



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. GREGORY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

LYDIATE

Date of Inspection Tuesday 27 September 2011

Inspectors Mrs. Denise Hegarty, Mrs. Mary Kearsley

Unique Reference Number 104936

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School Catholic Primary

Age range of pupils 3 – 11 years

Number on roll 196

Chair of Governors Mr. Terry Freeman

Head teacher Mrs. Deborah Albon

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Date of last inspection Tuesday 7 October 2008

Introduction

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education 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.

Information about the school

St. Gregory's school is a smaller than average sized Catholic Primary School situated in Lydiate within the Sefton district of the Archdiocese. It serves the parish of St. Gregory's, Lydiate, but almost a third of the pupils come from a variety of other parishes within the local area. There are 196 children on roll of whom 194 are baptised Catholic and 2 come from other Christian denominations. There are 10 teachers at the school, all of whom teach Religious Education and 7 of these are Catholic. Six teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education and the other 4 are all currently enrolled on and undertaking the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. Since the last inspection a new subject co-ordinator has been appointed.

Key for inspection grades

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

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Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school.

Inspection Judgements

Overall effectiveness:

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main Findings:-

St. Gregory's provides outstanding Catholic Education. It is led by committed and enthusiastic senior leaders and underpinned by a supportive, loyal staff team. The values and expectations of Catholic education and its mission in the Church are very clearly articulated, lived out within the school community and reinforced in the school Mission Statement. The values of love and celebration of life are reflected in the positive relationships that exist within the school community. It is clear that adults care deeply about the needs of the pupils and work hard to enable them to receive an all-round education in a bright, stimulating, Christian environment. The enthusiasm and energy of the staff is reflected in the positive response from pupils towards their work. Attainment in Religious Education is very good and achievement is outstanding. Children are polite, co-operative and very caring towards each other and have a real sense of belonging to the community. They are great ambassadors for the school and benefit greatly from the wealth and variety of opportunities offered to contribute to the Catholic life of the school. The level of participation and engagement in the prayer and liturgical life of the school is outstanding and many are developing independent skills in preparing prayer and worship. The promotion of spiritual and moral development is outstanding as is the quality of collective worship. Staff members are excellent role models for the pupils and offer an impressive variety of prayer and worship opportunities including a weekly prayer club.

On the whole, teaching and learning in Religious Education are very good. Pupils are exceptionally well cared for, known and respected as individuals and are highly motivated to make outstanding progress. Teachers use captivating activities and inspiring resources to motivate the children and keep their interest. This was evident in the children's display work, the many cross curricular links that are made and by the enthusiastic way the children talked about their religious education.

Monitoring and evaluation processes are well embedded. Realistic and challenging plans stem from the accurate analysis obtained through monitoring and are being used effectively to improve outcomes. Any underperformance is challenged and support put in as necessary. The school is successful in addressing the areas it has identified for improvement and does so in a strategic manner. The leadership team is deeply motivated and consistently communicates its high expectations to staff in order to secure improvement. Staff members are affirmed and feel supported. Teachers are regularly provided with in-service to support and enhance their ongoing development. The subject leader is new to the post and undertakes her role in an outstanding manner, approaching her work with energy and great enthusiasm. Governors are very supportive, challenging and proactive in their roles.

Since the last inspection the school has securely and systematically built on and maintained its previously outstanding performance. Self evaluation is rigorous. School leaders know their school well and have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. The Self Evaluation Document is detailed and very comprehensive. It has realistic timescales, gives an accurate account of the priorities for improvement and also celebrates achievement. It feeds into the overall school improvement plan which is closely monitored by governors. The vision and drive for continuous improvement makes the school's capacity for sustained improvement outstanding.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- . Improve pupils' learning opportunities and raise standards by:
 - making use of the language of the levels of attainment and the driver words consistently across the school in planning, questioning and in the giving of tasks;
 - continuing to increase the level of challenge for more able pupils.
- Continue to implement other targets set out in the school's self-evaluation document. That includes:
 - ensuring appropriate differentiation related to level of ability in Religious Education rather than literacy;
 - continuing to develop the school portfolio of assessed and levelled work;
 - developing a prayer trail in the school grounds for children and staff to use for meditation and prayer.

How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils

Pupils speak with enthusiasm about their Religious Education lessons, show high levels of interest and enjoyment in learning and demonstrate very positive attitudes to the subject and to their work. They are very confident and assured in talking about what they have learned and how religion, belief and spirituality impact on their lives. Pupils' achievements in Religious Education are outstanding. They make outstanding progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities. Analyses of assessments undertaken provide evidence of pupils' generally attaining appropriate or higher levels for their age and stage of development. There is no difference in performance between pupils of different gender or between groups of pupils. Outcomes for pupils with additional or special needs are outstanding. Pupils are becoming increasingly more religiously literate as they become very familiar with the key words from the topics and assimilate them into their vocabulary. Their knowledge, understanding and skills are developing appropriate to their age and capacity. They are developing the skills that enable them to think spiritually, ethically and theologically and are thus becoming more aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. Pupils are encouraged to work independently and collaboratively. Many examples of this were seen on the day of inspection and the children worked particularly well sharing ideas with partners in paired activities. They are increasingly able to assess how well they have done against their learning objectives at the end of lessons and to understand the next steps to take in their learning. They show utmost respect towards adults in the school and enjoy all aspects of school life. On the day of inspection, pupils appeared to be happy in their work and remained on task throughout. Across the school, their behaviour is outstanding.

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic life of the school and gain much from it. They are actively involved in developing and evaluating the Catholic character of the school by, for example, their involvement in Fair Trade activities and their enterprise initiative in selling healthy snacks at playtime to raise funds for local and global charities. They take full advantage of the many opportunities open to them and clearly articulate how living out their mission statement can make them better people. Pupils have an outstanding sense of belonging to the school community and value and respect others within it. They understand they also belong to local and wider communities and respond actively to the needs of people beyond the school. They are encouraged to take on roles of responsibility e.g. as active school councillors in the way Year 6 act as buddies for the children in their first year at the school. Pupils are considerate and caring of others both in school and in the wider community. 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 own actions. Education for personal relationships has fostered positive attitudes in pupils.

Pupils respond to and participate outstandingly in the school's Collective Worship. They act with reverence and are keen to participate in a variety of gatherings. They sing joyfully and with actions, reflect purposefully in silence and join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence. They use a variety of prayer styles and are able to pray spontaneously from the heart showing respect for the views of others. They are being encouraged to prepare and lead worship themselves in an age appropriate manner and consequently, their liturgical formation is developing well. They appreciate and are open to the Word of God in the scriptures.

How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils	
How well pupils achieve in Religious Education	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pupils' standards of attainment in Religious Education 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the quality of pupils' learning and their progress in Religious Education 	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	1
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	1

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

The quality of teaching is consistently very effective in ensuring that pupils are interested and engaged. A variety of teaching styles along with imaginative use of high quality resources, including technology, have a significant impact on raising standards. Activities such as role play, modelling with clay and use of art make learning exciting, engaging and motivate pupils. Lessons are built on prior learning and pupils' capabilities, but teachers do not consistently plan and use differentiated, challenging activities to extend learning for all groups of pupils. Teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and members of support staff are effectively deployed to meet the needs of the children. Teachers are given excellent opportunities for continuing professional development and this has had a great impact on teaching and learning. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils

to work independently and collaboratively. They have developed good questioning techniques which stimulate thinking skills and enable children to make links. Classroom displays are vibrant, informative and interactive. They show a clear celebration and love of learning. Excellent use is made of the key words from the topics to enhance the children's religious vocabulary.

The school's systematic monitoring and evaluation procedures in Religious Education are outstanding and a key feature of the continuing rise in standards. There are 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 and tackle underachievement. They enable pupils to evaluate their own work. Marking is both evaluative and informative and is most effective when giving pupils feedback on their next steps in learning. Formal assessment tasks are undertaken in line with Archdiocesan guidance. Assessment information is collated by the subject leader and shared with the leadership team, governors and parents. Tracking systems are detailed and provide a clear picture of current attainment and individual and cohort progress. Achievement and effort are celebrated. Any underachievement is challenged and subsequent progress monitored. The moderation of assessed work has enabled staff to become very familiar with the levels of attainment and this has led to the production of an excellent school portfolio of assessed and moderated work which clearly shows progress across the school.

The school provides an outstanding curriculum which is rich in creativity and meets pupils' needs. By using the *'Here I Am'* programme recommended by the Archdiocese, the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Religious Education are met. 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 Archdiocesan requirements. Of the total curriculum time at least 10% is allocated to Religious Education. This fulfils the requirements of the Bishops of England and Wales. Planning and work books indicate full coverage of the Religious Education process and programme. The school implements new curriculum developments as appropriate. Imaginative and well-planned strategies are deployed to enrich pupils' learning. Appropriate and relevant use of exciting and stimulating resources promotes a high level of motivation and engagement of pupils. Excellent use of ICT, art and drama lead to memorable learning experiences. Enrichment activities such as bringing visitors into the school have a positive impact on the curriculum and enable a lot of cross-curricular work to be undertaken. Pupils spoke with eagerness and enthusiasm about their recent 'Awe and Wonder' week and had produced a plethora of art and display work across the school which also indicated and celebrated how much the week had been enjoyed by the whole community. The Religious Education curriculum provides outstanding opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development of all. The use of circle time and the SEAL initiative enhance this provision.

The quality of collective worship provided is outstanding in reflecting the Catholic character of the school. Prayer is central to the life of the school and is given the highest priority. Acts of Worship are well-planned, vibrant and reflective with active participation by pupils and staff members. Members of staff are confident and skilled in planning and leading collective worship and liturgies. The teachers provide the necessary resources and opportunities to help children to develop the skills necessary to plan, lead and participate in Collective Worship. Boxes of

artefacts that can be used in worship have been provided in each classroom. There is an exceptional range of variety and quality of prayer styles offered to pupils. Members of the school leadership team demonstrate a high level of skill, imagination and creativity in leading worship and provide excellent role models for staff and pupils. Opportunities are given to enable full, active and conscious participation of the whole school community. 'Stay and Pray' sessions and other liturgies such as 'The Harvest Mass' have a significant impact on parents, governors and the wider community. The school's high quality provision ensures the spiritual needs of the pupils are very well met.

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education	
The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education	2
The effectiveness of assessment in Religious Education	1
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs	1
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	1

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic Life of the schools

Leaders and managers are outstanding at promoting the Catholic life of the school. They have an understanding of, and total commitment to the Mission of the Church. This is reflected in the school's own Mission Statement which underpins all aspects of school life. Enabling each person in the school community to fulfil this statement is given the highest priority. As a result pupils, too, have a secure understanding of the school's mission and are actively involved in determining and supporting it. All members of the community including parents, priest, governors and children were involved in the development and review of the Mission Statement. Its aims direct and guide every aspect of school life and are a useful tool by which the school can evaluate its effectiveness.

The dedication, drive and energy of the headteacher and subject co-ordinator are an inspiration to the whole school community. Accurate and regular self-evaluation at all levels within the school is a reflection of comprehensive monitoring, analysis and self-challenge. This results in targeted and coherent school planning and actions to ensure continuous improvement in all aspects of the Catholic life of the school. High quality continuing professional development and induction ensure an awareness, understanding and commitment to the strong Catholic ethos that permeates the school. All teachers have or are working towards the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies or its equivalent. The monitoring and evaluation of the provision for Religious Education are outstanding. The committed co-ordinator has ensured that accurate and consistent monitoring, assessment and tracking systems are in place and these are having an increasingly significant impact on pupils' learning, progress and standards. She keeps staff well-informed, has high expectations and models outstanding practice. Excellent documentation guides and directs all staff in the delivery of the subject. This is updated as necessary. Governors provide excellent challenge and support regarding the Catholic life of the school. They are extremely committed, have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and are well informed on matters relating to Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school. They know what needs to be done to raise standards further in their drive for improvement and

accountability. Governors discharge their duties outstandingly, are actively involved in the school community and have very positive relationships with the staff, pupils and parents.

The way leaders and managers promote community cohesion is outstanding. The school is a highly inclusive community with a clear, shared vision and a strong sense of belonging. It is involved in a wide range of partnerships which impact significantly on pupils' achievement and well-being and also on the Catholic life of the school. Well-established links with other Catholic primary schools, local schools in the Lydiate and Maghull areas, the parish and other local and global organisations provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop, enjoy and achieve. Pupils engage and collaborate with each other through, for example, the school council and the 'buddy' arrangements between pupils in Reception class and Year 6. Pupils are offered opportunities to collaborate and engage with those from different backgrounds locally, nationally and globally. As a result they recognise, respect and celebrate differences and have a strong sense of the common good. Children demonstrate an excellent awareness and understanding of their global responsibilities and do their utmost, in an age appropriate way, to promote justice and fairness. The use of the *'Here I am'* programme also promotes community cohesion. Children have explored the beliefs and values of Judaism and Islam. This helps to promote tolerance and respect for those who think differently. Opportunities have been provided for children to see practically how others live their faith through visitors who have been invited into the school to share their beliefs and values with the community. Leaders respect difference, value diversity and ensure equal opportunities for all. Collective worship is inclusive and the spiritual and religious identity of each individual is respected.

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic Life of the School	
How well leaders 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 and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	1
The extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school so areas needing development are addressed decisively and responsibilities met	1
How effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion	1