



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC INFANT SCHOOL

NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS

Inspection Date	13 November 2019
Inspectors	Rev. Anthony Kelly Mrs. Pat Peel
Unique Reference Number	104817

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

Type of School	Catholic Primary
Age range of pupils	3 -7
Number on roll	215
Chair of Governors	Mrs. Vanessa Wells
Headteacher	Mr. Darren McCann
School address	Victoria Road Newton -le-Willows Merseyside WA12 9RX
Telephone number	01744 678357
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Date of last inspection	23 September 2014

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's Infant School is an average sized Catholic Primary School situated in Newton-le-Willows serving the parish of St Mary's and St John's, St Patrick's and St David's.
- There are 215 children on roll of whom 198 are baptised Catholic, 5 come from other Christian denominations and 3 from other faith or religious traditions. Nine children have no religious affiliation.
- There are 9 teachers at the school of whom 8 teach Religious Education. Eight teachers are baptised Catholic and 8 teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education.
- Since the last inspection a new Executive headteacher has been appointed and two teachers are responsible for Subject Leadership.

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's Infant school is a good 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 good.
- Pupils appreciate, value and actively participate in the Catholic Life and mission of the school. A successful Mission Statement Day was held in October 2019. Consequently, the pupils know, own and live out their Mission Statement, *'I can do all things in Christ who strengthens me. Phil 4:13'*.
- Pupils show a respect for themselves and others as made in the image and likeness of God. The behaviour of pupils is excellent, and strong and positive relationships are in evidence throughout the school. They have a clear understanding of the *'Bee Rules - Be safe, Be Responsible, Be Respectful'*. They also show an understanding of the need to forgive, to be forgiven and they have a good understanding of right and wrong. At the end of the academic year, all pupils receive a certificate and gift to celebrate a personal quality. Awards, certificates, badges and stickers are also awarded throughout the year.
- Pupils accept the responsibilities of living within a Catholic school community. As a result, they are regularly involved with those activities which promote the Catholic Life and mission of the school both within school and the wider community. The pupils take part in fundraising events in order to support charities such as CAFOD and McMillan Coffee Morning. Their support of Alder Hey Children's Hospital has been particularly impressive. The pupils are aware of the needs of others and seek justice for others within and beyond the school community. A Warm Welcome local cafe which supports refugees shows their awareness and willingness to reach out to the local community.
- Pupils value and participate in opportunities provided by the school, such as visits and retreats. The newly created Worship Warriors benefited from a Spiritual Retreat Day to Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral. This gave them spiritual enrichment and they returned to school to begin to apply this to leading Worship. An Eco Committee has also been set up to help the school's contribution to the environment.
- Pupils respond well to the opportunities the school provides for their personal support and development. As a result, they are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of physical, emotional and spiritual growth. The school provides Leadership opportunities for pupils through the positions of School Councilors, Librarians and House Captains. The school runs successful Breakfast and After School Clubs which benefit pupils.
- Pupils, appropriate to their age and capability, have a good understanding of loving relationships. The school is well on the way to implementing the next steps in preparing them for their physical, emotional and spiritual development.

- Pupils embrace a holistic approach to education, have an understanding of what it means to have a vocation and recognise the importance of using their gifts in the service of others.
- Pupils value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the parish communities 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 feel able to express a pride in their own religious and cultural identity and beliefs.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school

- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is good.
- The school Mission Statement clearly expresses the educational mission of the Church. *'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Phil 4:13.'* is consistently displayed throughout the school and reminds the children of how they can live out each day.
- Staff are committed to its implementation across the curriculum and the whole of school life. They participate in school activities which reflect the Catholic Life and mission of the school.
- There is a clear sense of community at all levels, evident in the quality of relationships and the centrality of prayer to the whole community. The Catholic identity is at the core of behaviour management, and forgiveness is taught alongside school values of respect, compassion and resilience.
- The school environment reflects its mission and identity through obvious signs of its Catholic character with Scripture featuring prominently in displays. The Jo Kavanagh Prayer Garden, blessed by Deacon John O'Brian, is a lovely space for prayer and reflection.
- Staff promote high standards of behaviour and are good role models of mutual respect and forgiveness for pupils.
- The curriculum reflects a commitment to Catholic Social Teaching, to care for our common home and to the dignity of every human person. This is evident in fundraising activities on a national and local level, as well as an awareness of caring for the environment.
- The school provides many opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of pupils and staff. Staff are supported in their Continuous Professional Development and attend training days with the Archdiocese.
- All staff, either hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies, or are working towards it. A commitment to this is a strength of the school.
- Some staff have been trained to deliver the Rainbows Bereavement Support Programme to help any child suffering bereavement or loss.
- Visits to Church are arranged and the Parish Priest celebrates Mass at various times of the year.
- A whole school trip to Gulliver's World is planned in order to experience awe and wonder in the world.
- The school has a designated Pastoral Lead who makes a positive impact in helping to nurture children who are in need of extra support.

- Policies and structures are in place, which provide pastoral care to pupils, and there is a commitment to the most vulnerable and needy in both policy and practice.
- A new sensory area provides support for children experiencing social and emotional difficulties.
- The school has a regard for the pastoral needs of staff and pupils and the Senior Leadership Team operates an 'open-door' policy for anyone who needs to discuss a matter.
- Pastoral programmes; Personal, Social and Health Education and Relationships and Sex Education are planned, well taught and reflect Catholic teachings and principles.

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.
- Leaders and governors demonstrate a deep commitment 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.
- Leaders are well regarded as models of Catholic leadership by both staff and pupils. The new Executive Headteacher has played a big part in developing and nurturing the Catholic ethos of the school. His leadership and vision for the school, along with the help of Senior Leaders, Subject Leaders and Governors has transformed the Catholicity of the school.
- The provision for the Catholic Life of the school is given a high priority by leaders. Those in charge of Catholic life work well together and are committed to planned improvements to further enhance the Catholic Life of the school.
- Continuous Professional Development focusing on the Catholic Life of the school occurs and is effective. The school is keen to invest in its staff and support their aspirations. Staff take part in training run by the Archdiocese and Subject Leaders attend School Cluster Group meetings. Senior Leaders also attend training which fosters their own spirituality. As a result, staff have a strong understanding of the school's mission and are involved in shaping and supporting it.
- All staff meetings or get-togethers now begin with prayer or a moment of stillness. This helps to develop the Catholic ethos of the school.
- The school has strategies for engaging with parents and carers to the benefit of pupils, including those who might traditionally find working with the school difficult. As a result, parents and carers have a strong understanding of the school's mission and are supportive of it. One parent commented, *'My daughter is a child grounded in her Religious values and school supports her to grow.'*
- Parents are invited to share in celebrations of the childrens' work, achievements, whole school Masses and other liturgical celebrations.
- 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. They care deeply about these aspects.
- Governors make a strong contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. They are fully supportive of the school's mission and are involved in its evaluation.
- Governors are passionate about promoting the Catholic life of the school and care deeply about this aspect. They are highly ambitious and provide strong support and challenge to the school's Senior Leaders.

- The Religion Education Link Governor works closely with the Subject Leaders is dedicated to helping the school to improve and provides support and challenge in equal measure.
- The Parish Priest is a helpful part of the school family. He is very supportive and is accessible for Masses and other liturgical celebrations.
- The school responds well to Archdiocesan policies and initiatives and promotes the Archdiocesan vision throughout the school.
- Achievement and effort are widely recognised and are celebrated through Celebration Assemblies, Class Collective Worships, Twitter and the Newsletter.

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 lessons and are committed to improving their knowledge, understanding and skills, in order to further develop as competent learners.
- Pupils concentrate well, have an understanding of how well they are doing, of what they need to do to improve, and can articulate how they have made progress. Religious Education will soon become part of the new tracking system within the school and will help to enhance this. A wider use of the Driver words to challenge all pupils will equally help further this.
- Pupils approach their lessons with interest and enthusiasm. They enjoy challenging activities and respond well to opportunities which extend their learning. Themed weeks and days such as Multi-Faith Week and Spirituality Days are productive and popular.
- Behaviour in lessons is excellent because pupils enjoy Religious Education and disruptions in lessons are unusual.
- The quality of pupils' current work, both in class and in written work, is good. Pupils take pride in their work.
- Formal assessments are carried out termly by each child as recommended by the Archdiocese.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education is good.
- Planning follows the most up-to-date Archdiocesan format with the inclusion of the language of the new standards. However, implementing the driver words more widely will further improve lesson outcomes for pupils and ensure greater progression from year to year.

- Teachers consistently plan good lessons linked to pupils' current assessment so that pupils learn well. As a result of this, teaching is consistently good.
- Teachers are confident in their subject expertise and have a good understanding of how pupils learn. As a consequence, pupils apply themselves well and make good progress in lessons and over time. Greater focus on plenaries within lessons to extend pupils' learning and provide 'next steps' would extend this.
- Teachers employ a range of appropriate strategies, including individual, paired and collaborative work, with some imaginative and well-planned activities. Consequently, pupils are motivated and concentrate well in lessons.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils and use good questioning to challenge pupils. At times, this skill could be used more widely to further challenge and stretch pupils.
- Teachers manage time well to secure good learning in lessons and lessons are paced well to keep and maintain pupils' concentration.
- Good quality resources are used effectively to optimise learning for pupils. Teaching Assistants are also used consistently well in helping and supporting pupils.
- Marking is completed regularly by teachers. However, this could be more focused on teaching and learning to support pupils and aid teachers' work/life balance.
- Church visits are used to help, support and enhance learning.
- The Religious Education curriculum provides opportunities for childrens' spiritual and moral development. For example, the 'Everyday Heroes' Week' helps to encourage and foster a sense of vocation in the pupils.
- Achievement and effort are celebrated, and teachers regularly give good levels of praise to pupils, helping to aid motivation.

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 Religious Education is a core subject within the school and the curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in every respect and in each key stage.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the required amount of curriculum time is given to Religious Education in each key stage.
- Subject Leaders regularly attend Archdiocesan In-Service training and meet together with other schools within their Cluster Group to share good practice.
- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education is comparable to other core curriculum subjects, in terms of professional development, resourcing, staffing and accommodation.
- Continuous Professional Development is supported and encouraged within the school and Newly Qualified Teachers are supported and have access to appropriate training.
- The school follows the *Come and See* programme of study, as recommended by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.
- Leaders' and governors' self-evaluation of Religious Education is a good reflection of frequent assessment, tracking, monitoring, analysis and self-challenge which is informed by current best practice in Religious Education.
- The Subject Leaders for Religious Education have a clear vision for teaching and learning and a good level of expertise in helping to secure this vision. They work well together and are committed to taking the subject forward.

- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education is planned to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. The Link Governor meets with the Subject Leaders and with the Worship Warriors to see where improvements can be made.

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 good.
- Pupils act with reverence and are keen to participate in Collective Worship. They sing joyfully, reflect in silence and join in community prayer appropriately and with confidence.
- Pupils are becoming involved in planning, preparing and leading worship with confidence, enthusiasm and a degree of independence. They are thoughtful in their planning of liturgy and other pupils are engaged by the worship opportunities planned by their peers. Even greater opportunities for pupils to take ownership of Worship could now be used.
- Pupils use a variety of approaches to prayer which include Scripture, religious artefacts, liturgical music and other forms of prayer. The Worship Warriors use a Class Collective Worship Box to help to create a prayerful atmosphere.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons and feasts and the approaches this requires in the planning of appropriate worship opportunities.
- 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. They have a well-developed sense of respect for those of other faiths.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is good.
- Collective Worship has become a key part of the life of the school and prayer is included in all school celebrations. Praying together has become part of the daily experience for pupils and staff.
- Collective Worship has a purpose, message and direction. The themes chosen for worship reflect a good understanding of the liturgical seasons and the Catholic character of the school.
- Collective Worship is a priority in terms of planning, evaluating and resourcing; as a result, experience of Collective Worship is engaging, and members of the community speak positively about these opportunities. However, the timings of Worship need to be monitored to ensure Class Collective Worship do not run on too long.
- Families and friends are invited to share Worship celebrations during the year.
- The new Prayer Garden is utilised well to enhance the spiritual experience for children.
- Early Years and Foundation Stage regularly hold a 'Stay, Play and Pray' session for their families. A 'Go Forth Prayer' is given to family members to provide an opportunity to celebrate their experience at home with their child.

- A Collective Worship Comment Book has been established by the school whereby the extended school family are able to write positive comments which can then be shared with the children. This is a lovely link between home and school.
- Relevant staff have a very good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and ensure that pupils have experiences of the Church's liturgical life. The Parish Priest also celebrates significant liturgies during the year.
- Staff are skilled in helping pupils to plan and deliver quality worship when appropriate. They have a good understanding of the purpose of Collective Worship and the wide variety of methods and styles of prayer.
- Opportunities are planned in a manner that facilitates attendance by other adults associated with the pupils and school and response to this invitation is appreciated and taken up.

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

- Leaders and governors are good 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.
- They have a very good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts.
- Leaders of Collective Worship within the school are appropriate models of good practice for staff and pupils.
- They promote pupils' planning and leading of Collective Worship. This can now be more widely incorporated.
- Subject Leaders have attended Collective Worship In-Service training run by the Archdiocese and have led staff in Collective Worship.
- Leaders and governors regularly review Collective Worship as part of their self-evaluation processes.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- To continue to implement areas identified in the school's Self-evaluation Document.
- To further develop the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education by:
 - using the driver words to further support and challenge pupils and ensure greater progression;
 - using plenaries within lessons to help extend learning for all pupils;
 - to focus marking on teaching and learning.
- To further develop Collective Worship by:
 - helping and encouraging pupils to lead Worship more widely within class and across the school.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	2
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CATHOLIC LIFE

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	2
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school	2
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	2
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	2
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	2

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