



## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

St. Chad's is an inner-city Roman Catholic primary school serving a parish community close to the centre of Manchester. The surrounding area is one of relatively high levels of both social and economic disadvantage and pupil mobility. Learners come from a rich and diverse range of ethnic backgrounds. The age range of pupils is 3-11 and the school's admission number is 30. On entry to the Nursery the attainment of many pupils is significantly below the national average. There are currently 226 pupils on roll 58% of whom are baptised Catholics. 44% of learners are eligible for free school meals. The school has identified 30 pupils with special educational needs and 2 have a statutory statement of special educational need. There are 10 full time teaching staff of whom 5 (50%) are of the Catholic faith. 4 of the remaining staff are enrolled on the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies module training.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

St. Chad's is an outstanding Catholic school. The school's Mission Statement lies at the heart of its work ensuring a welcoming, caring ethos where all are respected, valued and nurtured. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all the pupils is outstanding. Relationships between staff and pupils are a strength. The headteacher is well supported by his leadership team and a knowledgeable governing body. Pupils are well motivated and behaviour is very good. They are proud of their school and demonstrate good attitudes to their learning. The planning, monitoring and resources supporting the Religious Education curriculum are outstanding. High quality assemblies and meaningful opportunities to celebrate classroom worship inclusive of all learners also give valuable support the curriculum. The headteacher has assessed the Leadership and Management of the Catholic Life of the school, the Quality of Collective Worship and the Leadership and Management of curriculum Religious Education to be good. Inspection evidence gathered however indicates these areas to be of outstanding quality.

### **Improvement since the last inspection**

Following the last inspection in 2008 the school addressed the issues that were raised. The systems for monitoring and assessing pupils' progress and achievements are now firmly embedded in the school. There are also plans in place for members of the governing body to support this monitoring. The Religious Education assessment portfolios demonstrate the school's commitment to the provision of an effective curriculum for all its learners.

### **Capacity to improve**

The school's self-evaluation is comprehensive. The headteacher has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and a positive vision for future developments. Together with his leadership team he is committed to continuing the development of the strong Catholic ethos of the school whilst embracing the religious and cultural diversities within its community. There is effective provision for relevant in-service training for staff. This ensures that each member of the school community is fully aware of the goals the school is aiming to achieve. The school has an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

There are no significant issues to be addressed. The school is encouraged to continue to develop the following priority as identified in its own evaluation.

- The termly workshops and peer support sessions which will enable the school to develop "strength from within"

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL**

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are outstanding. The school has set out its Mission to bring the Gospel message to pupils in a relevant and purposeful way by engaging children and their families in all aspects of the Catholic life of the school whilst embracing the values of the Moslem and other faith children within its community. The headteacher and senior leaders have a clear shared vision for the future. The governing body give strong support in shaping the direction of the school through discussion and monitoring of policies which reflect the Catholic ethos of the school and its inclusiveness of other faiths. The parish priest has a positive working relationship with both staff and pupils playing a positive role in the religious life of the school through the celebration of school and class Masses. All staff are hard working in their commitment to the school's Catholicity. Good relationships which exist between the home, school, parish family and wider community are a strength. Partnership with parents is encouraged through newsletters and good information regarding their children's progress. Parents are encouraged to share in school Masses, assemblies and many liturgical celebrations. As members of a multi-cultural and multi-faith community pupils promote community cohesion by their respect for each other as they celebrate their similarities in faith and cultures and demonstrate their compassion for others by their generous collections for local and world-wide charities. The school plays a leading role in the preparation of pupils for the Sacraments of Initiation.

## **THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

Provision for collective worship is outstanding. Collective worship is an integral part of each school day. A range of opportunities for pupils to lead or share collective worship within the school and parish community makes a significant contribution in promoting a living Christian faith. Such events include a weekly "Early Bird" Mass in the school during Lent and a Baptism service for new families. From an early age young learners are actively involved in classroom worship. A gathering in the Nursery, attended by many of the parents, celebrated God's wonderful world. Pupils had collected items from nature as examples of wonderful things God had made. They lead simple prayers and delightful singing before giving each parent and visitor a spray of flowers as a reminder of their celebration. Classes in turn prepare and present assemblies to which parents, governors and friends are welcome. Music and dance feature in many celebrations. A whole school assembly led by Year 1 told the story in both music and verse of God creating the world in seven days. This assembly was attended by a large number of parents and friends. During the important seasons of the liturgical year special emphasis is placed on prayer and worship at such events as the first Mass of Christmas which was celebrated in the school hall on Christmas Eve. The importance of such celebrations influences learners' spiritual and moral development. Each classroom has a focus area for prayer and worship with colourful displays of pupils' work reflecting topics they have studied. Simple prayers in pupils' workbooks together with reflection in classroom worship are evidence of a growing awareness of the importance of prayer in their daily lives. Collective worship makes a valuable contribution to the spiritual and moral development of all learners and to promoting community cohesion.

## **ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education are good. Most learners enter Foundation Stage with attainment often 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 generally good. Learners with special educational needs are well supported. In lessons observed during the inspection the pupils were good listeners who were eager to share ideas and respond well to questioning. They enjoyed working in partnerships, in pairs or in group discussions. Pupils enjoy their work demonstrating positive behaviour and effort. Activities set by the teachers were well matched to pupils' ages and ability. Support staff were used effectively to help pupils achieve at an appropriate level. Monitoring of planning and observations of lessons and work books by the co-ordinator help to provide good information of progress through the school. Pupils in Foundation know they are special to God and part of His family. In Key Stage 1 pupils were able to discuss the wonder and beauty of Gods' world and write their own prayers in thanksgiving or celebration. In Key Stage 2 work is recorded in a wide variety of ways including poems, prayers and extended pieces of writing. There is also good evidence of the study of world faiths. Pupils are eager to take on responsibilities making a positive contribution to the school as councillors.

## **THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

The quality of teaching and learning observed during the inspection was good with outstanding features in both key stages. Teachers are secure in their knowledge of the Salford guidelines and use a range of techniques and resources to engage, develop and support pupils in their learning. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils. Positive marking to indicate areas for pupils to improve their work and peer support to share good practice aims to ensure consistency in marking. Teachers plan their lessons in detail to include whole class and group discussion, working together in partnerships and individual written work. However lesson planning does not always show any evaluation of teaching or the pupils' learning. These evaluations should form an important part of teachers' forward planning. The use of assessment tasks and the levelling of pupils' work is well developed giving a clear picture of each pupils' achievements. Good classroom management skills using praise and encouragement are strong features of teaching to which pupils respond with enthusiasm. Interactive whiteboards and information communication technology are a valuable resource used effectively to create interest and enjoyment in the classroom. In a very good lesson Year 2 pupils discussed pictures of beauty in our world giving reasons for their favourite picture. The task was to write their own prayer of thanksgiving or celebration. With challenges set for each ability group all the learners achieved well. They shared their prayer with their partners who suggested ways in which the prayer could be improved. The pupils accepted this peer evaluation of their work.

## **THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM**

The quality of the Religious Education curriculum is outstanding. 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. The resources for information communication technology to support the delivery of the curriculum are good. Teachers are confident in their knowledge of the guidelines and consistent in their delivery of lessons. Teaching assistants play an important role in supporting both the teachers and pupils within the classroom. Regular monitoring indicates that staff use a variety of ways to ensure that all pupils are actively involved in discussion, presentation and role-play so as to meet the needs of all pupils. School Masses, assemblies and liturgical celebrations have a positive impact in supporting and enriching the Religious Education curriculum. The Religious Education curriculum makes a very good contribution to the spiritual and moral development of all the pupils. The study of world faiths in Key Stage 2 has been adopted and is supported by visitors into the school. These further promote pupils' awareness of the customs and traditions of other faith communities whilst understanding similarities and respecting differences. These positive experiences are helping to promote community cohesion.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

The leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education are outstanding. Working closely together the headteacher and senior leaders have a common vision for the on-going development of curriculum Religious Education and a keen awareness of the challenges this presents with the increasing number of non-Catholic pupils. Regular scrutiny of planning, and the monitoring of teaching and learning are well established procedures. The Religious Education subject leader is outstanding. She is enthusiastic, dedicated to her role and highly successful in introducing new initiatives to raise standards. Her support for staff and her willingness to model good practice has enabled the newest teachers to the school to work alongside her whilst developing their own subject knowledge and confidence. Following her attendance at diocesan training she provides good support for all staff when leading in-house training. Governors are supportive and well informed. They are able to monitor the Religious Education curriculum through termly reports from the headteacher and their visits to the school for occasions of prayer and worship and their attendance at Sacramental Programme celebrations. The parish priest is a regular and welcome visitor playing an active role in the life of the school community.