



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. FINBAR'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

LIVERPOOL

Inspection Date 6th November 2018

Inspectors Mrs. Denise Hegarty, Mr. John Riley

Unique Reference Number 104640

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 186 (not including nursery)

Chair of Governors Angela Williams

Headteacher Jan Conley

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Date of last inspection 19th November 2013

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. Finbar's School is a smaller than average sized Catholic primary school situated in the Liverpool area of the Archdiocese, serving the parish of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.
- There are 186 children on roll of whom 70 are baptised Catholic, 26 come from other Christian denominations and 42 have no religious affiliation. There are 48 pupils from another faith or religious tradition attending the school.
- There are 11 teachers at the school, of whom 6 are baptised Catholic. Eight teachers teach Religious Education. Two teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education and 4 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 | Requires Improvement |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

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OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

St. Finbar's is an outstanding school 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 appreciate, value and actively participate in the Catholic Life and mission of the school. They fully respect its Catholic tradition and are proud to confidently share their own cultural heritage and beliefs.
- Pupils participate in the school's evaluation of its Catholic Life and mission and are part of planning improvements to it. Each new school year, pupils spend time reviewing the mission statement and the motto, *'Praising God in every way; in all we think, do and say.'* They reflect on its significance and relevance for them.
- Pupils show a great respect for themselves and others as made in the image and likeness of God. They treat each other very kindly and strive for justice for all. Their behaviour is excellent. Pupils demonstrate the need to forgive, be forgiven and have a good understanding of right and wrong. They appreciate the positive reinforcement they are given when displaying excellent behaviour and attitude.
- Pupils know they are loved by adults in school and understand that their views and opinions matter. They are polite, helpful and well-mannered.
- Pupils accept the responsibilities of living within a Catholic school community. As a result, they are regularly involved with those activities which promote the Catholic Life and mission of the school both within school and the wider community. They are aware of the needs of others and seek justice for others within and beyond the school community. Throughout the year, children generously fundraise for a number of charities including CAFOD, NSPCC and Nugent. They also collect for the local foodbank and understand the impact their actions have on those they support.
- Pupils willingly take on roles and responsibilities around the school and wider community e.g. as school councillors, members of the school nutrition and gardening group, school buddies and class monitors. They undertake these roles enthusiastically and gain skills that will serve them well in the future. A school buddy told the inspector how proud he was to be a buddy because *'...we help everyone play, no matter what language they speak...we help them fit into the school family.'*
- Pupils' spiritual and moral development is evident in their attitudes to their peers and to the environment in which they live. They are keen to look after their world and understand they have a responsibility to do so.
- Pupils respond well to the opportunities the school provides for their personal support and development. As a result, they are happy and secure in their own stage of physical, emotional and spiritual growth. The vast majority of pupils, for example, take full advantage of the school's wrap around provision and grow in confidence and independence in a safe nurturing environment.

- Pupils have the opportunity to participate actively in residential visits to Crosby Hall and Kingswood Colomendy. These experiences impact greatly on the pupils' social and moral development as they develop self-confidence, and understand the value and importance of teamwork and communication skills.
- They are proud to receive awards and quick to congratulate each other enthusiastically and joyfully.
- Pupils, appropriate to their age and capability, have a very good understanding of loving relationships and sexual development within the context of a Christian understanding.
- Pupils embrace a holistic approach to education, have an understanding of what it means to have a vocation and recognise the importance of using their gifts in the service of others.
- 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 Archdiocesan celebrations and activities, irrespective of their own faith commitments. Pupils feel able to express great pride in their own religious and cultural identity and beliefs.

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 clearly expresses the educational mission of the Church and shapes all that is happening in St. Finbar's. It is certainly central to the life of the school and is currently under review, with full consultation of all stakeholders, to ensure it is up to date and fully reflective of all that is presently happening in the Catholic Life of the school.
- Staff members are committed to its implementation across the curriculum and the whole of school life. They participate in school activities which reflect the Catholic Life and mission of the school, such as staff prayer and Continuous Professional Development on Catholic Life. A member of the senior leadership team commented, *'Staff live the Mission Statement every day by the warm, welcoming and caring way they greet and engage with all of our children.'* This was reiterated by other members of staff, one of whom said, *'This Catholic school is my family – welcoming, warm, loving and safe.'*
- At all levels, this is a very close-knit, inclusive community evident in the quality of relationships and the centrality of prayer. St. Finbar's is a School of Sanctuary, committed to being a safe and welcoming place for all. It has also achieved the Inclusion Charter Mark. This is testimony to Catholic ethos in action and community cohesion. The care, support and nurturing afforded to children and their families is outstanding.
- The well-kept school environment reflects its mission and identity through obvious signs of its Catholic character. It is both vibrant and stimulating and engages, supports and challenges learners.
- Staff promote high standards of behaviour and are outstanding role models of mutual respect and forgiveness for pupils.
- The broader curriculum reflects a commitment to Catholic Social Teaching, to care for our common home and to the dignity of every human person. All subjects are taught discretely and all promote Christian values, equality and diversity.
- The school provides numerous opportunities to enhance the spiritual, moral and cultural development of pupils. Many wonderful experiences are offered, fully paid for by the school, that pupils might not otherwise have e.g. visiting the Terracotta Warriors at Liverpool Museum. There are also residential visits available to Kingswood Colomendy and Crosby Hall Educational Trust.
- Many afterschool clubs suit the varying interests of children including gardening, art, hockey, guitar, street dance and cooking.

- Policies and structures are in place, which provide outstanding pastoral care to pupils, and there is a commitment to the most vulnerable and needy in both policy and practice. It is clear that children are valued for their uniqueness and individuality. A Higher Level Teaching Assistant leads a Bereavement and Separation group supporting children who have suffered loss.
- The school has a regard for the pastoral needs of staff and members' needs are understood and catered for. There is a great sense of team spirit amongst all adults at the school.
- Pastoral programmes, Personal, Social and Health Education and Relationships and Sex Education are planned, well taught and reflect Catholic teachings and principles.

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.
- They demonstrate a public commitment to the mission of the Church and to the nurturing of this community. They are well regarded as models of Catholic leadership by both staff and pupils.
- The development of the Catholic Life of the school is viewed by leaders and governors as a core leadership responsibility. All adults at the school are considered leaders of the promotion of Catholic Life and are valued as such. They are expected to act as role models for pupils to emulate and fulfil this expectation outstandingly.
- The provision for the Catholic Life of the school is given priority by leaders. This is reflected in the school's self-evaluation which involves monitoring, analysis and self-challenge and is clearly focused on the school's Catholic Life and Mission Statement.
- This leads to planned improvements to further enhance the Catholic Life of the school. These action plans reflect the eagerness to avoid complacency and strive for improvement.
- The behaviour policy is respected by all and everyone is treated with respect, justice and equality.
- Continuous Professional Development focusing on the Catholic Life of the school occurs and is very effective. As a result, staff understanding of the school's mission is outstanding. Staff are involved in shaping and supporting it.
- The school has strategies for engaging with parents/carers to the benefit of pupils, including those who might traditionally find working with the school difficult. They are regularly informed about the Catholic Life of the school through monthly newsletters, the school website, Twitter updates, meetings etc. Their views and opinions are sought and valued. As a result, parents/carers have an excellent understanding of the school's mission and are highly supportive of it.
- The parish priest is highly effective in supporting and promoting the Catholic Life of the school. Very good home, school and parish links have been forged. The school supports family catechesis and the parish '*With You Always*' sacramental preparation programme.
- As leaders, the governing body is ambitious for the Catholic Life of the school and leads by example in the way it emphasises Catholic Life as a school improvement priority. Governors make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. They are dedicated to the school's mission, are involved in its evaluation and are ready to challenge as well as support where necessary. They are kept well-informed and invited to all significant and relevant events.
- The link governor takes an active interest in developments and makes a significant contribution to the Catholic Life of the school.
- The school responds well to Archdiocesan policies and initiatives and promotes the Archdiocesan vision throughout the school.

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 good.
- Pupils, from their limited starting points, make very good progress in each key stage.
- Groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are also making progress comparable to the progress of other pupils.
- Pupils, relative to their age and capacity, are religiously literate and engaged young people; they use their knowledge, understanding and skills, to reflect spiritually, and to think ethically and theologically. As a consequence, pupils are 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, in order to further develop as competent learners. They work well collaboratively and independently and are keen to share their personal views and opinions with their talking partners and the wider group.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy their Religious Education lessons especially when teachers provide them with exciting, creative opportunities. A Year 2 pupil, at interview said, '*...they're fun because we sometimes paint and draw instead of writing, and sometimes we do acting, too.*' Another exclaimed, '*I love R.E.!*'
- They concentrate well, have good understanding of how well they are doing and of what they need to do to improve. They can clearly articulate how they have made progress.
- Pupils approach their lessons with interest and enthusiasm. They enjoy challenging activities, and respond well to opportunities which extend their learning. Behaviour in lessons is excellent because pupils enjoy Religious Education and disruptions in lessons are extremely unusual. On the day of inspection, pupils across all the age ranges remained focussed and on task throughout their lessons.
- They are very familiar with the 'Driver Words' from the current *Levels of Attainment in Religious Education* and use them effectively as an aid to learning.
- Pupils' attainment, as indicated by formal and teacher assessment, is good. Pupils achieve at least average attainment and this is an improving trend.
- The quality of pupils' current work, both in class and in written work, is excellent. They take a real pride in the presentation of their work.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education is outstanding.
- Assessment procedures are embedded and teachers consistently plan lessons linked to pupils' current assessment so that pupils learn well. Planning is detailed and consistently differentiated to meet the needs and abilities of each child. Excellent teaching and learning strategies are deployed to ensure children are engaged. As a result of this, teaching is mainly outstanding.
- Before the start of new topics, the *Come and See for Yourself* is shared. This enables staff members to have a deeper understanding of the overall theme and where their topics fit into the bigger picture.
- Outstanding use is made of the 'Driver Words' from the current *Levels of Attainment in Religious Education* in planning, questioning, tasks and marking.
- Teachers are confident in their subject expertise and have a deep understanding of how pupils learn. As a consequence, pupils apply themselves extremely well and make very good progress in lessons and over time.

- Teachers employ a range of appropriate strategies, including individual and collaborative work. Consequently, pupils are motivated and concentrate hard in lessons.
- Teachers ensure pupils are involved in evaluating how well they are achieving. This contributes to their very good progress and increases their confidence in making further improvements.
- Teachers manage time extremely effectively to secure learning in lessons and across sequences of lessons. Various strategies are deployed very effectively to minimise time slippage and maximise learning opportunities.
- Teachers use observation and questioning during lessons in order to adapt tasks and explanations, so improving learning for pupils. Use of the 'Big Questions' is effective particularly with the older pupils.
- Excellent quality resources, including other adults, are used highly effectively to optimise learning for pupils. Teachers plan exceptionally well to effectively deploy any available additional adults in their classroom. Relationships between adults are outstanding. They work closely together to enhance learning experiences for children.
- Most teachers communicate high expectations to their pupils concerning work, attitude and behaviour in Religious Education, all of whom respond positively. They create a calm, purposeful learning environment where a positive atmosphere for learning prevails.
- High quality feedback leads to the engagement, interest, achievement and very good progress of pupils. Pupils are given the opportunity to respond, which further improves their understanding of what they need to do to improve.
- Assessed work is put in books which travel with the child through the school, so progression is clearly evident.
- Achievement and effort are often celebrated leading to high levels of motivation from all pupils.
- Vibrant displays and working walls in classrooms and around the school celebrate the children's work, reinforce learning and provide opportunities for reflection.

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 a high status and is comparable to other core curriculum subjects, in terms of professional development, resourcing, staffing and accommodation.
- Termly moderation of work ensures that teachers' levelling is consistent across the school. A portfolio of work is being generated.
- Any additional requirements and policies of the Archdiocese regarding the Religious Education curriculum are fully implemented.
- A robust cycle of monitoring and evaluation is in place for the subject. Salient whole school outcomes are shared and bespoke next steps, challenge and support given to individuals as necessary. Continuing professional development is provided as and when required.

- Leaders' and governors' self-evaluation of Religious Education is an accurate reflection of frequent assessment, tracking, monitoring, analysis and self-challenge which is informed by current best practice in Religious Education. This feeds into the subject leader's action plan and results in strategic action taken by the school which leads to at least very good outcomes in Religious Education.
- The enthusiastic curriculum leader for Religious Education has a clear vision for teaching and learning and a high level of expertise in securing this vision. These are used very effectively to improve teaching and learning in Religious Education, resulting in teaching which is generally very good to outstanding. She is a member of the senior leadership team and her support is much appreciated by staff members. One member of staff commented, *'My training and support from the R.E. leader have had a hugely positive impact on my understanding and teaching of R.E.'*
- The subject leader communicates regularly with the link governor who shares her expertise and offers critical support and challenge to drive forward improvements.
- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education is planned to meet the needs of different groups of pupils and to secure coherence across different key stages and phases. Governors undertake learning walks and have an open invitation to visit classes.

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 outstanding.
- They act with great reverence and are keen to participate in Collective Worship. They sing joyfully, reflect in silence and join in prayer appropriately and with confidence. During observations on the day of inspection, the response from the children was heartfelt. Every child present was totally engaged throughout each session.
- Pupils take great pride and joy in contributing to, planning and leading Collective Worship in an age appropriate manner. They do so capably, confidently and enthusiastically.
- They are keen to participate in church services and whole school Collective Worship. Each class takes a turn to lead and share celebrations for the whole school. They particularly enjoy sharing such celebrations with their family members.
- Pupils use a variety of approaches to prayer which include scripture, religious artefacts, liturgical music and other forms of prayer both traditional and contemporary.
- Children value and participate voluntarily in liturgy and prayer. The school Rosary Group meets regularly at certain times during the year whether there is an adult present to lead them or not! Those attending appreciate the opportunity provided and present numbers are steadily growing. One member said that this experience helped her become closer to God.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons and feasts and the approach this requires in the planning of appropriate worship opportunities. They clearly understand the liturgical structure used and could talk enthusiastically about ideas they had for all aspects.
- The experience of living and working in a faithful, praying community has a positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of all pupils, irrespective of their ability or faith background. Pupils display utmost reverence and respect demonstrating deepening spiritual and moral understanding especially at times given for personal reflection.
- Pupils, at interview, talked very positively and confidently about their experiences of Collective Worship.

- They have a highly developed sense of respect for those of another faith or religion. This is reflected in the manner in which many pupils participate in prayer and liturgy.
- Many children of other religious traditions and none choose to attend Christmas and Easter services and sacramental celebrations where they show great respect. They understand the significance of these services and rites for Catholic members of the school community.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding.
- Collective Worship is an essential part of the life of the school and prayer is always included in all school celebrations. Praying together is an enjoyable part of the daily experience for pupils and staff.
- Collective Worship has a purpose, message and direction. The themes chosen for worship reflect an excellent understanding of the liturgical seasons and the Catholic character of the school.
- Collective Worship is given a high priority in terms of planning, evaluating and resourcing; as a result, experience of Collective Worship is engaging and all members of the community speak very positively about these opportunities.
- A box of suitable artefacts and quality resources have been provided for each class. A variety of prayer areas are available for classes to use. Staff maintain useful planning files which contain evidence of outstanding practice.
- Relevant staff have a deep understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and ensure that pupils have inspirational experiences of the Church's liturgical life.
- Staff are confident in leading worship and are skilled in helping pupils to plan and deliver quality worship when appropriate. They have an excellent understanding of the nature and purpose of Collective Worship and of a wide variety of methods and styles of prayer.
- A variety of devotional areas around the school provide opportunities for prayer and quiet contemplation.
- Opportunities are planned in a manner that facilitates attendance by other adults associated with the pupils and school and response to this invitation is growing and appreciated as evident seen in comments left in the visitor book. Photographs and comments are regularly posted on Twitter so those who cannot attend can still share the experience.
- The *Wednesday Word* is provided for pupils to take home and share the Gospel message with their families.
- Worship is sensitive to and fully inclusive of all children as there is always an invitation for those present to take part.

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

- Leaders and governors are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Collective Worship.
- Leaders provide policies and guidelines, ratified by the governors, to enable staff members to plan and deliver excellent Collective Worship. It is timetabled to ensure quality time is devoted to worship and timings are suitable for the age and stage of the pupils. Often, as the occasion arises, 'awe and wonder' moments are seized and worship becomes spontaneous.
- Themes are shared with staff members each term. They are flexible and respond to the personal needs of pupils, the community and global issues.
- Leaders provide opportunities for induction of new teachers and regular continuing professional development is provided as necessary to ensure staff members are fully equipped to deliver quality experiences of Collective Worship.

- Leaders have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and make these accessible to the pupils in a contemporary context.
- Leaders of Collective Worship within the school are appropriate models of outstanding practice for staff and pupils. They promote pupils' planning and leading Collective Worship.
- Leaders monitor Collective Worship planning to ensure provision and experience is of a high quality. Formal observations take place each year. General findings are shared with all staff members and next steps shared with individuals as necessary. Timetables are monitored at the start of each term to ensure compliance with statutory and Archdiocesan expectations.
- The co-ordinator gives additional support to staff members as requested. She models excellent practice and co-plans with staff as necessary.
- Opportunities are provided for parents, carers, governors and parishioners to attend Collective Worship particularly at significant times during the year e.g. Advent, Remembrance, and Harvest etc.
- Leaders and governors regularly review Collective Worship as part of their self-evaluation processes. Planners and practice are regularly monitored by senior leaders and feedback is provided with any areas for development identified.

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 work being undertaken in Catholic Life by:
 - embedding *Journey In Love* into lessons to support Relationships and Sex Education.
- Further develop Collective Worship by:
 - continuing to develop children's planning and leadership.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

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

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| 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

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|--|---|
| How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education | 2 |
| 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

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|---|---|
| How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship | 1 |
| The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school | 1 |
| How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship | 1 |

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