



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. MARK'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

HALEWOOD

Inspection Date 5 December 2017

Inspectors Mrs. Pat Peel Mrs Jackie Coughlan

Unique Reference Number 104469

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 198 incl. Nursery

Chair of Governors Mrs. Ann Farrell

Headteacher Mr. Richard Coakley

School address
Fir Avenue
Halewood
Knowsley
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Date of last inspection 4 December 2012

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. Mark's is a smaller than average sized Catholic Primary School situated in Halewood serving the parish of St. John Vianney, Halewood.
- There are 198 number of children on roll of whom 132 are baptised Catholic, 21 come from other Christian denominations, and six from other faith or religious traditions. Thirty nine have no religious affiliation.
- There are eleven teachers in the school. Nine are baptised Catholic. Eight teach Religious Education. Ten teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education.
- Since the last inspection there has been no significant changeover of staff.

Key for inspection grades

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

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OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

St. Mark's School is outstanding in providing Catholic Education.

CATHOLIC LIFE

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 truly appreciate, value and actively participate in the Catholic Life at St. Mark's. They know, own and live out their Mission Statement *'in a caring Christian Community together we love, learn, laugh and achieve'* wholeheartedly. They know it is a calling to live out the Gospel values in their daily lives.
- Pupils show respect for themselves and others as made in the image and likeness of God. The behaviour of pupils is exemplary. In proportion to their years they show an ability to listen, to give thanks, to forgive and be forgiven. They are quick to congratulate others. They have an outstanding understanding of right and wrong.
- Pupils enthusiastically embrace the demands that members of the school community entails such as becoming councillors, playleaders and classroom monitors.
- They take a leading role in those activities which promote the schools Catholic Life and mission both within school and in the wider community such as fundraising for numerous charities e.g. CAFOD World Gifts, Nugent, British Legion and Operation Christmas Child. They are alert to the needs of others and seek justice for all. Within the locality they collect food and clothing for the HOPE homeless project in Liverpool. Pupils recently raised money for Syria Aid and used it to purchase food from a local supermarket.
- Pupils value and fully participate in opportunities provided by the school including a range of after school clubs such as horse riding, drama, and a range of seasonal sports. The school supports outdoor educational visits; pupils in Y6 visit the Boreatton Park Adventure Centre in Shropshire.
- Pupils take full advantage of the opportunities the school provides for their personal support and development they have an outstanding sense of belonging. On the day of inspection, a child commented that, *"St. Mark's is a great school and we all achieve our best!"*. As a result, they are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of physical, emotional and spiritual growth as their motto states *"A St. Mark's child is a happy child!"*
- Pupils, appropriate to their age and capability, have recently begun relationships and sex education within the context of a Christian understanding but this is in its infancy and needs to be embedded further into school life.
- Pupils enthusiastically embrace a holistic approach to education, understand what it means to have a vocation and recognise the importance of using their gifts in the service of others. Pupils value their weekly rewards and celebration assemblies held on a Friday where they recognise achievements from both inside and outside of school. The school choir sings at church, supports at the SVP Mass for the sick and housebound, joins with the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra at Christmastime and has sang with the Halewood Memory Lance choir.
- Pupils value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the parish community, and the Archdiocese. As a result, they respect and are involved with parish and diocesan celebrations and activities, irrespective of their own faith commitments.

- Pupils feel able to express a pride in their own religious and cultural identity and beliefs. Pupils celebrated 'Experience Christmas', Easter Church and harvest with St. Nicholas' and St. Mary's Anglican and Methodist Churches in Halewood.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school

- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.
- The school Mission Statement, *'In a caring Christian community together we love, learn, laugh and achieve!'* its aims and objectives are a clear and inspiring expression of the educational mission of the Church. It underpins every aspect of school life at St. Mark's.
- All staff are fully committed to its implementation across the curriculum. They enthusiastically participate in school activities which reflect the Catholic Life and mission of the school.
- There is a keen sense of community at all levels, evident in the high quality of relationships and the centrality of prayer to the whole community. The school is a supportive and joyful community.
- The school environment reflects its mission and identity through concrete and effective signs of the school's Catholic character. The displays are aesthetically pleasing and celebrate its uniqueness e.g. butterflies, Mission scrabble letters, inspirational quotes, and crosses etc. Classroom focus' and sacred spaces all create an overwhelming yet calm ambience which exudes St. Mark's Catholicity and ethos.
- Staff promote high standards of behaviour and are exemplary role models of mutual respect and forgiveness for pupils inside and outside of the classroom.
- The entire curriculum reflects a commitment to Catholic Social Teaching, to care for our common home and to the dignity of every human person through its fundraising and numerous outreach opportunities.
- The school provides extensive opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of all pupils and staff through continuous professional development opportunities such as attendance at Archdiocesan in-service days, core cluster meetings, and Catholic Certificate for Religious Studies etc.
- Clear policies and structures are in place, which provide the highest levels of pastoral care to pupils and there is an explicit and concrete commitment to the most vulnerable and needy in both policy and practice. The school Parent and Learning Mentor is a great asset to the school and supports pupils and their families.
- The school offers a breakfast club which is very well attended.
- The school is equally attentive to the pastoral needs of members of staff and ensures that every member's needs are understood and catered for.
- All the relevant documentation is in place and the school has made a commitment to undertake training and purchase relevant resources to support Relationships and Sex Education alongside Personal, Social and Health Education. This is an area the school has recognised needs to be further developed over the coming year.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school

- Leaders and governors are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

- The school's leadership team is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. Leaders are energised by the task and are a source of inspiration for the whole community. The development of the Catholic Life of the school is viewed by leaders and governors as a core leadership responsibility.
- The provision for the Catholic Life of the school is given the highest possible priority by leaders. This is reflected in the school's self-evaluation which is a coherent reflection of rigorous monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge and is clearly and explicitly focused on the Catholic Life of the school.
- This leads to well-targeted and planned improvements, often creatively conceived with key partners, to further enhance the Catholic Life of the school.
- Continuous Professional Development focusing on the Catholic Life of the school occurs frequently and is engaging, well planned and effective. The leaderships team and governors have undertaken a range of training opportunities including Relationships and Sex Education, Equality and Diversity and Archdiocesan in-service. As a result, staff understanding of the school's mission is outstanding. They share its purpose and are keenly and actively involved in shaping and supporting it.
- The school has highly successful strategies for engaging with parents and carers to the benefit of pupils, including those who might traditionally find working with the school difficult. In addition to the school website there is a parent app and twitter feed which is updated regularly. Views of parents are sought via questionnaires. There is a very active parent and teacher association. As a result, parents and carers have a thorough understanding of the school's mission and are highly supportive of it.
- As leaders, the governing body is highly ambitious for the Catholic Life of the school and leads by example in the way it consistently emphasises Catholic Life as a school improvement priority. Governors make a significant contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. The governors are passionate about the school's mission, are actively involved in its evaluation and are ready to challenge as well as support where necessary. They work together to ensure that the home, school and parish links are well maintained.
- The school is enthusiastic in its response to Archdiocesan policies and initiatives. They have made a commitment to ensure that Relationships and Sex Education is further developed in the school and recognise that this is in its infancy and needs embedding. They have undertaken an audit of current practice and have discussed and ratified a policy and statement.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

- The extent to which pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is outstanding.
- Pupils, from their varied starting points, make very good progress in each key stage, with many achieving outstanding progress.
- Groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are also making progress comparable to the progress of other pupils. Lessons are planned accordingly, and teaching assistants are used to great effect to enable this to happen.
- Pupils, relative to their age and capacity, are religiously literate and engaged young people; they use their knowledge, understanding and skills effectively, to reflect spiritually, and to think ethically and theologically. They are fully aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
- Pupils are actively engaged in lessons and are committed to improving their knowledge, understanding and skills, further develop as competent learners.

- Pupils concentrate well, have a clear understanding of how well they are doing, and sometimes what they need to do to improve. In some lessons they can fully articulate how they have made progress however, more assessment for learning opportunities need to be built into lessons across the school.
- Pupils approach lessons with great interest, passion and enthusiasm. Pupils enjoy tackling challenging activities, and respond very well to opportunities which extend their learning. Behaviour in lessons is outstanding because pupils enjoy Religious Education and they are rarely off task even in extended periods without direction from an adult.
- Pupils' attainment, as indicated by teacher assessment is good. Some of the levels particularly in upper Key Stage 2 are not accurate and more opportunities to moderate across school and in clusters will support this.
- The quality of pupils' current work, both in class and in written work, is outstanding and they demonstrate pride in their work.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education is outstanding.
- Teachers are effective in planning high-quality lessons linked to pupils' current assessment and their knowledge of the individual, consolidating and extending pupils' knowledge and understanding, so that they learn extremely well. As a result, some teaching is outstanding, and teaching is never less than good. Sharing best practice and expertise in succinct planning using the driver words will develop this further. The school must use the Archdiocesan planning template fully for the whole of the process.
- Teachers have a high level of confidence because of their subject expertise and their understanding of the breadth of teaching methods. Pupils are inspired to learn and make sustained progress.
- Teachers employ a wide range of appropriate teaching strategies, including individual and collaborative work. Consequently, pupils are highly motivated and sustain high levels of concentration.
- Teachers ensure some pupils are involved in evaluating how well they are achieving but this is inconsistent. More opportunities for assessment for learning needs to be built into lessons in line with other curriculum subjects.
- Most teachers consistently use time effectively to maximise learning opportunities in lessons and across sequences of lessons.
- Teachers carefully observe and skilfully question during lessons to adapt tasks and explanations, thus maximising learning for every pupil.
- High quality resources such as interaction with the Come and See website, God's and Church's Story, visual and audio media are used effectively. During introductions and plenary sessions excellent use was made of other adults to optimise learning for pupils.
- Teachers communicate high expectations and passion about Religious Education to their pupils who respond with enthusiasm. The children are very adept at giving high quality answers from the earliest years.
- During lessons high quality verbal feedback is frequent, leading to maximum levels of engagement, interest, achievement and progress. Pupils are given the opportunity to respond in a systematic and planned way, which ensures pupils understand what they need to do to improve. Pupils' responses to next step marking is becoming stronger.
- Celebration of achievement and effort are central to the teacher's assessment strategy, securing high levels of motivation from pupils. This is a real strength of the school. Relationships at every level are strong.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

- Leaders and governors are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Religious Education. Leaders and governors ensure that the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in every respect and in each key stage.
- Leaders and governors ensure that at least the required amount of curriculum time is given to Religious Education in each key stage.
- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education has full parity with other core curriculum subjects including professional development, resourcing, staffing and accommodation.
- The subject leader regularly attends all Archdiocesan in-service training and meets together with a cluster of other schools to support monitoring and evaluation of the subject. She also attends the Archdiocesan core cluster group. Her enthusiasm and commitment to the role has effectively driven forward the subject and subsequently her impact has continued to improve teaching and learning in Religious Education across the school.
- Any additional requirements and policies of the Archdiocese regarding the Religious Education curriculum are embraced and fully implemented. Since the last inspection the Come and See programme has been fully implemented across the school and all relevant documentation e.g. planning, monitoring and tracking are embedded.
- Leaders' and governors' self-evaluation of Religious Education is a coherent reflection of rigorous assessment, tracking, monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge which is well-informed by current best practice in Religious Education. This results in well targeted planning and strategic action taken by the school which lead to outstanding outcomes in Religious Education. There is a link governor for Religious Education and governors have undertaken training to support their strategic role. They are extremely committed to ensuring high quality Religious Education.
- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education is imaginatively and thoughtfully planned to meet the needs of all pupils and each key stage and phase is creatively structured to build on and enhance prior learning. The school has recognised a need to further develop the teaching and learning of other Faiths and Religions e.g. including more visitors and visits to other places of worship.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship

- Pupils response to and participation in the school's Collective Worship is good.
- Acts of Collective Worship engage pupils' interest and inspire in them deep thought and heartfelt response. There is a genuine enthusiasm for Collective Worship, reflected in the quality of communal singing, in the quality of prayerful silence and the depth of reverent participation in communal prayer.
- Some pupils readily take the initiative in leading worship displaying confidence and enthusiasm, but the school has recognised this needs to further developed. Pupils are visibly uplifted by the worship opportunities created by their peers. Pupils do not regularly evaluate their Acts of Collective Worship either as a leader or a participant. This needs to be further developed.

- Pupils have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts. Appropriate to their age and ability, some children prepare focal areas or lead acts of Collective Worship.
- Pupils display confidence in their use of a wide variety of traditional and contemporary approaches to prayer, which uses scripture, religious artefacts and liturgical music. John Burland is used extensively throughout the school to support worship.
- The pupils value and regularly participate voluntarily in liturgy and prayer.
- The experience of living and working in a faithful, praying community has a profound and visible effect on the spiritual and moral development of all pupils, irrespective of ability or faith background. They have a deep sense of respect for those of other faiths and this is reflected in the way pupils prepare and participate in prayer and liturgy.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is good.
- Collective Worship forms part of every school celebration for all pupils, whatever their own faith background.
- Praying together is part of the daily experience in school but this needs to be developed further to include 'Come and See for Yourself' reflections, more opportunities to invite parents to 'Rejoice' celebrations at the end of Religious Education topics and occasional retreats for pupils and staff.
- Collective Worship has a clear purpose, message and direction. The themes chosen for worship reflect the liturgical season and the Church's mission in education and staff are becoming much more confident in providing prayer opportunities.
- Staff give Collective Worship a high priority in terms of planning, evaluating and resourcing but this needs cascading down to the pupils to enable more pupils to have the skills to plan and lead Collective Worship across the school. Effective use is being made of the CD resources to support worship.
- Staff have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts, and ensure that pupils have good experiences of the Church's liturgical life.
- The school has recognised that opportunities are not always planned in a manner that attracts and facilitates attendance by other adults associated with the pupils and school this needs to be addressed.
- The parish priest presides at Mass and celebrations throughout the school and liturgical year.

How well leaders, governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship

- Leaders and governors are good in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Collective Worship.
- Leaders, have knowledge of how to provide policies and guidelines to ensure quality planning and delivery of Collective Worship.
- They have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts. They can make these accessible to pupils in a contemporary context but have recognised the need to create more visible reflective sacred spaces inside and outside school at key times of the Church's year.
- Leaders are very visible as leaders of Collective Worship within the school and in the locality.

- They extensively promote pupils' planning and leading Collective Worship in a variety of contexts but recognise that this needs to be further developed to ensure more children are involved in planning and leading worship facilitated by the teacher.
- Leaders place a high priority on the professional development of staff incorporating liturgical formation and the planning of Collective Worship and they have recently undergone training.
- Leaders and governors place the highest priority on the school's self-evaluation of Collective Worship.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Raise the standards of attainment in Religious Education further by:
 - continuing to address the areas identified on the Self Evaluation Document.
- Further develop the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education by:
 - ensuring teachers use the Archdiocesan template for planning to cover all aspects of the programme e.g. Explore, Reveal and Respond.
- Further develop the work being undertaken in Catholic Life by:
 - continuing to develop a curriculum map for Relationships and Sex Education;
 - beginning to embed *Journey in Love* and *No Outsiders* into lessons to support Relationships and Sex Education.
- Further develop the work being undertaken in Collective Worship by:
 - continuing to give pupils the skills in planning, preparing and leading Collective Worship;
 - inviting parents and the wider community to Rejoice celebrations.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	1
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CATHOLIC LIFE

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	1
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school	1

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	1
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	1

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	2
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	2
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	2

Key to judgements: Grade 1 is Outstanding, Grade 2 Good, Grade 3 Requires Improvement and Grade 4 Inadequate