



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. GABRIEL'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

HIGHER FOLDS, LEIGH

Inspection Date 24 April 2018

Inspectors Mrs. Pat Peel Mrs. Meg Buckley Mr. Andy Cocker

Unique Reference Number 106506

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Acts 2005 and 2011

Type of School Catholic Primary

Age range of pupils 3 - 11

Number on roll 290

Chair of Governors Mr. Damian Roach

Headteacher Mrs. Cathie Williams

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Date of last inspection 30 April 2013

Introduction

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Acts 2005 and 2011

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 this school

- St. Gabriel's is a larger than average sized Catholic Primary School situated in Leigh serving the parish of St. Gabriel and the community of Higher Folds.
- There are 290 children on roll of whom 92 are baptised Catholic, 96 come from other Christian denominations, and 7 come from other faith or religious traditions. Ninety-five children have no religious affiliation.
- There are twenty teachers in the school. Eight are baptised Catholic. Fourteen teach Religious Education. Three teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education.
- Since the last inspection, St. Gabriel's has undergone a considerable change. The school previously operated on two sites incorporating the federation of St. Gabriel's Catholic Primary School and Higher Folds Community Primary School. In September 2015 the school relocated to the Higher Folds Community School building which has been refurbished, and the old St. Gabriel's site was demolished. The school is currently awaiting further development from the Archdiocese to provide a Hall.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires Improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

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OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

St. Gabriel's School is Outstanding in providing Catholic Education.

CATHOLIC LIFE

The extent to which the pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school

- The extent to which the pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school is outstanding.
- Pupils truly appreciate, value and actively participate in the Catholic life. They know, own and live out their Mission Statement, *'Pray, Learn, Achieve and Celebrate Together'* wholeheartedly. They know it is a calling to live out the core Christian values in their daily lives as friends and followers of Jesus.
- The Core Values from the Mission Statement promote pupils showing a deep respect for themselves and others as made in the image and likeness of God. The behaviour of pupils is exemplary. In proportion to their years they show an ability to listen, to be honest, to give thanks, to forgive and be forgiven. They are quick to congratulate others. They have an outstanding understanding of right and wrong.
- Pupils enthusiastically embrace the demands that members of the school community entails such as becoming school councillors, sports councillors, prefects, junior librarians, eco group members etc.
- They take a leading role in those activities which promote the schools Catholic Life and mission both within school and in the wider community such as fundraising for numerous charities e.g. CAFOD, Nugent, Sports Relief, Macmillan to name but a few. They are alert to the needs of others and seek justice for all. Within the locality they collect for the Wigan and Leigh foodbank and have sold teddies for the Wigan and Leigh Hospice.
- Pupils value and fully participate in opportunities provided by the school including a range of after school seasonal multi sports clubs, biscuit decorating, art through music, and ICT etc.
- The school supports outdoor educational visits; pupils in years 3,4, 5 and 6 all visit Low Bank Ground Residential Centre in the Lake District.
- Pupils take full advantage of the opportunities the school provides for their personal support and development they have an outstanding sense of belonging. On the day of inspection, a child commented that they, *"Are proud of their school, and grateful for all the opportunities it offers them."* As a result, they are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of physical, emotional and spiritual growth.
- Pupils, appropriate to their age and capability, have recently begun relationships and sexual development within the context of a Christian understanding but this is in its infancy and needs to be embedded further into school life.
- Pupils enthusiastically embrace a holistic approach to education, understand what it means to have a vocation and recognise the importance of using their gifts in the service of others. They celebrate each other's achievements at their weekly assemblies where Core Values are recognised, and certificates are awarded.
- Pupils value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the St. Gabriel's parish, Higher Folds community and the Archdiocese. As a result, they

respect and are involved with parish and diocesan celebrations and activities, irrespective of their own faith commitments. Pupils attend Holy Family Church, Boothstown, on occasion and have visited the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ The King during Advent at the Nugent carol service and St. Oswald's Church in Old Swan for the John Burland 'Year of Mercy' celebration.

- Pupils feel able to express a pride in their own religious and cultural identity and beliefs.
- The school has covered Judaism and is about to cover Sikhism as part of their other Faith and Religions topics. They have been visited by a member of the Jewish community. This helps to promote tolerance and respect for other Religions.
- St. Gabriel's offers wrap around care with breakfast and after school provision run by the school.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school

- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.
- The school Mission Statement is truly reflective of its whole ethos, '*... a nurturing and inclusive community, united through the love of Jesus and inspired by Christian values to share the Good News.*' Its aims and objectives are a clear and inspiring expression of the educational mission of the Church. It underpins and is regarded by all as the spine which runs through every aspect of school life at St. Gabriel's.
- All staff are fully committed to its implementation across the curriculum. They enthusiastically participate in school activities which reflect the Catholic Life and mission of the school.
- There is a keen sense of community at all levels, evident in the high quality of relationships and the centrality of prayer to the whole community. The school is an extremely supportive and joyful community which is 'the beating heart' of the community it serves.
- The school environment reflects its mission and identity through concrete and effective signs of the school's Catholic character. The displays, classroom focus' and sacred space all create an overwhelming yet calm ambience which exudes St. Gabriel's catholicity and Christian ethos.
- Staff promote high standards of behaviour and are exemplary role models of mutual respect and forgiveness for pupils inside and outside of the classroom. Another child commented that, "*All the teachers and the head at St. Gabriel's are really kind to them.*"
- The entire curriculum reflects a commitment to Catholic Social Teaching, to care for our common home and to the dignity of every human person through its eco stewardship, fundraising and numerous outreach opportunities.
- The school provides extensive opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of all pupils and staff through continuous professional development opportunities such as attendance at Archdiocesan in-service days. Two recently qualified teachers' spoke at the newly qualified teachers conference this year. The school would benefit from more staff undertaking the Catholic Certificate for Religious Studies when possible to support the curriculum.
- Clear policies and structures are in place, which provide the highest levels of pastoral care to pupils, and there is an explicit and concrete commitment to the most vulnerable and needy in both policy and practice. The school works with several outside agencies but internally the existing safeguarding manager is a strength in supporting pupils and their families. More recently the school have appointed a learning mentor.

- All the relevant documentation is in place and the school has made a commitment to purchase relevant resources to support Relationships and Sex Education alongside Personal, Social and Health Education. The curriculum has been planned in readiness to celebrate Catholic teachings and principles in this aspect. This is an area the school has recognised needs to be further developed over the coming year.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school

- Leaders and governors are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- The school's leadership team is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. Leaders are energised by the task and are a source of inspiration for the whole community. The development of the Catholic Life of the school is viewed by leaders and governors as a core leadership responsibility.
- St. Gabriel's is an 'oasis of calm' in the Higher Folds community. It has a very strong Catholic identity with a clear Christian ethos of love and respect.
- The provision for the Catholic Life of the school is given the highest possible priority by leaders. This is reflected in the school's self-evaluation which is a coherent reflection of rigorous monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge and is clearly and explicitly focused on the Catholic Life of the school. This leads to well-targeted and planned improvements, often creatively conceived with key partners, to further enhance the Catholic Life of the school.
- The support from the serving parish priest needs to be recognised as he is a fundamental part of life at St. Gabriel's. He is a real asset to the school. His time commitment in supporting all aspects of the life of the school in his role as a very active link governor alongside the pastoral needs of the local community is commendable.
- The school has strategies in place for engaging with parents and carers to the benefit of pupils, including those who might traditionally find working with the school difficult. The school offers an open-door policy, sends out regular newsletters and has an up-to-date website. Views of parents are sought via questionnaires, and workshops.
- The leadership team and governors understanding of the school's mission is outstanding. They share its purpose and are keenly and actively involved in shaping and supporting it.
- As leaders, the governing body is highly ambitious for the Catholic Life of the school and leads by example in the way it consistently emphasises Catholic Life as a school improvement priority. Governors make a significant contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. The governors are passionate about the school's mission, are actively involved in its evaluation and are ready to challenge as well as support where necessary. Many of the governors are active ministers in parish life and support the school at their regular weekly masses held in the school hall.
- The school is enthusiastic in its response to Archdiocesan policies and initiatives and actively promotes the Archbishop's vision for the Archdiocese throughout the school. They have made a commitment to ensure that Relationships and Sex Education is further developed in the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

- The extent to which pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is good.
- Pupils, from their varied starting points, make good progress in each key stage.
- Groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are also making progress comparable to the progress of other pupils. Lessons are planned accordingly and teaching assistants are used to great effect to enable this to happen. They are a great strength in the school.
- Pupils, relative to their age and capacity, are becoming more religiously literate and engaged young people; they use their knowledge, understanding and skills effectively, to reflect spiritually, and to think ethically and theologically. They are fully aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
- Pupils are actively engaged in lessons and are committed to improving their knowledge, understanding and skills in Religious Education to further develop as competent learners. Their understanding of scripture is very good.
- Pupils are keen to respond to questions and some teachers, as observed in upper Key Stage 2, allow pupils to think about some of the more deeper questions of meaning and purpose.
- Pupils concentrate exceptionally well, have a clear understanding of how well they are doing, and what they need to do to improve.
- Pupils approach lessons with great interest, passion and enthusiasm. Pupils enjoy tackling challenging activities, respond exceptionally well to opportunities which extend their learning. Behaviour in lessons is outstanding because pupils enjoy Religious Education and they are rarely off task even in extended periods without direction from an adult.
- Pupils' attainment, as indicated by teacher assessment, is good and very good for some.
- The quality of pupils' current work, both in class and in written work, is very good and they demonstrate pride in their work.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education is good.
- On the day of inspection there was some outstanding practice observed with nothing less than good. Sharing best practice and expertise in succinct planning using the language of the level descriptors i.e. driver words as part of their repertoire will develop the impact of teaching further.
- In the best planning examples, activities are linked to pupils' current assessment and teachers' knowledge of the individual. Activities consolidate and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding, so that they learn extremely well. It is recommended that the school undertakes Archdiocesan in-service training on Planning and Differentiation to support teachers in this area.
- Teachers employ a wide range of appropriate teaching strategies, including individual, paired and collaborative work. Consequently, pupils are highly motivated and sustain high levels of concentration.
- Teachers ensure some pupils are involved in evaluating how well they are achieving but this is inconsistent. This contributes to their progress and provides them with a

high level of confidence in making further improvements. More opportunities for assessment for learning needs to be built into lessons.

- Most teachers consistently use time effectively to maximise learning opportunities in lessons and across sequences of lessons.
- Some teachers observe and question during lessons to adapt tasks and explanations, this needs to become more routine through the language of the level descriptors i.e. driver words thus maximising learning for every pupil.
- High quality resources such as interaction with the Come and See website, God's and Church's Story, visual and audio media including laptops are used effectively.
- In the best lessons teachers communicate high expectations and passion about Religious Education to their pupils who respond with enthusiasm. An example was seen in Pre-School where pupils were sharing the Good News that "Jesus is alive!" The teacher used a fan for pupils to experience the wind likened to the Holy Spirit before going outside and using bubbles and balloons to reinforce this. Pupils were visibly excited and squealed with delight during their activities. This passion was led by the class teacher.
- During lessons praise, affirmation and verbal feedback is frequent, leading to high levels of engagement, interest, achievement and progress.
- Marking in pupils' books is positive and affirming but they do not always know what they need to do to improve further. Pupils' responses to next step marking is inconsistent. Teachers' will be supported with this through the in-service training recommended.
- Celebration of achievement and effort are central to the teachers' assessment strategies securing high levels of motivation from pupils. This is a real strength of the school. Relationships at every level are strong.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

- Leaders and governors are good in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Religious Education. Leaders and governors ensure that the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in every respect and in each key stage.
- Leaders and governors ensure that at least the required amount of curriculum time is given to Religious Education in each key stage.
- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education has full parity with other core curriculum subjects including professional development, resourcing, staffing and accommodation. The subject leadership team regularly attends all Archdiocesan in-service training and meets together with a cluster of other schools to support monitoring and evaluation of the subject.
- Any additional requirements and policies of the Archdiocese regarding the Religious Education curriculum are embraced and fully implemented. Since the last inspection the Come and See programme has been fully implemented across the school and all relevant documentation e.g. policies, planning, monitoring and tracking are embedded.
- Leaders' and governors' self-evaluation of Religious Education is a coherent reflection of rigorous assessment, tracking, monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge which is well-informed by current best practice in Religious Education.
- The parish priest is link governor for Religious Education and actively supports the subject leaders in their role and disseminates that back to the full governing body. He

has supported teachers' in class during Come and See lessons i.e. Ordination and Baptism.

- Since the last inspection the subject leader has continued to drive forward Religious Education. In the last year she has been ably supported by another member of staff who now make up the leadership team. The team also have responsibility for Relationships and Sex Education, Collective Worship and Music. Their passion, enthusiasm and commitment to this role is very evident. They are committed to further improving teaching and learning and raising standards in Religious Education.
- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education is thoughtfully planned to meet the needs of different groups of pupils and each key stage. Following in-service training they will be enabled to ensure each phase is creatively structured to build on and enhance learning outcomes even further.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship

- Pupils response to and participation in the school's Collective Worship is outstanding.
- Acts of Collective Worship engage pupils' interest and inspire in them deep thought and heartfelt response. There is a genuine enthusiasm for Collective Worship, reflected in the quality of communal singing, in the quality of prayerful silence and the depth of reverent participation in communal prayer.
- Pupils readily take the initiative in leading worship displaying confidence and enthusiasm. Pupils' commented that they, *"really enjoy praying together, having moments of silent reflection and enjoy opportunities to think about Jesus."*
- The school has recently begun a small 'worship warrior' group with the intention of becoming more involved in planning and leading liturgies for their peers.
- More use could be made of the outside spaces for Collective Worship especially with the aim of developing the forest school area.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts. Appropriate to their age and ability, they prepare and bring in items for the focal areas, take part in or lead acts of Collective Worship, which fully reflects this understanding and write and share prayers.
- Pupils display confidence in their use of a wide variety of traditional and contemporary approaches to prayer, which uses scripture, religious artefacts and liturgical music.
- The pupils value and regularly participate voluntarily in liturgy and prayer.
- During weekly masses held in school, or in Holy Family church, pupils' regularly support in a variety of ways e.g. serving, reading, taking up the offertory etc.
- The experience of being in a faithful, praying community has a profound and visible effect on the spiritual and moral development of all pupils, irrespective of ability or faith background. They have a deep sense of respect for those of other faiths and this is reflected in the way pupils prepare and participate in prayer and liturgy together as one community, *"united through the love of Jesus."*

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding.
- Collective Worship is central to the life of the school for all pupils, and staff whatever their own faith background, and forms the heart of every school celebration. Praying together is part of the daily experience for all pupils and staff.

- Collective Worship has a clear purpose, message and direction. The themes chosen for worship are Christian and reflect a deep understanding of the liturgical season and the Church's mission in education.
- Following the monitoring visit Collective Worship has been given the highest possible priority in terms of training, planning, evaluating and resourcing; as a result, experiences of Collective Worship are now high quality and pupils are led into reflection and contemplation.
- Staff have developed a very good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts, and are passionate about ensuring that pupils have high quality experiences of the Church's liturgical life. The parish priest has been instrumental in supporting staff in this area through the use and delivery of the 'Come and See for Yourself' adult worship materials.
- Following training staff have become more skilled in helping pupils to plan and deliver quality worship when appropriate. They have a thorough and comprehensive understanding of the purpose of Collective Worship and the wide variety of methods and styles of prayer.
- Opportunities are planned in a manner that attracts and facilitates attendance by other adults associated with the pupils and school.
- The parish priest regularly presides at Mass for the school and local community in the school hall and leads many celebrations throughout the school and liturgical year. He is fulsome in his praise of the whole school community.

How well leaders, governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship

- Leaders and governors are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Collective Worship.
- Leaders, have expert knowledge of how to provide policies and guidelines to ensure quality planning and delivery of Collective Worship. They extensively promote pupils' planning and leading Collective Worship in a variety of contexts.
- Leaders are very visible as leaders of Collective Worship within the school. Some staff and governors are also parish catechists and support pupils and their families with the 'With You Always' First Holy Communion sacramental programme. Others are active ministers and support in the celebration of Mass. They are models of outstanding practice for staff and pupils and their families.
- Leaders place the highest priority on the professional development of staff incorporating liturgical formation and the planning of Collective Worship.
- Leaders and governors place the highest priority on the school's self-evaluation of Collective Worship with regular reviews of school performance. However, the school has recognised that this is still a priority. To this end, ways of working with parents and carers and members of the Higher Folds community are at the heart of every governors meeting.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Raise the standards of attainment in Religious Education further by:
 - continuing to address the areas identified on the Self Evaluation Document;
- Further develop the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education by:
 - undertaking Archdiocesan in-service for Planning and Differentiation
 - ensuring teachers develop the language of the level descriptors i.e. driver words into their day to day repertoire to more accurately support pupils during lessons;
 - giving quality time to next step marking to ensure pupils know what they need to do to improve further;
- Further develop the work being undertaken in Catholic Life by:
 - continuing to develop a curriculum map for Relationships and Sex Education
 - beginning to embed 'Journey in Love' into lessons to support Relationships and Sex Education.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	1
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CATHOLIC LIFE

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	1
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school	1

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	2
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	2

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	1
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	1

Key to judgements: Grade 1 is Outstanding, Grade 2 Good, Grade 3 Requires Improvement and Grade 4 Inadequate