



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

SAINT EDMUND'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

SKELMERSDALE

Tuesday 7 November 2006

Inspectors Mrs. Marie Connolly Mrs. S. Callaghan

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Catholic Primary
Age range of pupils	3-11
Number on roll	344
Chair of governors	Mrs. Frances Hopkins
School address	Windrows, New Church Farm, Skelmersdale, Lancashire WN8 8NP.
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Date of last inspection	5 February 2002
Head teacher	Mr. David Ashley

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.

Description of the school

Saint Edmund's is a small Catholic Primary School. The school is situated in the New Church Farm area of Skelmersdale. This is an area of significant social and economic hardship. The majority of Catholic learners are drawn from the parish of Saint Edmund's; a further five per cent of learners are drawn from Saint Mary's parish. About a third of the children attending this school are from other Christian denominations.

There are currently 119 children on roll of whom 77 are baptised Catholics. There are 39 from other Christian denominations and 3 children from *Other Faith* traditions. The majority of learners come from a white British background. A small number of children attending St. Edmund's belong to the travelling community. Attainment on entry overall is below that expected. There are 7 teaching staff of which 5 are Catholic and 6 have a Religious Education qualification. The subject leader for Religious Education has been in post for 5 years.

Key for inspection grades

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

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Overall effectiveness of the school

Saint Edmund's is a good Catholic school with many outstanding features. It is an inclusive community, underpinned by an exceptionally strong Catholic ethos, which establishes a positive climate for work. The gospel values of consideration, care and courtesy very evidently underpin every aspect of school life. Outstanding relationships have been established by working closely with both home, the parishes, and the wider community. Standards are good. Learners achieve well and make good progress by the end of Key Stage 2. Overall, teaching is good. Assessment provides clear guidance on learning. The curriculum is well planned. Learners' behaviour is outstanding. The provision for learners' spiritual and moral development is outstanding. Both curriculum Religious Education and Collective Worship make a significant contribution to this development. The headteacher is exemplary in leading the school. He has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and a vision of how to meet development needs. The coordinator is outstanding in supporting staff and raising the profile of the subject.

Grade: 2

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation is good. The judgements made in this document underestimate some of the judgements made in this report. The school's self-evaluation needs to be undertaken annually. Identification of its own areas for development and the strategies planned to address them as well as the minor areas for development identified in this report should be included. The leadership has a clear understanding of what needs to be developed, and openness to change. There is outstanding capacity for further improvement as shown by the shared commitment to Religious Education and related whole school issues by all.

Grade: 1

What the school should do to improve further

- Produce a set of practical objectives that flow from the aims of the school's Mission Statement, showing the ways in which it is lived out daily in the school;
- Ensure the areas identified in the school's own self-evaluation and the minor areas outlined in this report are implemented particularly the provision of staff in-service to support the planning and delivery of *Here I Am*.

Achievement and standards

Learners' attainment on entry to the school is below average with a large number of all learners having some additional needs. Learners make good progress in the school. Standards in Religious Education overall are good, with the majority of learners meeting the learning objectives and outcomes set, according to their age and stage of development. There is no significant difference in performance by learners of different gender. Learners with special needs make very good progress in Religious Education with the help provided by excellent teaching assistants and some differentiation of tasks to meet their needs. The school checks on the progress made by all through assessment and some challenging marking. In all key stages learners show confidence in discussion and feedback, despite poor oracy, showing good knowledge and understanding of the subject. All children show enthusiasm towards their work. Greater consistency will be ensured throughout the school by using the information gathered through the monitoring of planning, teaching and learning and scrutiny of the formal assessments made each term.

Catholic beliefs and values are at the heart of learners' spiritual and moral development. Children have a good understanding of the life and teaching of Jesus. Many strategies are used to enable them to apply this teaching to their own lives and experiences. The work undertaken on *Other Faiths* has helped the learners understand how others make sense of the world in which we live. The behaviour of children throughout the school is outstanding. Children have an excellent sense of right and wrong. The school provides outstanding opportunities for their spiritual and moral development. Photographs have been taken of this excellent practice and shared throughout the Archdiocese. The children make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community.

Grade: 2

Quality of Provision for Religious Education

Teaching and learning

Overall the quality of provision for Religious Education is good. The learning needs of all children are addressed through the use of some creative and imaginative teaching and learning strategies. These should be further developed for all stages of the seven-fold process. The teaching is enthusiastic which helps learners engage with the material presented and thoroughly enjoy their lessons. Some good use is made of the information communications technology. Well-prepared resources enhanced the delivery of lessons. Teachers make use of very good teaching assistants to support those learners with additional learning needs. Some use is made of differentiated tasks.

Planning needs to be more consistent. The day and date work is to be covered, groupings, support and resources all need to be included. Each stage of the seven-fold process should be planned for in advance.

The lessons observed had good pace and timing, which maintained the interest and concentration of learners and kept them on task and focussed. Work is provided that enables learners to work independently and collaboratively. All teachers should ensure that learners understand the purpose of the lesson by sharing the learning objective. This should then be re-visited during the plenary session. Learners' religious literacy would be enhanced by greater use of the key words for each topic. Assessment of learners' work is good. Records are kept and information used to inform future planning. All staff is to be provided with in-service to support the planning and delivery of *Here I Am*. This in-service and the ongoing monitoring of planning, teaching and learning will further improve progress and standards in Religious Education and ensure even greater consistency in teaching throughout the school.

Parents and carers are enabled to become involved in their children's Religious Education by the provision of regular newsletters and curriculum evenings informing them of what is to be covered. A vast number of initiatives are in place to ensure parents feel welcome and enabled to play an active part in the life of the school e.g. the reading club.

Grade: 2

Curriculum

The Religious Education curriculum is outstanding in meeting the needs and interests of learners. 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 diocesan requirements. Of the total curriculum time 10% is allocated to Religious Education. This fulfils the requirements of the Bishops of England and Wales. The leadership of the school ensures suitable positioning of Religious Education on timetables. Curriculum outlines are provided for parents. Excellent links are made with home and parishes. Different ways of enabling this to happen have been considered due to the increased demands placed on the priests. The way in which the school reaches out to support the local and wider community is outstanding. Overall the Religious Education curriculum makes an outstanding contribution to learners' spiritual and moral development.

Grade: 1

Leadership and Management

Religious Education

Leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education are outstanding. There is a clear vision for the subject within the mission of the school with a focus on raising standards. The coordinator provides effective and efficient support to staff and has shared all recent initiatives with them. She fulfils her role with enthusiasm and commitment. Good documentation guides and directs all staff in their delivery of the subject. The subject leader attends coordinators' meetings and information is disseminated to all staff during staff meetings or in-service time. Performance in Religious Education is monitored. The ongoing scrutiny of planning, workbooks and teaching and learning and effective use of the findings will enable greater consistency and raise standards further. Self-assessment is undertaken for each topic by staff and learners. St. Edmund's is socially inclusive by providing equality of access and of opportunity for all learners to make progress. This is a real strength of the school. Of the 7 staff teaching Religious Education 6 have a suitable qualification. Priorities for the subject are identified and targets set. Some appropriate resources are deployed to achieve high standards. The school is making some use of interactive white boards using materials teachers have created themselves. This should be developed further when the CD Rom for *God's Story* and *The Church's Story* become available. The provision and use of interactive resources is an area of ongoing development. Good use is made of photographic evidence. The headteacher and subject leader keep governors informed on matters relating to Religious Education. They discharge their responsibilities most effectively. Governors are fully involved in the life of the school. They visit school for a variety of purposes and recognise St. Edmund's as community serving the wider community.

Grade: 1

Catholic Life of the School

The leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school through the Mission Statement are outstanding. St. Edmund's is a place in which the gospel spirit of consideration, care and courtesy permeates every aspect of its life and work. Relationships are excellent. The school has a clear sense of its mission in reaching out to those less fortunate than itself. Learners support a variety of local, national and international charities both by becoming better informed and by raising funds and resources e.g. the work undertaken for local hospices. The Mission Statement is displayed in the entrance hall, documents and other places around the school. Its aims direct and guide every aspect of school life. The motto is known and owned by all including the children. All who form part of the school community should produce a set of practical objectives that flow from these aims and show how the mission is lived out daily. This would also affirm everyone's contribution to the school's mission. The school council is excellent. It undertakes its role with confidence and sensitivity. The council articulates well the strategies that

have been put in place to help improve behaviour and clearly appreciate the manner in which their voice is heard and acted upon.

Grade: 1

Collective Worship

The quality of Collective Worship is good. The school provides Collective Worship in a variety of ways for each child daily, in class, key stage and whole school gatherings. Throughout the year Collective Worship provides a variety of experiences for learners. This fulfils government and Archdiocesan guidance. A policy that states the nature and purpose of Collective Worship has been produced. Guidelines that support the planning and delivery of Collective Worship wherever and whenever it takes place should be produced and included in this policy. The inclusion of the ideas presented in Spirit of the Season on developing liturgies would further enhance Collective Worship. Collective Worship stimulates reflection on spiritual and moral issues and on personal beliefs. Teachers sometimes plan classroom Collective Worship on the Celebration planner. This is good. The Religious Education coordinator should monitor the planning and delivery of Collective Worship throughout the school to enable good practice to be shared.

Learners are sometimes encouraged to engage in the planning and delivery of Collective Worship, and also to participate in a meaningful manner both in class and larger gatherings. This enriches their experience. Time is given to individual reflection. Creativity is used to support learners' ongoing spiritual and moral development during acts of Collective Worship e.g. use of different types of prayer, music and symbol. Parents, governors and friends of the school community are invited to a variety of assemblies and services. This is greatly appreciated.

Grade: 2