

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 Oswald's is an average sized Catholic Primary School situated in Padagte area of Warrington and serves the parish of St Oswald's. The school takes a significant number of children from parishes in the district. There are 203 children on roll of whom 173 are baptised Catholic, 30 come from other Christian denominations. There are 10 teachers of whom 7 teach Religious Education and 7 are Catholic. Four teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education. Since the last inspection there is a team of two Religious Education Co-ordinators. The Assistant Head is currently on secondment and due to return to post in September 2012. A new Parish Priest, Rev Canon Redmond, has been in place since September 2011.

Key for inspection grades

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

© 2012 copyright – Archdiocese of Liverpool. This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

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 Oswald's is outstanding overall in providing Catholic Education. There is a clear vision for Catholic Education which is embraced by the whole school community. Since the last inspection the school has securely maintained and built on previously outstanding performance. Self evaluation is rigorous and accurate. Outcomes for pupils are good with outstanding features. There is no significant difference in performance between groups of pupils. Outcomes for pupils with additional or special needs is very good. The school is successful in addressing the areas it has identified for improvement. The leadership team is deeply motivated and consistently communicates its high expectations to staff in order to secure improvement. Staff are affirmed and supported. Teachers are provided with In-service to support their ongoing development. Realistic and challenging plans stem from the accurate analysis obtained through monitoring and are being used effectively to improve outcomes.

St Oswald's has a beautiful and inviting entrance, in particular the school hall is a feature of the school. All displays celebrate the achievements made by the school community. The quality resources used around the corridors, classrooms and school decoration reflect the care and love the staff; pupils and parents have for the school.

Overall the school has an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Continue to develop formal assessment by:
 - Staff training for the use of driver words and the impact of driver words when monitoring levels in formal assessment.

- Further develop planning by:
 - Using driver words within learning objectives and through differentiated activities;
 - Using challenging questions to develop success criteria.

- Improve marking of children's work by:
 - Developing manageable self assessments to inform planning and assessment;
 - Develop manageable and realistic time for children to respond to next steps through marking.
 -

How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils

Pupils' achievement in Religious Education is good. On entry to school many children have a limited knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith. Pupils' attainment in Religious Education is good. Pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities. Analysis of assessments undertaken provides evidence of pupils generally attaining appropriate levels for their age and stage of development in each key stage. There is no difference in performance between pupils of different gender. Outcomes for pupils with additional or special needs are very good. Pupils are becoming increasingly more literate. Their knowledge, understanding and skills are developing appropriate to their age or capacity. They are developing the skills that enable them to think spiritually, ethically and theologically and are becoming more aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. Pupils' enjoyment of their learning is good as shown by their interest, enthusiasm and exceptional behaviour. Pupils achieve by taking great care and attention in their lessons and follow the teachers lead. They listen and share ideas well and can link their learning to their own lives. They produce work that ensures understanding of the religious education topics through differentiated work. They are encouraged to assess learning through the use of concept maps at the beginning of topics and end topics with evaluations that celebrate their work. Children have a good understanding of the strands of Attainment Target 1. By developing children's understanding of the driver words and using them in their self assessments, children will be further challenged and grasp opportunities to extend their understanding.

Pupils are actively involved in developing and evaluating the Catholic character of the school by living out the Mission Statement in many various ways. Among the many they include themselves in fundraising for Clare House, Great Ormond Street and the Good Shepherd. They are encouraged to speak out for those in need and their ideas for fundraising show how they are *'reaching out to the wider community'*. Pupils have a real sense of belonging to the school community and they value and respect others. Pupils are encouraged to take on roles of responsibility in the school and wider community. Pupils regularly prepare to take on roles within Sunday Mass in St Oswald's Parish which is a real community celebration, *'ensuring that St Oswald's is central to the parish'*. Fr Redmond fully supports and encourages the staff and pupils in their roles within the parish, *'children are taught gently to be devout.'* Pupils are considerate and caring of others both in school and the wider community. Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong and apply this in their personal relationships. Education for personal relationships has fostered positive attitudes in pupils. Pupils take an increasing responsibility for themselves and their actions. They praise and acknowledge the contribution of others. They show a readiness to embrace and celebrate their lived experiences.

Pupils are outstanding in responding to and participating in the schools Collective Worship. Pupils take their responsibility of worship very seriously and with great pride. They are independent in their thoughts for preparation and delivery of worship and truly enjoy how they can share their worship with their peers, teachers, teaching assistants and visitors to school. They are increasingly more confident preparing and leading worship from their earliest years. They have become familiar with the preparation and stages of worship. They plan effectively and with confidence and are using quality pupil resources. In particular they are

choosing Scripture with growing understanding of the impact and message it can bring to their Collective Worship. They act with reverence and are keen to participate in a variety of gatherings. They sing joyfully, reflect in silence and join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence. No-one is expected to act in a manner contrary to their beliefs and all show mutual respect. Pupils' knowledge of prayer and liturgy is increasing. They have become familiar with a variety of prayer styles. They appreciate and are open to the Word of God in the scriptures. The Religious Education co-ordinators have plans in place to further improve resources for focus tables and help children to evaluate their collective worship planning.

How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils	
How well pupils achieve in Religious Education	2
<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 	2
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 effective in ensuring that pupils are interested and engaged and make very good progress. Teachers take into account pupils' prior learning and ensure differentiated tasks when planning so that the work consolidates, builds and extends their knowledge and understanding. There is a clear focus on teachers' planning, ensuring differentiation through the use of 'SORT' – support, outcomes, resources, tasks. There is some evidence of driver words from the attainment targets being used in planning. When used consistently, this will push forward the differentiation, challenging the children further. Planning within the Foundation Stage is detailed and shows in depth how Religious Education is embedded throughout key areas. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to work independently and collaboratively and pupils have high levels of concentration. Very good use is made of time and resources. The teachers ensure that resources used are of a high quality and are effective, for example use of key words to enable understanding. Interactive whiteboards are used creatively to enhance children's learning, for example the use of photographs and text and pictures from God's Story. Teaching assistants play an effective key role within the classroom. They support various groups and on a one to one basis with some pupils. They are calm and encourage focused learning. Teachers and others use a variety of strategies to sustain and motivate pupils. Clear learning objectives are used in line with the stages of the Here I Am Programme. Displays are of a high quality and encourage development through the stages of each topic. To build on this good practice child friendly driver word displays would motivate pupils further. All teachers have a calm approach to their teaching. There is a family atmosphere within each classroom with consideration, care and attention to every child. Children enjoy sharing and their responses are encouraged and always praised and affirmed. Achievement and effort are celebrated.

The assessment of pupils work in Religious Education is good. Teachers encourage pupils to feedback on their learning through the use of concept maps and end of topic assessment sheets. Throughout lessons children are made aware of their progress orally. Through marking some use of focused questioning is evident although inconsistent. This could be further developed encouraging next step questions in children's books or self assessment markers in earlier years. Formal assessment tasks are undertaken in line with Archdiocesan guidance. Assessment information is collated by the subject leaders and shared with the leadership team, governors and parents. The school has developed a very good tracking system for all of its pupils. They can identify through class and whole school where the need for support and challenge is and have action plans in place for those pupils to be further developed. Teachers are able to identify how well pupils are achieving and tackle underachievement. In particular, children who need support are identified clearly through daily planning. The Religious Education co-ordinators with the support of the head teacher work hard to ensure that the system for formal assessment is thorough. The religious education co-ordinators are currently updating their assessment training with the Archdiocese to strengthen the good systems in place for accurate levelling of work.

The curriculum is good in meeting pupils' needs. The school, using the Here I Am programme recommended by the Archdiocese, meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Religious Education. A whole school approach is used and appropriate levels of the programme are being followed in different classes. This ensures complete Religious Education entitlement for each child and meets National and Archdiocesan requirements. Of the total curriculum time 10% is allocated to Religious Education. This fulfils the requirements of the Bishops of England and Wales. Planning ensures full coverage of the Religious Education programme. The school implements new curriculum developments as appropriate. Care is taken to use the Here I Am programme to enrich pupils learning. There is evidence of imaginative and well planned strategies. For example, in the Foundation Stage, activities surrounding topics covered are well thought out, making children's learning memorable and stimulating. Parents are always fully informed through the use of quality Religious Education newsletters. The school also includes outlines of topics to be covered in religious education through termly and half termly subject reports. Updates on assemblies, children's masses, fundraising activities etc are reported in the weekly newsletters. Enrichment activities have a positive impact on the curriculum. An Eco club, for example has been very successful, where children have designed and made their own gardens for the last two years. These have been showcased at the Tatton Show. The Religious Education curriculum provides very good opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development. Through children's questionnaires, what they liked the most was helping others, having time alone and how they love coming to school. The parish priest, Fr Redmond commented, '*The children are full of happiness*'.

The Collective Worship provided is outstanding in reflecting the Catholic character of the school and taking into account all Faith backgrounds among the pupils. Collective Worship plays a key part in meeting the spiritual needs of the pupils. Opportunities are provided to enable full, active and conscious participation of the whole school community. Children are enabled to pray formally and informally. The school provides opportunities for staff to develop the skills in planning and leading Collective Worship and they have received inset to

deliver and develop Collective Worship. Staff meetings have been dedicated to improvements they have made. The teachers provide the necessary resources and opportunities to help children to develop the skills necessary to plan, lead and participate in Collective Worship. Outstanding opportunities are provided for parents, carers the local and wider Faith communities to participate in a variety of celebrations of the 'Here I Am' programme and the Church's liturgical year. The school and its community regularly take part in liturgical celebrations within school and church inviting parents, parishioners and friends.

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	2
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	1

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

Leaders and managers are outstanding in promoting and developing the Catholic life of the school and show an outstanding understanding of and commitment to the Mission of the Church. This is reflected in the Schools own Mission Statement. All who form part of the school community including parents, Priest, governors, staff and children were involved in the development and review of the Mission Statement. Its aims and practical objectives direct and guide every aspect of school life and are a useful tool by which the school evaluates its effectiveness. The key to the success of the Mission Statements is its six clear practical objectives and there is clear evidence that they are lived out daily. Pictorial or photographic evidence would support the objectives and be inspiring to pupils, staff and visitors to the school. Opportunities are provided for the staff and pupils to play an active part in Catholic life and Mission of the school. The Self Evaluation Document provides evidence of the schools monitoring, searching analysis and self challenge. Their analysis provides a basis to celebrate the schools strengths and outlining areas for development. The school provides supportive induction and in-service training to enable staff to further understand the Church's Mission in Education and play their unique part in it. For example, there is a culture of shared practice in particular with a new member of staff who has been supported fully by the Religious Education co-ordinators to develop understanding of the Here I Am programme. The school encourages regular attendance of Archdiocesan training by Religious Education co-ordinators and other staff members. All share and update staff through regular meetings. The school is encouraging staff members to complete and undertake the Catholic Certificate in Religious Education. There are opportunities for Spiritual and Moral Developments for pupils and staff such as time built into staff meetings and joint time with Catholic schools in Warrington. Pupils are supported through opportunities linked to the Here I Am programme, through their personal and social teaching and time given to reflect and celebrate on what they are doing for themselves, their community and the wider world.

Leaders and managers are outstanding in the way they use monitoring data to evaluate the schools performance, celebrate, and plan future improvements.

There are clear action plans in place for monitoring throughout Religious Education. The monitoring of staff planning for example clearly identifies ways forward and is an effective tool. The consistency of the schools tracking and monitoring shows a willingness to improve standards. The subject leaders are outstanding in guiding Religious Education. They show commitment and introduce new initiatives when appropriate. Good documentation guides and directs all staff in the delivery of the subject. This is updated as necessary. They are passionate about religious education and want to continue to challenge pupils, staff and themselves as co-ordinators. They take part in regular cluster meetings to improve and share good practice.

Governors are outstanding in fulfilling their responsibilities. They are a dedicated team who are committed to improving standards in the school. They have effectively helped to shape the direction of the school. The Governors receive a weekly pack of information from the headteacher who is consistent in her updates to them. There is communication via the weekly pack and through weekly meetings with the chair of governors and the headteacher. Through such consistent updates the governors are constantly driving standards forward. The regular meetings enables action upon their findings can be implemented quickly and with efficiency. They are continually evaluating and reviewing to ensure that in all they do, their Mission Statement is lived out at every opportunity. The governors are involved with the School's Evaluation Document, and are updated on improvements and updates to Religious Education. Governors are invited into school regularly and each governor is assigned to a class. A good bond is created with pupils, staff and parents which adds to the family atmosphere that St Oswald's creates. The new parish priest, Fr Redmond is hoping to take up a post on the governing body in the very near future, in the meantime is regularly kept up to date.

St Oswald's is an inclusive school. Leadership at all levels respects difference, values diversity and ensures equal opportunities for all. It was reported in their Inclusion Quality Mark (2011), *'Significant strengths of the school are outstanding personal development, care, guidance and support structures in place to support both the children and their families'*. Prayer, worship and the liturgical life of the school reflects and respects the religious diversity. Fr Redmond is a regular visitor to school and is in regular contact with the Religious Education co-ordinators and head teacher. Parents, parishioners and friends are welcomed into school for celebrations and assemblies. Fr Redmond celebrated mass in the school hall in the Autumn term joining the whole school community; he is planning to be involved in many prayer and liturgy celebrations within the school. There are positive relationships at every level within the school. Leaders and managers facilitate pupils' involvement in service to the local Faith and religious communities, joining together with the immediate neighbourhood served by the school and the wider community, for example, Padgate Walking Day. Parents are consulted regularly and involved in a variety of ways in the life of the school. Parents are invited into school each week in 'Sharing Time'. Parents are welcome to share with their child within the school day to look at their children's work on a weekly basis. There is an outstanding parent group that is deployed throughout the school. Parents are trained by the headteacher to help support class activities and are gently integrated into the life of the school. The parents group takes immense pride in their achievements and feel confident in a supporting role that they feel comfortable doing. There are some parents' in the group who have continued to stay with the parents' and grandparents' group after

their children have left school. St Oswald's recognises how vital the sharing of parent's skills are and ensures that they are full members of the school community. Children have explored the beliefs and values of other faiths and religions. They have invited outside visitors for Judaism and Hinduism Religious Education work. This helps to promote tolerance and respect for those who think differently. St Oswald's takes every chance to celebrate the beliefs and values of others and takes every opportunity for children to interact across cultural and faith boundaries.

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