



INSPECTION REPORT

School: **St. Ambrose R.C. Primary School**

Address: Princess Road, Chorlton-Cum-Hardy, Manchester, M21 7QA

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URN: 105520

Headteacher: Mr. Charles Flannery

Chair of Governors: Father J.P. Earley

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: 8th December 2011
Date of previous inspection: September 2007
Reporting Inspector: Mrs. Pauline Leatherbarrow

Information about the school

St. Ambrose is a Roman Catholic voluntary aided primary school in the Diocese of Salford and is situated in the Chorlton-cum-Hardy area south of Manchester, which is an area of significant social deprivation. There are 188 pupils on roll with 50.2% baptised RC children attending the school compared with 83% baptised RC children on roll at the previous inspection in 2007. The school has an admission number of 30. There are 10 full time and 2 part time teachers employed at St. Ambrose with 83% Catholic teachers with 5 holding CCRS and 2 presently undertaking the CCRS qualification. The Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher and Chair of Governor remain the same as at the previous Section 48 inspection in 2007. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than average. A higher than average proportion of pupils is from minority ethnic groups and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is broadly average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average overall.

Children transfer either to Barlow RC High School or Loreto RC High School.

Overall Effectiveness

Grade 2

The overall effectiveness of the school is good. The school works very hard to ensure that religious education for all children in terms of promoting the Catholic faith; morality and spiritual life of the school are all given a high profile. Pupils understand the importance of prayer and are very respectful during times of reflection. The links the school has made locally, nationally and globally has helped children in their cultural and spiritual development. Mass is celebrated in church for KS2 classes on a weekly basis with a planned programme of Key stage assemblies covering the liturgical year. Key stage 2 children are presently involved in the preparation and delivery of the liturgy through Mass and assemblies with future plans to increase this involvement further.

Standards of pupil work progresses well through both key stages. Children with special educational needs are provided for effectively through differentiated work and the support provided by teaching assistants.

Behaviour observed during the inspection was good both in class and during unstructured times. Unacceptable behaviour is dealt with in a positive and sympathetic manner by a caring staff. All staff provide excellent role models, who form a trusting and encouraging relationship with the pupils in their care. The RE co-ordinator and head teacher monitor Religious education provided for pupils through ongoing assessments, regular lesson observations and book scrutinies.

The school has a very committed head teacher who is well supported by the deputy head teacher and the Religious Education Co-ordinator.

The Governing body are supportive and act as critical friend. The RE (foundation) Governor is also a member of the non teaching staff and who has an in depth knowledge of RE provision in school.

Capacity for sustained improvement

Grade 1

The school is working very hard to raise standards in Religious education through a rigorous monitoring system of lesson observations, work scrutinies and improving assessment procedures. The RE co-ordinator has recently introduced a new 'Pupil Progress and Attainment' tracking system which will aid analysis of strengths and areas for interventions for RE. Evidence of children's work in RE being assessed and levelled twice annually was made available during the inspection. The RE Co-ordinator keeps all the information in a well organised RE curriculum file for new and existing staff as guidance and reference.

Links with the parish priest, who visits the school on a regular basis are excellent. His input as Chair of Governors is valued.

The school prepares an accurate School Improvement Plan which clearly identifies focussed areas for development in Religious Education.

What the school needs to do to improve further:

- 1. To further develop the children's ability to plan and lead their own liturgies and acts of worship.**
- 2. To continue to provide training for staff in the new scheme including assessment opportunities.**
- 3. Access appropriate training for newly appointed governors**

PUPILS

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

Grade 2

St. Ambrose is a good Catholic school. Special needs pupils are very well supported by a hard working team of teaching assistants. Children reported that they like coming to school. They are proud of St Ambrose and they take on roles of responsibility such as eco-warriors, school councillors and house captains.

The school's council meet regularly and play an important role in the decision making of the school, for example water in the classroom, toast as an attendance reward and improvements made to the playground. They seek the opinions of the children relating to trips and the changes recently made to the curriculum. The pupil council also work closely with other schools' councils in the local area and have organised joint charity events. Regular donations are made to Francis House, Cornerstone, CAFOD and a school in Gambia supported by the Marist Sisters.

Children are praised for good behaviour during lessons and pupil achievement is celebrated at a weekly assembly. Each class prepares an assembly each term, which reinforce and explain the class' learning in R.E. Key stage assemblies are led by the senior management team in Key Stage 2 and class teachers in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. These assemblies are based on the liturgical year or nationwide events for example Road Safety and Anti-Bullying week. A child centred Year 1 class assembly performed for the whole school was observed during the inspection which was well attended by parents and family in the hall. Children were very respectful throughout this assembly and actively participated during acts of prayer and worship.

The Sacramental Programme is primarily organised by the school. The Deputy Head teacher is the chief catechist and is supported by the RE Governor (and teaching assistant within school), who together, organise the after school meetings for Year 3 pupils undertaking the programme.

Children enter the school (nursery) with poor literacy and communication skills. Progress children make in RE is broadly in line with national averages. Progress for children with Special Educational Needs and English as an additional language is generally in line with their peers. Children were observed to enjoy their lessons, which was apparent through their good behaviour and engagement in them and by the excellent use of drama and role play.

Children's knowledge of bible stories is good especially by the time they reach upper key stage 2. Children were able to easily identify all the Sacraments and relate several key figures related in the New Testament.

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

Grade 2

St. Ambrose is using 'The Way, the Truth and the Life' scheme of work.

Some staff have attended Diocesan training on the new scheme and further staff will access this training in the spring term. All staff have subsequently received in house training on the new scheme. Collaborative planning has allowed staff to find rich and stimulating experiences with which to engage pupils. As a result of a recent training session, Key Stage 2 have planned together to deliver a celebration of the Epiphany with each class leading on a different aspect of the story. Opportunities for the children to make links with their own life are sought out for the children.

The co-ordinator monitors the planning and the outcomes on a half termly basis. Strengths and areas for development are fed back to teaching staff.

An annual staff audit is undertaken to ascertain their views on how RE is taught and how it could be improved through additional support / resources. There are an increasing number of children from other faiths attending St. Ambrose and these children are successfully integrated into the full life of the school. No parents have requested that their child be withdrawn from Religious Education.

Good use of ICT was evident during lesson observations. Teachers have a positive relationship with children during lessons. Children with specific learning needs are also well supported. The behaviour management and organisation of classrooms is very good and this has a positive impact on the learning of all children. Efficient assessment strategies observed being used in class enables some children to make good progress in lessons. Behaviour observed was generally good with any minor inappropriate behaviour being dealt with effectively through positive encouragement. Children who require additional support for managing behaviour or learning difficulties are well catered for through (13) teaching assistants appointed by the school. Most classes used house points or other systems as a reward for good behaviour or work. Pupil's good work and behaviour are also celebrated at a weekly assembly. There are well presented prayer focus areas in all classrooms and around school. Displays combine children's own work along with traditional symbols.

The marking policy means that the children know what they have done well and know what to do in order to improve further. Work in pupil's books are clearly marked and annotated to include how children might improve. WWW – What went well? EBI – Even better if.

The 6 lessons observed, ranged from satisfactory with good features (2), Good (2), Good with outstanding features (1), and outstanding (1). Effective use of questioning was observed in all lessons.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

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

Grade 2

The school's leadership team is deeply committed to the church's mission. It is welcoming, supportive and understanding. The staff and leadership of the school work very hard to meet the needs of all pupils against a background of social disadvantage.

The Chair of Governors and parish priest is a regular visitor in school and is able to witness the school's Catholic ethos and its religious and moral standards. He celebrates weekly Mass with the children and also comes to talk to the children about his role. In addition, the RE Governor has an in depth knowledge and understanding of the RE taught curriculum and also supports the Sacramental Programme along with the Deputy Head Teacher. The Head Teacher reports to the Governing Body termly, which includes a section related specifically to RE.

The RE Co-ordinator is fully aware of the needs of curriculum RE and attends the relevant Inset provided by the Diocese to keep abreast of future developments. Teaching staff are encouraged to obtain CCRS qualification and two members of staff are currently involved in this process and which is being paid for through the school budget. Inset is regularly provided to develop the spirituality of the staff. The RE Co-ordinator ably leads the monitoring cycle of RE through; planning, outcomes, work scrutiny, observations, displays and assemblies. A new tracking system has been introduced for the collection of data from RE which, will help the leadership team analyse the school's strengths and areas for future interventions.

The Mission Statement is reflected in all policies and the relationships which are developed in the school. There is an emphasis on respect for all members of God's family and is reflected in the overarching school rule – Respect. It permeates all aspects of school life and is prominently displayed throughout the school.

Parents receive the weekly Wednesday Word, which helps keep parents informed of the weekly readings and Gospels. Regular newsletters and bulletins advertise upcoming events in the school and parish. The parish are also informed about school events and developments through the church's newsletters.