



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES CATHOLIC JUNIOR SCHOOL

LIVERPOOL

Inspection Date	Tuesday 8 th October 2019
Inspectors	Mrs Julie Rourke Mrs Angela Paget Mrs Maureen Hillsdon Mr Dave Williams
Unique Reference Number	104650

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

Type of School	Catholic Junior
Age range of pupils	7-11
Number on roll	423
Chair of Governors	Mrs Sue Faulkener
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Reidel
School address	Hale Road Walton Liverpool L4 3RL
Telephone number	0151 525 7602
E-mail address	admin@sfd.sco.uk
Date of last inspection	1 st October 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. Francis de Sales Junior school is a larger than average sized Catholic Junior School situated in Walton, Liverpool and serves the parish of St. Francis de Sales.
- There are 423 children on roll of whom 318 are baptised Catholic, 45 come from other Christian denominations. Nine children come from other faiths or religious traditions. Fifty-one pupils have no religious affiliation.
- There are 23 teachers in the school of whom 14 are baptised Catholic. Nineteen teach Religious Education and 7 teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education.
- Since the last inspection, the school has a new Chair of Governors. The governors have appointed a new headteacher and a new Religious Education subject leader is in post.
- Since the last inspection the school has had a mid-inspection monitoring visit.

Key for inspection grades

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

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OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

St. Francis de Sales Catholic Junior school 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 at St. Francis de Sales Juniors are ambassadors of their mission. They have developed their own motto, "To serve the school with love and respect, as Jesus taught" and know how to live it out. They actively participate in the Catholic Life and promote the mission of the school. They regularly evaluate its effectiveness.
- Pupils show a respect for themselves and others as made in the image and likeness of God. Children's behaviour is exemplary, they show an ability to listen, to give thanks, to forgive and be forgiven. They are also quick to congratulate and celebrate each other's achievements. On the day of inspection, children were polite and welcoming, particularly in sharing their classroom greeting of, 'God bless you and protect you.'
- Pupils value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the parish community and the Archdiocese. They are enthusiastic in their involvement in school Masses throughout the liturgical year such as, St. Francis de Sales feast day, Advent, Easter and a Leaver's service. They are confident in expressing pride in their own religious and cultural identity and beliefs.
- Some pupils are part of a WOW, a Word on Wednesday club to explore weekly Scripture and celebrate their faith.
- Pupils enthusiastically embrace the demands that membership of a Catholic school entails. They fully accept their responsibilities and as a result they take a leading role to become, for example, part of the school council, prefects, monitors and play pod leaders.
- Children fully accept the responsibilities of living within a Catholic school community. They recognise the importance of using their gifts in the service of others. They are alert to the needs of others and seek justice for all within and beyond the school community. Pupils are encouraged to initiate charitable activities. They have supported the homeless, created essential packages for those in need and fundraised for Alder Hey in support of a fellow pupil.
- Children take a leading role in living out their Catholic mission. They wrote letters to the local council concerning refuse problems in the community. They visit and sing to the residents of a local retirement home. The school grounds are kept clear of litter because the children are aware of their environment responsibilities.
- Pupils enjoy all that the school has to offer. They take part in activities such as, athletics and choir. residential trips to Barcelona, PGL and skiing give the children new and exciting opportunities.
- Pupils enjoy learning about other faiths and religions. They are encouraged to welcome, promote acceptance and tolerance within their school community. They regularly learn about Judaism and Islam.

- Many visitors from and visits to, for example, other faith and religion groups, bring a wealth of first-hand knowledge to enhance children's understanding. Children enjoy a close working partnership with Manchester Muslim Preparatory School, sharing learning experiences, faith activities, joint trips to museums, Physical Education and Art.
- They take full advantage of the outstanding opportunities that the school provides for their personal support and development such as, Seedlings, which helps pupils explore and process their feelings and develop confidence in expressing themselves. Children have access to a sensory room where they have time and space to help with stresses and anxiety. The school is keen to become a 'Rainbows' school, to support children experiencing loss or bereavement.
- The Relationships and Sex Education programme, *Journey in Love*, recommended by the Archdiocese, has been implemented. As a result of this, pupils, appropriate to their age and capability, are developing in their understanding of loving relationships and sexual development within the context of a Christian understanding of the purpose of sexual love.

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 Mission Statement is a clear and inspiring expression of the educational mission of the Church. The mission, "Non Excidet - We Shall Not Fail" is taken from the patron St Francis de Sales' Episcopal coat of arms. The children have their own motto, "To serve the school with love and respect, as Jesus taught."
- The school environment reflects its mission and identity through concrete and effective signs of the school's Catholic character. The school grounds have spaces and resources to encourage a variety of emotional and social play. There is a dedicated prayer and remembrance garden which is lovingly cared for. There are vibrant, bright displays throughout the school. The school family are proud of and celebrate its rich historic past, with exciting stories and origins of the school and church, giving the school a traditional and homely feel.
- St. Francis de Sales Juniors is a strong Catholic community. Christ's example and Gospel values are at the heart of all they do. There is a real sense of family at all levels, evident in the quality of relationships and the centrality of prayer. The school is a supportive and joyful community. On the day of inspection, a staff member expressed, '(We are) valued, including our contribution to the life of the school and the Catholic faith. It is comforting to know I work in a school such as this- what a privilege!'
- The school has a high regard for the pastoral needs of staff and members' and these are understood and catered for. The headteacher ensures there is appropriate, discretion and sensitive support. The school boasts a gym and exercise room, which is available for all staff to use, helping to support well-being and mental health. The school's marking policy has been changed to improve feedback to children and save teachers valuable time.
- Staff promote high standards of behaviour and are outstanding role models of mutual respect and forgiveness for pupils. All staff are fully committed to the Catholic Life and mission of the school, across the curriculum and the whole of school life. The school has a clear philosophy, 'through Christ's example,' the children, staff and governors live by Gospel values.
- Pastoral programmes, Personal, Social and Health Education and Relationships and Sex Education are planned, well taught and reflect Catholic teachings and principles. This is linked closely to the Relationships and Sex Education programme, *Journey in Love* which reflects Catholic teachings and principles. The school can now continue to embed the RSE programme across the whole of the school year and evaluate the evidence and practices.
- Clear policies and structures are in place, which provide outstanding levels of pastoral care to pupils, and there is an explicit and concrete commitment to the most vulnerable and needy in both policy and practice.

- All children at St. Francis de Sales are provided with outstanding, inclusive, pastoral and educational care. This ethos is shared with all teachers, teaching assistants and those who provide one to one care. Appropriate measures and strategies are in place to address any behaviour and pastoral issues. The school has an open-door policy and works closely with a charity, 'It's your child's life,' that supports families needing guidance with school and life skills.
- The school has outstanding provision in encouraging children to reflect and act on Catholic Social Teaching. It promotes action for dignity, solidarity, the poor, common good, peace, care for creation. The school has worked with several national and international causes e.g 'Global Scholars' supported action on 'The Use of Water'. Humanities Leaders raised awareness of the amount of plastic used and thrown away. 'Home baked,' a local charity generating skills for employment, baked pies with the children whilst also developing their awareness of aspiration, sacrifice, ambition, perseverance, resilience and achievement.
- A 'Forgotten Heroes' project involved partnering with the local, 'Friends of Anfield Cemetery,' to locate and commemorate the unmarked graves of two recipients of the Victoria Cross. The school community were involved in a ceremony where the headstones were unveiled, and the pupils read introductions and citations.
- The parish priest fully supports and promotes the Catholic Life of the school. He is a regular visitor to the school and often attends staff social events. The children enjoy his visits and he works closely with the school to support and offer families and their children a welcoming school, parish and Sacramental programme.
- The relationship between the parish and the school is outstanding. On the day of inspection, the parish priest explained that the school, together with the parish, lives out their Gospel values with care and compassion.
- The school provides parents with a wealth of information regarding the Catholic Life of the school. The website and school's *Twitter* page display the variety of opportunities provided for the children and its successes, celebrations and latest news.

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 headteacher, senior leaders and governors are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. They are energised by the task and are a source of inspiration for the whole community.
- The provision for the Catholic Life of the school is given the highest possible priority by leaders. This is reflected in the school's self-evaluation which reflects rigorous monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge and is clearly focused on the Catholic Life of the school and its Mission Statement.
- The school's Mission Statement enabled all stakeholders to reflect on and have an outstanding understanding of their mission. They share its purpose and are keenly and actively involved in shaping and supporting it. The school can continue to develop its highly effective mission statement by regularly evaluating and evolving the school's statement, aims and practical objectives.
- Leaders and governors are leading an inclusive and welcoming school. The school has outstanding strategies for engaging with parents/carers to the obvious benefit of pupils. Parents/carers understand the school's mission. They are invited to school and parish Masses, celebration assemblies, Sacramental preparation and a variety of fundraising and school events.

- The governing body is highly ambitious for the Catholic Life of the school and leads by example in the way it consistently emphasises this as a school improvement priority. There are planned improvements to further enhance the Catholic Life of the school.
- Governors celebrate regularly with the school through, for example, in worship, for fundraising events and attendance at a variety of assemblies.
- All policies relating to the Catholic Life of the school are up to date and ratified by the governors.
- The school responds excellently to Archdiocesan policies and initiatives and actively promotes them throughout the school, including Archdiocesan subject leader training.

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 outstanding.
- The school has introduced the new standards of attainment for Religious Education. The school has ensured that children's attainment Religious Education is tracked as all other core subjects. There is outstanding evidence that formative and summative assessment provide clear judgements. Teachers are able use this data in their teaching to differentiate how Religious Education is affecting different groups of children, for example, children with specific needs, boys, girls and children with English as an Additional Language.
- Pupils, from their varied starting points, make good progress in each key stage, with many achieving outstanding progress.
- Behaviour in lessons is outstanding because pupils enjoy Religious Education. They are rarely off task even in extended periods without direction from an adult.
- On the day of inspection, pupils concentrated well, were engaged in lessons and were committed to improving their knowledge, understanding and skills in order to further develop as competent learners. They have a clear understanding of how well they are doing, and of what they need to do to improve, and can articulate how they have made progress.
- Children responded to questions in lessons with knowledge and passion for Religious Education. They enjoyed their activities and responded enthusiastically to opportunities that extended their learning.
- Pupils workbooks are well presented, depict a variety of activities and progress is evident across the year groups. Their achievements are celebrated with affirming feedback from their teachers. There are award stickers from governors and the parish priest. Formative feedback and any marking in books are effectively ensuring children are progressing.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education is outstanding.
- Teachers have a high level of confidence and understand of the breadth of teaching methods. Teachers plan outstanding lessons, are confident in their subject expertise and understand how pupils learn in Religious Education. As a consequence, pupils apply themselves well in lessons and make outstanding progress.
- Teaching assistants are carefully planned for to optimise learning for pupils. They show outstanding understanding of and consideration of the specific needs of pupils in their care and encourage progress.

- Planning is supporting outstanding teaching. Teachers plan for and creatively use driver words in their formative assessments, questioning, explanations and feedback.
- On the day of inspection, teachers planned a variety of activities to engage the pupils. Throughout the school children knew the clear classroom routines, creating safe boundaries for calm, inclusive working environments. Lessons were structured and scaffolded to ensure all children accessed their learning. Teachers made excellent use of questioning, continuous assessment of learning and consistent praise and encouragement within lessons taught. Children were keen to share how they were making progress.
- Pupils were encouraged to link how what they had understood from the Scriptures can be used in their lives. In most lessons observed driver words focused on making links to Scripture, people in the Bible and the Sacraments. This focus to 'make links' throughout Key Stage Two is enabling greater depth in Religious Education.
- In some lessons observed learning journals were used containing prior learning to remind, revise and build on children's knowledge and understanding. In outstanding lessons, teachers used phrases that gave limitless challenges.

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

- Leaders and governors are outstanding 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 and in each key stage.
- They ensure that the required amount of curriculum time is given to Religious Education. Religious Education has full parity with other core curriculum subjects, in terms of professional development, resourcing, staffing and accommodation.
- Any additional requirements and policies of the Archdiocese regarding the Religious Education curriculum are embraced and fully implemented.
- Leaders and governors' self-evaluation of Religious Education is a coherent reflection of rigorous assessment, tracking, monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge which is well-informed by current best practice in Religious Education. This results in targeted planning and strategic action taken by the school which leads to outstanding outcomes in Religious Education.
- Governors are fully informed about Religious Education standards and have opportunities to view children's work. The subject leaders regularly report to governors about any new initiatives. They are fully aware of their responsibilities and ratify all policies inked to Religious Education. Governors are keen take advantage of any training provided by Archdiocesan Education Department.
- The Parish priest is fully supportive of the *Come and See* Religious Education Programme. He is always available to offer support for children and teachers in school. Teachers and pupils are regularly invited into church to support children's experiences.
- The Religious Education team have worked tirelessly to lead new initiatives and continue to improve the provision and outcomes of Religious Education. They are a dedicated team of two and are highly supportive of one another. They enjoy their role because they understand and know the importance of the Catholic church's mission in education.
- The subject leaders for Religious Education are role models of outstanding practice. This impacts on teaching and learning resulting in teaching that is likely to be consistently good and/or outstanding. They have a clear vision and enthusiastically look for ways to continually improve and keep outstanding progress. They are part of a cluster of local schools enabling them to share their outstanding Religious Education practice.

- Following this inspection, one of the Religious Education team will become the subject leader and will be joined by a newly appointed Collective Worship lead. The highly effective subject lead has already been proactive and joined the central Archdiocesan cluster group to support her role and share all the school has to offer with other diocesan schools.
- Parents receive regular updates, newsletters and the school's website offers clear guidance, policies and evidence concerning Religious Education. Parents are fully informed of their child's progress through yearly formal reports on the achievement of their children.

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 value and regularly participate voluntarily in liturgy and prayer. They display confidence using a variety of traditional and contemporary approaches to prayer, scripture, religious artefacts and liturgical music.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts. Appropriate to their age and ability, they are able to prepare acts of Collective Worship which fully reflect this understanding.
- On the day of inspection pupils shared their enjoyment being part of Collective Worship. They know that their prayers can help others and themselves.
- Acts of Collective Worship engage all pupils' interest and inspire in them deep thought and heartfelt response. There is a genuine enthusiasm for Collective Worship, reflected in the quality of resources, planning, joyful singing, prayerful silences and the depth of reverent participation in communal prayer.
- On the day of inspection, children were given time with God, prayed together, shared their own thoughts, listened to music and were provided with purposeful go forth messages.
- The experience of living and working in an inclusive, faithful, praying community has an outstanding profound and visible effect on the spiritual and moral development of all pupils, irrespective of ability or faith background. They have a well-developed sense of respect for those of other faiths. This is reflected in the manner in which pupils participate in prayer and liturgy.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is good.
- Collective Worship is central to 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.
- Relevant staff have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and ensure that pupils share good experiences. On the day of inspection there were some good and outstanding practices of worship.
- Collective Worship is given 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.
- Collective Worship has a clear purpose, message and direction. The school has good guidance in delivering worship with use of the Wednesday Word, the liturgical year and allowing for spontaneity in prayer.

- Staff support pupils in planning and delivering quality worship, when appropriate. They have a thorough understanding of the purpose of Collective Worship and a wide variety of methods and styles of prayer.
- The staff have opportunities to pray together. The school would benefit from further opportunities to for example, reflect and hold a retreat together. This will further the school family's spiritual well-being and give more opportunities for staff to reflect on their outstanding practices, mission, dedication and hard work.
- Collective Worship can continue to flourish by setting and formalising long term themes. This will enhance teachers in their planning and delivery. Creating a portfolio of outstanding practice as a shared resource will support teachers' workload in leading worship throughout the year.
- The school invites families to regular liturgical services and celebration assemblies. By continuing to develop and extend the invitation to families, parishioners, Grandparents and the local community, they can be a part of school worship that can be cherished by all.

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 have expert knowledge of how to provide policies and guidelines to ensure quality planning and delivery of Collective Worship.
- They have an extensive understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and they are able make these accessible to the pupils in a contemporary context.
- Leaders place the highest priority on the professional development of staff incorporating liturgical formation and the planning of Collective Worship.
- Leaders of Collective Worship are models of good and outstanding practice for staff and pupils. This can be further developed though the development of staff prayer and through the planned development to strengthen themes across the school year.
- Leaders and governors place the highest priority on the school's self-evaluation of Collective Worship with regular reviews of school performance.
- Governors and the parish priest are fully immersed and support the prayer life of the school and regularly attend liturgies throughout the school year. They are in a true partnership with the school community and its families, ensuring a welcoming and inviting prayerful environment.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Use the guidance outlined in this report and continue to implement the school's 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	1
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	1

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	2
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