



## ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. SEBASTIAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

LIVERPOOL

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Tuesday 16 September 2008

Inspectors            Rev. D. Melly      Mr. M. Halford

URN                    104664

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Type of School	Catholic Primary
Age range of pupils	3 -11
Number on roll	241
Chair of Governors	Rev. P. Kelly
School address	Holly Road, Fairfield, Merseyside, L7 0LH.
Telephone number	0151 260 9697
Fax number	0151 260 5679
E-mail address	<a href="mailto:sebastians-ao@st-sebastians.liverpool.sch.uk">sebastians-ao@st-sebastians.liverpool.sch.uk</a>
Date of last inspection	24 June 2004
Headteacher	Mr. D. Hardiman

## 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. Sebastian's School is a larger than average primary school. It is situated in the Fairfield area of Liverpool. It mainly serves the parish of St. Sebastian. It is part of the Liverpool Local Authority. The catchment area is one of significant social and economic disadvantage. There are higher than average percentages from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language. There are 241 learners on roll of whom 228 are baptised Catholics, 7 come from other Christian denominations and 6 learners come from *Other Faith* traditions. The number of learners eligible for free school meals is well above average. This is also reflected in the number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are 15 members of staff 13 of whom are Catholic. Fourteen teachers teach Religious Education 13 of who have a Religious Education qualification. The school has been successful in gaining many awards including the Centre of Excellence for Spanish, Activemark Gold for Sports, Basic Skills Award, Eco-Schools Green Flag, Artsmark Gold, National Healthy Schools Award, Investors in People Award, F.A. Chartermark School, Charter Mark School & Becta (computer) Award.

## 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. Sebastian's is an outstanding school and is a buzz with activity, which is very productive. It is an open, welcoming, Christ centred community where all are enabled to achieve their potential, working in partnership with the homes, the parish and the wider community. A very strong Catholic ethos is certainly evident in the positive climate, which has been created for work. Outstanding relationships have obviously been established within the school and with the homes, parish and the local and global community. All are valued, respected, cared for and affirmed. An example of this is the specially fitted out Quiet room which is used by Rainbow groups. Standards are outstanding overall. Learners achieve well and make outstanding progress. Teaching and learning is outstanding overall. Assessment is in place and is being well developed. The curriculum planning is outstanding and results in an effective delivery of the *Here I Am* programme. Learners' behaviour is outstanding. The Religious Education programme, Collective Worship and the Catholic life of the school make an outstanding contribution to the learners' spiritual and moral development. The school is outstanding in promoting community cohesion. The headteacher and senior management team have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and a vision of how to meet development needs.

**Grade: 1**

### **Improvement since the last inspection**

Following the last Section 23 Inspection in June 2004 the school has taken effective steps to address the areas for development identified in the School Development Plan. The Mission Statement, together with its aims and practical objectives, has been reviewed and revised by all who form the school community. Collective Worship is now on a rota for all staff. Interactive resources are available and all classrooms have interactive whiteboards. Assessment procedures have been revised and updated

**Grade: 1**

### **Capacity to improve**

The school's self-evaluation is accurate and comprehensive. The priorities for both the improvement of Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school stem from the self-evaluation and the school development plan. The leadership has a clear understanding of what needs to be developed and is committed to improvement. There is outstanding capacity and eagerness for further improvement.

**Grade: 1**

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Continue to implement the targets set out in the school self-evaluation document and development plan.

## **Achievement and standards**

Learners' attainment on entry to the school is much lower than expected. Learners make outstanding progress in the school and by Year 6 meet or exceed the expectations of the *Here I Am* programme. Standards in Religious Education overall are outstanding. There are no significant differences in performance by learners of different gender or ethnic background. Learners with special needs, including the gifted and talented, make excellent progress in Religious Education with the provision of differing tasks and the help provided by the teachers and learning support assistants. The school checks on the progress made by all through assessment. Learners' work is always marked with positive comments that affirm, challenge and direct. Learners are very confident and articulate in discussion. They ask good questions which show good knowledge and understanding of Religious Education. Learners are given opportunities to record their knowledge and understanding and express their own thoughts and feelings in a variety of styles.

The school celebrates achievements in lessons and assemblies. Children throughout the school are confident and obviously enjoy work. They have a good understanding of the life and teaching of Jesus and his Church and are able to apply this to their own lives and experiences. Learners' behaviour is outstanding. They have a very good sense of right and wrong, which is supported by the effective house system, which is in place. The Gospel values of love and forgiveness underpin the provision for learners' moral development enabling them to make an outstanding contribution to the school community. The school council has a great effect on the life of the school. Teachers and learners show genuine care, concern and respect for each other.

**Grade: 1**

## **Quality of Provision for Religious Education**

### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of provision for Religious Education is outstanding. Teaching is outstanding overall. Teachers are secure in their knowledge and understanding of the *Here I Am* programme and this is reflected in their thorough planning and confident delivery of the topics. *Here I Am* is extremely well used. Teachers make the topics come alive and exciting for the children. There are also outstanding examples of collaborative teaching where teachers dovetail well weaving a seamless web throughout the lessons. There are many examples of extremely enthusiastic teaching, which show creativity and imagination. This challenges the learners and enables them to respond enthusiastically and helps them to work well both independently and collaboratively. Outstanding use is made of information communication

technology especially the interactive white board and PowerPoint. Enthusiastic questioning enabled the learners to respond confidently and with great energy as they recalled previous learning and were led to even deeper levels of thinking and understanding. Learners are certainly challenged and respond positively. The learners' listening skills, their imagination and their sensitivity are also very well developed. Very good use is made of story, drama and role-play. Children's behaviour and relationships are outstanding in all lessons. Learners are obviously valued in class. They are listened to and treated with respect not just by the teachers and support staff but also by their peers. Affirmation is used to great effect. The tasks observed on the day were challenging, exciting, interesting and differentiated, catering well for the wide spectrum of learning abilities in the school. Because of this approach the children are able to learn, make outstanding progress and very obviously enjoy what they are doing. There is very good structure to the lessons, which, together with the diligence of the teachers, helps learners stay focussed. Learners work extremely well both independently and collaboratively. Monitoring of teaching and learning through observation of planning, lessons and learners' workbooks, has been put in place and is very thorough. Very effective use is made of teaching assistants throughout lessons. The learning objective is shared at the beginning of lessons and is revisited at the plenary. This helps maintain the sharp focus of the lesson. Learners' work is regularly assessed and records are effectively kept in portfolios.

Parents and carers are enabled to become involved in their children's Religious Education in a variety of ways and this is outstanding. Newsletters are also sent to the homes each term with an outline of the religious topics to be covered and suggestions for involvement. Parents are also invited to attend Masses, assemblies and celebrations, which are very popular and give parents a great insight into what is being taught in Religious Education. Many parents have been encouraged by the school to develop their own potential and obtain various qualifications. The school also reports comprehensively on progress in Religious Education.

**Grade: 1**

## **Curriculum**

The school is outstanding in meeting the Religious Education curriculum needs and interests of learners. Through using the *Here I Am* programme recommended by the Archdiocese the school is meeting 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, which is a requirement of the Bishops of England and Wales. Very strong links are made with home, parish and the local and global community. The Religious Education curriculum makes an outstanding impact on learners' spiritual and moral development.

**Grade: 1**

# **Leadership and Management**

## **Religious Education**

Leadership and management in Religious Education are outstanding. There is a clear vision for the subject within the mission of the school, which is shared by all and is reflected in the very positive relationships throughout the school and the enthusiasm of the teachers and learners. The headteacher, leadership team and the Religious Education coordinator are extremely committed. They are making an outstanding contribution in leading and supporting staff and have a clear vision for the further development of the school. The Religious Education coordinator shows great enthusiasm for her role and is obviously very committed. She is very thorough and a great example to others in the school community. An excellent handbook guides and directs all staff in their delivery of Religious Education. Monitoring through scrutiny of planning, workbooks, teaching and learning is in place and is outstanding. A process of assessment is also in place and is very effective. Of the 14 staff teaching Religious Education 13 have a suitable qualification. Teaching assistants are very effectively deployed. The subject leader attends coordinators' meetings and information is disseminated to all staff during staff meetings or in-service time. Priorities for the subject are clearly identified and targets set. Religious Education is well resourced and funding has been well used to add value to children's learning. The headteacher, senior management team and Religious Education coordinator keep governors informed on matters relating to Religious Education. Governors discharge their responsibilities most effectively. The long serving and well-respected parish priest is a very valued member of the community and his contribution to the life of the school is greatly appreciated and valued. All the governors are very involved in an outstanding way in the life of the school.

**Grade: 1**

## **Catholic Life of the School**

There is outstanding leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school through the Mission Statement. St. Sebastian's is a school in which the Gospel spirit of love and forgiveness permeates every aspect of its life and work. The learners are obviously valued, affirmed and respected. This helps them to be confident and happy. An outstanding Mission Statement, which expresses the philosophy of education in this Catholic school, is in place. This is summed up in the motto 'Only my best will do. Be kind to one another'. Aims, flowing from the Mission Statement with objectives showing how the aims are to be achieved, could profitably be considered. All who form the school community were involved in the development of the Mission Statement, which is at the heart of all that is done in the school.

**Grade: 1**

## Collective Worship

The quality of Collective Worship overall is outstanding. The school provides Collective Worship in a variety of ways for each child daily, in class, in key stage or occasionally as whole school gatherings. This fulfils government and Archdiocesan guidance. An outstanding policy and guidelines to support the planning, delivery and nurturing of Collective Worship is in place. Acts of worship were very well planned with great thought being given to resources, particularly the deployment of the adults in the room. Collective Worship observed included music, lighted candles and appropriate objects to create a prayerful atmosphere. Appropriate songs and hymns were sung enthusiastically. Formal and informal prayer was well used. There was some very good use made of story (from a big book) and the scriptures. Both expressed shared values linked to the ethos of the school. There was also time for personal reflection, which was extremely well used helping children appreciate and value their own qualities and gifts in a prayerful way. The learners present responded respectfully to the warm, nurturing encouragement of the confident leaders. Great sensitivity was shown to all learners especially those from other faiths. Focus tables and displays in each classroom and throughout the school are colourful, attractive and well presented, expressing well the topic of *Myself*. This enhances the delivery of the curriculum and Collective Worship. Collective Worship, and the availability of the Quiet Room in the Field of Dreams, makes an outstanding contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the children.

**Grade: 1**

## Community Cohesion

The school's leadership team is outstanding in promoting community cohesion. There is a shared vision and commitment to serve the common good. Leadership at all levels respects difference, values diversity and ensures equal opportunities for all. Parents and carers are very involved in decision-making and in the life of the school. Collective Worship celebrates, reflects and respects the diversity of belief within the school. The use of the Religious Education programme, *Here I Am*, supports community cohesion, which in turn has been supported by the many visitors invited into the school from the homes, the parish and the wider community, including those from Other Faith traditions. Visits have also been made to the places of worship of other faiths and these have been very much appreciated by both learners and staff. Links are established with the wider community including the Kensington Regeneration programme, The Hindu Temple, the Chinese community, local residential homes. The school premises is used for adult education classes which are open to all as is the after school club and the outdoor sports facilities. Learners have explored the beliefs and values of Judaism, Sikhism and Islam. All show a concern for the well being of those less fortunate than themselves in their support of Nugent Care, CAFOD, Mission Together, Marie Curie, McMillan, Disaster Funds. Links are to be reopened also with the local L'arch community.

**Grade: 1**

