



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. ALBERT'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

KNOWSLEY

Tuesday 13 March 2007

Inspectors Ms. Nora Finnegan Mr. Mike Halford

URN 104467

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	127
Chair of governors	Rev. Fintan O'Driscoll
School address	Steers Croft, Stockbridge Village, Merseyside, L28 8AJ.
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Date of last inspection	4 February 2003
Headteacher	Mr. Kevin Mahoney

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

St. Albert's Catholic Primary School, which serves the local parish, is situated in Stockbridge Village in Knowsley. The area in which the school is situated has high levels of unemployment. Fifty eight percent of children are entitled to free school meals. Thirty-four children have learning difficulties/or disabilities and three children have a statement of special educational needs. Almost all children are white British and none are learning English as an additional language. Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery covers the full spectrum but overall is well below average. There are 212 children (including Nursery) on roll. One hundred and seventy two of the full-time learners are baptised Catholics, 13 come from other Christian denominations and there are no children from *Other Faith* traditions. There are 8 members of staff, 6 of whom are Catholic. Seven teachers teach Religious Education.

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

St. Albert's is a good Catholic school with several outstanding features. It is a very secure, caring community underpinned by a strong Catholic ethos where children are respected, affirmed and nurtured. This encourages them to flourish in all aspects of their development. Outstanding relationships, at all levels, are a feature of the school. Standards are good. Learners achieve well and make good progress with some learners in Key Stage 2 exceeding expectations. Teaching throughout the school is good overall. Assessment strategies are in place and provide good guidance on learning. The curriculum is well planned and owned by the school. Learners' behaviour is outstanding. The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding. The provision for learners' spiritual and moral development is outstanding. The quality of the school's Mission Statement is good. The Religious Education coordinator provides outstanding leadership of the subject. The headteacher's leadership of the school is outstanding. He has a very clear understanding of the mission of a Catholic school, has high expectations, is aware of the school's strengths and has a vision of how to meet development needs. The governors discharge their responsibilities effectively.

Grade: 2

Improvement since the last inspection

The school had no key issues from its last Section 23 Inspection in February 2003. Since then, the school has continued to further develop and improve standards through implementation of all new guidelines given by the Archdiocese. The Religious Education handbook and spiritual and moral policies have been updated. In-service has been provided to further develop teachers' understanding and ensure that there is a common format across the school. Formal assessment has been introduced. Monitoring of planning, teaching and learning, workbooks and assessment has been introduced.

Grade: 1

Capacity to improve

The school's view of its overall performance is very accurate. The priorities for both the improvement of Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school stem from the self-evaluation and will be influenced by the findings of this inspection. The leadership has a clear understanding of what needs to be developed and are fully committed to improvement. There is outstanding capacity for further improvement.

Grade: 1

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that more able learners are challenged through use of differentiated tasks;
- Continue to implement the targets set out in the self-evaluation document and the school development plan.

Achievement and standards

Learners' attainment on entry to the school covers the full spectrum but overall is below national expectations. The number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. Learners make good progress in the school and by Key Stage 2 many children exceed expectation. Standards in Religious Education overall are good. There are no significant differences in performance by learners of different gender or ethnic background. Less able learners make good progress in Religious Education through use of tasks suited to their needs and with the help provided by teachers and the very good teaching assistants. In a few classes more able learners are challenged through effective use of differentiated tasks. This good practice needs to be shared throughout the school. Children's work is marked, mostly with positive and challenging comments. In all key stages learners are confident in discussion, ask very good questions showing knowledge and understanding of the subject. Throughout the school learners' work is recorded in a variety of ways. Use of photographic evidence would enhance this process. Some learners in Key Stage 2 write well independently in a variety of styles.

Catholic beliefs and values are at the heart of learners' spiritual development. The school celebrates achievements in lessons and assemblies. They have a very good understanding of the life and teaching of Jesus and are able to apply his teaching to their own lives and experiences. Learning about *Other Faiths* has been most enjoyable and has led children to an awareness of how others make sense of the world, and the need for tolerance and respect. There are a wide variety of systems in place to reward effort and good behaviour, which is exemplary. Learners have an excellent sense of right and wrong. Children's behaviour and respect for each other is outstanding. The provision, which enables children's spiritual and moral development, is outstanding.

Grade: 2

Quality of Provision for Religious Education

Teaching and learning

Teaching overall is good with one outstanding lesson. All teaching observed was confident and enthusiastic in its exploration of the topic, using a variety of teaching strategies that enable all children to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding. Outstanding use was made of information communication technology to enhance teaching and learning. Lessons are well planned to meet the needs of most learners. Some teachers make excellent use of differentiated tasks to challenge more able learners. This good practice needs to be reflected in planning and shared throughout the school. All lessons have good pace and timing, which maintains learners' interest and concentration and keeps them focussed. The learning objective is highlighted at the beginning of the lesson and all learning related to it during the plenary session. Most learners are enthusiastic and show enjoyment of Religious Education. Learners work well independently and collaboratively undertaking a range of activities. Relationships are outstanding and learners are continually affirmed. Good use is made of regular assessment to monitor learners' progress. The provision of homework, when relevant, enables parents and carers to become involved in their children's Religious Education.

Grade: 2

Curriculum

In all classes the Religious Education curriculum is matched to the needs and interests of the majority of learners. It is important to ensure that the needs of more able learners in all classes are met through use of more challenging tasks. 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. Good links are made with home, parish and the local community. The Religious Education curriculum makes an outstanding contribution to learners' spiritual and moral development. The policies supporting the development of learners' spiritual and moral development have been recently updated and contain clear aims and practical objectives.

Grade: 2

Leadership and Management

Religious Education

Leadership and management in Religious Education are good. There is a clear vision for the subject within the mission of the school with a focus on high standards. The Religious Education coordinator provides strong leadership and support to staff who share a commitment to the subject's aims and values. She shows a genuine enthusiasm for her role. An excellent handbook, which has recently been updated, guides and directs all staff in their delivery of Religious Education. Performance in Religious Education is monitored through scrutiny of planning, teaching and learning and workbooks. St. Albert's is socially inclusive by providing equality of access and of opportunity for all staff and learners. Four of the seven staff teaching Religious Education has a suitable qualification. It is recommended that those currently without a suitable qualification are encouraged to obtain the *Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies*. Teaching assistants are planned for and are very involved in the teaching and learning process. The Religious Education coordinator attends coordinators' meetings and in-service provided by the Department for Christian Education. Information is disseminated to all staff during staff meetings. Priorities for the subject are clearly identified and targets set. Religious Education is funded on par with other core subjects. Resources are continually updated and deployed well to achieve good standards. The headteacher keeps governors fully informed on matters relating to Religious Education. Governors discharge their responsibilities effectively.

Grade: 2

Catholic Life of the School

Leadership and management are outstanding in developing the Catholic life of the school through the Mission Statement. St. Albert's is a place in which the gospel spirit of love and respect permeates every aspect of its life and work. The Mission Statement clearly expresses the philosophy of education in this Catholic school. It has clear aims but, practical objectives, which show how it is lived out in the daily life of the school, need to be added. The Mission Statement is used to inform and direct all school policies and plans. Reflection on the Mission Statement provides an effective system by which to monitor and evaluate the Catholic life of the school on a regular basis.

Grade: 1

Collective Worship

The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding. The school provides Collective Worship in a variety of ways for each child daily, in class, or key stage gatherings. This fulfils government and Archdiocesan guidance.

An outstanding policy, with clear aims and practical objectives, supports the planning and delivery of Collective Worship. Teachers and learners are involved in the planning and delivery of Collective Worship. Acts of worship include various forms of prayer, scripture, music and other elements that support liturgical formation. Collective Worship stimulates reflection on spiritual and moral issues and on personal beliefs. The Collective Worship observed was outstanding. Learners respond well and participate in acts of worship. All classes make use of quality focus tables to enhance delivery of class Collective Worship. When appropriate, school Masses and other liturgical services are celebrated. Collective Worship makes an outstanding contribution to spiritual and moral development.

Grade: 1