



# ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

## INSPECTION REPORT

### ST FRANCIS DE SALES CATHOLIC INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL

LIVERPOOL

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Inspection Date 11<sup>th</sup> February 2020

Inspectors Mrs Julie Rourke  
Mrs Christine Mason, Miss Jackie Coughlan, Mr John Riley

Unique Reference Number 104651

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

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Type of School Infant and Nursery

Age range of pupils 3-7

Number on roll 432

Chair of Governors Mrs Lyndsey Edwards

Headteacher Miss Clare Suffield

School address Margaret Road  
Liverpool  
L4 3RX

Telephone number 0151 525 8489

E-mail address head@stfrancisdesalesinf.liverpool.sch.uk

Date of last inspection 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2015

# 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 Infant and Nursery School situated in Walton, Liverpool and mainly serving the parish of St. Francis de Sales.
- There are 432 children on roll, including Nursery, of whom 173 are baptised Catholic, 83 come from other Christian denominations and 14 are from other faith or religious traditions. Seventy-eight children have no religious affiliation.
- There are 22 teachers at the school, including the headteacher, of whom 12 are baptised Catholic. Nine teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education.
- Since the last inspection, there has been a change in personnel. A new Chair of Governors has been appointed and there is a new subject leader in post.

### 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 Infant and Nursery 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 Infant and Nursery school know, own, can sing and live their mission to the fullest, 'We walk, learn, love and smile together with Jesus.' They actively participate in the Catholic Life of the school and promote its mission. They regularly evaluate its effectiveness by sharing phrases from their mission such as, 'We walk in Jesus' footsteps every day,' and use their mission to write their own Golden Rules.
- 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 managed their own behaviour because of the outstanding positive ethos around the school.
- Positive reinforcement such as, celebration assemblies acknowledge and highlight children's work, behaviour and acts of kindness. They are awarded dojo points for themselves and their class.
- They value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the parish community and the Archdiocese. On the day of inspection, children spoke about their enjoyment of visiting church and welcoming the parish priest into school. Older children lead and participate in Mass each term with the local community.
- 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.
- Children fully accept and enjoy the responsibilities of living within a Catholic school community. They recognise the importance of using their gifts in the service of others. They perform Nativity plays and Easter concerts for their parents, the school community and parishioners. They visit and sing with residents in a local care home.
- Children and families are encouraged to support a variety of local, national and global charities, such as, CAFOD, Claire House, Downs Syndrome Awareness Day, Slow Down for Bobby and World Mental Health Day.
- The children enjoy welcoming visitors into school for example, the National Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Children and CAFOD to reinforce the importance of helping and supporting others.
- Many visitors and visits bring a wealth of understanding and first-hand knowledge. Children's awe and wonder is enriched by days exploring Formby Beach, Martin Mere, Chester Zoo and welcoming The Mobile Farm.

- Pupils have many opportunities to take part in after-school clubs for example, cookery, Maths, Science and even learning to play the Ukulele! The extra activities help to develop their life skills, teamwork, communication and problem solving.
- Pupils enjoy learning about other faiths and religions. Children visit their local Cathedral, Mosque, Synagogue and Hindu Temple which gives them the opportunity to witness first-hand religious practices. They are encouraged to welcome, promote acceptance and tolerance within their school community. They regularly learn about Judaism and Islam.
- They take full advantage of the outstanding opportunities the school provides for their personal support and development such as, Yoga, Therapeutic Inclusion, massage, Forest Schools, Drawing Therapy, and Wilderness Therapy. Children and their families are signposted to outside agencies such as, the Austic Spectrum Disorder Foundation, Seedlings, Social Services, Children's Centres and Family Support workers.
- The Relationships and Sex Education programme, *Journey in Love*, recommended by the Archdiocese, has been implemented. The programme continues and develops as children move to the Junior school. As a result of this, pupils, appropriate to their age and capability, are developing in their understanding of loving relationships within the context of a Christian understanding.

## **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 has been crafted to suit the needs of the whole school community with clear aims and objectives.
- The school environment reflects its mission and identity through concrete and effective signs of the school's Catholic character. There is an overwhelming sense of calm in the school. The building and grounds are lovingly cared for and well-maintained. The school displays and focus areas are of a high standard, beautifully decorated learning areas and sacred prayer spaces. Imaginative outdoor play resources such as a 'Secret Garden,' creates a sense of awe and wonder for the children.
- The school and parish work closely together. The parish priest welcomes the children to church to support their learning in Religious Education. Children enjoy exploring the church.
- 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.
- During the last three years the school has fundraised to build a school in Nepal. The planning, participating, inviting visitors from the new school and video links has fostered a collective acknowledgement from the staff as they are living their mission for the good of others.
- The school has a high regard for the pastoral needs of staff and members' needs are understood and catered for. They have been awarded a Wellbeing Charter. There are designated members of staff to support and signpost those affected by safeguarding issues, workload, bereavement and personal crisis. Staff are encouraged to talk about their mental health as part of their daily conversations.
- The school's robust safeguarding team works tirelessly ensuring all pupils are supported. Pastoral programmes, Personal, Social and Health Education and Relationships Education are planned, well taught and reflect Catholic teachings and principles. Interventions such as, Sustained Shared Thinking and Emotional Wellbeing in the Early Years, wellbeing lunch clubs, tackling trauma through Attachment strategies and ROAR (as response to addressing mental health) are evidence of the school's outstanding commitment to live out the values of their mission.

- The school has outstanding provision for Catholic Social Justice through their actions for dignity, solidarity, the poor, common good and peace. EMTAS, the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Service, work with school to support families that are new to the country. The school uses an interpreter to help settle, answer questions and hosts coffee mornings for new parents enabling them to share languages and experiences.
- There are strong links and support from the local L6 Charity. The school can access foodbanks, clothes, uniforms and toys, which are provided for families in the school.
- St. Francis de Sales Infant and Nursery school is a caring, kind and loving Catholic community, evident in the quality of relationships. All staff work exceptionally hard to provide outstanding holistic care for all children and families in their care and school community which was clearly visible on the day of inspection. An inspector portrayed their work as, 'The hands of Jesus.' There is an explicit and concrete commitment to the most vulnerable and needy in both policy and practice.
- The school provides parents with a wealth of information regarding the Catholic Life of the school. Parents with younger children are invited to Stay and Play sessions which enables parents to be involved in their child's early learning. The school's website and *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.
- The self-evaluation document whilst thorough, would benefit from prioritising and articulating the school's development points over appropriate and manageable periods of time.
- Continuous Professional Development focusing on the Catholic Life of the school occurs frequently and is engaging, well planned and effective. As a result, the staff have an outstanding understanding of the school's mission. They share its purpose and are keenly and actively involved in shaping and supporting it.
- The school has strategies for engaging with parents/carers to the obvious benefit of pupils. Parents/carers understand the school's mission. They are invited to school masses, Holy Week services, celebrations, Advent prayer and a variety of fundraising and school events. Parent questionnaires show overwhelmingly that they agree and support the school's Catholic life values.
- The governing body is highly ambitious for the Catholic Life of the school and leads by example in the way it consistently emphasises Catholic Life as a school improvement priority.
- Governors make a highly significant contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. They are passionate about the school's mission, are actively involved in its evaluation and are ready to challenge as well as support where necessary. They have supported the school through financially supporting professional development and quality resources. Their value of investment shows clearly in the outstanding nature of the school.
- The governors celebrate regularly with the school through, for example, worship, fundraising events and assemblies.

- All policies relating to the Catholic life of the school are up to date and ratified by the governors.
- The school is enthusiastic in its response to Archdiocesan policies and initiatives. Each initiative is planned thoroughly and is highly effective, ensuring the children and the whole school community are part of the Church's mission.
- The school is now ready to map the provision for Relationships and Sex Education identifying links with Religious Education, Science and Personal, Social and Health Education across the school year.

## 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.
- Pupils, from their limited starting points, make good progress, with many achieving outstanding progress.
- Groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are also making progress comparable to the progress of other pupils.
- The school is highly successful in using the new *Standards in Religious Education*, particularly in how they have been adapted and used in Early Years and Key Stage One settings. This outstanding practice should be shared through the cluster network of schools.
- There is outstanding evidence of data collated from across the school, showing how Religious Education is affecting different groups of children, for example, children with specific needs, boys and girls.
- Pupils attainment is outstanding. The collation of data for individual children and in specific groupings shows how the school is ensuring that every child is planned for. This supports their sustained progress.
- Pupils are actively engaged in lessons and enjoy improving their knowledge, understanding and skills, in order to further develop as competent learners.
- Pupils approach their lessons with great interest and enthusiasm. They enjoy tackling challenging activities and respond exceptionally well to opportunities which extend their learning.
- Behaviour in lessons is outstanding because pupils enjoy Religious Education. They are rarely off task even in extended periods and without direction from an adult. On the day of inspection, children spoke about their how they enjoy the lessons that the teachers provide for them.
- Almost all pupils, relative to their age and capacity, are becoming religiously literate young people. They use what they know and understand and are using their skills effectively, to think, talk about and are developing how to reflect about their learning.
- Children hear about religious stories and talk about them in Religious Education and are learning how those stories can help them in their lives. They can remember their learning and are making their own links.
- Pupils concentrate, have a clear understanding of how well they are doing, and of what they need to do to improve, and through children's workbooks progress is shown over time.
- The quality of pupils' current work, both in class and in written work, is outstanding. Their work is presented with care and to a high standard, depict a variety of activities and progress is evident across the year groups. Children's work reflects and celebrate the rich experiences and opportunities they are given

## **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 because of their subject expertise and understanding of the breadth of teaching methods. Pupils are inspired to learn and make outstanding and sustained progress.
- Teachers are highly effective in consistently planning high-quality lessons linked to pupils' current assessment and their knowledge of the individual, consolidating and extending pupils' knowledge and understanding, so that they learn extremely well. As a result of this, teaching is outstanding.
- Teachers plan for and use driver words and skills correctly and effectively to differentiate and challenge pupils. This enables them to communicate high expectations. Planning is imaginative and thoughtful because it is adapted to ensure that data is used to inform their learning objectives to suit the varying learning needs of the children.
- Driver words/skills are communicated excellently with children. This outstanding practice enables skills to be used as everyday language, part of their Religious Education dialogue with children. On the day of inspection, teachers used display and working walls effectively, engaging visual learners and enabling children to remember their learning. They used hand signs and symbols to emphasise the skills they were asked to use, encouraging all learners to understand and access what their expectations were.
- Teaching assistants and one to one support workers provide outstanding skilled understanding and consideration of the specific needs of pupils in their care and encourage progress. They optimise pupils learning.
- Teachers plan a wealth of creative activities to engage the pupils. In several lessons observed there was evidence of role – play, use of singing, music and moments of awe and wonder.
- In an outstanding lesson on the day of inspection, because of a learning atmosphere of fun and love, children were immersed. Paired talking and remembering by using the working wall helped children progress. The teacher shared a visual story of the Last Supper, pausing and demonstrating. The atmosphere in the classroom was palpable.
- This is one example of the excellent teaching observed on the day. The teachers know that Religious Education is not only taught as a core subject, but it crosses into and impacts on children's spiritual and moral developments and any moments to capture this is was not lost.
- Praise for every achievement on the day of inspection was frequent, leading to high levels of engagement, interest, achievement and progress.

## **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 be part of monitoring children's work through their books and on learning walks. The subject leader regularly reports to governors. They are fully aware of their responsibilities and ratify all policies linked to Religious Education.
- 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 explore, ask and experience their learning in a different setting.
- The subject leader is enthusiastic and passionate in her teaching and in her leadership of Religious Education. She is an organised, effective and creative coordinator.
- She is a role model of outstanding practice, has an inspiring vision for outstanding teaching and learning and a high level of expertise in securing it. This effectively impacts across the school, resulting in outstanding teaching and learning in Religious Education
- Parents are fully informed of their child's progress through yearly formal reports on the achievement of their children. They receive regular updates and newsletters about Religious Education and there is a wealth of information on the schools' website.

## 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.
- 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. This is reflected in the manner in which pupils participate in prayer and liturgy.
- 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 contribute in partnership with teachers, to be active in the many opportunities for prayer and worship.
- On the day of inspection, pupils shared their enjoyment about being part of Collective Worship.
- Acts of Collective Worship engage all pupils' interest and inspire in them to stop, reflect and respond with prayer. There is a genuine enthusiasm for Collective Worship, reflected in the quality of resources, planning, joyful singing, prayerful silences and participation in communal prayer.
- On the day of inspection, children were given time with God, prayed together, listened to music and were provided with purposeful go forth messages.
- Children take part in a religious club, named Little Church. They learn, talk about and experience Gospel stories and the values that come from them. The children know that they can use these values in their everyday life.

## **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 are skilled and knowledgeable about the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and ensure that pupils share in a variety of experiences.
- 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.
- On the day of inspection there were good and outstanding practices of worship. Collective Worship has a clear purpose, message and direction.
- Staff support pupils in participating in quality worship. They have a good understanding of the purpose of Collective Worship and a wide variety of methods and styles of prayer.
- The staff have some opportunities to pray together using *Come and See for Yourself*. The school would benefit from further opportunities for staff prayer, worship and spiritual well-being.
- 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. They are invited to Stay and Pray sessions. Children enjoy making the invitations and welcoming their parents.

## **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.
- Leaders and governors place the highest priority on the school's self-evaluation of Collective Worship with regular reviews of school performance.
- They have an extensive understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and they are able to make these accessible to the pupils in a contemporary context.
- Leaders of Collective Worship are models of good and outstanding practice for staff and pupils.
- Leaders have placed the highest priority on the professional development of staff incorporating liturgical formation and the planning of Collective Worship. The school would benefit from providing further in-service to develop themes, set Scripture and explore ideas and practices in how children can respond to God's Word. This will ensure consistent and outstanding practice across the school.
- Governors and the parish priest are fully immersed and support the prayer life of the school and regularly attend liturgies and provide Masses throughout the school year.

## **What the school needs to do to improve further**

- Continue to follow targets outlined in the Self Evaluation Document and any recommendations within this report.

# INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

## OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

|   |   |
|---|---|
| How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education | 1 |
|---|---|

## 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***