



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

St AMBROSE BARLOW CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

ASTLEY

Inspection Date Tuesday 4th October 2016

Inspectors Mrs Maria Eves Mrs Angela Paget

Unique Reference Number 106510

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

Type of School Catholic Primary

Age range of pupils 4 – 11years

Number on roll 210

Chair of Governors Mrs Delia Fletcher

Headteacher Mr Darren McCann

School address Manchester Road
Astley
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Date of last inspection 22nd November 2011

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 Ambrose Barlow school is an average sized Catholic Primary School situated in Astley serving the parish of St Margaret Clitherow.
- There are 210 children on roll of whom 180 are baptised Catholic, 30 come from other Christian denominations.
- There are 9 teachers, including the Headteacher, of whom 8 teach Religious Education and 9 have a suitable qualification in Religious Education. Eight teachers are baptised Catholic.
- Recently completed building work has extended the school.
- Since the last inspection a new Headteacher and Religious Education Co-ordinator have been appointed.

Key for inspection grades

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

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Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school.

Overall effectiveness:

St Ambrose Barlow Catholic Primary School is an outstanding school in providing Catholic Education.

Inspection Judgements

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. The school exudes a strong sense of spiritual purpose. There is a focus on teamwork, achieving high standards and creating a vibrant nurturing environment rooted in Gospel values for children to develop and learn in.
- Pupils know and understand the School's Mission Statement 'I have come that they may have life and have it to the full'. Pupils understand the part they play within the mission of the school and are actively involved in evaluating the Mission Statement, they regularly and confidently refer to it in lessons and discussions.
- Pupils have a strong sense of belonging to the school community and value and respect others. St. Ambrose Barlow is a place where worship, faith, education and practice are central to school life.
- Pupils are encouraged to take on roles of responsibility in the school and wider community, for example School Council, prefects, play leaders, monitors and Eco Council. Pupils shared with inspectors their excitement for the forthcoming elections for Head Girl and Head Boy and were able to articulate the protocols and procedures involved in the elections.
- Pupils are actively involved in developing the Catholic character of the school by the way they confidently participate in collective worship, school assemblies and participate in parish and community celebrations with enthusiasm and a sense of togetherness. Pupils are active members of the recently formed Worship Team. The newly developed Prayer Room in school also provides a beautiful sacred place for children, staff, parents and governors to gather.
- Pupils in years four, five and six benefit from participation in residential trips to Low Bank Ground, Robin Wood and London. This enables pupils to further develop responsibility, independence and to demonstrate care, respect and consideration for all.
- Behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils enjoy school, have positive attitudes to learning and approach their work with enthusiasm. Pupils concentrate well in lessons and are keen to take a full and active part. Their positive behaviour makes a significant contribution to their outstanding achievement. Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong and apply this in their personal relationships. They take an increasing responsibility for themselves and their actions.
- Education for pastoral care and personal relationships has fostered positive attitudes in pupils. This is well supported by the SEAL programme.
- Pupils praise and acknowledge the contribution of others. They show a readiness to embrace and celebrate their lived experiences.
- Pupils are encouraged to develop their potential in all aspects of school life and readily embrace the many opportunities offered to them through the school's many enrichment activities and stimulating and vibrant environment.

- St. Ambrose Barlow Catholic school has a strong and living commitment to evangelisation and strives to meet the call to spread Jesus' word in a variety of ways in the local community. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of service and support for others. They are growing in their understanding that the call to justice and service is part of being a member of a Catholic community. A number of fund raising events take place throughout the year, for example Shoe Box Appeal, Nugent Care, MacMillan Cancer Trust and Wish Upon a Star. The local Little Hut Luncheon Club also really appreciate the occasions, particularly at Christmas, when the children join them and lead the carol singing. Pupils demonstrate respect and understanding of other faiths and religions.

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

- Pupils' achievements in and enjoyment of Religious Education is outstanding.
- Their attainment in Religious Education is outstanding.
- They make outstanding progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities.
- On entry to school many children have a limited knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith. The school builds increasingly well on these starting points so that by the end of Year 6 attainment in Religious Education is outstanding and progress is outstanding in developing the religious literacy of pupils.
- There is no difference in performance between pupils of different gender.
- Outcomes for pupils with additional or special needs are outstanding.
- Analysis of assessments undertaken provides evidence of pupils generally attaining and in some cases exceeding the appropriate level for their age and stage of development in each key stage.
- Pupils are becoming increasingly more religiously literate. Their knowledge, understanding and skills are developing appropriate to their age or capacity. During the inspection pupils of all ages were able to articulate and discuss Religious Education with confidence and the level of recall and knowledge demonstrated was of a high standard.
- They are developing the skills that enable them to reflect spiritually, think ethically and theologically and are becoming more aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
- Pupils' engagement in and enjoyment of their learning is outstanding as shown by their interest, enthusiasm and behaviour.
- Pupils are encouraged to work independently and collaboratively.
- Pupils are eager to learn and improve their knowledge, understanding and skills as they become independent learners.

How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship

- Pupils' response to and participation in Collective Worship is outstanding.
- They show interest, respond well and actively participate in Collective Worship.
- They act with great reverence and are keen to participate in a variety of gatherings.
- Pupils' knowledge of prayer and liturgy is increasing.
- Pupils recognise that St. Ambrose Barlow Catholic Primary school is a prayerful community and its Catholic character is effectively reflected through well planned and inspirational displays and artefacts, including the beautiful new Prayer room.
- They become familiar with a variety of prayer styles. They appreciate and are open to the Word of God in the scriptures.

- Pupils' enthusiastic singing enriches the prayerful experience. They reflect in silence and join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence.
- Pupils are becoming increasingly more confident preparing and leading worship from their earliest years and the recently formed Worship team will further support this.

The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education

- The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education is good.
- It is consistently effective in ensuring that pupils are interested and engaged and make outstanding progress. Clear learning intentions and outcomes characterise all learning as does the warm working relationships between pupils and staff.
- Pupils are encouraged to take ownership of their own learning and become independent learners. This was evident in all lessons observed during the inspection.
- In both key stages practical activities and well scaffolded tasks kept children highly motivated and engaged.
- Teachers display good subject knowledge and deploy a range of teaching styles to motivate and inspire pupils. Highly effective questioning challenged pupils' thinking and the pace of the lessons ensured all pupils remained interested and motivated resulting in pupils making good progress. All teachers provided opportunities for pupils to work independently and collaboratively and good strategies such as Talking/ Learning Partners enabled pupils to discuss and share ideas with each other. Good use is made of time and resources. Pupils with additional needs are very well supported by Teaching Assistants whose support, encouragement and challenge enables pupils to make good progress and enjoy their learning.
- Information and Communication Technology is a real strength of the school and its use to maximise pupils' learning is outstanding.
- Teaching encourages pupils' enjoyment of and enthusiasm for Religious Education.
- Teachers take into account pupils' prior learning and ensure differentiated tasks when planning so that the work consolidates, builds and extends pupils knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils are informed of their progress and how to improve both orally and through marking. They are given opportunities to discuss their work and how to improve. Effort and achievement are celebrated.
- The assessment of pupils' work in Religious Education is good.
- The school has good assessment strategies which provide accurate and detailed information on the achievement of all the pupils. The planned development of a rigorous tracking system will further enhance this.
- Teachers are able to identify how well pupils are achieving and tackle underachievement.
- Teachers enable pupils to evaluate their own work using a variety of strategies including *Assessment for Learning* techniques.

The extent to which the Religious Education Curriculum promotes pupils' learning

- The extent to which the Religious Education Curriculum promotes pupils' learning is outstanding.
- The curriculum is outstanding in meeting pupils' needs. The school delivers an exciting curriculum, supported by activities that introduce the children to new experiences helping them explore their own capabilities, stimulate their thinking and broaden their horizons.

- The school, using the *Come and See* programme recommended by the Archdiocese, meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Religious Education.
- Appropriate levels of the programme are being followed in different classes. Topics are carefully planned for the various year groups to ensure progression and increasing depths of study. This guarantees 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. Imaginative and well planned strategies are deployed to enrich pupils' learning.
- The school implements new curriculum developments as appropriate.
- Enrichment activities such as breakfast club and after school clubs have a positive impact on the curriculum.
- The Religious Education curriculum provides outstanding opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral development and vocation.
- The curriculum is customised to meet the needs of groups and individuals.
- Children have explored the beliefs and values of other faiths and religions. This helps to promote tolerance and respect for those who think differently.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.

- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding. It reflects the Catholic character of the school and takes into account the variety of faith backgrounds among the pupils.
- Collective Worship has a high profile and is central to the life of the school.
- Collective Worship is well organised, calm, reflective and relevant to the lives of the pupils with themes that follow the pattern of the liturgical year.
- 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 using a variety of prayer methods and styles.
- The school provides many opportunities for staff to develop the skills in planning, leading and evaluating Collective Worship.
- The teachers provide the necessary resources and opportunities to help children to develop the skills necessary to plan, lead and participate in Collective Worship and to evaluate it effectively.
- Opportunities are provided for parents, carers and the local and wider faith communities to participate in a variety of celebrations of the *Come and See* programme and the Church's liturgical year.

How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.

- Leaders, governors and managers are outstanding in promoting monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Catholic life of the school and demonstrate a deep understanding of and commitment to the Mission of the Church. The Headteacher, Deputy Head and Governors all have great ambition, high expectations and a shared vision with regard to the Catholic mission and ethos of St. Ambrose Barlow in the way they plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils. They work tirelessly to nurture and develop this flourishing Catholic community.

- This is reflected in the school's own Mission Statement. All who form part of the school community including parents, clergy, governors and children were involved in the development and annual 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.
- Leaders, governors and managers are effective in the way they use monitoring data to evaluate the school's performance, celebrate, and plan future improvements. More regular monitoring of pupils' workbooks will further enhance this.
- Excellent opportunities are provided for the staff and pupils to play an active part in the Catholic life and Mission of the school. They know, own and live out their Mission Statement.
- The Self Evaluation Document provides evidence of the schools monitoring, searching analysis and self challenge.
- Their analysis provides a basis to celebrate the school's strengths and outlining areas for development.
- Staff are well supported in their teaching through in-service training and continuous professional development. The school provides excellent induction to enable staff to further understand the Church's Mission in Education and play their unique part in it.
- The quality of Collective Worship is a priority for the school. It is effectively monitored and evaluated by leaders, governors and managers. An up to date policy is in place.
- A range of opportunities for spiritual and moral developments are provided for staff and pupils.
- Leadership at all levels respects difference, values diversity and ensures equal opportunities for all.
- Prayer, worship and the liturgical life of the school reflects and respects the religious diversity within the school.
- There are positive relationships at every level within the school.
- The partnership with parents is outstanding and a strength of the school. Evidence from school surveys and questionnaires show that the vast majority of parents greatly appreciate the life and Catholic mission of the school. The outstanding Headteacher is highly respected within the community and greatly valued by parents. This was further evidenced in discussions with a group of parents who asked to meet with inspectors. Parents spoke of how much they appreciated the opportunities to attend school assemblies, acts of worship and celebrations and how spiritually uplifting they found these occasions.
- Governors are outstanding in fulfilling their responsibilities. They are knowledgeable, skilled and extremely hard working. They are regularly invited into school and both governors and school leadership commented on how beneficial and enjoyable these visits are.
- Governors provide an appropriate balance of challenge and support and are ambitious for the continued success of the school.

How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Religious Education of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.

- Leaders, governors and managers are outstanding in promoting monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Religious Education of the school and in the way they plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.
- Monitoring data is used effectively to evaluate the school's performance and plan for future improvements.
- There is a programme for the monitoring and evaluation cycle.

- Teaching and learning is monitored regularly and appropriate feedback and support given as necessary. Good practice is shared and celebrated.
- Continuing professional development opportunities are provided for all.
- Assessment information is collated by the subject leader and shared with the leadership team, governors and parents.
- Formal assessment tasks are undertaken in line with Archdiocesan guidance.
- The subject leader is outstanding in guiding Religious Education. He shows great determination and commitment and introduces new initiatives when appropriate. Good documentation guides and directs all staff in the delivery of the subject. This is updated as necessary.
- The Self Evaluation Document is rigorous in identifying targets, timescales and lines of accountability.
- Curriculum outlines are provided for parents who are consulted on different issues depending on the topic being covered.
- Achievement and effort are celebrated.

What the school needs to do to improve further?

- Continue to implement the areas for development identified in the School's own Self Evaluation Document, particularly by:
 - Further developing the tracking system using the recommended Archdiocesan materials to enable robust analysis of data to impact on planning and provision resulting in improved outcomes for all pupils;
 - Continuing to moderate pupils' work with other Religious Education Co-ordinators from cluster group.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	1
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OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS

How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils	
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	1
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	1
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	1

PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education	
The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education	2
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning	1
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	1

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

How effective leaders, governors and managers are in developing the Catholic Life of the School	
How well leaders, governors 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, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	1

Key to judgements: Grade 1 is outstanding, Grade 2 good, Grade 3 requires improvement and Grade 4 inadequate