

INSPECTION REPORT

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ST. PATRICK'S
ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Livesey Street Collyhurst Manchester M4 5HF

Inspection date December 2009
 Reporting Inspector Mr. J. Brierley
 Inspection carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School Catholic Primary
 URN 105535
 Age range of pupils 3-11
 Number on roll 172
 Appropriate authority The governing body
 Chair of Governors Mr. J. Cahill
 Headteacher Mrs. R. B. Mason
 Religious Education Co-ordinator Mrs. R. B. Mason
 Date of previous inspection October 2007

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

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Patrick's is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school serving the parish of St. Patrick in Collyhurst close to the centre of Manchester. The district contains some socio-economically disadvantaged areas. Pupils come from a variety of social backgrounds with the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups significantly higher than the national average. This results in 42% of children having English as a second language. This is a significant increase since the last inspection. Indicators suggest that the children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills well below the national expectation for the age group. The age range of pupils is from 3 to 11 years. The indicative admission number is 30. There are currently 172 pupils on roll including nursery. 86 of the pupils are baptised Catholics. 17 pupils have been identified as having special educational needs with 1 child having a statutory statement of special educational need. 53% of the children are entitled to free school meals. 7 of the 9 teachers (78%) are of the Catholic faith. The school has secured the Healthy Schools award at national standard and is currently working for the gold standard.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory with good features. Since the last inspection the school leadership's efforts to raise standards in teaching and learning have been significantly frustrated as a result of the long term absences of teaching staff, the changing pupil roll and ongoing changes to the governing body. The chair of governors and a core of conscientious governors have been supportive of the headteacher but since the last inspection the governing body has undergone significant change and has not always been in a position to effectively ensure that school improvement is taking place. The headteacher, school leadership team, staff and new governing body will need to work together to meet the challenges the school now faces in order to improve the overall effectiveness of the school. Teaching in Religious Education is satisfactory overall and pupils are making satisfactory progress. The provision for prayer and worship is outstanding. The school has a very warm, welcoming and caring environment which successfully caters for all aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The personal development of children is therefore good. Children from many different cultural backgrounds happily learn and play together and parents are very supportive of the school. Parents identify that the school works very hard in ensuring that children from such diverse backgrounds are warmly welcomed. During the inspection the pupils were happy, very well behaved, polite and friendly and showed a good attitude to their learning.

Improvement since the last inspection

Following the last Section 48 inspection in October 2007 the school has started to assess learners' work in curriculum Religious Education. The school has recently implemented an electronic tracking system as an aid towards the next stage in monitoring and tracking pupil progress. The Early Years Foundation Stage area has been refurbished.

Capacity to improve

The area for improvement identified in the previous inspection is still in the early stages of being addressed, partly as a result of long term staff absences. The problems created by staff absences have been resolved. The school leadership has identified areas for improvement and with the support of the new governing body the school's capacity to improve is satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the role of governors in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school.
- Further develop teacher skills in the moderation and levelling of children's Religious Education work as an aid to embedding assessment and pupil tracking in Religious Education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are good. Since the last inspection the school's leadership's attempts to raise standards have been impeded in part by significant long term staff absences. The lack of consistency and continuity as a result of these absences has resulted in some disruption to teaching and learning and the implementation of planned improvements. The school has also had to come to terms with a significant and ongoing change to the pupil roll with a large proportion of learners having English as a second language. The improvements requested from the last inspection have been partially implemented. Strategies for rigorously monitoring and evaluating the school's performance are being established in order to bring about the sustained raising of standards. The new governing body will need to be more involved in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school in order to ensure that planned improvements are completed and evaluated. Led by a conscientious headteacher, the leadership team and staff ensure a quality provision for the Catholic life of the school in the context of maintaining sensitivity to a multi-faith pupil roll. Community cohesion is a feature of the school's efforts to meet the cultural and faith needs of its diverse community. The school extends its links to the wider community through its support of both local and national charities, its close links with other educational establishments and the wider community. Children have a voice in the school through the school council, the house system, junior wardens and Guardian Angels.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The provision for collective worship is outstanding. Members of staff regularly pray together. The prayer and worship policy sets out clear aims and purposes for collective worship. A rota of class Masses is agreed at the beginning of the school year with the parish priest. The parish priest celebrates a class Mass each week in church with parents and parishioners so that the children can experience coming to Mass in church. The children and teachers prepare the liturgy and the parish priest makes sure that the Mass is child centred and forms a real spiritual experience for the children. Assemblies are often based on the liturgical year and the Religious Education curriculum programme. The whole school assembles every Monday for a business assembly with a focus for prayer led by the headteacher, every Wednesday for class led collective worship assemblies and again on Fridays when the school celebrates the achievements and attainments of children and staff. There is also a golden nominee assembly every four weeks when achievement rewards are given. Parents are welcome at all assemblies. The school recognises its important role in creating community cohesion by identifying in its prayer and worship policy the need to - 'conduct our assemblies in a manner which is sensitive to the individual faith and beliefs of all members of the school community. While the majority of acts of worship in our school are Christian, we also hold assemblies that reflect other religious traditions that are represented in the school and wider community'. All assemblies and prayer and worship opportunities witnessed during the inspection were consistently good and outstanding. The children in Year 1 were completely engrossed in giving thanks to God for their gifts and talents.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are satisfactory. Indicators suggest that on starting school the majority of the children's attainment is generally well below the national expectation for the age group. The changing pupil roll has resulted in a large proportion of learners entering the school without the traditional Catholic background and often with English as an additional language. Since the autumn term 2008 the school monitors pupils through the completion of Religious Education assessments each half-term but the tracking of individual pupil progress and the measuring of achievement and standards in Religious Education are at an early stage. The assessment of individual children is not yet impacting on the raising of standards. There are pockets of good practice in the school. These are in the process of being developed in order to bring about a consistency of approach and the establishment of a clear policy for monitoring and evaluating pupil progress and achievement in Religious Education. The scrutiny of exercise books during inspection showed that differentiation in children's work is mainly by outcome or the provision of additional teaching support. There was little evidence to suggest that even in classes covering two age groups, and the accompanying range of abilities, that differentiated tasks had been set. There is a lack of challenge in tasks set for the more able pupils which is a key to raising levels of achievement. The use of assessment to support learning in Religious education is in the early stages of development. The inspector encourages the school to further develop teacher skills in the moderation and levelling of children's Religious Education work as an aid to embedding assessment and pupil tracking in Religious Education.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The overall quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education are satisfactory. All lessons observed during the inspection were at least satisfactory and teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge. Lessons are based on the diocesan programme of study for Religious Education and teachers use both medium term plans and short term planning although the use of short term planning lacks consistency through the school. Learning objectives are identified in some short term lesson plans and in children's exercise books in the vertically streamed Year 4 and Year 5 class. The writing of the learning objective at the beginning of the exercise provides a focus for learners to complete a task and a focus for teachers when marking the completed task. Marking is completed regularly by all teachers and, although recognising and praising good work, it does not consistently suggest how pupils can improve their work or ask probing questions to encourage further self assessment as an aid to raising standards. A Year 6 lesson based on 'Finding ways to recognise and listen to God in our lives' presented the class with real challenge, as they selected pictures in which they could identify an appropriate advent message from God. This challenge was not evident in previous exercises. The Christmas story displayed on the interactive whiteboard during a Reception class lesson was successfully developed through aspects of continuous provision. During all lessons the children were well behaved and attentive displaying very good relationships with each other, their teachers and their teaching assistants.

QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The quality of the Religious Education curriculum is satisfactory with good features. The school's Mission Statement is prominently displayed alongside the children's version. Religious Education displays celebrating children's work and the presence of religious artefacts throughout the school ensure that Religious Education is clearly visible in the school. The school's Religious Education curriculum is based on the Salford Diocesan guidelines. In the Early Years Foundation Stage Religious Education is linked to the early learning goals and the extended activities in continuous provision. The Religious Education curriculum is enhanced through the school by extended curriculum time for Circle time, Personal Social and Health Education, prayer and worship opportunities, assemblies, liturgical and special celebrations. All teachers should identify on their timetable when Religious Education forms part of the wider curriculum. The curriculum is enhanced for some year groups by a visitor from the Bible Explorer programme. The exercise book scrutiny, however, indicated that the Religious Education curriculum did not always sufficiently reflect the amount of time allocated on the timetable. The Religious Education curriculum promotes social cohesion through the study of other faiths and cultures and by identifying key times in their calendars. As many faiths and cultures are present in the school the recognition and respect shown for differences is a daily feature of the school, as reflected in displays around the school. The Religious Education curriculum promotes the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepares them for the next stage of their education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education are satisfactory. The improvements requested from the last inspection have been partially implemented but the levelling of children's work as a means of measuring and tracking individual pupil progress in curriculum education remains an area for further development. The headteacher, who is also the co-ordinator of the subject, has an excellent knowledge of her subject and carries out an annual audit of the subject. The Religious Education action plan shows that the headteacher has monitored curriculum Religious Education through the scrutiny of lesson plans, exercise books and lesson observations. Her own monitoring has identified areas for improvement. The parish priest is the governor with responsibility for Religious Education and meets the children regularly through class Masses. Preparation for the Sacramental Programme takes place mainly in school with the support of a Presentation sister. The headteacher reports to the governing body on curriculum Religious Education through her half termly reports to governors. The chair of governors and a conscientious core group of governors are supportive of Catholic life of the school. The new governing body, school leadership team and staff are now in a position to bring consistency and continuity to the school and work on the planned improvements without distraction so that, as the school Mission states, 'St Patrick's school will continue to provide a Catholic Education enriched by the gospel values and teachings'.