

**SALFORD DIOCESE
INSPECTION REPORT**



ST. CHAD'S ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Balmfield Street Cheetham Hill Manchester M8 0SP

Inspection date June 2008
Reporting Inspector Mrs. Joan Duffin
Inspection carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School Catholic Primary
URN 105525
Age range of pupils 3-11
Number on roll 235
Appropriate authority The governing body
Chair of Governors Mr. K. Mahoney
Headteacher Mr. J. Travis
Religious Education Co-ordinator Mrs. Y. Kinsey (acting)
Date of previous inspection May 2004

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

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Chad's is a voluntary aided Catholic primary school which serves the parish of St. Chad in Cheetham, Manchester. The school is in an inner city area where there is great deprivation and a relatively high level of drug and alcohol abuse. The age range of learners is 3 to 11. The indicative admission number is 30 and there are currently 235 pupils on roll. 141 learners are Catholic. Pupils come from a rich and diverse range of ethnic backgrounds. 40% of pupils have English as a second language. At 31.1% the rate of pupil mobility is much higher than average. 44% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. 31 children have been identified as having special educational needs and 3 of these have a statement of special educational need. 7 of the 10 teachers (70%) are Catholic.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St Chad's is a good Catholic school. There is a happy, caring atmosphere which establishes a good climate for work. The range and quality of provision for collective worship is outstanding. Standards attained in curriculum Religious Education are below that expected nationally. Progress is only satisfactory because of the high level of mobility in the school but some children make good progress. Pupils of lower ability are well supported and more able pupils are challenged. Teaching is good and the curriculum is well planned. The formal monitoring of teaching and learning and the systems for assessment need to be developed further to raise standards. There is a strong Catholic ethos in the school and excellent provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. The diversity of ethnic backgrounds in the school is celebrated and community cohesion is strongly promoted. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and, together with the senior management team, leads the school very well. He has a clear view of the direction the school should take. Very good relationships exist between the school and parents and with the local community.

Improvement since the last inspection

Following the last Section 23 inspection in May 2004 the school was asked to ensure there were sufficient members of staff qualified to teach Religious Education and that 10% of teaching time be allocated to curriculum Religious Education. The school was also asked to monitor and evaluate curriculum Religious Education more rigorously. The school has worked hard to address these issues. The last one has been addressed but the monitoring and assessment of curriculum Religious Education has stalled. The headteacher is aware of this and has identified it as an area for improvement.

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation is rather modest in some areas but accurate on the whole. The headteacher has a good understanding of development needs and staff and governors are committed to improvement. There is good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the standards of curriculum Religious Education by developing the systems of monitoring and assessment.
- Include a role for governors in monitoring curriculum 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 lies at the heart of the school's aims, policies and expectations. "Love one another as I have loved you" permeates every aspect of school life. The governing body fulfils its role well in relation to the school's Catholic foundation. It has knowledge of the Catholic life of the school through headteacher and Religious Education co-ordinator reports and from involvement in the school. The parish priest and assistant priest are frequent and welcome visitors to the school. The headteacher has a clear vision of the nature of the Catholic school and, together with the senior management team, promotes the Catholic life of the school very effectively. The acting Religious Education coordinator is leading staff well in the absence of the experienced coordinator. All staff fully support the many opportunities for prayer and worship in the school and promote learners' spiritual and moral development in all they do. There is a strong Catholic ethos in the school characterised by Gospel values and reconciliation. The Sacramental Preparation Programme is mostly based in the school with some support from the parish. Children are given many opportunities to care for those less fortunate than themselves and give generously to such charities as St Joseph's Penny and the Rainbow Family Trust. They have a CAFOD Soup Day and the headteacher runs in the Great Manchester Run in aid of Save the Children. The children sing at the Irish Centre and at Manchester Fort.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Provision for collective worship is outstanding in relation to the range and quality of opportunity provided. The policy for prayer and worship outlines the many and varied opportunities provided which give pupils a wealth of prayerful experiences. Whole school Masses are held at least termly and Early Bird Masses are celebrated weekly during Lent. A Welcome Mass was celebrated for those people who wished to be baptised. Class and whole school assemblies are held weekly. Pupils are fully involved in the preparation and presentation of the different forms of collective worship. The outstanding assembly observed was prepared and planned by a Key Stage 1 class and presented to the whole school and parents. A rock version of the story of the 3 Little Pigs was used to explain how Jesus is our Rock. The children spoke clearly and sang and acted with great enthusiasm. Classroom prayer and worship sessions are held regularly. The excellent session observed in the Foundation Stage celebrated the work done during the half term on God's wonderful world. Parents were happy to join in the celebration. Liturgical celebrations throughout the year further enhance provision. The SEAL personal development programme has been adapted to include suitable bible stories. Collective worship makes an excellent contribution to the spiritual and moral development of learners and to promoting community cohesion. The excellent displays and prayer tables around the school provide further opportunities for prayer and reflection.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are satisfactory. Pupils' attainment on entry to school is well below that expected nationally. The very high level of mobility of pupils makes it very difficult to maintain good progress. Those pupils who stay at the school for most of their primary school years make good progress. By Year 6 the standard achieved is below average but some pupils are at or slightly above average. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported. The diocesan scheme of assessment and standardisation has been adopted but implementation has stalled with the long term absence of the Religious Education co-ordinator. This means it is not yet being used effectively to raise standards in curriculum Religious Education. The standard of writing in curriculum Religious Education is below average. Orally pupils are able to relate stories from the Old Testament. They can talk about Jesus and apply his teaching to their own lives. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and their behaviour during the inspection was excellent. The school provides well for their spiritual and moral development. The school council and the Buddy system make a positive contribution to the school and give pupils the opportunity to develop independence and responsibility.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning in the school is good. The teaching observed ranged from good to outstanding. Lessons are well prepared and conducted at a good pace to maintain interest and enjoyment. Work is provided which matches pupils' needs including support from teachers and teaching assistants for the less able and challenge for the more able. Questioning is effective with good use of open-ended questions. The use of interactive whiteboards is developing well. An outstanding lesson observed in Upper Key Stage 2 used the interactive whiteboard to help the children explore the different images of the Church. Pupils were motivated by the images used and responded enthusiastically to the challenge. Teachers mostly have high expectations of pupils and use a variety of methods and styles to retain pupils' interest and keep them on task. A good lesson observed in Key Stage 1 made use of drama, painting, writing and the computer to help children to understand and remember the story of St. Paul's journey to Damascus. The lesson finished with a short class worship in praise of God. Teachers ensure that pupils understand the purpose of the lesson and consolidate this with a plenary session at the end. Pupils are well behaved and respect the views of others. They respond to teachers' questioning with knowledge and understanding.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The Religious Education curriculum is good. It complies with local and national expectations with regard to time allocated. The new diocesan scheme is being implemented as it becomes available. The curriculum is well planned and made accessible to all pupils. Less able children are supported and the more able challenged to reach their potential. The headteacher sets clear direction for the teaching of Religious Education. Systems of monitoring and evaluation have been established but are not being fully implemented at the moment due to the long term absence of the Religious Education co-ordinator. The diocesan guidelines on the study of world religions have been adopted and other opportunities are taken to promote community cohesion and an understanding of other faiths and cultures. The Religious Education curriculum makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. It is enriched by the wide range of opportunities for prayer and worship in the school. Visitors to the school and a wide range of extra-curricular activities further enhance the provision. Parents appreciate all that the school does and are happy for their children to attend. Educational visits and strong links with the local community enrich the provision even more. The clean, bright, attractive rooms help to create a good climate for work.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The school has assessed its leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education as satisfactory and the inspector would agree with this judgement. Governors have improved their understanding of what is required but need to develop their role as a critical friend in the monitoring of curriculum Religious Education. The chair of governors, who is also the link governor for Religious Education, and the parish priest are frequent and welcome visitors to the school. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and is aware of the strengths and areas for development. The acting Religious Education co-ordinator has performed her role well but has not been able to develop the monitoring and tracking systems. These now need to be further developed, together with the assessment guidelines, to raise standards in curriculum Religious Education. The school's self-assessment is mostly accurate but rather underestimates its achievements in some areas. Appropriate priority is given to Religious Education in the School Improvement Plan and associated action plans. Resources are good and are used effectively. Relationships within the school are excellent and enhance the enthusiasm and enjoyment of learners. The school is committed to providing an effective learning environment, good relationships and equality of learning for all with Christ at the centre.