

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

School: St Dunstan's RC Primary School  
Address: Bacup Street, Moston, Manchester. M40 9HF  
Telephone: 0161 681 5665  
e-mail address: admin@st-dunstans.manchester.sch.uk  
URN: 105526

Headteacher: Mrs Karen Thompson  
Chair of Governors: Father David Featherstone

---

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Diocese of Salford  
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

---

Date of inspection: November 2011  
Date of previous inspection: June 2009  
Reporting Inspector: Mrs Margaret Dolan

## **Information about the school**

St Dunstan's is a Roman Catholic voluntary aided primary school serving the parish of St Dunstan in Moston, Manchester. About 65% of the pupils are of white, British origin with the other pupils coming from a range of minority ethnic groups including a large group of black African origin. The school is situated to the North East of Manchester city centre in an area with high levels of disadvantage. The pupils come from a wide range of socio economic backgrounds and housing. The admission number has been changed to 45 to accommodate the large number of families moving into the area. There are currently 273 pupils on roll and of these 80% are baptised Catholics. The school has a full time nursery. 22% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals and there are 34 pupils who have English as an Additional Language. There are 24 children on the special needs register, 8 on school action, 15 on school action plus and one pupil awaiting assessment for intensive support. There is a high proportion of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties in the school.

There are 14 teachers in the school of whom 93% are Catholic. Nine teachers hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies or equivalent qualifications.

## **Overall Effectiveness**

**Grade 2**

St Dunstan's is a good school. The school works hard to ensure a good Religious Education for all the children and the spiritual life of the school is good. Class Masses are celebrated in school during the winter months and in church during the summer and these are well supported by parents and parishioners. Assemblies are well planned and follow the liturgical year and family assemblies are based on 'statements of belief' and are held fortnightly.

Behaviour is good and the children are polite and well mannered. Children feel safe and secure and are aware that if they have any problems they can discuss them with a member of staff. The postbox outside the headteacher's office is well used to alert staff of any of the children's worries or difficulties.

The headteacher and senior leadership team with the support of the staff and the governing body are keen to develop the religious life of the school. The Chair of Governors who is also the Parish Priest is a regular and very welcome visitor and is a witness to the school's Catholic ethos and its religious, spiritual and moral focus.

## **Capacity for sustained improvement**

**Grade 2**

Since the last inspection a new headteacher and assistant headteacher have been appointed and with all the staff, they are committed to developing the school in all aspects of the curriculum. A new Religious Education coordinator

has been appointed since September and her vision, faith commitment and enthusiasm is instrumental in the development of the Religious Education curriculum. A well organised coordinators file records all the information about pupils progress and staff development in Religious Education. Monitoring and evaluation is being revised and updated to include the new syllabus, The Way, The Truth and The Life and training has been arranged for staff development. Learning walks and book scrutinies have taken place this term and observations and monitoring visits have been planned for the new year. The link governor for Religious Education is keen to be involved in monitoring and will be updated on a regular basis.

Links with the parish and community are good and the school hopes to improve these in the future with their relay of prayer project and with developing a link with a partner school in another country.

### **What the school needs to do to improve further**

- 1. Develop monitoring and evaluation including regular assessments and levelling of pupil's work.**
- 2. Ensure that World Religions is taught in a structured way including an alternative form of recording pupils work to ensure consistency and avoid confusion**

## **PUPILS**

**How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups**

**Grade 3**

Outcomes for pupils is satisfactory with many good features. Attainment on entry is below national average but pupils make satisfactory progress by the end of Year 6. Achievement in Religious Education is satisfactory but there are signs of improvement especially in Key Stage 2. Children with special educational needs are well supported by hard working and competent support staff including children with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Mass is celebrated with the children each Tuesday in school during the winter months and at the parish church in the summer. Each Mass is led by a KS2 class and parents and parishioners are welcome and attend in good numbers. During inspection Year 6 celebrated a Mass on the feast day of St Cecelia and participated fully in the readings and Mass responses. Their behaviour was excellent and they were keen to answers questions posed by the Parish Priest to explain the readings.

Assembly each Monday is led by the headteacher and is based on the gospel and the liturgical year. This theme is referred back to at the assembly on

Friday when parents are invited to an achievement assembly and awards are given for good work and good behaviour. On alternate Thursdays the children meet as family groups for assemblies and these are planned using aspects of 'Nurturing Human Wholeness' and consider the way we lead our lives. The children are of mixed ages and this gives older children the opportunity to meet and form friendships with children from other age groups and helps to develop their leadership skills. The children demonstrate high levels of interest, knowledge and reflection. A council of Elders is also developed through these groupings and these children help to shape initiatives in the school and are responsible for fund raising during Lent. On the Thursdays when the family groups do not meet, class assemblies are organised and these take a topical or seasonal theme. The children help to plan and organise these assemblies.

The Sacramental programme is arranged through the parish but the school staff are very supportive of the work of the catechists and show their commitment by attending parish celebrations and meetings. During Holy Week assemblies and services take place in school and in church, including a passion play performed by the sacramental programme children from Year 3 and Children's Stations of the Cross on Good Friday. After their participation in the sacramental programme children are invited to train as altar servers and this forms another link between school and parish. During the year children from Y3 and Y6 have the opportunity to take part in a retreat to develop their spiritual awareness at key times in their faith lives. There is good liaison with the high school and Year 6 pupils as part of their introduction to secondary education take part in the diocesan Crossroads programme as a joint venture. The children are aware of the needs of people who are less fortunate than themselves and are keen to raise funds for charities including CAFOD, The diocesan CARITAS charity which helps children and homeless people, Francis House and the Lally Centre who work with families in the area.

## **How effective the provision is for Catholic Education**

**Grade 2**

The provision for Catholic education is good with outstanding features. The lessons observed during inspection were at least good with some outstanding examples of good practice. Children in Year 4 considered Mary's feelings when she was asked to be the Mother of God. The children became journalists and worked with a partner to explore the situation. The lesson had good pace and the children used good questioning skills, modelled by the teacher. The lesson ended with a child using her own words to pray for love, peace and thanksgiving. The painting of the Annunciation by Fra Angelico inspired children in Year 2 to think about Mary's feelings. The children worked with partners and used speech and thought bubbles to consider the words and emotions of Mary and the angel. Year 5 were considering the 10 commandments and how these apply to real life situations in the style of 'The Jeremy Kyle Show'. By examining conflict and disorder in this way the children were able to recognise which of the commandments were being broken and the consequences of their actions. Children in the early years

worked together in groups with their key workers and thought about how we show love to one another and to God. Teacher knowledge is very good and the use of different genres and presentations in the lessons observed ensured that the children were interested and keen to learn. Classroom organisation needed to present in this way was exemplary in each setting.

Work in children's Religious Education books was generally good although there were some inconsistencies. The standard expected was consistent with the work in other curricular areas and the children were proud of their books and keen to talk about other work in their books. A favourite lesson was when they looked through large glasses to see good things about other members of their class. There were some examples of differentiation but mainly by outcome but the work was well planned using the diocesan guidelines. Religious Education is timetabled for 10% of curriculum time in all classes. As well as work in books, assessment for learning was seen in the range of higher order questioning by the teachers and the responses of the children. Interactive whiteboards are well used and a good range of resources were used in classrooms. Each classroom had a prayer focal area for the children to refer to when they prayed and there were displays of children's work in Religious Education in the classrooms and around the school. The school works well with children with emotional and behavioural difficulties and children in the classrooms are well supported.

The diverse community surrounding St Dunstan's school means that there are children from other faiths and cultures in the school. These children are well integrated and are involved in the spiritual and prayer life of the school. Parents are aware of their right to withdraw children from Religious Education and prayer and worship but this has not been necessary. The school is aware of the need to develop World Religions in the school and this is part of their future development.

The school is part of the Relay of Prayer organised by the diocese to celebrate the Olympic Games and the children have been gathering together information about Ireland as this is their partner country. As part of the project, pupils from the high school will be visiting St Dunstan's to present their partner country which is Algeria. This forms another liaison link with the high school and helps with transition of the Year 6 children.

## **LEADERS AND MANAGERS**

### **How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the School**

Grade 2

St Dunstan's is led by a very committed headteacher and her staff and a supportive governing body. Leadership and management of Religious Education is good and there are plans for development. The Chair of Governors, who is also the Parish Priest, is a welcome visitor to the school each Monday when he visits all the classes and talks to the headteacher. He is also in school for weekly Masses and he is able to witness the school's

**Catholic ethos and its religious, spiritual and moral focus. The Chair of Governors is also the Religious Education link governor and he is keen to be involved with the Religious Education Coordinator on the monitoring of the Religious Education curriculum.**

**The governors are very supportive of the school and keen to ensure that the children receive the best in Catholic Education. When new staff are appointed the governors seek, where possible, to employ a committed Catholic to promote the shared vision of the school. The governors appointed a Catholic School Improvement Partner to work with the headteacher and to challenge the religious life of the school as well as other curricular areas. The headteacher has a Religious Education objective for her performance management and will look into the possibility of introducing this for all members of staff. Governors are kept fully informed of the religious life of the school through the headteacher's reports and Religious Education forms part of the School Improvement Plan.**

**The Religious Education coordinator is leading a review of the school's mission statement. She is consulting with the pupils and will also speak to staff, governors and parents and hopes to have this ready by the end of the school year. Continuous Professional Development has been planned with the diocesan Religious Education coordinator for all staff to further develop range and styles of liturgy and to assist in the delivery of the new syllabus. New staff induction ensures that Religious Education is well taught and presented and the added advantage of supporting other staff is seen as the development of individual faith journeys. Standards of visible practice of faith by all the staff and their willingness to support the parish in the sacramental programme and celebrations is a strength of the school. Monitoring and evaluation takes place and the Religious Education coordinator recognises that this is an area of development. Resources including books and artefacts are to be centrally resourced in the headteacher's office.**

**A parent and teachers group has been re-established to develop relationships with the school and to help develop social and community groups within the local area. A good example of this was the children's fashion show which took place during inspection and was well received and well attended by parents and staff. Children learn about other countries through their fund-raising activities but the school would like to develop international links and is looking for a partner school in another part of the world.**