



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES CATHOLIC JUNIOR SCHOOL

WALTON

Inspection Date Wednesday 1 October 2014

Inspectors Mrs Pat Peel
Mrs. Sue Banister Rev. Des Seddon

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 358

Chair of Governors Mr. Charlie Breen

Headteacher Mrs. Ellen Seymour

School address Hale Road
Walton
Liverpool
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Date of last inspection 22 November 2011

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 is a larger than average sized Catholic Junior School situated in Walton and mainly serving the parish of St. Francis de Sales.
- There are 358 children on roll of whom 350 are baptised Catholic, 6 come from other Christian denominations. There are 2 pupils from another faith or religious tradition.
- There are 23 teachers of whom 16 teach Religious Education. Fourteen teachers are Catholic. Five teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education with a further 5 currently enrolled on the Catholic Certificate for Religious Studies course.
- Since the last inspection a new subject leader has been appointed.

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 Junior School is outstanding in providing Catholic Education.

Inspection Judgements

The extent to which the pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school.

- Pupils are outstanding in the way in which they contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life at St. Francis de Sales.
- There is a shared vision for Catholic Education which is embraced by the whole school community and reinforced in the school's Mission Statement *"Aiming for and achieving high standards with smiles, as Jesus taught."*
- The school has recognised the need for a full review of the Mission Statement so that it reflects the current life of the school.
- Pupils have an excellent sense of belonging to the school. Its values and ethos are visibly reflected in the exemplary attitudes and relationships between all members of this close knit community. St. Francis de Sales is a haven whereby everyone feels safe and is loved for who they are.
- Pupils embrace opportunities to meet their potential in all aspects of school life and this is the great strength of the school. The creative curriculum transcends discrete subjects and is the lifeblood of St. Francis' drive for excellence.
- The learning environment is vibrant and stimulating and enriches pupil's sensory experiences.
- The creative curriculum coupled with its national and international links provide pupils with a breadth of opportunities above and beyond the classroom.
- Pupils are encouraged to take on roles of responsibility by becoming school councillors, prefects and playground buddies. One of the recently appointed councillors when asked why they had put themselves up for the role said that *"I know that I will be able to inspire others in school to make it even better!"*
- Pupils act as ambassadors of the school during off site visits i.e. on visiting church in support of parish events, residential and theatre visits, singing in the local community and taking part in the Hillsborough remembrance activities.
- Pupils are actively involved in developing the Catholic character of the school by the work they undertake in fundraising for numerous charities e.g Good Shepherd, Operation Christmas Child, The Poppy Appeal to name but a few and outreach to the local community by collecting food for the North Liverpool food bank and in the wider community fundraising for a well in Ghana.
- Pupils benefit from participation in annual residential activities. Year 6 pupils have an opportunity to visit Barcelona.
- Pupils have an excellent sense of right and wrong and apply this in their personal relationships. Education for personal relationships has fostered positive attitudes in pupils. They are enquiring and reflective.
- Pupils take an increasing responsibility for themselves and their actions and enthusiastically praise and celebrate each other's achievements in all areas of the curriculum. The school hosts an annual prize giving celebration.
- Pupils are involved in service to the local Faith and religious communities by taking an active part in parish liturgies and choral events including attendance at the Advent service at the Metropolitan Christ the King Cathedral. The immediate neighbourhood served by the school and outreach in the wider community.

- A group of staff and pupils recently embarked on pilgrimage to the Basilica of La Sagrada Familia as part of their Barcelona experience.

How well pupils' achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

- Pupils' achievement and enjoyment in Religious Education is outstanding.
- Many children have a very limited knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith.
- The school has embraced the Come and See programme and the needs of all the pupils are being met. The range of activities provided for the pupils are very effective in engaging and enthusing pupils.
- Pupils' attainment in Religious Education is outstanding. On entry to the junior school they make excellent progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities.
- There is no difference in performance between pupils of different gender.
- Outcomes for pupils with additional or special needs are outstanding and their support is very effective.
- Assessments undertaken to date show that pupils are working at a very good level for the age and stage of their development. A portfolio of exemplars from previous years has been collated.
- Scrutiny of workbooks provides evidence of pupils attaining a very good level for their age and stage of development. On the day of inspection this was limited to work from this academic year. The school needs to ensure that a sample of workbooks from each year group are kept to provide evidence of work undertaken.
- Pupils are becoming increasingly more religiously literate as they become familiar with key words from the topics. Their knowledge, understanding and skills are developing appropriate to their age or capacity. Some of the oldest pupils were working at a very high level.
- 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 and exemplary behaviour. This is a real strength of the school.
- Pupils were inspired by a visit from, a victim of crime, who now works in the field of restorative justice. Some children had written letters to a mother, whose son was murdered locally. This work was of a particularly high standard and pupils' demonstrated a great maturity and understanding of 'unconditional love' in their response to it.
- Pupils work extremely well independently, in pairs and collaboratively in small groups.

How well pupils' respond to and participate in Collective Worship

- Pupils are outstanding in responding to and participating in Collective Worship.
- Pupils are extremely respectful, act with reverence and are keen to participate in a variety of gatherings.
- On the day of inspection pupils were thoroughly engaged and gave heartfelt responses when both praying and singing during worship.
- Pupils are becoming familiar with a variety of prayer styles and their knowledge of liturgy is increasing.
- Pupils sing joyfully, reflect in silence and join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence.

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

- The quality of teaching and purposeful learning is outstanding in ensuring that pupils are interested, engaged and make excellent progress.
- High expectations and appropriate challenge is the key to St. Francis' success.
- Teacher's planning is effective in meeting the needs of the pupils. Small class sizes enable teachers to differentiate activities closely to match the needs of their pupils.
- Two teachers are currently trialling the use of the Archdiocesan planning template. Rolling this out across all classes will ensure consistency throughout the whole school.
- Teachers take into account pupils' prior learning when planning Religious Education lessons. Driver words are used extensively in some classes although this was not evident in all planning.
- Teachers display excellent subject knowledge and deploy a range of teaching styles. There was lots of evidence of pupils being challenged and inspired on the day of inspection which enriches their enjoyment of Religious Education.
- Excellent use is made of time and resources e.g. interactive white board, audio and visual media, bibles etc. The school is very effective in deploying teaching assistants to enhance lessons for those children who require additional support.
- Information communication technology is used extensively throughout the school and is a real strength. Pupils are very adept at using iPads to support their learning.
- Pupils are very positively affirmed throughout their lessons and relationships are excellent. Marking is positive and informs pupils of their progress. Effort and achievement are celebrated.
- The creative ways in which the 'Remember' aspect of the topic was broken open and developed in every class was a real celebration of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
- The school has implemented assessment strategies which provide information on the achievement of all pupils. A sample of pupils' workbooks from each class must be accrued across the school. This is in addition to a portfolio of exemplars. This will provide evidence of learning that has taken place throughout the topics over time.
- The tracking of pupils' work in Religious Education is in place. However, there is insufficient evidence of rigorous analysis to show trends over time.

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

- The Religious Education curriculum is outstanding in promoting pupils' learning.
- Staff and governors see Religious Education as the core subject and at the very heart of the creative curriculum.
- 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. Termly newsletters are provided for parents and carers and there is relevant information on the school website to support Religious Education.

- The school implements new curriculum developments as appropriate and the programme is securely embedded across the school. Come and See engendered in pupils a real sense of engagement and enjoyment.
- Enrichment activities after school such as drama, chess, boot camp, ICT, guitar etc have a positive impact on the curriculum.
- The Religious Education curriculum provides very good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral development and vocation.
- Children have explored the beliefs and values of Judaism. However, this is an area that the school has identified needs enhancing further. Two weeks in each academic year must be spent looking at another faith and another religion. This helps to promote tolerance and respect for those who think differently.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.

- The Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding in reflecting 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 prayer life of St. Francis de Sales.
- Collective Worship plays a key part in meeting the Spiritual needs of this worshipping community.
- Opportunities are provided to enable full, active and conscious participation of the whole school community.
- Pupils are enabled to pray formally and informally using a variety of prayer methods and styles.
- The children are becoming skilled in planning, preparing and leading Collective Worship. As a legal requirement it must be timetabled for and shown independently from Religious Education lessons. Best practice demands that the subject leader collates a bank of evidence of sample planners from each class throughout the whole school.
- Opportunities are provided for parents, carers, the local and wider Faith communities to participate in a variety of celebrations.
- The parish priest presides at Mass throughout the Church's liturgical year and key school celebrations i.e. Year 6 Leavers Mass, St. Francis' Feast Day etc. The school provides altar servers to support at Mass.
- The school supports the With You Always Sacramental Programme in the parish community.

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 and developing the Catholic life of the school. The leadership team is deeply committed to the Church's Mission in education. They are energised by the task and are a source of inspiration for the whole school community.
- This is reflected in the Mission Statement outlining St. Francis de Sales as a place where everyone truly is "*...aiming for and achieving high standards with smiles, as Jesus taught.*"

- The aims and practical objectives derived from the Mission Statement direct and guide all aspects of school life and are a useful tool by which the school evaluates its effectiveness.
- Excellent opportunities are provided for the staff and pupils to play an active part in the Catholic Life and Mission of the school through prayer, raising awareness of those in need and charitable outreach.
- The Self Evaluation Document provides evidence of the schools monitoring, analysis and self challenge. It is a comprehensive document which guides the school well in this area.
- The school provides very good in-service training to enable staff to further understand the Church's Mission in Education and play their unique part in it.
- A range of opportunities for Spiritual and Moral developments are provided for all staff and pupils including Collective Worship, attendance at Archdiocesan Spirituality days, etc.
- 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 leading to a welcoming, happy, safe and caring learning environment for staff and pupils.
- Governors are very well informed about Catholic life at St. Francis de Sales and discharge their responsibilities in an appropriate manner. Together they have effectively helped to shape the direction of the school. They are committed wholeheartedly to the Catholic life 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.

- The way in which leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is good.
- The Self Evaluation Document is a coherent reflection of monitoring, analysis and self challenge in this area. Evidence is limited therefore it is not robust enough to effectively evaluate the schools performance and plan for future improvements.
- Formal assessment tasks are undertaken in line with Archdiocesan guidance and the school tracks pupil progress in Religious Education. However, this needs to be analysed in greater depth to ensure that any key areas for development are tackled systematically. Currently, there is not enough data to show trends over time.
- Following reconstitution of the governing body it is highly recommended that the school appoints a link governor with responsibility for Religious Education. This will aid the systematic monitoring and evaluation of provision and outcomes for pupils.
- Teaching and learning is monitored and appropriate feedback and support given to teachers as necessary.
- Continuing professional development opportunities are provided for all staff including attendance at Archdiocesan in-service topic days and subject leader days.
- The newly appointed subject leader is excellent in guiding Religious Education. He is enthusiastic and shows a real commitment to the role. Excellent documentation guides and directs all staff in the delivery of the subject and new initiatives are introduced when appropriate i.e planning templates. He has attended recent training and updated all the subsequent documentation and policies.

What does the school needs to do to improve further?

- Raise the standards of attainment in Religious Education further by:
 - continuing to address the areas identified on the Self Evaluation Document;
 - undertaking a full review of the Mission Statement following reconstitution to reflect the schools current governors, staff and pupils.
- Further develop the work being done in assessment, monitoring and tracking of pupils progress by:
 - conducting a range of systematic monitoring activities relating to provision and outcomes for pupils;
 - collecting a bank of sound evidence to support rigorous monitoring;
 - using the information gleaned through analysis of data to inform teacher's planning leading to improvements in achievement of individuals and groups.
- Improve the quality of provision and outcomes for pupils by:
 - enabling pupils to explore the beliefs and values of another faith and/or other religions;
 - inviting visitors into school to share their religious beliefs with the pupils;
 - taking pupils out to other places of worship;
 - forging links with a school with a different religious background.

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	1
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	2

Key to judgements: Grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 requires improvement and grade 4 inadequate