

INSPECTION REPORT

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ST. EDMUND'S ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Queen Street Little Hulton Salford M38 0WH

Inspection date March 2010
 Reporting Inspector Mrs M. J. Schofield
 Inspection carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School Catholic Primary
 URN 135307
 Age range of pupils 3-11
 Number on roll 396
 Appropriate authority The governing body
 Chair of Governors Rev. Fr. Leo Heakin
 Headteacher Mrs. Claire Harrison
 Religious Education Co-ordinator Mrs. Claire Harrison
 Date of previous inspection N/A

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	3	
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	
The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements		

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Edmund's is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school in the Diocese of Salford serving the parishes of St. Edmund, St. Joseph and Our Lady and the Lancashire Martyrs. It is situated in Little Hulton drawing its pupils from an area of high social and economic disadvantage. On entry to the Nursery the attainment of many pupils is below the national average. The age range of pupils is 3-11 and the indicative admission number is 45. There are currently 396 pupils on roll of whom 251 are baptised Catholics. 35% of learners are eligible for free school meals. 52 pupils have been identified as having special educational needs. Currently 5 learners have a statutory statement of their needs. Of the 20 teaching staff 12 (75%) are of the Catholic faith and hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Edmund's is a good Catholic school. The headteacher, deputy and staff work together to ensure the caring and inclusive ethos within the school is a true reflection of the aims expressed in its Mission Statement. Within the school community all are valued and nurtured. Good relationships between teaching staff, teaching assistants and pupils are a strength. Learners are proud of their school. They show good attitudes to their learning and enjoy their work. The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. Meaningful and varied opportunities to celebrate prayer and worship together support and enhance the curriculum. Further strengthening of the existing links between the home, school and parishes will help the school to move forward in its development. The school is fully supportive of the Sacramental Programme in each of the three parishes it serves. The strong support of the chair and vice-chair in strengthening the role of the governing body is a positive step in the further development of the school.

Improvement since the last inspection

St Edmund's is a new school that followed the amalgamation of three local Catholic schools. The school opened in September 2008. The new headteacher took up her role in January 2010. She has assumed the role of the subject leader for Religious Education and has a clear vision for the development of the religious curriculum and prayer and worship. Policies relating to the Religious curriculum and prayer and worship will be reviewed and shared with both staff and governors. Systems for the monitoring of teaching and learning, planning and assessment are still in their early stages. All teaching staff from the three schools were appointed to the school in September. Governors are informed of developments in the Religious Education curriculum and encouraged to attend school assemblies and masses. The Religious Education co-ordinator attends allocated courses run by the Diocese.

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation is honest and comprehensive. The headteacher and senior leaders share a vision for future developments in the school. They are committed to developing the effective monitoring of the curriculum and prayer and worship. All staff are fully aware of the goals the school is aiming to achieve. The school therefore has a good capacity for future improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen the support of the governors by raising their awareness of their roles and responsibilities.
- Further develop a common format for lesson planning to include the identification of differentiation and the evaluation of teaching and learning.
- Develop assessment procedures in curriculum Religious Education to include the moderation of assessments in order to have a clear picture of the level at which each child is working.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are satisfactory. All aspects of the daily life and work of the school are a reflection of the recently reviewed statement of its Mission, “We are a family where God is at the heart of everything we do”. There is a strong team spirit in this new school which has come into being as a result of the amalgamation of three local Catholic schools. The headteacher, deputy and leadership team work hard to create a secure, fair environment where everyone is valued and nurtured. Relationships between staff and pupils are a strength. The governing body have a good committee structure in place and are well informed through headteacher reports. Governor links with classes have recently been established. However not all governors are fully aware of their important role and responsibility in challenging the school leadership and the governing body is encouraged to strengthen this. The governors’ involvement in school worship and activities demonstrates their commitment to upholding the caring, inclusive ethos which helps to promote good relationships between the home, school and parish families. Partnership with parents is encouraged and parents are welcome to come to share in school Masses, assemblies and liturgical celebrations. The parish priest who visits the school regularly makes a significant contribution to prayer and worship and the religious life of the pupils. The school demonstrates a strong commitment to the local community and the wider community through its generous support of local and world-wide charities. The school plays a full supporting role in the preparation of pupils for the Sacraments of Initiation.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Provision for collective worship is outstanding. Opportunities for prayer and worship are well planned, organised and celebrated. The school is committed to the provision of a range of meaningful opportunities for staff and pupils to develop their relationships with God. Each classroom has a focus area for prayer and worship with colourful displays of the pupils’ work. Simple prayers in pupils’ workbooks together with quiet time for reflection in classroom worship indicate a growing awareness of the importance of prayer in their lives. Key stage assemblies focus on “Statements to Live By” for prayer time, supplemented by topical events and the liturgical year. Key Stage 2 pupils plan and celebrate regular Masses to which parents, governors and parishioners are invited. In all worship observed during the inspection the pupils prayed with reverence and respect and sang with great enthusiasm. The younger pupils in reception particularly enjoyed the introduction of role play as they re-enacted the events of the Last Supper into their worship. The Holy Week liturgical celebration presented in the church was attended by many parents. The events from Palm Sunday to the Crucifixion were beautifully related in word, song and reverent actions. It was a challenging, sympathetic performance enjoyed by all. Collective worship makes an outstanding contribution to the spiritual and moral development of learners and to promoting community cohesion.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and standards in Religious Education as pupils move through the school are satisfactory. The majority of learners enter Foundation Stage with attainment well below the national expectations. They make satisfactory progress as they move through Foundation Stage. In Key Stage 1 pupil attainment continues to improve so that at the end of Key Stage 2 it is good. In all observations during the inspection learners built on their prior knowledge. They were attentive listeners, who were eager to share their ideas. They responded well to questioning and worked well with talk partners or in group discussions. Staff generally set activities appropriate to pupils’ ages and abilities. They deployed their support staff well to help pupils achieve at an appropriate level. Monitoring of planning, lesson observations and work books by the co-ordinator would help to provide clearer information of progress through the school. Pupils in Foundation understand that God loves each person and gives us many gifts. In Key Stage 1 pupils are beginning to write independent sentences to recall stories from the Old Testament and to write their own short prayers. In Key Stage 2 independent writing continues to develop. Pupils can identify various ministries in the church and recognise situations in their own lives where there are opportunities for reconciliation. As pupils move through the school they grow in awareness of the beliefs and values of their faith and are increasingly able to relate them to their own life experiences. Pupils are eager to take on responsibilities in the school.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning observed during the inspection was generally good with outstanding examples in both Key Stages. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the Salford diocesan guidelines and use a range of techniques to encourage and support learning and meet the needs of their pupils. Lesson planning varies in its detail. The school should develop a common format to include clear objectives, the expected learning outcomes and a range of activities that can be used to develop each topic. Teachers' evaluations of their lessons should be an important part of their planning. Assessment tasks are completed by the pupils each half term. Teachers indicate the level at which they feel each child is working. So as to indicate a clearer picture of the levels which learners are achieving, moderation of assessments at each Key Stage would be helpful. Interactive whiteboards and information communication technology are a valuable resource and are used effectively to create interest and enjoyment in the classroom. All teaching areas are bright stimulating learning environments with colourful religious displays. A very good example of teaching was observed in the Year 6 class. Learners recalled their study of biblical characters whose meetings with Jesus had changed their lives after experiencing reconciliation. They considered situations in their own lives as they suggested how reconciliation can begin. Pupils acted out their prepared dramas illustrating how broken friendships can be made right again. The lesson concluded with a short time for reflection and prayer and the sign of peace.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The quality of the Religious Education curriculum is good. The Religious Education policy is clear in its aim "to enrich the religious experience of pupils, staff and the community we serve". The school works actively in partnership with parents to foster the spiritual, moral educational, social and personal development of the pupils. Time allocated to curriculum Religious Education is in line with national and diocesan guidelines. The school follows the *REvision 2000* guidelines supplemented by activities related to the liturgical year. Teachers are knowledgeable and confident in the consistency of their delivery of well organised lessons. Teaching assistants who play an important role in supporting teachers and pupils within the classroom are well deployed. Inspection observations indicate that staff use a variety of ways to ensure that all pupils are actively involved in discussion, presentation and role-play. Resources are good and together with information communication technology give valuable support to the delivery of the curriculum. School Masses, assemblies and liturgical celebrations have a positive impact in supporting and enriching the Religious Education curriculum. The study of world faiths in Key Stage 2 helps to develop pupils' awareness of the customs and traditions of other faith communities and to promote community cohesion. The school plays an active role in the Sacramental Programme in each of the three parishes it serves.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education are satisfactory. The headteacher who took up her role in January has assumed temporary role of co-ordinator for curriculum Religious Education. She has a clear vision for the future development of curriculum Religious Education as a priority affecting the life and work of this new school. She is well supported by the leadership team and the parish priest to lead the school forward. Policies for Religious Education and prayer and worship are currently under review. They need to ensure that progress and the development of the curriculum are frequently reviewed. Clearer systems for assessment, planning and evaluation of the religious curriculum need to be established. These monitoring procedures when developed will then provide a clear insight into standards, strengths and future areas for development. The recent training from the diocese for the development of classroom worship has proved very productive. Governors are kept informed of learners' progress in the religious and community life of the school through headteacher reports and their visits to the school for occasions of prayer and worship. At this time in the life of the new school they need to be more proactive and challenging in their support for the headteacher. The parish priest is a regular and welcome visitor playing an active role in the religious life of the school community.