



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

HUYTON

Tuesday 17 June 2008

Inspectors Mrs. Denise Hegarty Mrs. Anne Mc Nally

URN 104472

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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| Type of School | Catholic Primary |
| Age range of pupils | 5 -11 |
| Number on roll | 188 |
| Chair of Governors | Mr. J. Mulcahey |
| School address | Edenfield Crescent, Huyton, Liverpool, Merseyside, L36 6DS. |
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| Date of last inspection | October 2003 |
| Head teacher | Mr. Charlie Newstead |

Introduction

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the School Inspection 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. Joseph's is a smaller than average Catholic Primary School situated in Huyton and is one of two schools that serves the parish of St. Aidan's. There are currently 188 learners on roll of whom 186 are baptised Catholics, 1 is from another Christian denomination and 1 has no faith tradition. The vast majority of children come from white British backgrounds. Overall, attainment on entry is below the national expectations. The school has average numbers of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are an above average number of learners entitled to free school meals. Of the 10 members of the teaching staff, 8 are Catholic and 9 teachers teach Religious Education. Seven teachers have a Religious Education qualification and 3 are currently undertaking the *Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies*.

Key for inspection grades

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

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Overall effectiveness of the school

St. Joseph's is a good Catholic school with many outstanding features and with great potential to be outstanding overall. It is a caring, supportive community where leadership has high expectations of staff and learners and consequently, opportunities are provided for all to reach their full potential. Children are given many opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills outside the curriculum in a variety of ways. This is a school where every child matters and their gifts and talents are celebrated. Relationships are very good at every level and all who visit are made to feel very welcome. All members of staff work well together as a team to create a positive climate for learning where everyone feels loved and valued. This enables the newly implemented Mission Statement to be lived out by all members of the school community. This is also reflected in the vibrant and stimulating displays evident around the school. There are close links with parents and parish. Standards are good. Learners achieve well and make good progress as they move up the school. Teaching is good overall. Sound assessment procedures are in place and these need to be developed and built upon. Monitoring and evaluation systems are used effectively to inform the school self evaluation processes. Whilst the school's self evaluation document appears comprehensive, more specific developmental strategies will make it a more useful resource. It can then be more rigorously monitored by staff and governors. The curriculum is well planned leading to a very effective delivery of the *Here I Am* programme. Work is frequently differentiated and a variety of teaching and learning strategies deployed to ensure that the children's learning needs are met. Children collaborate and co-operate with each other on tasks and behave well in their lessons. Collective worship is good and there are clear guidelines in place for delivery. Both curriculum Religious Education and Collective Worship make a significant contribution to the learners' spiritual and moral development. The school is outstanding in promoting community cohesion and there are many projects and initiatives underway to take this further. The headteacher and the subject co-ordinator, who is also the deputy headteacher, have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and share a vision for the future. The governors are very supportive and discharge their duties and responsibilities very well. The school has an outstanding capacity to improve.

Grade: 2

Improvement since the last inspection

Following the last Section 23 Inspection in October 2003, the school has taken effective steps to review its progress through its annual process of self evaluation. The headteacher is new to the school since the last inspection, but the Religious Education co-ordinator is the same and she has ensured that all areas for development were addressed. The headteacher has given his full support to her in these matters. A whole school approach to the *Here I Am* programme is now used and the school is thus able to monitor planning and assessment more effectively and consistently as a consequence. In-service training was undertaken in the delivery of Collective Worship, new resources were provided and a useful policy developed. Led by the headteacher, a new Mission Statement was established recently by all stakeholders in the school community, and appropriate aims and objectives developed from it.

Grade: 1

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation document is useful, comprehensive and realistic. The judgements made in it broadly match the judgements made in this report. There are good processes in place for self-evaluation which inform the school improvement plan. Any additional areas for development identified in this report should now be included. The leadership team has a clear understanding of what needs to be developed, and the capacity for improvement is outstanding. This is evident in the shared commitment to Religious Education and related whole school issues by the headteacher, the Religious Education co-ordinator and the chair of governors.

Grade: 1

What the school should do to improve further:

- Review the self evaluation document to include more effective strategies to indicate how identified areas for improvement will be rectified;
- When reporting to parents and learners, teachers should use the language of the level descriptors and expectation statements to provide more meaningful information;
- Continue to implement the targets set out in the self evaluation document and the school development plan.

Achievement and standards

Learners' attainment on entry to the school is below national expectations. Learners make good progress and standards in Religious Education are good by the end of Key Stage 2 with most children meeting the learning needs. There are no significant differences in performance by learners of different genders. Children with special educational needs, ably supported by enthusiastic teaching assistants, also make good progress. Most teachers' planning and lessons observed showed that tasks were differentiated to meet the needs of all the learners although some tasks could have been more challenging on the day of inspection. Children's work is marked with positive, encouraging comments and in some classes indicates the next steps to be taken in learning. Teachers have high expectations of the children. Religious Education targets are given to most learners, but these need to be monitored closely to become more effective. Teachers take care to praise the children consistently for good work and behaviour in most lessons. This leads to an enthusiastic response from the children who really enjoy their work and do their best to please. On the whole, children's behaviour was very good, but some challenging behaviour was observed in one class and support should be given to ensure that other learners are not distracted from their work as a consequence. Children are very confident in discussion about the topics covered and talk enthusiastically about their Religious Education lessons especially those that involved a visitor attending where learning was considerably enhanced. They show a good knowledge and understanding of the subject. Throughout the school, work is recorded in a variety of different ways e.g. play scripts, newspaper articles, diary entries etc. More use of role play, improvisations and hot-seating activities may enhance the learning of the children whose written skills are weaker. Good practice in the use of information

communication technology was seen clearly in Year 3. Other learners would benefit from this level of good practice being adopted consistently throughout the school. The school is striving to deliver Religious Education across the curriculum, but need to ensure that the appropriate learning outcomes are central to the teaching. The monitoring of planning, teaching, learning and assessments are generally good. Standards could be raised even further if these procedures became more deeply embedded and more evaluative. Moderation of work should take place to ensure that levels are consistent across the school.

Catholic beliefs and values are at the heart of learners' spiritual and moral development and these are enhanced by a variety of opportunities provided by the school. Children have a good knowledge and understanding of the life and teaching of Jesus. Wide and varied creative strategies, including those linking other curriculum areas, are used to apply this teaching to their own lives and experiences. Children show interest and enjoyment in their work. The work undertaken on *Other Faiths*, especially the roles played by invited visitors, has helped the children understand how others make sense of the world in which we live. The Religious Education link governor is the subject co-ordinator and she informs the full governing body on what is currently happening in Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school. The behaviour of children throughout the school is very good, they work together collaboratively showing mutual respect. They have a good sense of right and wrong and are able to communicate their views and opinions well. Positive reward systems affirm their good behaviour. Good relationships are a strength of the school. The children make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community. Parish links are good and the parish priest visits the school and celebrates Mass with staff, parents and learners. Members of the school staff help with the preparation of children for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist using '*Celebrate Together*'. Communications are very good. Parents are kept up to date with what is happening in Religious Education by regular newsletters which now support the work of the home school parish partnership in developing children's religious education.

Grade: 2

Quality of Provision for Religious Education

Teaching and learning

The quality of provision for Religious Education is good. The learning needs of all the children are addressed through use of a variety of teaching and learning strategies. Most of the teaching observed showed that the teachers were confident and enthusiastic in their delivery of the programme. This helped the learners to engage well with their lessons and thoroughly enjoy them. Teaching was good overall. Some good use was made of information communication technology where well-prepared resources enhanced the delivery of lessons and maintained the children's interest throughout. This good practice should be shared among the rest of the staff and children given the opportunity to record their work more frequently using their information communication technology skills. More challenging activities are needed to stretch the more able children especially in Key Stage 1. There are many cross-curricular links made. Effective use is made of all additional adults to support children with special or additional educational needs. These assistants are a real asset to the school as the children easily relate to them and are freely given

the support they need. Most lessons that were observed had good pace and timing, which maintained the interest and concentration of learners and kept them on focussed on their tasks. Work is provided that enables learners to work independently and collaboratively. Most teachers ensure that learners understand the purpose of the lesson by sharing the learning objective at the start. This is then often re-visited and reiterated during the plenary session. Learners' religious literacy is being enhanced in most classes by using the key words for each topic. These are often found on displays so children can focus on them and access them easily. Marking is positive and affirming and some is constructive and developmental. More of this sort of feedback is needed to move learning on and raise standards even further. New assessment and recording procedures are in place showing what progress has been made. These should now inform planning. Monitoring of teaching and learning through observation of planning, teaching and learning is in place and is very effective. Parents and carers are enabled to become involved in their children's Religious Education by the provision of regular newsletters which inform them well of what is covered in Religious Education and life of the school and have recently given ideas and suggestions as to how they can work in partnership to help. They receive annual reports on progress and achievement and are regularly invited to *Here I Am* assemblies at the *Rejoice* stage of the process and to class Masses. Very recently, all members of the school, parish and wider community were invited to the successful launch of the school's new Mission Statement.

Grade: 2

Curriculum

The Religious Education curriculum is outstanding in meeting the needs and interests of learners. The school, using the *Here I Am* programme recommended by the Archdiocese, 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 taught curriculum time at least 10% is allocated to Religious Education. This fulfils the requirements of the Bishops of England and Wales. The leadership team ensure suitable positioning of Religious Education on timetables and Religious Education is clearly seen as *the* core subject in this school. Very effective links are made with home and the parish. Parents are kept well-informed of what is happening in the religious life of the school and about the progress of their children. The Religious Education curriculum makes an outstanding contribution to learners' spiritual and moral development.

Grade: 1

Leadership and Management

Religious Education

Leadership and management, in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education, are outstanding. Religious Education has been given real prominence in the curriculum. The subject leader, supported by the headteacher, provides outstanding support to staff. She has introduced all recent initiatives relevant to her role. Co-ordinators' meetings have been attended regularly and information is disseminated to all staff during staff meetings or individually after school. Clear documentation guides and directs all staff in their delivery of the subject. Staff are nurtured and supported in their planning and delivery of Religious Education thus ensuring that all parts of the process are given appropriate worth. They are encouraged, in turn, to attend topic days for their own professional development and asked to share resources and feedback to others at subsequent staff meetings. Performance in Religious Education is currently monitored well through scrutiny of planning, teaching and learning and workbooks. Formal monitoring of lessons has been undertaken to identify strengths and areas for ongoing professional development by senior management. Self-assessment needs to be consistently undertaken for each topic by staff and learners. Of the 10 staff teaching Religious Education, 7 have a suitable qualification. Three other teachers are currently undertaking the *Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies*. Funding for Religious Education is good, but should be on par with other core subjects. School portfolios of levelled work need to be further developed to allow the school to better demonstrate progress and evidence the good work of learners. The subject coordinator is a governor and is, therefore, able to keep the governors fully informed on matters relating to Religious Education. Governors are outstanding in the discharge of their duties and responsibilities.

Grade: 1

Catholic Life of the School

The leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school through the Mission Statement are outstanding. St. Joseph's is a welcoming school in which the Gospel spirit of love and respect permeate every aspect of its life and work. The newly revised high quality Mission Statement is in place with appropriate aims and practical objectives. This is proudly displayed prominently around the school and is truly owned by all who were involved in its revision and implementation. The school council and other learner representatives are involved in ensuring that a child-friendly version of the Mission Statement will be created. Children from every class were eager to have their work chosen to illustrate their Mission Statement culminating in its recent launch to which all stakeholders and friends were invited. The aims and objectives of the Mission Statement should now become central to the revision of all policy documentation. This is a happy community where very good relationships exist. The school has a clear sense of its mission in reaching out to others. Learners support a variety of local, national and international charities both by developing awareness of and by raising funds and resources for the work undertaken by a range of organisations.

Grade: 1

Collective Worship

The quality of Collective Worship is good. The school provides Collective Worship in a variety of ways and settings for each child daily thus fulfilling government requirement and Archdiocesan guidance. A useful policy has been produced that states the nature and purpose of Collective Worship and gives guidelines that support the planning and delivery. The planning sheet provided also enables the teachers to plan effectively and efficiently. The school monitors the planning and delivery of Collective Worship and this should enable the elements of good practice to be shared and promote consistency throughout the school. A focus for worship is provided in each classroom using candles, religious objects and artefacts. Resources are made available to enable these areas to be changed regularly thus helping children to reflect more readily on the topic being covered and supporting their spiritual development. Teachers ensure time is given to individual reflection. Parents, governors and members of the school community are invited to *Here I Am* assemblies held in the *Rejoice* part of the process and to school Masses. The children respond well to Collective Worship and are becoming more increasingly involved in its planning and delivery. They enjoy singing songs; hymns etc. and make good use of songs from *REJOICE*. Overall, Collective Worship makes a good contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the learners as it stimulates reflection on spiritual and moral issues and on personal beliefs and values.

Grade: 2

Community Cohesion

The school is outstanding in promoting community cohesion. There is a growing shared vision and commitment to serving the common good and to celebrating everyone's unique gifts and talents. Children are given many opportunities to develop in a variety of activities through music, drama, sports etc. Leadership at all levels values diversity and ensures equal opportunities. Parents are encouraged to become actively involved in the life of the school. A variety of opportunities are provided for parents and carers to share their views and opinions. Collective Worship celebrates, reflects and respects the diversity of belief and culture within the wider community. The Religious Education Programme, *Here I Am*, is used effectively to provide support to community cohesion. Learners have had opportunity to explore the beliefs and values of other faiths: Judaism and Islam. Several visitors of different religious beliefs have attended school enriching the learning experience of the learners. The school community shows a concern for the well being of those less fortunate than themselves in their support of local and national charities e.g. CAFOD, Nugent Care and Operation Christmas Child. Governors feel able to come into school at any time and are welcomed into classes to visit or to attend assemblies and school Masses. The headteacher is working with Cape UK to promote community cohesion through arts, creativity and culture. The school holds focus weeks where issues such as bullying and racism are addressed.

Grade: 1

