

NOTTINGHAM DIOCESAN
INSPECTION REPORT
ON
DENOMINATIONAL EDUCATION

SPRING 2009



Saint Mary's Catholic Primary School
Lowry Drive
Marple Bridge
Nr. STOCKPORT
SK6 5BR

Date of Inspection: 30th March 2009

(Section 48, 2005 Education Act)

SECTION 48 DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT

Name and address of School:	Saint Mary's Catholic Primary School Lowry Drive Marple Bridge Nr. STOCKPORT SK6 5BR
Headteacher:	Mrs. Fionuala Boucher
Chair of Governors:	Mrs. Vicki Major
Date of Inspection:	30 th March 2009
Inspection Team:	Mr. Simon Groake Mrs. Anne Recchia
URN & DCSF Numbers:	URN: 160123 DCSF: 356 3516
Overall Grade Awarded:	1 Outstanding

A. DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL

Saint Mary's School is in an unusual position in that it supports children from two parishes from the Dioceses of Nottingham (St Mary's, Marple Bridge) and Shrewsbury (Holy Spirit, Marple). The majority of children transfer to Harrytown Catholic High School in Shrewsbury Diocese. 92% of pupils are Baptised Catholics with the other 8% from other Christian denominations.

The school is situated in a prosperous suburb of Greater Manchester, although it serves pupils from a wider area, including two Manchester overspill council estates. A school bus is provided for pupils and is well used. 3% of pupils live in recognised deprived areas. 4.9% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Two percent of pupils are from ethnic minority groups and whose first language is not English. 4.7% of pupils have a statement of SEN, with 10% on the SEN Register.

B. OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective and efficient is the provision of Catholic education in meeting the needs of learners and why?

Saint Mary's is an outstanding and successful school. It is held in high esteem by its pupils, staff, parents, Governors and the local community. It really *"...lives and learns by journeying with Jesus"* (Mission Statement). It is a place where pupils and staff thrive and where the unique qualities of its pupils are valued and celebrated.

The provision for community cohesion is outstanding.

Pupils achieve high standards in Religious Education through good teaching, a creative curriculum and strong leadership. The school is aware of its strengths and areas for development. It has a clear vision of the way forward to ensure it is able to build upon its success... It has successfully identified assessment for learning as one of its main priorities in Religious Education (R.E.).

Since the last inspection monitoring of R.E. is carried out regularly and the curriculum has been enhanced through a more creative approach especially through its links with other subjects.

GRADE: 1 Outstanding

C. The capacity of the school to make further improvements and why.

The school's own self assessment is accurate and insightful. The staff are highly motivated to drive forward improvements. They are exceptionally well led by the head teacher whose enthusiasm and clear vision is evident in all aspects of the school. She is well supported by the senior leadership team, Governors and staff.

There are appropriate structures and systems in place for the school to improve further.

GRADE: 1 Outstanding

D. What steps need to be taken to improve the provision further?

There are no major areas needing urgent attention. There are however, some suggestions that will assist the school in its further development.

- To apply skills and systems used in other core subjects to assist work in further developing Assessment for Learning in Religious Education.
- To enhance the role of subject leader by further developing rigorous monitoring skills and tracking of pupil progress in Religious Education.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and Management

1. How effective are leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school?

The Governors of Saint Mary's Catholic School fulfil their role to an outstandingly good standard in relation to the school's Catholic foundation. They are both supportive and challenging, forming a strong partnership with the leadership team. The Governors monitor the Catholic life of the school effectively, through classroom visits and reports. They use their varied and diverse expertise well to assist in school improvement and have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development.

Leaders and managers at all levels are committed to making the Mission Statement a lived reality. They regularly review the mission and aims of the school, effectively including all stakeholders. As a result learners flourish and commit themselves to the Catholic mission developing both spiritually and morally.

The Headteacher is extremely committed to constantly raising standards and driving through improvements. She has successfully managed to maintain the quality of provision during recent staff changes and has developed a cohesive team who effectively contribute to the spiritual and moral development of all learners.

There are very good links with the two parishes the school serves. The Parish Priests are regular visitors and play an active part in the faith development of the pupils through prayers, reflections, away days, sacramental preparation and follow up.

The leadership team promotes highly successful links with other key partners both locally and nationally. The school is regarded as a "*Champion for extended School*" in the area and has been asked to support and share expertise with other schools. It has good links with both the Nottingham and Shrewsbury diocese and takes an active role in the Deanery.

The Head teacher regularly monitors the Catholic life of the school through her observations, questionnaires, feedback from events, reports to governors and the annual review of the Catholic vision for the school. This ensures that Saint Mary's Catholic School is an ever evolving and developing one having Christ at its centre.

GRADE: 1 Outstanding

Collective Worship

2. How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

The quality and provision for prayer and collective worship is outstanding. The Mission Statement, "We live and learn by journeying with Jesus, embracing Gospel values", is a truly lived experience in the school and is at the forefront of its liturgical life.

Collective worship is well planned, engages learners and staff alike. Through various prayer styles it inspires deep thought and heartfelt responses. Pupils react well and are keen to participate, as demonstrated during the liturgical dance and signed hymn, in the collective act of worship observed. They take an increasingly active role as they progress up the school in planning for and participating in worship and prayer especially in the celebration of the Eucharist. The annual "Away Day" for the older pupils has given them an opportunity to plan liturgies on a particular theme. This has been very effective and enriched whole school cross curricular activities on the theme of the saints.

The Parish Priest makes a powerful contribution to the community and actively engages with the pupils to plan liturgies and offer opportunities to take part in the sacraments.

Monitoring of whole school collective acts of worship is done both formally and informally by the Head teacher. This good practice now needs to be extended to classroom prayer and worship to ensure consistency and quality.

Through acts of collective worship pupils are able to use the message of the scriptures successfully. They thrive both spiritually and morally, exhibiting a mature sense of right and wrong and responsibility and duty to others.

GRADE: 1 Outstanding

Community Cohesion

**3. How effectively the school promotes community cohesion:
inwardly (within the school);
within the local faith community (parish and education communities);
and the wider social, cultural and educational communities.**

The school is outstanding in its promotion of community cohesion. The school has an excellent sense of community and recognition that all are working towards fulfilling its catholic mission. Saint Mary's is regarded highly within the local community and is proactive in supporting local events and charitable causes.

All leaders and staff work collaboratively to ensure that the pupils have the best possible learning experience and environment. The Headteacher works effectively with other agencies. The school has recently been given the accolade of "extended schools champion", within the local cluster of schools. The school has made full use of the additional funding provided to create a wealth of opportunities for pupils to experience cultural diversity.

The school's "Saints Days" have been highly effective in engaging children in a global perspective through an RE focus, first exploring their UK heritage then widening their experience to European Countries. Various fundraising projects also raise pupils' global awareness, the HUGS charity for example has been used not only to raise money for a Ugandan children's charity but has also given the pupils opportunities to make contact with pupils from another country through a pen pal scheme. Local charities have also benefited from the pupils charitable giving which helps to bring pupils in touch with those vulnerable and less fortunate than themselves.

Saint Mary's is an inclusive school. Through prayer and collective worship respect for all faiths is nurtured and pupils are able to demonstrate that they are all members of one human family, responsible for one another. Disability awareness training, organised through the local cluster groups, has raised awareness and given pupils a better understanding of the needs of others.

Transition to the local Catholic High School is smooth as a result of excellent links between the schools; pupils make the transfer easily and settle quickly into the new environment.

Parents from all backgrounds are welcome in school. They are included in any consultation process before decisions are made and implemented and are encouraged to play an active part in the running of the school.

GRADE: 1 Outstanding

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and Standards

4. How well do learners achieve?

The standards pupils achieve in curriculum religious education are very high given their capability on entry into school, with many achieving above National expectations by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported and able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in a variety of ways.

Challenging targets are set for pupils and as a consequence, outstanding work is produced, showing empathy, good understanding of scripture and thoughtful reflections. Curriculum RE makes a very effective contribution to the moral and spiritual development of learners. There are no significant variations between groups of pupils, they gain knowledge, skills and understanding at a very good rate across all key stages

Pupils are extremely well behaved, polite and mature. Their lessons are well planned and creative catering for the age, learning style and attainment of the pupils. As a consequence pupils enjoy lessons. They take an active part in the running of the school and are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves and others. The Year 6 "Special Friends" project encourages a sense of community, linking new starters in full time education with older pupils.

GRADE: 1 Outstanding

Quality of Provision for Religious Education

5. How effective are teaching and learning?

Teaching at Saint Mary's ranges from good to outstanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge, plan carefully and pitch work at an appropriate level to challenge the pupils. In classes where outstanding teaching occurs, pupils make very good progress, know how they can improve and respond positively to the assessment and making of their work. This excellent practice could usefully be shared with colleagues. Assessment for learning is used very well in literacy and plans to develop this further in Religious Education will give teachers a clearer picture of pupils' attainment and next steps in their development. Pupils with additional learning needs are identified accurately and appropriate provision is put in place so they are able to access the curriculum effectively. Teaching support staff are well used to encourage challenge the pupils.

Good use of ICT is made for both teaching and learning. Interactive white boards are used effectively to engage learners. Pupils use ICT skills well to research R.E. topics, present work and record activities. Cross curricular links are made to enhance learning and encourage pupils to think ethically spiritually and morally.

Parents are kept well informed of pupil progress through reports and meetings with the teaching staff. A termly newsletter is used to encourage parents to take an active in their child's learning. Weekly homework tasks, where RE is always given a high priority, also inform parents of learning intentions and suggest ways they can help.

GRADE: 1 Outstanding

6. How well does the Religious Education curriculum meet the needs and interests of learners?

The curriculum fulfils the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools, to an outstanding level. "Here I Am" is used effectively throughout the school and is reflected through interactive displays and prayer foci. The curriculum provides a systematic study of God, the life and teaching of Jesus and the church and its relation to the lives of the pupils. Learners are encouraged to investigate and reflect upon the teachings of the church and to develop appropriate skills and attitudes.

Pupils' knowledge and skills are developed to a high standard through a wide range of learning opportunities and as a consequence pupils make good progress over time. Pupils' ability to reflect and empathise is a feature of their work. They contribute well in discussions, take a pride in their work and enjoy R.E. lessons.

Full advantage is taken to develop learners' skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening. Links with other subjects such as drama, ICT and Art are used very effectively to enhance learning in R.E.

The quality of teaching is of a significantly high standard to ensure that all learners make progress. The curriculum is sufficiently well planned that it builds upon previous knowledge and skills making sure that pupils are able to think spiritually, morally and theologically and become aware of their religious commitment in everyday life.

GRADE: 1 Outstanding

Leadership and Management

7. How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education?

The leadership of the subject is strongly focused on the Catholic mission of the school. The subject leader is knowledgeable and manages the subject smoothly. She is able to support her colleagues effectively and holds the inclusion of all learners as an essential part of her role, in this way she moderates and mediates the mission within the school.

Morale in the school is high, family values are promoted and a sense of "team" is evident throughout. Monitoring of teaching and learning by the head teacher is insightful and leads to improved practice. Assessment and monitoring of pupil performance has made progress since the last inspection. However, a more rigorous approach to this through assessment for learning and the careful tracking of pupil progress over time would inform planning and raise standards even further. The schools' own self assessment is largely accurate and honest, recognising areas for development, such as assessment for learning, very effectively.

The school is well resourced with books, equipment and appropriately trained staff to deliver the Religious Education curriculum. Attractive displays create a lively environment in which the school community can work and play.

GRADE: 1 Outstanding

Common grading scale for all inspection judgements

- Grade 1 Outstanding
- Grade 2 Good
- Grade 3 Satisfactory
- Grade 4 Inadequate

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective and efficient is the provision of Catholic education in meeting the needs of learners and why?	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the overall effectiveness of the Catholic life of the school and its provision for community cohesion; 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the overall effectiveness of the provision for the Catholic Religious Education curriculum, its main strengths and areas for development 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the effectiveness of steps taken to promote improvement since the last inspection 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the capacity to make further improvements 	1

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

How effective are leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school?	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how well the governing body fulfils its role in relation to the school's Catholic foundation 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction which promotes high quality care and education and leads to improvement 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the quality of the leadership of the Headteacher and senior staff in leading and developing the Catholic life of the school 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively leadership at all levels in the school promotes learners' spiritual and moral development 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the impact of the involvement of the local priests on the work of the school 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively the leadership promotes relationships and communication with key partners in education 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively the Catholic life of the school is monitored and evaluated 	1
How good is the quality of Collective Worship?	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the quality of the provision for prayer, Collective Worship and liturgical life of the school and its frequency 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> learners' response to the school's provision 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively the provision is planned, monitored and evaluated 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how well the liturgical life, prayer and Collective Worship contributes to the spiritual and moral development of the learners 	1
How effectively the school promotes Community Cohesion?	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively leadership at all levels promote community cohesion within the school 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the efforts of the school to promote community cohesion with the wider Catholic faith and education communities 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how well does the school work in partnership with the wider education, cultural and social communities 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the inclusive nature of the provision for prayer, Collective Worship and the liturgical life of the school 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how far the Religious Education curriculum promotes community cohesion 	1

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How well do learners achieve in Religious Education?	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> learners' success in achieving challenging targets including qualifications and learning goals, with trends over time and any significant variations between groups of learners 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the standards of learners' work 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> learners' progress relative to their prior attainment and potential, with any significant variations between groups of learners 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the extent to which learners enjoy their work 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the behaviour of learners 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the extent to which learners' contribute positively to the school and broader community in the school 	1
How effective are teaching and learning in Religious Education?	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how well teaching is used to meet learners' needs and curriculum requirements 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the suitability and rigour of assessment in planning, monitoring and informing learners' progress 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the diagnosis of, and provision for, additional learning needs 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the involvement of parents and carers in their children's learning and development 	1
How well does the Religious Education curriculum meet the needs and interests of learners?	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the extent to which the Religious Education curriculum matches learners' aspirations and potential, building on prior attainment and experience 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how far the Religious Education curriculum meets external requirements and is responsive to local circumstances 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the extent to which the curriculum in Religious Education contributes to the spiritual and moral development of the learners 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the extent to which the Religious Education curriculum contributes to learners' enjoyment and achievement 	1
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education?	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively whole school and subject leadership in Religious Education lead and support their staff 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively performance in Religious Education is monitored and improved through quality assurance and self-assessment 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve their potential 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are well taught 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the adequacy and suitability of specialist equipment, learning resources and accommodation 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve high standards 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent to which governors discharge their responsibilities 	1