



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. JOHN FISHER CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

KNOWSLEY

Tuesday 24 April 2007

Inspectors Rev. Desmond Seddon Mrs. Rosemary Purcell

URN 104476

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Catholic Primary
Age range of pupils	4-11
Number on roll	154
Acting Chair of governors	Rev. Paul Benbow
School address	Tithebarn Road, Prescot, Merseyside, L34 OHA.
Telephone number	0151 546 8742
Fax number	0151 549 1274
E-mail address	stjohnfisher.de@knowsley.gov.uk
Date of last inspection	10 June 2003
Head teacher	Mr. Peter Kennedy

Introduction

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

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.

Description of the school

St. John Fisher is a small Catholic Primary School. The school is situated in the village of Knowsley and serves the learners within the village and over a wider surrounding area. This area has many indicators of deprivation and the proportion of children in the school who are eligible for free school meals is above average.

There are currently 154 children on roll of whom 129 are baptised Catholics. There are 25 children from other Christian denominations and none from Other Faith traditions. The proportion of learners identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is around the national average. There are 9 teachers teaching Religious Education, of which 7 are Catholic and all have a Religious Education qualification.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

© 2007 copyright – Archdiocese of Liverpool. This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school.

Overall effectiveness of the school

St. John Fisher is a good Catholic school with a number of outstanding features. It is an inclusive community, underpinned by an exceptionally strong Catholic ethos, which establishes a positive climate for work. The values of the gospel very evidently underpin every aspect of school life. Outstanding relationships have been established by working closely with both home, parish, and the wider community. Standards are good. Learners achieve well and make good progress by the end of Key Stage 2. Overall, teaching is good. Assessment provides clear guidance on learning. The curriculum is well planned. Learners' behaviour is outstanding. The provision for learners' spiritual and moral development is outstanding. Both curriculum Religious Education and Collective Worship make a significant contribution to this development. The headteacher is exemplary in leading the school. He has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and a vision of how to meet development needs. The coordinator is good in supporting staff and raising the profile of the subject.

Grade: 2

Improvement since the last inspection

There were no significant areas for development in the last inspection report. The school continues to strive for excellence in all areas. There have been a number of initiatives which illustrate the school's openness to developments, for example the Teddy Bear club, the Jesus and Me Club (J.A.M.) and the introduction of the Rainbows programme to help children who have suffered a loss.

Grade: 1

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation is good. The judgements made in this document overestimate some of the judgements made in this report. The school's self-evaluation needs to be undertaken annually. Identification of its own areas for development and the strategies planned to address them as well as the minor areas for development identified in this report should be included. The leadership has a clear understanding of what needs to be developed, and openness to change. There is outstanding capacity for further improvement as shown by the shared commitment to Religious Education and related whole school issues by all.

Grade: 1

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to implement the items contained in the self-evaluation document and the minor issues within this report.

Achievement and standards

Learners make good progress in the school. Standards in Religious Education overall are good, with the majority of learners meeting the learning objectives and outcomes set, according to their age and stage of development. There is no significant difference in performance by learners of different gender. Learners with special needs make good progress in Religious Education with the help provided by excellent teaching assistants and differentiation of tasks to meet their needs. The school checks on the progress made by all through assessment and challenging marking. In all key stages learners show confidence in discussion and feedback, showing good knowledge and understanding of the subject. All children show enthusiasm towards their work. Greater consistency will be ensured throughout the school by further use of the information gathered through the monitoring of planning, teaching and learning and scrutiny of the formal assessments.

Catholic beliefs and values are at the heart of learners' spiritual and moral development. Children have a good understanding of the life and teaching of Jesus. Many strategies are used to enable them to apply this teaching to their own lives and experiences. The work undertaken on *Other Faiths* has helped the learners understand how others make sense of the world in which we live. The behaviour of children throughout the school is outstanding. Children have an excellent sense of right and wrong. The school provides outstanding opportunities for their spiritual and moral development. The children make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community.

Grade: 2

Quality of Provision for Religious Education

Teaching and learning

Overall the quality of provision for Religious Education is good. The learning needs of all children are addressed through the use of some creative and imaginative teaching and learning strategies. The teaching is enthusiastic which helps learners engage with the material presented and thoroughly enjoy their lessons. Some good use is made of the information communications technology. Well-prepared resources enhanced the delivery of lessons. Teachers make use of very good teaching assistants to support those learners with additional learning needs. Some use is made of differentiated tasks.

The lessons observed had good pace and timing, which maintained the interest and concentration of learners and kept them on task and focussed. Work is provided that enables learners to work independently and collaboratively. All teachers should ensure that learners understand the purpose of the lesson by sharing the learning objective. This should then be re-visited during the plenary session. Learners' religious literacy would be enhanced by greater use of the key words for each topic. Assessment of learners' work is good. Records are kept and information used to inform future planning.

Parents and carers are enabled to become involved in their children's Religious Education by the provision of regular newsletters and curriculum evenings informing them of what is to be covered. A vast number of initiatives are in place to ensure parents feel welcome and enabled to play an active part in the life of the school.

Grade: 2

Curriculum

The Religious Education curriculum is outstanding in meeting the needs and interests of learners. The school, using the *Here I Am* programme recommended by the Archdiocese, meets the requirements of the curriculum directory for Religious Education. A whole school approach is used and appropriate levels of the programme are being followed in different classes. This ensures complete Religious Education entitlement for each child and meets national and diocesan requirements. Of the total curriculum time 10% is allocated to Religious Education. This fulfils the requirements of the Bishops of England and Wales. There is a need by the leadership to review the placing of Religious Education on the timetables, especially in the lower school classes. Curriculum outlines are provided for parents. Excellent links are made with home and parish especially through the Religious Education governor. The way in which the school reaches out to support the local and wider community is outstanding. Overall the Religious Education curriculum makes an outstanding contribution to learners' spiritual and moral development.

Grade: 1

Leadership and Management

Religious Education

Leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education are good. There is a clear vision for the subject within the mission of the school with a focus on raising standards. The coordinator provides effective and efficient support to staff and has shared all recent initiatives with them. She fulfils her role with enthusiasm and commitment. Good documentation guides and directs all staff in their delivery of the subject. The subject leader attends coordinators' meetings and

information is disseminated to all staff during staff meetings or in-service time. Performance in Religious Education is monitored. This is at present only descriptive and needs to be more focussed on the judgement of the quality of the lesson overall. The ongoing scrutiny of planning, workbooks and teaching and learning and effective use of the findings will enable greater consistency and raise standards further. Self-assessment is undertaken for each topic by staff and learners. St. John Fisher is socially inclusive by providing equality of access and of opportunity for all learners to make progress. This is a real strength of the school. Of the 8 staff teaching Religious Education all have a suitable qualification. Priorities for the subject are identified and targets set. Some appropriate resources are deployed to achieve high standards. The school is making some use of interactive white boards using materials teachers and children have created. This should be developed further when the CD Rom for *The Church's Story* is obtained. The provision and use of interactive resources is an area of ongoing development. The headteacher and subject leader keep governors informed on matters relating to Religious Education. They discharge their responsibilities most effectively. Governors are fully involved in the life of the school. They visit school for a variety of purposes and recognise St. John Fisher as community serving the wider community.

Grade: 2

Catholic Life of the School

The leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school are outstanding. St. John Fisher is a place in which the gospel spirit of consideration, care and courtesy permeates every aspect of its life and work. Relationships are excellent. Learners support a variety of local, national and international charities both by becoming better informed and by raising funds. The Mission Statement was due to be reviewed this year. This has been deferred with the imminent retirement of the headteacher. This work will be undertaken when a new headteacher is in post.

Grade: 1

Collective Worship

The quality of Collective Worship is good. The school provides Collective Worship in a variety of ways for each child daily. Throughout the year Collective Worship provides a variety of experiences for learners. This fulfils government and Archdiocesan guidance. A policy that states the nature and purpose of Collective Worship has been produced. Guidelines that support the planning and delivery of Collective Worship wherever and whenever it takes place should be produced. Collective Worship stimulates reflection on spiritual and moral issues and on personal beliefs. The Religious Education governor supports this provision in an excellent way, by leading Collective Worship on appropriate occasions.

Parents, governors and friends of the school community are invited to a variety of assemblies and services. This is greatly appreciated. Collective Worship overall makes an outstanding contribution to learners' spiritual and moral development.

Grade: 2