



## ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

### INSPECTION REPORT

### ST. BENEDICT'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

#### NETHERTON

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Inspection Date 13 October 2015

Inspectors Mrs. Denise Hegarty,  
Mrs. Angela Williams, Mrs. Angela Paget.

Unique Reference Number 135085

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

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Type of School Catholic Primary

Age range of pupils 3 - 11

Number on roll 239

Chair of Governors Jayne Dunn

Headteacher Michael Phillips

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Bootle.  
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Date of last inspection 8 February 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. Benedict's is an average-sized Catholic Primary School situated in Netherton in the Sefton district of the Archdiocese and serves the parish of St. Benet's.
- There are 239 children on roll, of whom 209 are baptised Catholic. Twenty nine pupils are from other Christian denominations and there is one pupil who has no faith or religious tradition.
- There are 11 teachers at the school, of whom 9 are Catholic. Eight teachers teach Religious Education and 6 have a suitable qualification in Religious Education.
- The headteacher is new to the post since the last inspection. Religious Education is co-ordinated by a team of two teachers, both of whom were in post at the time of the last inspection. Also on the team are a Teaching Assistant and several children.

### Key for inspection grades

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

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## Overall effectiveness:

St Benedict's 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.
- Pupils know and understand the school's Mission Statement and clearly understand the part they play within it. They were involved in its evaluation and have produced their own wonderful version which can be easily accessed by all children.
- Pupils have a great sense of belonging to the school community and value and respect others. They are excellent ambassadors for the school and many examples of the caring attitudes they show towards others were noticed on the day of inspection as pupils generously shared their time, ideas and resources so kindly with others.
- Pupils are encouraged to take on roles of responsibility in the school and wider community. Every child in Year 6 has a leadership role, for example, as a school councillor, a sponsor of a younger child or a lunch time monitor. This responsibility prepares them well for their next stage of education by equipping them with independence and many organisational and communication skills. For instance, a peer mediator, when questioned about their role at interview responded, 'I help the younger ones to solve their own problems first rather than look for an adult to help.' Pupils show great dedication to these roles.
- Pupils are actively involved in developing the Catholic character of the school through, for example, their involvement in charity work and fund raising. They are alert to the needs of others and kindly support a wide variety of good causes including Operation Christmas Child's Shoe Box Appeal, Nugent Care's Good Shepherd Fund and Macmillan Cancer Support. Pupils respond with enthusiasm and remarkable generosity to these opportunities, are often the first to raise awareness of the plights of others and have a strong sense of serving the common good.
- They benefit from participation in a variety of strategically planned opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These involve residential trips for Years 5 and 6 and many day visits to, for example, the theatre and museum. Prior to the celebration of the sacraments, the school provides a retreat for pupils to give them time and space to reflect on the next step of their faith journey. Pupils value this time and particularly enjoy their celebration provided by the Parents, Staff and Friends of the school Association around the feast of SS. Peter and Paul. All these opportunities contribute to raising self-esteem and self-confidence.
- 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. They understand and participate in the school's restorative justice programme and are quick to forgive others. Their behaviour is excellent.
- Education for pastoral care and personal relationships has fostered positive attitudes in pupils and evaluations from them indicate a mature response to these experiences.
- Pupils praise and acknowledge the contribution of others. They show a readiness to embrace and celebrate their lived experiences.
- They are involved in service to the local faith and religious communities and the immediate neighbourhood served by the school through, for example, the SMILE project which enables them to make a lasting contribution to the community. They play an active

role in the life of the parish as altar servers, by leading singing and through distributing hampers for the homeless. They show heed for their environment by caring for their Garden of Remembrance and by keeping the grounds free of litter.

- Pupils show respect and understanding of other faiths and religions and have enjoyed learning about Judaism and Islam within the curriculum.
- They embrace opportunities to meet their potential in all aspects of school life and take pleasure in participating in a variety of extra-curricular activities, such as those undertaken as part of the Children's University and in sport, music, recreational activities etc. Through these, pupils learn the values of commitment and sportsmanship.
- They take the opportunity to share their views on the Catholic life of the school and know that their responses are incorporated into the School Improvement Plan.

### **How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education**

- Pupils' achievements and enjoyment in Religious Education are outstanding.
- On entry to school many children have a limited knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith and are at an early stage in their Religious Education journey.
- They make excellent progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities across the school so that by the end of Year 6, their attainment in Religious Education is high.
- There is no difference in performance between pupils of different gender.
- Outcomes for pupils with additional or special needs are also outstanding.
- Analyses of assessments undertaken provide evidence of pupils generally attaining appropriate level for their age and stage of development in each key stage with some exceeding expectations.
- Evidence from the school's monitoring of workbooks across time and scrutiny on the day of inspection shows that the majority of pupils' work is consistently very good or outstanding. Great pride is taken in work and it is generally presented very well.
- 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. At interview, pupils spoke confidently about what they had learned in their topics and were able to relate it clearly to the Christian message therein.
- Pupils' engagement in and enjoyment of their learning is outstanding as shown by their interest, enthusiasm and excellent behaviour for learning. On the day of inspection, all pupils were engaged in their work and were clearly excited about what they were doing. Most pupils showed sustained concentration throughout their lessons and no child was off task at any time.
- Pupils are encouraged to work independently and collaboratively. In their group work, they work together extremely co-operatively and are polite and kind to each other. Their behaviour and these positive attitudes to their peers are exemplary.
- Pupils are anxious to learn and improve their knowledge, understanding and skills as they become independent learners. They have an increasing ability to assess their own learning.

### **How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship**

- Pupils' response to and participation in Collective Worship is outstanding.
- They show interest, respond well and actively participate in Collective Worship.
- They act with reverence, respect and enthusiasm and are keen to participate in a variety of gatherings.
- Pupils' knowledge of prayer and liturgy is increasing. Their liturgical skills are developing very well from an early age.

- They have become familiar with a variety of prayer styles. On the day of inspection, for example, children from the reception class composed a spontaneous litany of praise in response to the creation story.
- Pupils appreciate and are open to the Word of God in the Scriptures.
- They sing joyfully, reflect purposefully in silence and join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence.
- Despite the fact that there are a variety of faith stances within the school, all children are at ease together and participate well in Collective Worship and are keen to invite their parents and carers along.
- They are becoming increasingly more confident preparing and leading worship from their earliest years. They enjoy taking the initiative and are creative and resourceful in their planning and delivery. The *Rejoice* part of the process in the *Come and See* programme is used very effectively consistently across the school to enable pupils to acquire the skills needed. They are able to create an atmosphere conducive to worship through skilful use of music, prayer focus and silence.

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

- The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education is outstanding.
- It is consistently effective in ensuring that pupils are interested and engaged and make excellent progress.
- Teachers display very good subject knowledge and deploy a wide range of teaching styles to motivate and inspire pupils.
- Teaching encourages pupils' enjoyment of and enthusiasm for 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.
- They use good questioning techniques to assess the effectiveness of their teaching, to stimulate thought and to promote and challenge pupils' learning.
- Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to work independently and collaboratively.
- Good use is made of time and resources including other adults and Information and Communication Technology to maximise learning.
- Pupils are informed of their progress and how to improve both orally and through marking. They are given opportunities to discuss their work and how to improve. They are nurtured as independent and reflective learners.
- The school has adopted a mind-friendly approach to learning which helps engage pupils' concentration, motivation and application.
- Effort and achievement are celebrated. Feedback on pupils' work and achievements boosts their self esteem. Excellent use is made of praise and encouragement so a very positive climate for learning is maintained.
- The assessment of pupils work in Religious Education is outstanding. Through formal and informal assessment and moderation, teachers have consolidated their knowledge of expectations in Religious Education and as a result have clear understanding of how to guide pupils to their expected level and beyond.
- The school has excellent assessment strategies which provide accurate and detailed information on the achievement of all the pupils.
- Teachers are able to identify how well pupils are achieving, tackle underachievement and raise attainment.
- Teachers enable pupils to evaluate their own work. They can clearly see the progress they have made over the course of a topic through use of mind-maps.

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

- The extent to which the Religious Education Curriculum promotes pupils' learning is outstanding. Religious Education is clearly seen as the core subject in this school.
- 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.
- Careful timetabling ensures that of the total curriculum time, 10% quality time 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.
- The school's creative curriculum also provides many opportunities for children to explore the awe and wonder of our world. Careful thought has been given to ensure there are links with other curricular subjects.
- Enrichment activities have a positive impact on the curriculum. This caters for the interests of all pupils with, for example, a range of sports, choir, art and other clubs.
- The Religious Education curriculum provides outstanding opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral development and vocation. The whole school curriculum, in fact, has a strong focus on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
- The curriculum is customised to meet the needs of groups and individuals and links are forged to extend pupils' learning at home through homework. Feedback from parents indicates this is a positive experience for all.
- Every opportunity is taken to enhance the curriculum and widen children's experiences through carefully selected visitors, for instance, Bishop Tom and Mill Hill Missionaries and through visits to places such as the theatre and museum. These are strategically planned to encompass all year groups across the school.
- Children have explored the beliefs and values of Judaism and Islam. A Jewish visitor came to school to share elements of his faith with pupils and some pupils visited a synagogue. This all 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 outstanding. It reflects 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 life of the school. It 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 in a variety of settings including outdoors.
- The school's worship planners show evidence of different prayer methods and styles being used to enhance children's experience of prayer enabling them to pray both formally and informally.
- Timings are age and stage appropriate thus ensuring that it is a personal experience for those present.
- The school has purchased a variety of resources for worship, including modern crucifixes, which are well-cared for and used very effectively. Adults (and pupils) create beautiful visual displays for worship as focus areas for thought and stimulus for reflection.
- The school provides opportunities for staff to develop the skills in planning, leading and evaluating Collective Worship.

- The teachers provide 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.
- Collective Worship is well-planned and adults are great role models for pupils to emulate.
- Opportunities are provided for parents, carers the local and wider faith communities to come together to participate in a variety of significant services and celebrations such as the Harvest Festival, Carol Services and the Ash Wednesday Liturgy etc. These celebrations are well-supported and much 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.
- This is a warm and welcoming school with a caring ethos where all the community are valued for the unique individuals that they are. Each person's gifts and talents are nurtured and developed. This leads to the school being an extremely tight-knit, flourishing community with very positive relationships across the board.
- This is reflected in the school's own Mission Statement, *'With Jesus, we learn, love and laugh'*. All who form part of the school community including parents, clergy, governors and children were involved in the development and review of the Mission Statement. All children in the school contributed to a child-friendly version which reflects on how the mission is lived out in school life. This is displayed on the main corridor and available to view on the school's website.
- The statement's 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.
- At the launch assembly of the renewed Mission Statement, each class was sent forth with a banner depicting the revised statement and these are now proudly displayed in each classroom.
- Excellent opportunities are provided for the staff and pupils to play an active part in Catholic life and mission of the school, such as through the environmental work that goes on to care for our 'common home'. All members of the community clearly understand how to live out their Mission Statement in the daily life of the school.
- There is a focal point in the school hall which reflects the liturgical life of the Church. Beautiful banners designed and made by members of the school community enhance the display and are used for Advent, Lent, Easter and Pentecost.
- High quality displays and a vibrant learning environment reflect the ethos of the school.
- Leaders, governors and managers are outstanding in the way they use monitoring data to evaluate the schools performance, celebrate, and plan future improvements.
- The Self Evaluation Document provides evidence of the schools monitoring, searching analysis and self challenge. It is regularly monitored, evaluated and updated in consultation with staff, governors and parents.
- It celebrates every aspect of school life and provides challenge to ensure the school strives to achieve the highest quality outcomes and provision for its community.
- There is an induction programme for new members of staff to ensure they are fully aware of the Catholic mission of the school and the requirements needed to fulfil their unique part in it. Each newly qualified teacher is assigned a mentor from the Religious Education team to help and support them. The school provides continuing professional development opportunities and encourages the full participation of staff members to develop their understanding and commitment to the Church's mission in education.

- The quality of Collective Worship is a priority for the school. It is very effectively monitored and evaluated by leaders, governors and managers. An up to date policy is in place.
- Leaders regularly seek the views of pupils, staff and parents/carers regarding the quality and significance of Collective Worship in school and are quick to respond to the findings in a thorough manner.
- A range of opportunities for spiritual and moral developments are provided for staff and pupils. The school curriculum is planned to ensure children have a variety of experiences to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. This is further enhanced by a wide range of school trips. The school leaders map these experiences carefully to ensure that, throughout their time in school, children have a vast array of enriching opportunities.
- Each term starts with a reflection, lead by the Religious Education team, to provide staff with opportunities to come together to pray and reflect on their roles.
- The school takes every opportunity to nurture and develop the whole child and enable each to find success in school life. The use of *Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning* and *Mind-friendly Learning* support this.
- A pastoral mentor has been appointed to work closely with parents, pupils, members of staff and outside agencies to ensure the school provides the highest possible care for all pupils especially those who are most vulnerable.
- 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.
- Parents are consulted regularly through questionnaires, parents' forum and informal discussions. They find the school supportive and relax knowing that their children are happy and safe. They are involved in a variety of ways in the life of the school including involvement in the Parents, Staff and Friends of the school Association.
- Links with the parish are well-established and enrich the pupils' sense of belonging to the parish community. The previous parish priest, who has recently retired, regularly visited the school and offered pastoral support to staff, pupil and their families. He was inspirational in bringing the community together. The school has recently welcomed a new parish priest into the fold and he is keen to carry on this good work. Notices and newsletters are exchanged and links remain strong.
- The school works well with parish catechists and families to ensure high quality sacramental preparation for pupils.
- Governors are outstanding in fulfilling their responsibilities. They have effectively helped to shape the direction of the school through their high profile within the school and in the way they support and challenge leaders.

**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 outstanding 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.
- The Self Evaluation Document is rigorous in identifying targets, timescales and lines of accountability. A subject action plan emanates from this document and is closely monitored throughout the year. A suitable budget is dedicated to Religious Education.
- There is a robust programme for the monitoring and evaluation cycle which has been in place over a good period of time. Monitoring data gleaned is used very effectively to evaluate the school's performance and plan for future improvements. There is no room for complacency in this school.

- Teaching and learning are monitored regularly and appropriate feedback and support given as necessary. Good practice is shared and celebrated. All teachers are involved in the monitoring process and take part in joint lesson observations across the school with a member of the Religious Education Team. This gives them a useful overview of learning throughout the school.
- Continuing professional development opportunities are provided for all. Teachers embrace this opportunity to develop their classroom practice.
- Assessment information is collated and tracked by the subject leader and shared with the leadership team, governors and parents.
- Formal assessment tasks are undertaken in line with Archdiocesan guidance.
- Religious Education is lead by a highly organised team of two teachers and a teaching assistant. Several children are also involved in some aspects of the role. The team is outstanding in guiding the subject. They have high expectations of themselves and of others. All show great commitment and introduce new initiatives when appropriate. Excellent documentation guides and directs all staff in the delivery of the subject. This is updated as necessary.
- Regular staff meetings are dedicated to Religious Education and ensure staff members are fully aware of new developments etc. These opportunities help to maintain the high profile of the subject.
- A Religious Education governor works with the team and is deeply committed to supporting the school. As a former head-teacher, she brings a wealth of experience to the role.
- Reports are made to the governors on matters related to the subject and the lead governor regularly visits to check on progress.
- Curriculum outlines are provided for parents who are consulted on different issues depending on the topic being covered. They receive personalised, detailed reports on their children's progress and achievement at the end of each year. Many opportunities are given for parents to become involved in their child's Religious Education through homework etc.
- The school has a wide range of strategies to celebrate achievement and effort including weekly awards assemblies. Good use is made of the entrance screen to celebrate all the great things that happen in school life.

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

- Continue to implement the areas for development identified in the school's own self-evaluation document. These include:
  - developing a high quality system of marking to ensure dialogue between pupils and adults;
  - liaising with the new parish priest to continue to develop a shared vision;
  - involving parents and families in acts of worship in classes.
- Further raise attainment in Religious Education by:
  - ensuring tasks are consistently differentiated within topics across the school;
  - ensuring marking is consistently developmental as well as congratulatory.

# INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	1
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## **OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS**

<b>How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils</b>	
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**

<b>How effective the provision is for Catholic Education</b>	
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**

<b>How effective leaders, governors and managers are in developing the Catholic Life of the School</b>	
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	1

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