

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. KENTIGERN'S ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Bethnall Drive Fallowfield Manchester M14 7ED

Inspection date June 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 105584
 Age range of pupils 3-11
 Number on roll 480
 Appropriate authority The governing body
 Chair of Governors Rev. Fr. T. Connolly
 Headteacher Mr. P. Jackson
 Religious Education Co-ordinator Mrs. M. Delury
 Date of previous inspection April 2007

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades 1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3 = Satisfactory 4 = Inadequate
Overall effectiveness of the school	1	
Leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school	1	
The quality of Collective Worship	1	
Achievement and standards in Religious Education	1	
The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education	1	
The quality of the Religious Education curriculum	1	
Leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education	1	
<i>The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements</i>		

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Kentigern's is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school in the Diocese of Salford serving the parishes of St. Kentigern and St. Bernadette in south Manchester. It is a large two form entry school drawing its pupils from an area of high deprivation and unemployment. Most pupils come from the local authority housing with some owner occupied properties. On entry to Nursery attainment is generally below the national average. The age range of pupils is 3-11 and the indicative admission number is 60. There are currently 480 pupils on roll of whom 402 are baptised Catholics. 34% of children are eligible for free school meals. The school has identified 37 pupils with special needs including 4 pupils with a statutory statement of their needs. Of the 19 teachers 18 (98%) are of the Catholic faith and 10 hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Kentigern's is an outstanding Catholic school. The strong leadership team, a dedicated staff and the supportive governing body work together to ensure the development of their shared vision for the school. The caring and inclusive ethos within the school ensures everyone in the community is valued and nurtured. The good relationships between staff and pupils are a strength which extends to parents, parish and into the wider community. Learners are proud of their school. They enjoy their work and behave well at all times. Provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is outstanding. The Religious Education programme is well planned, resourced and monitored. Meaningful and varied opportunities to celebrate prayer and worship together support and enhance the curriculum. The school is fully involved in the parish led Sacramental Programme.

Improvement since the last inspection

Following the last Section 48 inspection in April 2007 the school had no identified issues or areas for development. The school has continued the rigorous monitoring and evaluation of its Religious Education curriculum. Newly qualified staff and teachers new to the school are well supported in their delivery of the curriculum through quality in-service training. Governors are very supportive and well informed of developments in the Religious Education curriculum through co-ordinators reports and their frequent attendance at school assemblies, Masses and other activities. They are rightly proud of the school's achievements and committed in their support of its Catholic ethos.

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation is accurate and comprehensive. The headteacher believes that all staff should be involved as a team in the management of the delivery of the Religious Education curriculum. This ensures staff are committed to implementing a programme of quality teaching and learning which meets the pupils' spiritual and moral needs. All staff are fully aware of the goals the school is aiming to achieve. The school has therefore an excellent capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

There are no key issues for the school to address at this time.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are outstanding. The principle of “every child matters” is central to the school’s Mission Statement. This is evidenced by the excellent relationships that exist between staff and pupils and the care and guidance taken to ensure pupils develop to their full potential in a true Christian environment where all are valued. The parish priest who is chair of governors visits the school regularly. He makes a significant contribution to monitoring the Religious Education curriculum, to prayer and worship and the spiritual life of the pupils. The supportive governing body monitor the work of the school as a faith community through their attendance at assemblies and religious celebrations. Their involvement demonstrates their commitment to upholding the caring, inclusive ethos which fosters the good relationships existing between the home, school and parish family. Partnership with parents is further encouraged through good information regarding their children’s progress. The efficient Religious Education co-ordinator and senior leadership team ensure monitoring and evaluation procedures are regularly reviewed. The school plays a full supporting role in the preparation of pupils for the Sacraments of Initiation. The increasing number of learners from different cultures has enabled the school to celebrate the diversity of pupils’ backgrounds enriching the experiences of all the school community.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Provision for collective worship is outstanding. Throughout the day staff and pupils are invited to develop their relationship with God. Each day begins as staff gather for a brief period of prayer and quiet reflection. A variety of opportunities for prayer and worship offered by the school is carefully planned to reflect the Religious curriculum, the liturgical year, the Sacramental Programme and special feasts and festivals. During inspection a Key Stage 1 assembly led by the headteacher focussed on Jesus’ words “Love one another”. Using the statue of the Sacred Heart to illustrate how it showed Jesus’ love for us the young learners recognised how we should show love and peace to each other. They understood outward appearances are not important but rather what is inside someone that makes them a loving caring person. Pupils played an important role in this celebration as they read simple readings and following the Gospel reading simple bidding prayers. Pupils were then asked to reflect on what they could do to show love for someone during that day. This celebration was enhanced by the reverence and respect shown by the pupils in their prayers and their enthusiastic singing. An act of collective worship in Class 4 followed the theme “Our gifts and talents from God.” Gathered around an altar in a prayerful atmosphere the learners spoke about their special gifts and talents and in turn placed their shells on the altar whilst thanking God. They were encouraged to remember that all their gifts come from God. Collective worship makes a good 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 are outstanding as pupils move through the school. Many learners enter Foundation Stage with attainment often below the national expectations. They make good progress as they move through Foundation Stage. In Key Stage 1 pupil attainment is consistently improving so that at the end of Key Stage 2 it is outstanding. 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 in pairs or group discussions. All staff set activities appropriate to pupils’ ages and abilities and deployed their support staff to help pupils achieve at an appropriate level. Monitoring of planning, observations and work books by the co-ordinator helps to provide information of progress through the school. Pupils in Reception understand that Jesus died on the Cross for us because he loves us. In Key Stage 1 pupils recognise some stories from the Old and New Testaments and can retell them in simple sentences. They are also able to write their own short prayers. In Key Stage 2 learners use a wide variety of ways to record their work including letters, poems, mind maps and quality pieces of extended writing. They show a good knowledge of the Sacraments and understand that the Mass is our most important liturgical prayer. As they move through the school their growing awareness of the beliefs and values of their faith enables pupils to relate them to their own life experiences. Pupils are eager to take on responsibilities as school councillors and playground “buddies”.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning observed during the inspection was outstanding in all phases and key stages. Teachers have a secure knowledge of their scheme's guidelines and use a range of techniques to encourage and support learning and meet the needs of all pupils. Good lesson planning identifies clear objectives, the range of activities to develop the topic, the resources to be used and the expected learning outcomes. Assessment tasks are completed by the pupils each half term. Interactive whiteboards and information communication technology are a valuable resource and are used effectively to create interest and enjoyment in the classroom. All classrooms are bright and stimulating learning environments with colourful religious displays of pupils' work reflecting the topics they have studied. An outstanding example of teaching was observed in a Year 6 class. Learners recalled their work on the early parts of the Mass. Using an excellent Power point presentation the class then considered the events of the Last Supper portrayed in the Da Vinci painting. They were familiar with the words spoken at Mass at the Offertory and Consecration and recognised the significance that the same words were spoken by the priest during the Mass. Using the words of the hymn "This is My Body" groups of learners created freeze frame tableaus representing each verse. These were demonstrated to the class. In a time for quiet reflection pupils wrote their own prayer they could say during the Offertory or the Consecration. Some of these were shared with the class. A deeper understanding of the significance of this part of the Mass was evident in the pupils' responses during the lesson.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The quality of the Religious Education curriculum is outstanding. The Religious Education policy is clear in its aims and objectives. Time allocated to curriculum Religious Education is in line with national and diocesan guidelines. The school follows the syllabus "We Belong to the Lord" based on the new catechism of the Church. This was introduced into the school by the parish priest and the governing body. The topics of Scripture, Tradition, Doctrine, Liturgy, Prayer and Christian life have been adapted by the school to be introduced to the pupils at a time relevant to a child's own experience. The scheme is supported by "The Way the Truth and the Life". The resources to support the delivery of the curriculum are good. Teachers are knowledgeable and confident in the consistency of their delivery of well planned lessons. Teaching assistants play an important role in supporting staff and pupils within the classroom. Inspection observations revealed that staff use a variety of ways to ensure all pupils are actively involved in discussion, presentation and role-play. School Masses, assemblies and liturgical celebrations have a positive impact in supporting and enriching the Religious Education curriculum. The study of world faiths across the school is supported and extended by visitors to the school and a planned week to celebrate and develop awareness of the customs and traditions of other faith communities. These positive experiences help to promote community cohesion.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of the leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education is outstanding. The senior leaders of the school and the parish priest recognise the importance of Religious Education as a core subject affecting the life and work of their school. The co-ordinator for Religious Education has excellent knowledge of her subject, a clear vision for her role within the school and provides strong leadership and direction. She leads by example. By her monitoring and evaluation of the Religious Education curriculum through observations she is able to assess that effective teaching and learning ensures equal opportunities for all learners. These monitoring procedures are an effective way of ensuring consistency in maintaining standards. Assessment procedures are in place. Moderated by the teachers of parallel classes these help to provide an indication of the levels at which pupils are working. As co-ordinator she attends training courses provided by the diocese and provides further support to staff through the delivery of in-service training in school. This encourages all staff to challenge their own practice and be adventurous and creative in their delivery of the curriculum. Governors are well informed of learners' progress in the religious and community life of the school and they share in policy review and practice on their frequent visits to the school for occasions of prayer and worship. The parish priest is a regular and welcome visitor playing an active role in the spiritual life of the whole school community.