



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JAMES' CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

SKELMERSDALE

Inspection Date Tuesday 12 November 2013

Inspectors Mrs M Connolly Mrs D Martin

Unique Reference Number 119588

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

Type of School Catholic Primary

Age range of pupils 4-11

Number on roll 144

Chair of Governors Rev A Callaghan

Headteacher Mr David Iliff

School address Ashurst Road
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Date of last inspection 3 February 2009

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 James' is a smaller than average sized Catholic Primary School situated in Skelmersdale serving mainly the parish of St Mary's.
- There are 144 children (excluding Nursery) on roll of whom 91 are baptised Catholic, 24 come from other Christian denominations, and 7 from other religions. 22 children have no religious affiliation.
- There are 10 teachers all of whom teach Religious Education. Five have a suitable qualification in Religious Education. One of whom holds a degree in Religious Education. Three others are currently undertaking the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. Three teachers are baptised Catholic.
- Since the last inspection a new headteacher, Religious Education coordinator and Collective Worship coordinator have been appointed. Their energy and enthusiasm is inspiring all.

Key for inspection grades

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

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Overall effectiveness:

St James' is an outstanding school in providing Catholic Education.

Inspection Judgements

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.
- The school motto 'We belong to the loving family of St James' is embraced by the whole school community.
- The school reviewed the Mission Statement after the appointment of the new headteacher. All concerned, including the children were involved in the process. A most creative tree displaying the school's mission is situated as you enter the school. Past pupils were also asked to create posters to share the mission in many other places around the school. These are excellent.
- Pupils have an outstanding sense of belonging to the school community and value and respect others. They have an excellent understanding of their 'family' ethos.
- Pupils are encouraged to take on roles of responsibility in the school and wider community by being members of the school council, Pupil Parliament, playground leaders, reading buddies and librarians to name but a few. They work hard to raise money for numerous charities including The Good Shepherd Appeal, Jospice, Macmillan Cancer Charity UNICEF and the Poppy Appeal.
- They are actively involved in developing the Catholic character of the school by their involvement in Collective Worship.
- Pupils benefit greatly from participation in after school clubs and trips away.
- The school plans to link with a school from a developing country to foster links with those from a different cultural background.
- Pupils have an excellent sense of right and wrong and apply this in their personal relationships. They take an increasing responsibility for themselves and their actions.
- Pastoral care and personal relationships are truly outstanding and a real strength of the school enabling children to feel secure and grow in confidence.
- Pupils praise and acknowledge the contribution of others. They show a readiness to embrace and celebrate their lived experiences.
- They embrace opportunities to meet their potential in all aspects of school life.
- Pupils are involved in service to the local faith and religious communities and the immediate neighbourhood served by the school e.g. by serving on the altar in church and singing at the local Care Home. They show respect and understanding of other faiths, religions and cultures.

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

- Pupils' achievements and enjoyment in Religious Education is outstanding.
- Their attainment in Religious Education is good.
- They make outstanding progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities.
- On entry to school many children have a limited knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith.
- There is no difference in performance between pupils of different gender.

- Outcomes for pupils with additional or special needs are very good. The support provided is excellent.
- Analysis of assessments undertaken provides evidence of pupils generally attaining the appropriate level for their age and stage of development by the end of Key Stage 2. This is improving.
- Pupils are becoming increasingly more religiously literate. Their knowledge, understanding and skills are developing appropriate to their age or capacity.
- 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. This was seen being undertaken first hand on the day of inspection as Year 5 explored life choices. Their response was outstanding.
- Pupils' engagement in and enjoyment of their learning is outstanding. Their behaviour is also outstanding.
- Pupils are encouraged to work independently and collaboratively and do so with enthusiasm.

How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship

- Pupils' response to and participation in Collective Worship is outstanding.
- They show deep thoughtfulness and respect during Collective Worship.
- They act with reverence and are keen to participate in a variety of gatherings and act with integrity when praying with others who have different beliefs to their own.
- Pupils' knowledge of prayer and liturgy is increasing.
- They are becoming increasingly familiar with a variety of prayer styles. They pray reverently and are clearly used to praying formally and informally. They are able to reflect in silence and join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence.
- They appreciate and are open to the Word of God in the scriptures and thoughtfully respond. Role-play and dance are used most effectively to 'break open' scripture.
- They sing joyfully use signing and mime when appropriate.
- They are becoming increasingly more confident preparing and leading worship from their earliest years and are developing many skills to support this. The school has prioritised the development of Collective Worship and invested in some very good resources to support pupils spiritual development.

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

- The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education is good.
- Some teaching is outstanding.
- It is consistently highly effective in ensuring that pupils are interested and engaged and make outstanding progress.
- Teachers generally display good subject knowledge and deploy a wide range of creative teaching styles to motivate and inspire pupils.
- Teaching encourages pupils' enjoyment of and enthusiasm of Religious Education.
- Teachers take into account pupils' prior learning and ensure differentiated tasks when planning so that the work consolidates, builds and extends their knowledge and understanding. The differentiated support provided by Teaching Assistants and others is outstanding.
- Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to work independently and collaboratively. Excellent use is made of time and resources including other adults and Information and Communication Technology.

- Pupils are informed of their progress and how to improve both orally and through marking. They are given opportunities to respond to comments and learn how to improve. Effort and achievement are celebrated both in class and at assemblies.
- The assessment of pupils work in Religious Education is good. Some very good use is being made of 'driver words'.
- The school has introduced good assessment strategies which provide accurate and detailed information on the achievement of all the pupils. The tracking of pupils is being undertaken. The information gained after this has had time to embed will be shared with governors and other interested parties.
- Teachers are able to identify how well pupils are achieving and tackle underachievement well.
- Teachers sometimes enable pupils to evaluate their own work at the end of lessons by revisiting the learning objective. This is good. Pupils also evaluate when they complete a topic.

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

- The extent to which the Religious Education Curriculum promotes pupil's learning is outstanding.
- The curriculum is good in meeting pupils' needs.
- 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. Imaginative and well planned strategies are deployed to enrich pupils' learning.
- The school implements new curriculum developments as appropriate.
- Enrichment activities such as use of music, Information Communication Technology, role play, dance and art have a positive impact on the curriculum.
- The Religious Education curriculum provides outstanding opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral development and vocation.
- The curriculum is differentiated to meet the varying needs of groups and individuals.
- Children have explored the beliefs and values of other faiths and religions. This helps to promote tolerance and respect for those who think differently and to give worth to some of the different beliefs within the school. Visitors from other faith and religious backgrounds have supported this development. Visits to places of worship will further support this.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.

- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding. It reflects the Catholic character of the school and takes into account the variety of faith backgrounds among staff and pupils.
- Collective Worship has a high profile and is central to the life of the school.
- A separate coordinator has been appointed to promote Collective Worship throughout the school. She shows real commitment and this is clearly having a great impact on the whole school community.

- Collective Worship plays a key part in meeting the spiritual needs of the pupils. Opportunities are provided to enable full, active and conscious participation of the whole school community. The Collective Worship observed was deeply moving.
- Children are enabled to pray formally and informally using a variety of prayer methods and styles.
- The school has provided opportunities for staff to develop the skills in planning, leading and evaluating Collective Worship. This has given them a confidence that in turn impacts on the manner in which the children's skills grow and develop.
- The local High School chaplain has been a real asset in nurturing spirituality through Collective Worship since the last inspection. She works with teachers, classes and the whole school exploring a variety of themes, feasts and the liturgical calendar. This really helps children's transition to High School.
- The teachers are providing the necessary resources and opportunities to help children to develop the skills necessary to plan, lead and participate in Collective Worship and to evaluate it effectively. These will continue to be developed.
- Lovely areas to support prayer and reflection are provided in classrooms and around the school. These are well utilised.
- The school has joined with other local schools for shared prayer and worship. This was well received and is an excellent example of the importance of prayer in the life of the school.
- Opportunities are provided for parents, carers, governors the local and wider faith communities to participate in a variety of celebrations of the *Come and See* programme and the Church's liturgical year. This is greatly appreciated.

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 monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Catholic life of the school and in the way they plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.
- They are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. This is reflected in the school's own Mission Statement which is depicted in a variety of ways e.g. photographically and artistically throughout the school. The school has invested in displays to depict the mission around the school. The statement 'We belong to the loving family of St James' underpins all that takes place in school.
- The Mission Statement aims and practical objectives direct and guide every aspect of school life and are a useful tool by which the school can evaluate its effectiveness.
- The school celebrates well its achievements and plans future improvements. The school is keen to foster links with the local high school and other local primaries. This is of mutual benefit.
- Excellent opportunities are provided for the staff and pupils to play an active part in Catholic life and Mission of the school especially by the way they have deep care and concern for each other and in the way they participate in Collective Worship.
- The Self Evaluation Document provides evidence of the schools monitoring, searching analysis and self challenge.
- Their analysis provides a basis to celebrate the school's strengths and outlining areas for development. The Self Evaluation Document is very comprehensive. When the remaining developments outlined are implemented and those already introduced are embedded they will have great impact on the life of the school.

- The school provides induction and in-service opportunities to enable staff to further understand the Church's Mission in Education. This helps them to play their unique part in it e.g. good use has been made of the in-service provided by the Department for Christian Education.
- The quality of Collective Worship is a strength of the school. It is effectively monitored and evaluated by leaders, governors and managers. An up to date policy is in place.
- The nurturing of staff spirituality is an area of ongoing development. Come and See for Yourself is used to support this.
- Leadership at all levels respects difference, values diversity and ensures equal opportunities for all.
- Prayer, worship and the liturgical life of the school reflect fully the Catholic character of the school. Excellent links have been made with the parish.
- There are extremely positive relationships at every level within the school.
- Parents are consulted regularly and ways to further involve them in the life of the school are evolving.
- Governors are outstanding in fulfilling their responsibilities. Together with the headteacher they have effectively helped to shape the direction of the school through their ongoing commitment.

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.

- Leaders, governors and managers are good in promoting monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Religious Education of the school and in the way they plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.
- Monitoring data has started to be used effectively to evaluate the schools performance and plan for future improvements.
- There is a clear programme for the monitoring and evaluation cycle.
- Teaching and learning has been monitored through scrutiny of planning and workbooks and some lesson observations.
- Outstanding practice needs to be shared and celebrated to further raise standards.
- Continuing professional development opportunities are provided for all especially at L.ACE and in school.
- Assessment information is collated and has started to be tracked by class teachers and the subject leader. This will be shared with the leadership team, governors and parents.
- Formal assessment tasks are undertaken in line with Archdiocesan guidance.
- The new subject leader is outstanding in guiding Religious Education. The subject leader and Collective Worship coordinator work together to ensure all aspects of Religious Education are supported. They show real commitment to and extraordinary enthusiasm in their respective roles. New initiatives are introduced when appropriate. Outstanding documentation guides and directs all staff in the delivery of the subject. This has been updated recently.
- The Self Evaluation Document is rigorous in identifying targets, timescales and lines of accountability
- Achievement and effort are celebrated in numerous ways.

What the school needs to do to improve further?

- Continue to develop and embed some of the more recently introduced initiatives including:
 - Tracking. Use the information generated to report standards to the leadership team, governors and parents;
 - pupils' planning and leadership of Collective Worship;
 - sharing outstanding practice observed in monitoring of lessons;
 - moderation of work with other local schools;
 - fostering links with the High School and other local Primary School.

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	2
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	2
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

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