



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

ST. OSWALD'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

WARRINGTON

A Section 23 Report from the Department for Christian Education

ST. OSWALD'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

WARRINGTON

Names of Inspectors:

Rev. D. Melly Rev. D. Seddon

Date of Inspection:

9 March 2004

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Copies of this Report may be obtained from the Governors of the School.

INTRODUCTION

This inspection was carried out under Section 23 of The School Inspections Act 1996.

Its purpose was to report on:

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- Standards
- Teaching and learning
- Pupils' response
- Curriculum
- Leadership and management

WHOLE SCHOOL ASPECTS

- Mission Statement
- Collective Worship
- Spiritual and Moral Development

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 School Inspections Act 1996).

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

Name of School:	St. Oswald's Catholic Primary School
Type of School:	Primary
School Category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Headteacher:	Miss H. T. Lennon
Address of School:	Padgate Lane, Padgate, Warrington, WA1 3LB.
Telephone:	01925 813015
Fax:	01925 820525
Chair of Governors:	Mr. M. Whitfield
Date of last inspection:	4 February 1997

SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Oswald's is situated in Padgate on the north side of Warrington. The school is in an area of mainly private housing and the majority of the parents are in employment. A growing number of pupils are now coming from nearby council housing estates. There are about 10% of children on free school meals. Parents are extremely supportive. The school has received two school achievement awards 2002 and 2003 for its improvements and high standards. *Investor in People* status was achieved in 2003.

There are 186 baptised pupils on the school register 175 of whom are baptised Catholics. One pupil is from another faith tradition.

There are six Catholic teachers on the staff.

The current targets set by the school in relation to Religious Education are:

- develop the role of the Religious Education coordinator;
- further develop formal assessment of Religious Education;
- develop the teaching of *Other Faiths*;
- support the staff who are not Catholic;
- develop the programme for preparation for first sacraments;
- up-date resources.

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school with many strengths and few areas for development in Religious Education.

MAIN STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL

- Pupils are managed very well and very good standards of behaviour are achieved.
- Pupils respond very well and show enjoyment of Religious Education.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- There are excellent relationships and discipline in the school.
- The time allocated to Religious Education is very good (9.7% to 10.8%).
- The quality and provision of Collective Worship is very good.
- Provision for spiritual and moral development is very good.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Ensure that the areas for improvement identified in the development plan and the self-review document are implemented.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

A policy and guidelines for Collective Worship have been produced. Religious Education resources have been audited and updated. The Religious Education handbook has been reviewed and developed. Teaching of *Other Faiths* has been introduced.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEW OF THE SCHOOL

The vast majority of parents who filled in parent response forms are happy with the school. Some parents feel that the school does not keep them well informed about what is taught and about their children's progress in Religious Education.

There were 96 parent response forms returned.

The majority of the children are very happy with the school and did not identify any significant areas for change in Religious Education.

SCHOOL'S SELF-REVIEW

The school has filled in the self-review document well and has correctly identified areas for development.

STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Standards in Religious Education are good.

QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

The quality of teaching in Religious Education is good.

PUPILS' RESPONSE

Pupils respond very well and show enjoyment of Religious Education.

PROVISION FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision for Religious Education is good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Leadership and management are very good.

MISSION STATEMENT

The school has a good Mission Statement which is lived out in the life and work of the school.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The quality of Collective Worship is very good.

SPIRITUAL AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT

The quality of spiritual and moral education is very good.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How high are standards in Religious Education? How well do pupils achieve?

1. The standard achieved in Religious Education is good. The majority of pupils meet the expectations of the *Here I Am* programme. Standards in Religious Education are gradually improving. The school has introduced the formal assessment sheets provided by the Archdiocese and these are being well used. The development of this work is part of the school's development plan for Religious Education.

2. The pupils' achievement overall is good and in some cases very good.

3. Pupils with additional needs make good progress in Religious Education through the provision of differentiated tasks and the additional support given by teachers and classroom assistants.

4. There are no significant differences in standards achieved by pupils of different gender.

5. Lesson and workbook observations, discussions with pupils from Year 2 and Year 6, together with discussions with pupils during lessons show that pupils are growing in their knowledge and understanding of the teachings, beliefs, values and way of life of Catholic Christianity and of *Other Faith* traditions explored in the *Here I Am* programme.

6. Pupils are able to communicate their knowledge and understanding in a variety of appropriate forms. These include the completion of different tasks which include the personal reflections undertaken in the *Remember* stage of the process. Pupils, especially those in Key Stage 2, are able to talk about the topics covered with confidence and understanding.

7. Pupils have started to understand the human search for meaning and purpose and are able to identify some of the questions it raises and of the answers which the Church has given to those questions. This was particularly evident in class and Collective Worship where the focus at the moment is on the basic question '*Who Am I*' and the Church's response in faith in the Incarnation.

How effective are teaching and learning in Religious Education?

8. The quality of teaching in Religious Education is good. This makes a significant impact on pupils' learning. Skilful question and answering helps children to reflect on their lives and where they are going. Praise is particularly well used to consolidate what is being learnt.

9. Planning and classroom teaching indicate that teachers on the whole have a secure knowledge and understanding of Religious Education and of the *Here I Am* programme. Teachers set high expectations so as to challenge pupils and deepen their knowledge, skills and understanding. This is particularly reflected in the display of the seven-fold process of the *Here I Am* programme in each class together with the learning intention for each stage.

10. Teachers plan their lessons very thoroughly, using the planning sheets provided by the Archdiocese for this purpose. Lessons have clear religious learning objectives, which are shared with the pupils and displayed in each class. These meet the learning needs of all pupils.
11. Teachers use a variety of imaginative teaching and learning strategies that match the learning objectives and needs of all pupils. Good use was made of questioning, time out partners, small group and whole class discussion and prayer.
12. Teachers manage pupils very well and very good standards of behaviour are achieved.
13. There is very good time management in most classes. Resources, including smart boards for teacher presentation and pupil interaction, information communication technology, worksheets, lighted candles, quiet music, computer slides and power point presentations are well used.
14. Where teaching assistants were used this was done in an effective manner to support individual and group learning.
15. Pupils are acquiring new knowledge and skills, are developing their understanding in Religious Education and are obviously enjoying what they are doing. Their knowledge is being extended by good question and answering, and the use of resources to support learning. At the moment they are growing in their knowledge and understanding of the importance of appreciation of all there is in their lives for which they should be thankful. They are also exploring the Mass, the Church family's way of saying thank you to God for Jesus.
16. There is evidence of prior learning being consolidated and being applied in new contexts with the aid of skilful questions.
17. Pupils demonstrate creativity in their work: composition of prayers, the use of information communication technology skills and power point, especially in Year 6 and creative writing.
18. Pupils work at a good pace and work productively. They show interest in their work in Religious Education and are able to sustain concentration being on task throughout the lessons.
19. Pupils are developing the skills that enable them to work well independently and collaboratively.
20. Teachers are beginning to use the formal assessment sheets provided by the department to assess pupils' work. This is good. Workbooks are always marked with very constructive and supportive comments, which help children appreciate how they can improve further. Comment is made on the planning sheets of those pupils exceeding or not meeting the expectations of the programme. Assessments are used to inform future planning.
21. Pupils are taught how to evaluate their own work. This is done well with the use of the templates of caterpillars in Key Stage 1 and butterflies in Key Stage 2 which the children are encouraged to fill in for themselves. These show a great

variety of faith and life work being remembered. One aspect of each topic is then chosen to be recorded on a candelabra which builds up to a picture of the whole year's work. Pupils understand how well they are doing in Religious Education and are informed by teachers of ways in which they can improve through verbal feedback as lessons progress and through comments in the workbooks and Religious Education folders.

How well do pupils respond to Religious Education?

22. Pupils respond very well and show enjoyment of Religious Education. They apply themselves productively to their work are able to sustain concentration and show interest in what they are doing.

23. Throughout the lessons observed pupils were able to form constructive relationships with others and respect their views.

24. Pupils were observed showing initiative and taking responsibility as they chose hymns and readings for the *Rejoice* section of the programme. This provided evidence of their confidence and self-esteem.

25. Throughout the inspection pupils showed through their actions that they know what constitutes appropriate behaviour.

How good is the provision for the curriculum in Religious Education?

26. The requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Religious Education are met by the school using the *Here I Am* programme recommended by the Archdiocese. 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.

27. The time allocated to Religious Education is 9.7% to 10.8% of total curriculum time and is very good. This fulfils the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

28. There are seven teachers teaching Religious Education three of who possess a suitable qualification in Religious Education. Teachers should be encouraged to gain the *Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies* that is on offer. Suitable arrangements are in place for the induction and ongoing professional development of teachers. This is part of the ongoing development plan of the school. All of this contributes to teacher effectiveness.

29. The school provides a bright stimulating environment for pupils. There is a focus for worship with attractive and relevant artefacts and sacred objects in each classroom many of which are obviously being built up as the topic progresses. Children's work is tastefully displayed around the school enhancing the learning environment and showing how much the work is valued.

30. The financial allocation for Religious Education is good. Teachers have a variety of very good resources for teaching Religious Education. These are updated regularly. Money has recently been spent on resources to support the teaching of

Judaism and Islam, the Cheshire Library Services, *God's Story*, prayer books and bibles for each class, CD players together with CD's of reflective music and candles.

31. St. Oswald's school is socially inclusive by providing equality of access and of opportunity for all pupils to make progress. This is undertaken by differentiation of tasks and additional support.

32. Through curriculum Religious Education the school respects the faith of all pupils whatever their backgrounds: baptised Catholics whether from worshipping backgrounds or not and those who do not belong to the Catholic faith. This was evident in lessons and Collective Worship.

How effective and efficient are the leadership and management in Religious Education?

33. Leadership and management in Religious Education are very good. There is a clear vision for the subject within the mission of the school with a focus on the promotion of high standards. A very good handbook and other very well presented documentation guides and directs all staff in their delivery of Religious Education.

34. The coordination of Religious Education is very good. The coordinator fulfils her role with enthusiasm. All recent initiatives of the Department for Christian Education have been very well implemented.

35. There is clearly a shared commitment between all of those teaching Religious Education to the subject's aims and values. This is inspired and motivated by the coordinator for Religious Education and supported by the headteacher.

36. The Religious Education coordinator attends coordinators' meetings regularly and information is disseminated to all staff during staff meetings.

37. Priorities for the development of the subject are clearly identified, targets are set and appropriate resources are allocated. These are to be found in the Religious Education development plan and the school's self-review document.

38. There is a policy in school for the monitoring of planning, teaching and learning by the Religious Education coordinator and the senior management. This is effective in guiding teaching staff and in securing progression in pupils' knowledge skills and understanding.

39. All staff have availed of in-service provided by the Archdiocese to support the planning, delivery and evaluation of the *Here I Am* programme. They have also had in house in-service on Mission Statement, Catholic ethos and the teaching of *Other Faiths*. The headteacher and Religious Education coordinator have attended in-service on assessment and the teaching of *Other Faiths*.

40. The financial and physical resources are well managed by the Religious Education coordinator. The most recent acquisitions made by the school and have had significant impact.

WHOLE SCHOOL ASPECTS

How effective is the Mission Statement in the life and work of the school?

41. The Mission Statement is a good expression of the philosophy of education in this Catholic school: "St Oswald's School promotes Gospel values in a Christian learning community where children can grow in knowledge and understanding and in the acquisition of skills, attitudes and values."

42. A clear set of aims are also in place. These show how the Mission Statement is implemented in the daily life of the school. The staff and governors were involved in the development of the statement and its aims.

43. The Mission Statement is displayed throughout the school. It directs school policies and plans. The current statement was developed about six years ago. Since then it has been reviewed on a regular basis and has consequently become more of a driving force in the life of the school.

How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

44. The quality of Collective Worship is very good. The school provides Collective Worship in a variety of ways for each child daily. There is a whole school assembly with Collective Worship on Mondays and Thursdays. Key Stage Two has Collective Worship on Wednesdays and Key Stage One on Fridays. Otherwise Collective Worship takes place in class and is led by the children. This fulfils government and Archdiocesan guidance.

45. The Collective Worship attended included opportunities for individual reflection and silent prayer, which were very well used. Concentration on the topic *Thanksgiving* encouraged reflection on spiritual and moral issues and on personal beliefs, as the children were encouraged to value the things in life that we all need to appreciate and be thankful for and to see the Mass as the great act of thanksgiving of the Church. The gathering together, the listening, the formal and informal prayer and the enthusiastic hymn singing contributed to the liturgical formation of pupils.

46. There is a very comprehensive policy and guidelines to support the planning and delivery of Collective Worship wherever and whenever it takes place.

47. The Collective Worship observed was a very enriching religious experience for all concerned. It was appropriate in its content, form, length, organisation, presentation and leadership taking account of the age, ability and background of the pupils.

48. Collective Worship promotes a common ethos, shared values, positive attitudes and community spirit as the pupils are encouraged to reflect on the above.

49. Collective Worship is held both in the school hall and in the classrooms. A variety of resources are used depending on the topic being considered. Very good use was made of quiet music to create atmosphere, a focus for worship with a lighted candle, the work the children produced in class, and taped backing music for which some children took responsibility. There is a focus for worship provided in each classroom. Many of these are built on as each topic progresses.

50. The presence of staff, both teaching and non-teaching, together with the large number of parents who were present, witnessed to the value the school places on prayer and worship.

51. Classroom Collective Worship is obviously well organised with children taking leading roles. Charts were observed outlining the responsibilities of children leading Collective Worship within the classroom.

How effective is the school's provision for the spiritual and moral development of its pupils and how well do they respond to it?

52. The provision for spiritual and moral development is very good.

53. Pupils are given opportunities to reflect upon and find meaning in everyday experiences. They are developing a sense of the transcendent and of God in their lives. They are encouraged to reflect on and respond to God's presence. This is well done. At the moment they are appreciating the many gifts of God in our lives that need to be appreciated and seeing the Mass as a way of giving thanks to God for all.

54. In both Religious Education lessons and Collective Worship pupils are given opportunities to consider how the teachings of the Church provide insights into and explanations for the fundamental questions of existence. For example, through the current topic *Thanksgiving* pupils are looking at the fundamental question *Who Am I?* and the Church's response in faith to the Incarnation.

55. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own attitudes and values in the light of the gospels and the teachings of the Church. This is being done through the development of class rules and the celebration of good behaviour in assemblies and above all by trying not to take life for granted but to be always thankful.

56. Pupils are developing the range, depth and quality of their prayer life. Formal and informal prayer, particularly silent reflection, are well used both in class and in the assemblies in the school hall.

57. Pupils are growing in knowledge and understanding of the life, words and actions of Jesus. Evidence of this is provided in class, assemblies and in the pupils' workbooks.

58. Pupils are learning that there is something beyond the material in life and the need to value inward experience and consciousness. This was very evident in the lessons and Collective Worship observed.

59. Through their work on *Other Faiths*, particularly Judaism, pupils are learning about how some other people respond to the spiritual dimension of life and to respect them as Jesus would. Preparations are in hand to now introduce the pupils to an understanding of Islam. This will involve two and a half hours of Religious Education time in the year.

60. The school provides a secure community which promotes principles and behaviour which help pupils to distinguish right from wrong. Opportunities are provided for pupils to explore questions of motive, attitudes and intentions in relation

to action and show an ability to think through the consequences of their action. The excellent relationships and discipline are testimony to this work.

61. There is a school council with pupil representation from each class. The children enjoy and appreciate the responsibility this affords.

What should the school do to improve further?

The following is a specific issue which the governors and staff should include in the post inspection plan:

- ensure that the areas for improvement identified in the development plan and the self-review document are implemented.

Areas for development identified in the report which are not included in key issues for action but which should be considered by the school:

- * encourage teachers to gain the *Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies*. (28).

DATA AND INDICATORS

PUPILS

Number of pupils in each year group:

Reception	29
Year 1	26
Year 2	28
Year 3	22
Year 4	27
Year 5	26
Year 6	<u>29</u>
	187

Number of Catholic pupils: 175

Percentage of pupils from each parish:

St. Oswald's	65.2%
St. Bridget's	16.5%
St. Stephen's	6.9%
St. Peter's	4.8%
St. Augustine's	2.1%
St. Benedict's	1.6%
St. Mary's	1%

Number of pupils from other Christian denominations: 11

Number of pupils from Other Faith traditions: 1

Number of pupils having a statement of special educational needs: 4

Admission limit of pupils: 30

TEACHERS AND CLASSES

Total number of teachers: 8 full-time 1 part-time

Number of teachers teaching Religious Education: 8

Number of Catholic teachers in the school: 6

Number of classes: 7

Organisation of the school into classes:

One form entry from Reception to Year 6

Average class size in key stages:

Reception: 29

Key Stage 1: 28

Key Stage 2: 27

TEACHING TIME

Total teaching time per week:

Reception: 23 Hours 15 Minutes

Key Stage 1: 23 Hours 15 Minutes

Key Stage 2: 23 Hours 30 Minutes

Total Religious Education teaching time per week:

Reception: 2 Hours 15 Minutes

Key Stage 1: 2 Hours 30 Minutes

Key Stage 2: 2 Hours 30 Minutes

Percentage of total teaching time per week spent on Religious Education: 9.7% to 10.8%

FINANCIAL DATA

	Current Financial Year	Last Financial Year
	£	£
Religious Education	763.03	234.75
English	952.22	6,562.18
Mathematics	459.98	956.39
Science	259.39	631.23

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEW OF THE SCHOOL

What parents like about the school

- They are happy with the values and attitudes the school teaches.
- They are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school.
- They are made to feel welcome in school.
- The school gives parents a clear understanding of what is taught in Religious Education.
- The school enables their children to achieve very good standards of work in Religious Education.
- The school keeps parents well informed about their children's progress in Religious Education.
- Their children are happy in school.

What some parents are not happy about

- One parent does not feel that the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school.
- Two parents are not happy with the values and attitudes the school teaches.
- Two parents do not feel welcome in school.
- Five parents feel that the school does not give a clear understanding of what is taught in Religious Education.
- Seven parents feel that the school does not keep parents well informed about children's progress in Religious Education.

Ninety-six parent response forms were returned. Three sessions are held each year with the parents of the new intake. The school sends a weekly newsletter to each home. Overviews are sent to parents from the junior department once a term and twice a term from the infant department. Two parents' evenings are held every year and reports on children's progress are sent to each home. All of these give an opportunity to parents to be aware of what is taught and of the children's progress in Religious Education.

What children like most about their school

- The majority of the children are very happy with the school and no significant requests for change were made.

