the class belonged to the experience. A variety of appropriate continuous provision kept pupils engaged and focused.
- In the Foundation Stage there are excellent portfolios of pupils' work. Work is presented to a high standard and Religious Education is promoting and developing many early skills.
- Teaching Assistants provide care and support to pupils and teachers. They show sensitivity to pupils needs and ensure all pupils in their care reach their full potential.
- Opportunities for Information Technology were used well, including the use of an interactive whiteboards and I-pads.
- Teachers take into account pupils' prior learning and work consolidates, builds and extends their knowledge and understanding. Planning is detailed and planning templates are used showing differentiation, a range of activities and good evaluations.
- Planning, teaching and learning would now benefit from identifying and using the driver words to show differentiation, develop levels of challenge and pupil expectations.
- Pupils are informed of their progress and how to improve both orally and through marking. Marking is positive, affirming and shows some developmental marking for Religious Education. This good practice can now be shared, developed and be consistent across the school.
- The school has good assessment strategies in place which provides information on the achievement of all the pupils.
- Teachers are able to identify how well pupils are achieving. The school tracks the achievement of all the pupils.

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. Time given for teaching and learning of Religious Education will continue to be consistent across the school through regular monitoring of class timetables.

- 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. It is customised to meet the needs of groups and individuals.
- The curriculum has been used to link with many areas of school life, for example, the International Schools Award, Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning programme, Philosophy for Children and Creative Challenge Curriculum.
- There are many outstanding opportunities for personalised learning, such as, *Think Yourself Great* and cognitive behaviour therapy; adding to the outstanding opportunities provided for pupils' spiritual and moral development.
- The outdoor school environment provides a variety of areas for play, sport and learning and is accessible in all seasons. Inside the school there are colourful and well-presented displays reflecting and giving worth to pupils' work.
- The school works in partnership with St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary as a federated school. Both schools have the same head teacher and governing body and both work closely with other local primary school clusters.
- There is an extended schools' service, *Field of Dreams*, used regularly after school and a service is also provided in the school holidays.
- Pupils are provided with many enrichment and extracurricular clubs such as, sports, music, homework and booster clubs. Pupils are encouraged to contribute as part of their mission, '*Only my best will do.*' The school celebrates their dedication to extracurricular clubs through the Children's University and hosts an award ceremony for pupils and their families.
- There are many visitors to school such as the parish priest, charity speakers and theatre groups.
- Children have explored the beliefs and values of other faiths and religions. This helps to promote tolerance and respect for those who think differently. Judaism is taught each year and Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism is on a rolling programme. The school has invited pupils of other faiths and religions to share their beliefs with their peers.

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.
- 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.
- Children are enabled to pray formally and informally using a variety of prayer methods and styles.
- The school provides many opportunities for staff to develop the skills in planning and leading Collective Worship. On the day of inspection a thoughtful and reflective worship was led for staff, which is practised on a weekly basis.
- The teachers provide the necessary resources and opportunities to help children to develop the skills necessary to plan, lead and participate in Collective Worship.
- There is outstanding evidence of some pupils planning and evaluating worship and this can now continue to develop across the school by using the Archdiocesan *Stepping Stones* advice.
- There are many opportunities provided to enable full, active and conscious participation of the whole school community, for example, Lenten services, a Remembrance service for World War One and end of year Masses.

- Opportunities are provided for parents, carers 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.

- Leaders, governors and managers are outstanding in promoting monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Catholic life of the school and in the way they plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.
- 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 direct and guide every aspect of school life.
- The mission statement would benefit from developing practical objectives linked to its aims to use as a further tool by which the school can evaluate its effectiveness.
- Leaders, governors and managers use monitoring data to evaluate the schools performance, celebrate, and plan future improvements.
- The Self Evaluation Document provides evidence of the schools' monitoring, analysis and self-challenge. It provides a basis to celebrate strengths and outlines areas for development.
- Leaders, governors and managers at St. Sebastian's are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education and are a source of inspiration for the whole community.
- Governors have full knowledge and understanding of the Catholic life of the school and fulfil their responsibilities. They have effectively helped to shape the direction of the school.
- Governors are regularly invited into school for a variety of events and liturgical celebrations. Regular updates are received from the Headteacher regarding the Catholic life of the school.
- Governors are rightly very proud of St. Sebastian's and know and care deeply for the school and surrounding community. They ensure the traditions and links to the surrounding parish community are upheld as they shape and support the school family.
- The Parish priest visits school and welcomes pupils and staff to masses at church as well as a variety of liturgical events in school. He works closely supporting the school with events such as a recent, memorable and moving World War One Remembrance service at church. He aids staff and pupils with the *Come and See* Religious Education programme.
- There are excellent home, school, and parish links for Sacramental preparations and celebrations. An after school church craft club for pupils is ran by members of the community, a governor and the subject leader. The parish priest offers reflection and prayer at the end of each session.
- Staff ensure that they play an active part in the Catholic life and mission of the school. It is an inclusive school where all are made welcome. The headteacher and staff display respect and care for each other and to every child and their families.
- The Headteacher, deputy head teacher have attended spirituality sessions ran by the Archdiocese. All staff regularly take part in weekly morning worship and *Come and See for yourself* staff reflections, all of which are shared on the schools' website.
- The school provides valuable induction and regular in-service training to enable staff to further understand the Church's Mission in Education and play their unique part in it. Many staff members teaching Religious Education either have their Catholic Certificate in

Religious Studies or are working towards the completion of it. Governors and the headteacher continue to encourage the completion of the certificate for all staff members.

- The quality of Collective Worship is a priority of the school. An up to date detailed policy is in place and further advice from the Archdiocese will continue the development of worship.
- Parents are consulted regularly and involved in a variety of ways in the life of the school e.g. through regular newsletters, the school website and a variety of liturgies, celebration and fundraising events. There is an active and supportive Parent, Teacher and Friends Association. Parent views of the school are positive.

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.
- The subject leader is new to the role and is showing outstanding qualities in guiding Religious Education. She leads Religious Education with commitment and passion for the subject and is a role model to the rest of the school. She is organised in her work and has introduced new initiatives when appropriate and has a clear vision and action planning.
- The Self Evaluation Document is a reflection of monitoring and self-challenge. Action plans are detailed and comprehensive.
- Briefing meetings provided by the Archdiocese are attended regularly and continuing professional development opportunities are provided for staff. Communication between the headteacher, staff, parents and governors is effective.
- Governors are informed of standards in Religious Education and in partnership with the subject leader they have taken part in learning walks.
- Monitoring of pupils work, planning and displays is used well to evaluate the schools performance and plan for future improvements. This should now include the formal monitoring of teaching and learning for Religious Education so that outstanding practices can be shared and challenges and standards can continue to be raised.
- Detailed and comprehensive documentation guides and directs all staff in the delivery of the subject. This is updated as necessary.
- Formal assessment tasks are undertaken in line with Archdiocesan guidance. Moderation is completed by the Religious Education subject leader and staff members.
- Assessment information is collated and tracked by the subject leader and shared with the leadership team and governors.
- Curriculum outlines are provided for parents who are consulted on different issues depending on the topic being covered.
- Formal written reports give priority to Religious Education and inform parents of their child's knowledge, understanding and achievements.

What the school needs to do to improve further?

- Continue to develop the mission statement of the school by;
 - developing practical objectives that link to the aims of the mission statement.
- Develop teaching and learning of Religious Education by;
 - formally monitoring and evaluating the teaching and learning of Religious Education so that outstanding practices can be shared and challenges and standards can continue to be raised;
 - using the driver words to show differentiation to develop levels of challenge and pupil expectations;
 - sharing good examples of developmental marking to enable consistency across the school.
- Develop pupils' participation in Collective Worship by:
 - using and seeking advice on the *Stepping Stones* Archdiocesan guidance enabling gradual expectations in worship across the school.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

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

How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils	
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

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education	
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

How effective leaders, governors and managers are in developing the Catholic Life of the School	
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

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