



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

SKELMERSDALE

Inspection Date 25 June 2013

Inspectors Mrs. Denise Hegarty
Ms. Julie Mosinsk Mr. Mike Halford

Unique Reference Number 134598

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

Type of School Catholic Primary

Age range of pupils 3 -11

Number on roll 288

Chair of Governors Mrs Mary Reid

Headteacher Mr Terry Naylor

School address Blakehall,
Skelmersdale
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Date of last inspection 8 March 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 of Assisi school is a larger than average sized Catholic Primary School situated in Skelmersdale serving the parish of St. Richard's, Skelmersdale.
- There are 288 children on roll of whom 165 are baptised Catholic and 123 come from other Christian denominations.
- There are 16 teachers at the school including the headteacher of whom 13 are Catholic. Eleven teachers teach Religious Education and 10 have a suitable qualification in Religious Education
- The headteacher is new to the post since the last inspection as is one of the two co-ordinators.

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 of Assisi School provides good 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 pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is good.
- They are very good ambassadors for their school and display very positive attitudes towards it.
- Pupils know and understand the school's Mission Statement, 'We love and grow in Christ, we live and learn in partnership, we build and share together' and have spent time learning to understand that it calls them to live out the values from the Gospel in their daily lives. A song has been developed that enables all the children to remember its message easily.
- Pupils have a strong sense of belonging to this school community and really enjoy being part of it. They value and respect the views and opinions of others.
- Pupils are encouraged to take on roles of responsibility in the school and wider community e.g. as playground buddies, school councillors and eco monitors. Within these roles, they care for the environment, raise awareness to the needs of others and are involved in the recruitment and selection process for new staff members.
- Representatives of the school council attend the Pupil Parliament of Skelmersdale Heads Association for Raising Educational Standards. Pupils across the school gain much from this initiative especially from its provision of a great variety of enrichment activities.
- Children embrace opportunities to meet their potential in all aspects of school life and benefit from a range of extra-curricular activities e.g. choir, music, sports, art and crafts and dance. Through them, they learn the values of commitment, team work and taking responsibility for their actions.
- Pupils are actively involved in developing the Catholic character of the school by raising awareness of and generously supporting a variety of charities including CAFOD, Children in Need and Nugent Care both financially and through their prayers.
- All Year 5 and Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to participate actively in a residential trip to Tower Wood. This experience impacts greatly on the pupils' social and moral development.
- Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong and apply this in their personal relationships. They take an increasing responsibility for themselves and their actions within the moral framework upheld by the school. They have contributed to the formulation of class and school rules.
- Education for personal relationships has fostered positive attitudes in pupils and respects the dignity of all. Pupils are learning to respect and value themselves as well as their peers.
- Pupils praise and acknowledge the contribution of others. They show a readiness to embrace and celebrate their lived experiences especially through Collective Worship which often promotes self-respect and celebration for each individual pupil.
- They are involved in service to the local faith and religious communities and contribute to the Liturgy of Mass through e.g. music and prayers. The school choir go out into the community to visit and perform for a centre for people with disabilities.

- Pupils show respect and understanding of other faiths and religions and have enjoyed learning about Judaism within the curriculum and plan to discover about Hinduism later this term.

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

- Pupils' achievements and enjoyment in Religious Education is good.
- They make good progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities.
- Pupils' attainment in Religious Education is good overall. Analysis of assessments undertaken provides evidence of pupils generally attaining appropriate level for their age and stage of development in each key stage.
- There is no difference in performance between pupils of different gender.
- Outcomes for pupils with additional or special needs are also good.
- Pupils are becoming increasingly more religiously literate. Their knowledge, understanding and skills are developing appropriate to their age or capacity. They are able to express themselves through a variety of media including Information and Communication Technology.
- They have a good recall of previous topics covered and can relate their new learning to them. They are developing the skills that enable them to reflect spiritually, think ethically and theologically and become more aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
- Pupils' engagement in and enjoyment of their learning is generally very good as shown by their interest, sustained concentration and good behaviour in lessons. They particularly enjoy their role play activities and the cross curricular links that are made with art and Information and Communication Technology.
- Pupils are encouraged to work independently and collaboratively. They co-operate well with each other in group work. Across the school, children are respectful of each others' views and opinions.
- Pupils should be encouraged to take pride in their work and pay more attention to presentation.

How well pupils' respond to and participate in Collective Worship

- Pupils' response to and participation in Collective Worship is good.
- They show interest and are fully at ease in both prayer and worship. A plethora of photographic evidence of children participating in a variety of celebrations supports this.
- They act with reverence and respect at such times and are keen to participate in a variety of gatherings.
- Pupils' knowledge of prayer and liturgy is increasing. They are very familiar with responses from the Mass and with a variety of prayer styles. At interview, Year 6 pupils spoke of how they enjoyed composing their own prayers and welcomed the opportunity to do so.
- They appreciate and are open to the Word of God in the scriptures showing reverence and esteem.
- Pupils sing joyfully, often signing the words, reflect quietly in an age appropriate manner and join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence.
- Their liturgical skills are well developed as they understand the liturgical structure to Acts of Worship provided.
- They now need to become increasingly more skilled in preparing and leading worship.

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

- The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education is good.
- It is consistently effective in ensuring that pupils are interested, engaged and make good progress. Child-centred learning is a priority for the school.
- Teachers plan well and generally display sound subject knowledge. They make good use of the driver words from the Levels of Attainment in planning tasks. In lessons, they reiterate the key words from the topics to ensure the children's religious literacy develops well.
- Adults in the classroom work hard and are great role models for the children to emulate. A range of teaching styles are deployed to motivate pupils. These include opportunities for kinaesthetic learning and cross-curricular work.
- Teachers always take into account pupils' prior learning and ensure tasks are clearly differentiated when planning so that the work consolidates, builds and extends their knowledge and understanding. This needs to be extended further particularly to challenge the higher achievers.
- In the outstanding lessons observed on the day of inspection, teachers used challenging tasks and questions to take the children beyond their 'comfort zone'.
- Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to work independently and collaboratively.
- Lessons are consistently evaluated for effectiveness.
- The learning environment is attractive and stimulating. Displays are often interactive and contain children's work from all parts of the learning process.
- Teachers have high expectations of the pupils they teach in terms of attitude and behaviour and use praise and verbal encouragement well to convince the children to respond appropriately. Pupils' contributions are valued and appreciated. Their behaviour is very well-managed by adults in a positive manner.
- Effort and achievement are celebrated through marking and verbal feedback.
- Marking consistently gives positive encouragement, but could be more developmental to further direct the children's learning.
- Good use is made of time and resources including other adults and Information and Communication Technology to maximise learning.
- 'Assessment for Learning' strategies are generally used effectively across the school.
- The informal and formal assessment of pupils work in Religious Education is good. Most teachers use their assessments well to inform future planning.
- The school has good assessment strategies which provide detailed information on the achievement of all the pupils. Teachers track individual progress and enter data onto school tracking sheets which are used effectively to identify areas of development for individuals and groups of pupils. They are thus able to identify how well pupils are achieving and should now provide more challenging tasks to tackle any underachievement.
- Teachers enable pupils to evaluate their own work.

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

- The extent to which the Religious Education Curriculum promotes pupils' learning is good.
- It meets pupils' needs very well. Religious Education is seen as the core curriculum subject in this school.

- Using the *Come and See* programme recommended by the Archdiocese, the school meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. Appropriate levels of the programme are being followed in different classes including those with a mixed age group. 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 *Rejoice* part of the process should be consistently recorded and kept with planning. End of topic evaluations could indicate the next steps for learning more consistently.
- The school implements new curriculum developments as appropriate and purchases suitable resources in support.
- Displays around the school are often linked to the curriculum and celebrate work. The environment is bright, stimulating and conducive to learning.
- The provision for Religious Education is fully inclusive. Staff members take utmost care to break down barriers to learning for children with special and additional needs and provide focussed support. This is a real strength of the school.
- Enrichment activities such as opportunities emanating from the school's association with Skelmersdale Heads Association for Raising Standards have a positive impact on the curriculum, promote respect for the gifts and talents of each individual and help to raise self esteem especially for the more vulnerable children.
- The Religious Education curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral development and vocation.
- Children have explored the beliefs and values of the Jewish faith and will learn about the Hindu religion later this term. This helps to promote tolerance and respect for those who think differently.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is good. It is central to the life of the school.
- It has a very high profile, reflects the Catholic character of the school well and takes into account the variety of faith backgrounds among the pupils.
- Collective Worship plays a key part in meeting the spiritual needs of the pupils. Children are encouraged to know and experience the presence of God in their lives.
- Opportunities are provided to enable full, active and conscious participation of the whole school community.
- Prayer and Liturgy are used effectively as a source of inspiration to help pupils and staff members reflect upon their lives and mission.
- Material being delivered is lively and interesting. This ensures pupils are engaged and interested.
- Children are enabled to pray formally and informally using a variety of prayer methods and styles.
- Excellent use is made of music and Information and Communication Technology.
- The quality of provision for Collective Worship is monitored.
- The Religious Education co-ordinators ensure that suitable, modern resources are purchased and used effectively.
- The teachers should now provide resources and opportunities to help children to develop the skills necessary to plan, lead and participate in Collective Worship and to evaluate it effectively.

- Opportunities are provided for parents, carers and the local community to participate in a variety of celebrations of the *Come and See* programme and the Church's liturgical year. Many regularly attend the Friday Celebration Assembly and other liturgies e.g. at Christmas and Easter.

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 good at 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 wholly committed to promoting and developing the Catholic Life of the school and show a very good understanding of and commitment to the Mission of the Church. In this school, the children are taught to 'love and be loved'.
- This is reflected in the school's own Mission Statement. All who form part of the school community were involved in the development and review of the Mission Statement. Its aims and practical objectives direct and guide every aspect of school life and are a useful tool by which the school evaluates its effectiveness. It is displayed prominently throughout the school, on the website and used on documentation.
- Opportunities are provided for the staff and pupils to play an active part in Catholic life and Mission of the school. They truly know, own and live out their Mission Statement. All members of this cohesive community work together for the good of all.
- The learning environment is bright and attractive both indoors and outside. There are many displays around the building that pertain to the Catholic life of the school and celebrate life herein.
- The inclusion of all is a high priority and the school provides a warm, welcoming environment. There is real commitment to living the school's mission to care for the well-being and development of its members. The Sunshine Bereavement Group is set up at lunchtimes to care for children who are bereaved or in need of support. Children are given focussed tasks to help them remember and keep alive the memories of those they have lost.
- The pastoral care of pupils at this school is second to none. The Pastoral Care Team are very effective in identifying the vulnerable and providing support for them.
- Staff members are very loyal to the school and thoroughly enjoy their life and work here. They are dedicated to recognising the uniqueness of the individual with their particular needs and backgrounds and to enabling each to achieve their potential in a happy, safe environment. Staff members try very hard to enable children to find success and to recognise and celebrate their achievements.
- Leaders, governors and managers use the monitoring data available well to evaluate the school's performance, celebrate, and plan future improvements.
- On the whole, the quality of planning is good. Monitoring of planning and teaching should focus on ensuring there is consistent progression across the school and ensure that tasks are always clearly differentiated to meet the needs of the more able.
- The Self Evaluation Document provides evidence of the school's monitoring, analysis and self challenge. It is a comprehensive document which gives an accurate picture of the Catholic Life and work of the school. The analysis provides a basis to celebrate the school's strengths and outlines areas for development. It is rigorous in identifying targets, timescales and lines of accountability.

- The school provides good induction and in-service training to enable staff members to further understand the Church's Mission in Education and to play their unique parts in it. In-service sessions at LACE are regularly attended and Religious Education features regularly on the staff meeting agenda.
- The quality of Collective Worship is a priority for the school. An excellent up to date policy and guidelines for its implementation are in place.
- A range of opportunities for spiritual and moral developments are provided for staff and pupils. All are encouraged to know and experience the presence of God in their lives.
- The school strives to produce well-rounded children who can achieve their potential in all aspects of their lives and who live out the values from the Gospel.
- Matters of social justice are given high importance with many examples of awareness and fund raising for a variety of good causes e.g. on CAFOD Family Fast Day, the older children are encouraged to forgo their mid-morning snack and to donate monies to the appeal as gestures of empathy and support. The school holds the International Schools Award.
- Leadership at all levels respects difference, values diversity and ensures equal opportunities for all. Funding is available to invite visitors of other faiths and religions into school to share their faith and help to foster positive attitudes and respect for the beliefs of others.
- There are positive relationships at every level within the school and within the parish community. The Parents and Friends Association raises funds to enhance the environment and provide resources for the school.
- There are strong links with the parish and the school supports the Archdiocesan sacramental preparation programme, *With You Always*, very well. Some school staff members and governors are actively involved as part of the catechetical team.
- Parents are consulted regularly and involved in a variety of ways in the life of the school. They are kept well-informed through newsletters, the school website and text messages. They are invited to service, Masses, celebrations and assemblies.
- Governors fulfil their responsibilities very well. They are fully committed and kept well-informed about the Catholic Life of the school. Governors are competent, decisive and realistic in their expectations. They have effectively helped to shape the direction of the school through their high profile in the school. They regularly attend school celebrations throughout the year and access training as required.

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 Religious Education of the school and in the way they plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.
- Religious Education is very much at the core of the curriculum in this school.
- Governors and leaders ensure that 10% quality time is dedicated to the teaching the subject. The Religious Education link governor is a strong presence in the school and most supportive of its activities.
- Monitoring data is used effectively to evaluate the school's performance and plan for future improvements. Teaching and learning are monitored and appropriate feedback and support given as necessary. Good practice is celebrated.
- Continuing professional development opportunities are provided for all and additional support given to new or inexperienced staff members.

- Assessment information is collated and tracked by the subject leaders and shared with the leadership team, governors and parents.
- Formal assessment tasks are undertaken in line with Archdiocesan guidance. Staff are familiar with and becoming more secure in their levelling of work.
- The subject leaders guide and develop Religious Education very well. They show real commitment and enthusiasm for their work. Archdiocesan training and briefing sessions are regularly attended and new initiatives introduced when appropriate. Excellent documentation guides and directs all staff in the delivery of the subject. This is updated as necessary.
- Governors are kept well-informed. They are interested and proactively involved in a variety of ways. They bring their own expertise to the school and their particular skills are used effectively. They ensure that a generous budget is provided for the subject.
- Newsletters are provided for parents and carers each term, which outline the curriculum and indicate how they can help to support their children's Religious Education. They receive an annual report on progress and are kept further informed through verbal reports on Parents' Evenings. They are consulted on different issues depending on the topic being covered and encouraged to support their child's learning.
- Achievement and effort are celebrated especially at the end of week assemblies which are much appreciated and enjoyed by the pupils.

What the school needs to do to improve further:

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress further by:
 - differentiating work more particularly to challenge the higher achievers.
- Improve the provision for Collective Worship by:
 - developing the role of children in preparing and leading Collective Worship;
 - inviting parents and the local community to participate more frequently;
 - developing the use of the wonderful outdoor environment to enhance the children's spirituality.
- Continue to implement the areas for development identified in the school's own self-evaluation document. These include:
 - reviewing the tracking of Religious Education;
 - providing children with first-hand experience of other cultures, religions and faiths;
 - revisiting the school's Mission Statement.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	2
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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	2
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	2

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	2
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	2

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	2
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
