



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. OSWALD'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

LONGTON

Tuesday 15th September 2009

Inspectors Mrs. Denise Hegarty Mrs. Angela Williams

URN: 119637

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Catholic Primary
Age range of pupils	4 -11
Number on roll	241
Chair of Governors	Mr. E. Hart
School address	Chapel Lane Longton Preston Lancashire PR4 5EB
Telephone number	01772 613402
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Date of last inspection	17 October 2006
Head teacher	Mrs. Bernadette Wood

Introduction

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

The report of the inspection is produced for the Archbishop of Liverpool (Code of Canon Law 804 and 806) and for the governors of the school.

The inspectors are members of the Christian Education Department and their associates approved by the Archbishop of Liverpool for this purpose.

Description of the school

St Oswald's is an average sized Catholic primary school serving the parish of St. Oswald's in Longton near Preston. It also takes in a small percentage of children from the parish of Our Lady's, Tarleton. The school is in the Lancashire district of the Archdiocese. There are currently 241 children on roll of whom 228 are baptised Catholic and 10 come from other Christian denominations. Three learners have other faith traditions. The vast majority of children are from a White British heritage, but there are a small number of pupils from other backgrounds. Overall, attainment on entry is about that expected and there is a below average number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are 8 teachers teaching Religious Education and 5 teachers at the school have a suitable qualification to do so. The Head teacher, who has been in post since before the last inspection, is also the Religious Education Co-ordinator. The school is undergoing a large building programme at the current time with some classes are working in difficult conditions.

Key for inspection grades

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

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Overall effectiveness of the school

St. Oswald's is an outstanding Catholic school. It is a vibrant, inclusive, Christian community with a very positive climate for learning and where the Catholic ethos is apparent for all to see and experience. The outstanding Mission of the school, underpinned by the gospel values of love, honesty and respect, is evidently lived in every aspect of school life and beyond. This is apparent in the excellent relationships existing between teachers and pupils, staff and governors, with the priest, parishioners and with the wider community. There is a real, true sense of community here and all members speak lovingly, loyally and proudly of their school. Religious Education is outstanding and delivered well to meet the needs and interests of the children. Leadership and management consider it to be the core subject in the curriculum. This practice is outstanding. Standards are good, learners achieve well, really enjoy their lessons and work hard to make good progress. Learners' behaviour is outstanding – the children co-operate well with each other and show each other respect and kindness. Overall, teaching is good. There are outstanding methods of assessment undertaken and these are providing clear guidance on learning. The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding as is the provision for learners' spiritual and moral development. Both curriculum Religious Education and Collective Worship make a significant contribution to this development. The co-ordinator provides outstanding leadership, guidance and support to staff. She is committed to her role and has put in place all new Archdiocesan and national initiatives. Together with members of senior management and governors, she, as Head teacher, shows outstanding leadership in developing the Catholic life of the school through the school's Mission Statement. This is evident through their understanding of the mission of a Catholic school and how it affects their life and work therein. Leadership at all levels has an increased awareness of the school's strengths and has taken outstanding steps to deal with any areas of development found in their self evaluation process. The school is outstanding in promoting community cohesion.

Grade: 1

Improvement since the last inspection

There has been tremendous improvement since the last Section 48 Inspection in November 2006. Outstanding steps have been taken to address the previous areas for development and to drive the school forward. The School's Mission Statement was reviewed. Assessment procedures are embedding and moderation meetings are ensuring that standards are becoming consistent across the school. Monitoring procedures are in place and views of members of the community regularly sought. Resources have been purchased to enhance Religious Education (including for Other Faiths) and Collective Worship. All new local and national initiatives have been embraced and implemented.

Grade: 1

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation document is outstanding. It is a comprehensive document that is reviewed annually as part of the school's cycle of self-review. Given the commitment shown by the Headteacher, governors and all staff members, there is outstanding capacity for further improvement.

Grade: 1

What the school should do to improve further

- Update the Self-evaluation Document to include any areas for development mentioned throughout this report.
- Encourage the teaching staff to continue their professional development in Religious Education by providing opportunities for them to undertake CCRS and/or to attend to Topic Days provided by the Archdiocese.
- Ensure that whole school moderation of work leads to the Records of Attainment being completed consistently across all key stages.

Achievement and standards

Learners achieve well. Their attainment on entry to the school is about that expected with below average numbers of learners having additional needs. They make good progress in the school. Standards in Religious Education overall are good, with pupils meeting the learning objectives and outcomes set, according to their age and stage of development. There is no significant difference in performance by learners of different gender. Learners with special needs make good progress in Religious Education with the help provided by additional adult support to meet their needs. There are sound systems in place to monitor planning, displays, assessments, teaching and learning which enable teachers, leaders and governors to be fully aware of progress and standards within the school. In all key stages learners were confident in discussion and demonstrated sound knowledge and understanding of the subject. All children show great enjoyment and enthusiasm for their work. The behaviour of children throughout the school is outstanding. They know, understand and follow their Mission Statement and Code of Conduct, have an excellent sense of right and wrong and work collaboratively and co-operatively together. Members of staff affirm and praise good work and behaviour and this leads to a very positive climate for learning. The children make an outstanding contribution to the school, local and wider community in their capacities as school councillors, play leaders and buddies. In this early part of the school year, the Year 6 pupils are excitedly anticipating their various new roles and responsibilities.

Grade: 2

Quality of Provision for Religious Education

Teaching and learning

Overall the quality of provision for Religious Education is good. The learning needs of all children are addressed through the use of creative teaching and learning strategies. Differentiation is good, but largely by outcome and support, therefore, more attention should be focussed on giving tasks that cater for the needs of individuals and provide challenge for higher achievers. Teachers present the children with material that is interesting and consequently they are motivated to learn and thoroughly enjoy their lessons. Children are enabled to make links between lessons as teachers recap previous work at the start and inform them what learning will take place next. In observations, the children remained on task throughout and willingly participated in completing their work. There are opportunities for children to work both independently and collaboratively. In their interview, they spoke confidently and with enthusiasm about topics they had covered and were able to relate the relevance of their life experience to the Christian understanding of the topics. They spoke about how much they enjoyed role play, music and learning about other faith traditions. Some good use was made of Information Communications Technology to engage the children, but the more could be done to enable children to use their own ICT skills within Religious Education. Assessment of learners' work is outstanding. The school checks on the progress made by all through rigorous procedures. Staff moderate work together and are conversant with the levels and standards their pupils are achieving. Information gleaned from assessments should now be used more consistently to inform future planning and enable standards to be raised further. More attention should be given to consider the language of the level descriptors from the Levels of Attainment and especially to focus on the 'driver words' at the appropriate level. Parents and carers are enabled to become actively involved in their children's Religious Education in an outstanding way through the provision of termly newsletters, meetings with teachers and by invitation to Assemblies and Liturgies. Reports sent home concerning the children's achievement and progress, are specific and very informative.

Grade: 2

Curriculum

The school is outstanding in meeting the Religious Education curriculum needs and interests of learners. Through using the *Here I Am* programme recommended by the Archdiocese the school meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Religious Education. A whole school approach is used and appropriate levels of the programme are being followed in different classes. This ensures complete Religious Education entitlement for each child and meets national and diocesan requirements. Of the total curriculum time 10% is allocated to Religious Education. This fulfils the requirements of the Bishops of England and Wales. Religious Education is seen as the core subject within the school and is delivered with rigour and vigour. Strong links are made with home, parish and the local and global community. The

Religious Education curriculum makes an outstanding impact on learners' spiritual and moral development and the children are well-prepared for their future. Provision is also enhanced by regular visits from the parish priest who works very closely with the school.

Grade: 1

Leadership and Management

Religious Education

Leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education are outstanding. There is a clear vision for the subject within the mission of the school. As Religious Education Co-ordinator, the head teacher provides outstanding leadership and shows great commitment to the subject. Co-ordinators' meetings have been attended regularly and information given is disseminated effectively during staff meetings. A handbook and excellent documentation guide and direct all staff in their delivery of Religious Education. Priorities for the subject are clearly identified and targets set. Outstanding systems for monitoring are in place and feedback sensitively undertaken with coaching techniques put in place where necessary. Success is celebrated and areas for development are practically acted upon. St. Oswald's is socially inclusive by providing equality of access and of opportunity for all learners to make progress. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively in lessons to support children. Five members of staff have a suitable qualification in Religious Education and all have Performance Management targets that will have an impact on Religious Education and/or the Catholic life of the school. The budget for Religious Education is good and has enabled resources to be purchased and deployed outstandingly to raise standards and enhance teaching. Governors are kept fully informed on matters relating to Religious Education and discharge their duties and responsibilities in an outstanding way. They are proactive and give considerable amounts of time, energy and expertise to the school. They are keen to be involved in what is being taught in Religious Education lessons and in the Catholic life of the school.

Grade: 1

Catholic Life of the School

There is outstanding leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school through the Mission Statement. St Oswald's is a warm, flourishing, Christian community where the gospel spirit of love, honesty and respect, permeate every aspect of its life and work in an outstanding way. People listen to each other and consider others views and ideas in an open and honest manner. This is a place where staff, children and their families are nurtured in a very positive, gentle, caring way. It is acknowledged that each child is unique and has the right to learn and achieve their full potential. The Mission Statement has been reviewed since the last inspection in a process that involved the whole community. This has enabled the governors

and staff to effectively monitor the Catholic life of the school. The Mission Statement itself is outstanding and is truly known and owned by all members of the school and parish community in an outstanding way. It informs all school policies and plans, is shared with parents on the school prospectus and calendar and is displayed prominently throughout the school and church. A set of excellent, appropriate aims that come from the Mission Statement have been put in place. The practical objectives indicating how each of these is lived out by the school community are being developed.

Grade: 1

Collective Worship

The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding. The school provides Collective Worship in a variety of ways for each child daily, in class, as a key stage or whole school. Throughout the year Collective Worship is highly organised and provides a variety of experiences for pupils, thus fulfilling government and Archdiocesan guidance. An excellent policy to support the planning and delivery of Collective Worship is in place and appropriate planners are used. Monitoring and evaluation and an audit of resources have taken place and this good practice should continue. In-service training was provided for staff. Collective Worship undertaken stimulates reflection on spiritual and moral issues and on personal beliefs. Children respond outstandingly and are prayerful and respectful throughout. Adults participate well and are good role models. Time needs to be consistently given to enable children to make a personal response. There is a focus area in each classroom and good use is made of music, ICT and resources to enhance the delivery. The parish priest makes a great contribution to the spiritual life of the school through his involvement in and contributions to celebrations, Masses and other liturgies. Parents are regularly invited to assemblies and liturgies throughout the year e.g. to the Foundation Stage 'See what I can do now.' Collective Worship makes an outstanding contribution to the children's spiritual and moral development. A 'Week of Wonder' has been held which culminated in the production of beautiful and spiritual art work.

Grade: 1

Community Cohesion

The school is outstanding in promoting community cohesion. A policy for community cohesion has been written by the Governors. Within the school community, there is a shared vision and commitment to serve the common good. Leadership at all levels respects difference, values diversity and ensures equal opportunities for all. Collective Worship celebrates, reflects and respects the diversity of belief within the community. The use of the Religious Education Programme, *Here I Am*, provides outstanding support to community cohesion. Learners have had opportunity to explore the beliefs and values of other faiths: Judaism and Islam. Parents and carers are made aware of what is happening in the school community as they are invited to

celebrations and receive regular newsletters. The parish community has very strong ties to the school especially through the visits made by the priest. All relevant Sacramental Preparation is jointly undertaken by the school and parish. Members of the governing body are also regular visitors. The school community shows a concern for the well being of those less fortunate than themselves in their awareness raising and support of local, national and global charities e.g. in their donations to CAFOD, N.S.P.C.C., and Nugent Care. At harvest festival time, children are taken to visit the shelter for the homeless and the local sheltered housing. Opportunities are taken to bring in visitors from other cultures and faiths to share their ways and beliefs through, for example, art, music and dance.

Grade: 1