

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. MALACHY'S ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Eggington Street Collyhurst Manchester M40 7RG

Inspection date March 2010
 Reporting Inspector Margaret Dolan
 Inspection carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School Catholic Primary
 URN 105532
 Age range of pupils 3-11
 Number on roll 193
 Appropriate authority The governing body
 Chair of Governors Mr. Anthony Murray
 Headteacher Mrs. Julie Miles
 Head of Religious Education Mr. Noel Murphy
 Date of previous inspection June 2007

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	
Overall effectiveness of the school	2	Explanation of the Grades 1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3 = Satisfactory 4 = Inadequate
Leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school	1	
The quality of Collective Worship	1	
Achievement and standards in Religious Education	2	
The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education	2	
The quality of the Religious Education curriculum	2	
Leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education	2	
<i>The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements</i>		

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Malachy's Roman Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided school serving the parish of St. Malachy in Collyhurst, North Manchester. The school serves a very deprived area close to Manchester city centre. There are 193 children on the school register. The admission number for the school is 30 and there are 30 children on the special needs register. There is one child with a statement of special educational needs, one child who has been assessed but not yet statemented and two children due to be assessed. 120 of the children are baptised Roman Catholics. There is a rising number of pupils from different cultural backgrounds which the school considers a strength and therefore celebrates the diversity. 10% of the children have English as an additional language and 11 different languages are spoken. 50% of the children have free school meals. In many cases children on admission demonstrate the effects of educational and social deprivation and require individual attention from the school to help them achieve the optimum from their education. . There are 12 teachers in the school of whom 11 (92%) are Catholics and all the teaching assistants and administrative staff are Catholics.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Malachy's is a good school with outstanding features. It has a strong Catholic ethos. It is well led by a committed and enthusiastic headteacher who is well supported by the senior leadership team and all the staff. The governors are keen to support the school and committed to expect the best education for the pupils. Leadership and management ensure a warm and welcoming environment where all aspects of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are addressed. The staff are excellent role models and care deeply about the development of the children both academically and socially. The very high quality of prayer and worship is a great strength of the school and is further enhanced by the strong relationships between staff, pupils and parents. In teaching and learning the teachers are well supported by dedicated and hard-working teaching assistants.

Improvement since the last inspection

Following the last Section 48 inspection in June 2007 the school has been successful in developing assessment in line with the overall systems in the school. APP (assessment for pupil progress) has been introduced and this will include independent work produced during Religious Education lessons. The World Religions scheme is taught and is developing in the curriculum and, in line with the development of the new creative curriculum, will support community cohesion and global learning. Festivals are celebrated with parents in assemblies which include music, dance and drama. Resources have been improved and safeguarding training and systems have been updated. There is a new Religious Education co-ordinator who has been in role since September and he is supported by the headteacher and the senior leadership team in promoting the Christian values of the school. Children enjoy coming to school and their behaviour is excellent. The use of the rocket take off system in the classrooms and the achievement shop encourage positive attitudes in the children. Children with special educational needs are well catered for in an atmosphere of respect and caring for each other. The governing body is proud of the school's achievements and is supportive of the headteacher and staff.

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation is good and is concise, objective and realistic. The leadership and management has a clear vision for the school. The school values highly the opportunities to pray and reflect together with the pupils, parents and the whole community. The new co-ordinator is enthusiastic and committed and keen to develop assessment through APP (Assessing Pupil Progress) in Religious Education. The school demonstrates a good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop assessment of Religious Education through APP (Assessment of Pupil Progress) to complement the creative curriculum.
- Develop the World Religions scheme and teach as a separate topic.

- Establish performance management objectives for Religious Education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are outstanding. The Mission Statement is reviewed regularly and is to be re-written in line with the creative curriculum. It is evident in all policies, experiences and day to day routines and in all aspects of the daily life and work of the school. The school has developed good relationships with parents and staff are always available to talk to them about any issues that may concern them. As part of its contribution to community cohesion the school has established good partnerships with outside agencies to support the pupils and develop skills and experiences. This has included visits to the Marist Centre as well as the strong relationships with Sister Regina and the Brothers of Charity who live within the parish and work with the school in many capacities. The governing body is supportive and appreciative of the work of the school and is kept fully informed through the headteacher's reports. Teaching staff attend the beginning of governors' meetings to explain new initiatives and discuss progress. Since the last inspection sub-committees have been established and this has helped them to be informed in aspects of performance and progress and in holding the school to account. The vice-chair has the shared responsibility with governors and staff to help the school in its journey as a Catholic community. Governors give priority to Catholic candidates when appointing teaching staff. 5 members of staff hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies and 1 member of staff is in the process of completing the course. At least one in-service training day each year is devoted to the religious life of the school and all members of the school staff are involved.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Provision for collective worship is outstanding in both frequency and quality. Planning for collective worship and liturgies is detailed and thorough and the themes include the liturgical year, the Religious Education curriculum and local and current world issues. All pupils take part in all activities regardless of faith and this is enhanced by the wonderful musical contribution of the school community. The celebration of Mass for the Annunciation observed during inspection was well presented with readings, singing and the accompaniment of the school band and was a wonderful experience of praise and thanks to God. Each half term classes from Years 1 to 6 are actively involved in the planning and preparation for their class Mass and assembly. Collective worship is provided daily and is whole school or class based. In class based prayers the children are prepared for the day with reference made to any feasts or special events as happened in Year 2 when the children recalled the story of the Annunciation. In response to a 'pupil voice' activity key stage assemblies will be introduced in the summer term. In Year 5 the children took part very reverently in a prayer service considering all the people they cared for. They looked at God as a good father and related how they could bring that message into their own lives. Year 4 presented a reflection on the Stations of the Cross and considered the emotions of all those who were with Jesus in the time leading up to the crucifixion. They then looked at their own emotions and challenges and these were then added to the friendship tree in the classroom. Children are encouraged to attend monthly children's Masses in St. Malachy's church and these are well supported by school staff. Parents are invited to end of term assemblies when prizes and certificates are presented for achievement. They are also invited to other special assemblies throughout the year. No parents have asked for their children to be withdrawn from collective worship or Religious Education lessons.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education are good. The children's Religious Education books are well presented and the work in them is appropriate and well marked. Expectations are commensurate with the work in other subjects. Work is levelled and assessments are kept in a file. This shows the children's work is of the same level as the work of children of a similar age in other schools. The children are proud of their school. They feel safe and are aware that they can tell members of staff if they have any problems and that their problems will be dealt with appropriately. Older children have responsibilities around the school and Year 6 act as playground buddies. Children are given the opportunity through Religious Education and personal, social and health education lessons to discuss and understand social and moral issues. The children were aware of and had discussed issues affecting other countries and were able to relate how they had collected money for the victims of the Haiti earthquake through a themed own clothes day and by singing in the school garden for parents. Children who had taken part in the sacramental programme were able to recall

their experiences when they received the sacraments for the first time. They used the correct language and related how the bread and wine were changed into the body and blood of Jesus. Awe and wonder is introduced to classrooms by the use of candles, artefacts and music. A prayer and worship session in reception class was followed up with pupil and teacher led activities including a computer programme on Holy Week and a wonderful array of spring flowers in the outdoor play area.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The inspector agrees with the school that the quality of teaching and learning is good. The teachers' own knowledge is good and this leads to well constructed and interesting lessons. Lesson plans show progression and differentiation is apparent in different forms during lessons. The school follows the diocesan assessment processes and lesson observations take place regularly to develop classroom skills. The school is encouraged in its plans to develop assessment in Religious Education further to complement the creative curriculum. Teachers have high expectations of children's work and use a variety of styles of teaching to involve the children and help deepen their knowledge and understanding of their faith. The whiteboards are well used and also the use of music and drama enhances the delivery of lessons and prayer and worship. The lesson observed in Year 3 recalled the Passover meal and this was developed into Jesus meeting with the disciples for the last supper. The use of unleavened bread helped the children in their understanding of the food that would have been eaten in Jesus' time. Year 1 children were reminded of the story of Palm Sunday and some of the children told the story in drama after working with a teaching assistant. Children of different abilities were given appropriate tasks to complete with the help of support staff. Year 6 reported on Peter's denial in a very modern way. By use of role play and appraisal using mini laptop computers the children considered how we would comment today on the events on Maundy Thursday. The children were very responsive and were able to look at these issues in a constructive and evaluative way.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The Religious Education curriculum is good. Time spent on Religious Education is in line with diocesan and national guidelines. Planning is based on the diocesan guidelines REvision 2000 and the Curriculum Directory. As a further part of the school's contribution to community cohesion world religions are taught but this needs to be separated from the Religious Education sessions in a more topic based way. This will fit in with the creative curriculum which the school is developing at this time. Art, music, drama and mime are used to make lessons more relevant and to encourage pupil participation. The music throughout the school is exceptional and is appropriately used to develop atmosphere in all lessons on a regular basis. Boys and girls take part enthusiastically in all lessons and pupils who have difficulties of any kind have support from teaching assistants. The school has a breakfast club before school and there are sports and other activities after school. During May and October children have the opportunity to go into church at lunchtime to say the rosary with sister Regina. In Holy Week Stations of the Cross take place in school and church, prepared and presented by the children. Developments and reviews in Religious Education are reported to the curriculum sub-committee and presented to the governors. The chair of governors is a weekly visitor in school and regularly walks around school and talks to members of staff and children.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education are good. A new co-ordinator was appointed in September and is keen to develop aspects of Religious Education such as assessment and world religions with the support of the headteacher and staff. Performance management objectives are to include Religious Education targets in the next phase and the school is encouraged in this work. Staff are good role models and are respected by the children and parents. Their attendance at monthly Masses and celebrations encourage the children in their own faith journeys. Religious Education is an important part of the school improvement plan. Classrooms are bright and each room has its own prayer area with appropriate religious objects and artefacts. Teachers have religious books and artefacts in their classrooms and extra resources to which the staff have access are kept in a cupboard in the Religious Education co-ordinator's classroom. The Lalley Centre run by Catholic Family Services is situated in the basement of the school and children are aware of the work for the community that takes place there. The school is well maintained and attractive displays reflect the faith life of the school. In the hall there were displays on forgiveness and Jewish feasts

and there was also a board for house teams. The school is very keen that the children have good role models that they can apply to their own lives so they have Mother Theresa, Nelson Mandela, Winston Churchill and Helen Keller as house names to show different virtues. St. Malachy's is a school where Religious Education and prayer and worship have a high profile and this is seen everything it does.