

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Edmund's is a Roman Catholic voluntary aided primary school in the Diocese of Salford. The school building is used for parish worship since the demolition of the church in 1994. St. Edmund's parish is now amalgamated with the parishes of St. Malachy and St. Patrick. The majority of pupils are from the local parish with the remainder living in adjoining parishes. The school is situated in an urban district 1.5 miles from the centre of Manchester. The area has levels of social and economic deprivation which are well above the national average. There is high unemployment in the area and 62% of learners are eligible for free school meals. Most learners live in the area and come from a range of social backgrounds. A number of learners are from minority ethnic backgrounds but all speak and understand English on entry. The age range of the pupils is 3-11. The indicative admission number is 25 and there are presently 155 learners on roll; 118 of these are baptised Catholics. 22 pupils have been identified as having special educational needs with 3 pupils having a statutory statement of special educational need. 7 out of 8.5 (82%) of the teaching staff are Catholics.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Edmund's is a good school with some outstanding features. It has a strong Catholic ethos. Guidance is given to staff and pupils by outstanding leadership. All staff promote a warm, caring environment in which all aspects of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. The inclusion and provision for pupils with special educational needs is an example of the above. Time is given over to planning how staff and pupils can support each other. Pupils are polite and friendly and have a good attitude to their learning. Pupils are also encouraged to support and care for each other. The Religious Education curriculum is well planned and further enhanced by both the quality of relationships within the school and the quality of teaching and learning. Teaching is good overall with an example of outstanding teaching seen during inspection in lower Key Stage 2. Non-teaching assistants, where deployed, support the teaching staff well. All staff are positive role models for pupils and are dedicated, committed and hard working. They work as a team and strive to support the children and each other. They underpin the elements of "Every Child Matters". Links between home, school and parish are strong. The school is very well supported by the parish priest who is also the governor for Religious Education.

Improvement since the last inspection

Although there were no key issues raised at the last inspection progress has been maintained. This is evident in the leadership and management of Religious Education and the continued dedication of the headteacher. It is also evident in the working relationship between the headteacher, her staff and the parish priest who is also the chair of governors. The warm, friendly caring atmosphere is a further strength of the school.

Capacity to improve

The school's capacity to improve is good because of the ability to evaluate itself and form judgements about what it must do to improve. For example the school continues to work with the diocesan advisers for Religious Education to develop further the assessment of the Religious Education curriculum. The Headteacher also strives for continuous raising of the standards in curriculum Religious Education by seeking out good practice in other schools which will enhance the future delivery of the Religious Education curriculum at St Edmund's

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to develop the monitoring and the involvement of children in the delivery of class collective worship
- Continue to develop the assessment of curriculum Religious Education by levelling all the children's work

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of St. Edmund's school are outstanding. The headteacher and deputy have a clear vision of the nature of the Catholic school and governors are active in their support for the school. The parish priest is the chair of governors and the nominated Religious Education governor. He is a frequent visitor to school. Each week he celebrates Mass and meets with the headteacher. He frequently liaises with staff and also supports the children's learning through his teaching of the Sacramental Programme. The school's Mission Statement is reviewed each year and the school community are encouraged to contribute. The quality of relationships between staff and learners is further strengthened by the exemplary care and guidance which the school gives to the learners and to their families. The principles of the excellence and enjoyment curriculum reinforce the school's agenda that "every child matters" to ensure that creativity and a sense of awe and wonder are embedded within the religious character of this school. The headteacher has the Catholic Teaching Certificate and four members of staff are currently studying for the Catholic Certificate in Religious Education. Three members of staff have a theology degree

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Provision for collective worship is good overall. Mass is celebrated each week in school and fully involves the learners in all aspects of the celebration. At the school Mass attended during the inspection the pupils responded reverently to the prayers of the Mass. Musicians accompanied the hymns and pupils carried out the readings. Throughout the school year opportunities for liturgical celebrations are provided for pupils, parents and parishioners. Class led assemblies, weekly "good work" assemblies and teacher led assemblies reflect the prayer and worship in action. Collective worship themes and celebrations are carefully planned and a detailed record kept by the Religious Education Co-ordinator who provides good support for all staff in this area. In each classroom there is a very good focus for prayer which has been devised with care and attention. Both the displays in class and around the school indicate the learners' ability to express their spirituality in prayer. The school would benefit from a more rigorous monitoring of class collective worship in order to ensure a consistent approach. Children would also benefit from being more involved in preparing class collective worship.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are good. Learners demonstrated good factual knowledge of their faith when discussing issues with the inspector. All learners show a genuine interest in their Religious Education lessons and are confident in expressing their views or asking questions to clarify issues. They are keen to discuss issues with their peers and to exchange ideas with the adults in the classroom. The example seen of pupils discussing "Thank you" prayers to God showed that pupils were challenged to elaborate on their answers. The responses were thoughtful and indicated that they were aware of wider world issues too. This was demonstrated by the reference to people in other countries needing water for their crops. The teachers' marking is good. It praises good work and special effort. It also encourages learners to reflect on their responses to the lesson and encourages them to improve their work through constructive comments. Whilst assessment arrangements have been introduced a further development in the levelling of children's work will enhance the assessment of standards both within and between key stages. The school is encouraged to continue with this work.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good with an example of outstanding teaching at lower Key Stage 2 where the focus was on children writing psalms to praise God. The teacher's enthusiasm was infectious and this was demonstrated in the pupils' response. The lesson had pace and time was used efficiently. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge of the curriculum as evident in their planning and the quality of learners' work as scrutinised by the inspector. Throughout the school tasks meet the needs of the learners. The behaviour of the learners is generally good. They listen attentively, join in and on the whole settle down quickly to work. They take pride in their work and are genuinely interested and enthusiastic about learning. Resources are good. Assessment is under development following the guidelines of the diocese with some of the staff levelling the children's work. Classrooms are tidy, attractively displayed and well organised. Lessons contribute to the general spirituality and moral development of the learners. Displays and the focus for prayer both within the classroom and around the school highlight the importance of the teaching and learning within Religious Education.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The Religious Education curriculum is good. Religious Education has a very high profile in the school. Policies which are regularly reviewed support both the Religious Education curriculum and prayer and collective worship. More than 10% of the teaching time in all classes is allocated to the subject. The diocesan *REvision 2000* guidelines are followed throughout and supplemented by activities relating to the liturgical year and by a range of other resources and learning experiences. Teachers' planning is thorough and together with the pupils' learning is closely monitored. The Religious Education co-ordinator attends in-service provided by the diocese. Staff meetings ensure that provision for Religious Education is under constant review and development. The headteacher discusses issues relating to Religious Education with extensive input from the nominated governor on a weekly basis. The curriculum committee reviews developments in the school. Termly reports to the governing body include Religious Education. Finance for Religious Education is given the same high priority as other core subjects in the School Development Plan. These processes help to ensure that curriculum Religious Education is regularly and critically reviewed, appraised and improved

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The school has assessed the leadership and management of Religious Education as good. The inspector disagrees and finds it outstanding. The chair of governors and headteacher fully support the Religious Education co-ordinator in her role and have a shared vision for Religious Education in the school. The headteacher reports each term to the governing body and governors are involved in policy decisions. The co-ordinator has a clear understanding of her role and is very effective in providing educational direction for the teaching and development of curriculum Religious Education. This is evident from the Religious Education co-ordinator's file. Priority is given to Religious Education in the School Development Plan and Religious Education is included in the performance management objectives of teachers. This priority is also evident in the commitment of the Governing Body to supporting staff in studying for the Catholic Certificate in Religious Education. The co-ordinator carries out an audit of resources regularly and there are plans to improve the resources for other faiths. The co-ordinator works hard and her enthusiasm is infectious. One pupil remarked, "The teachers know the importance of religion". This reflects the school's commitment in supporting the pupils on their journey in faith.