

DIOCESE OF  SALFORD
INSPECTION REPORT

School: Saint Mary's RC Primary School

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Headteacher: Mr. P. Heaton

Parish Priest: Fr James Manock

Chair of Governors: Mrs. I. Turner

RE Leaders: Mrs R. Gerrard / Mrs K.Wallace

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: January 2012

Date of previous inspection: March 2009

Reporting Inspector: Mrs. C. Page

Information about the school

St. Mary's R.C. Primary is a two form entry Roman Catholic voluntary aided primary school in the Diocese of Salford. Pupil numbers have increased since the last RE inspection. St. Mary's serves the parish of St. Mary and St. Philip Neri. The strong links to the parish and the work of the fully committed parish priest enriches pupils' religious, spiritual, moral and social education and experiences. The majority of learners live in the parish. There are currently 463 children on roll. St. Mary's R.C. Primary is situated in a semi urban setting and has a wide and varied catchment area. The intake exists mainly of children from the local private housing and the council estates of east and west Radcliffe, the school attracts children from as far as the Bolton boundary. The school supports the south cluster partner schools by admitting Catholic pupils unable to access Catholic education within the St. Monica's catchment area. There are a number of families who are socially disadvantaged and claiming benefits. The standard indicative admission number is 60. The age range of the learners is 3 to 11 years, with 414 children on roll in the main school, also 49 part-time children in FS1. Most children attend the nursery prior entry into main school. Foundation Stage Profile scores are generally in line with National expectations. There are a small number of children with English as an additional language. 10.1% of children are eligible for free school meals ranking the school 41 (out of 63) within the LA's Index of Multiple Deprivation. Attendance is good and improving (97.2% in 2011). There are currently 14.2% of children are on the SEN register, 66 at SA and SA+ and 0.07% of children have a statement. There are 14% of children who have identified Special Educational Needs. There is 1% of children with a statement of Special Educational Needs. 97.6% learners are baptised Catholics. The Reception class intake in September 2011 was 100% baptised Roman Catholic. There are 15 full time teaching staff and 4 part-time teachers, of whom 12 (63%) are of the Catholic faith. 10 teachers (52.6) hold the CCRS/CTC/CRE qualification.

Overall Effectiveness

Grade 1

Saint Mary's is an outstanding Catholic school. It is very successful in offering its learners a traditional Catholic education in a friendly and supportive environment. All feel a part of the school/parish family and differences are welcomed and celebrated. The school celebrates the integral closeness of the parish church, which stands as the flagship for the whole community. The parish church is adjoining the school and is a rich resource readily available for use by the school family. Saint Mary's is very well supported by the parish priest. This ensures the pastoral and spiritual needs of the learners and their families are successfully met resulting in excellent home, school and parish links. Parents expressed their delight at being a part of a wide caring family. The school is firmly at the heart of the parish it serves. Provision for Religious Education is good and is well monitored by the Religious Education leaders. Standards are good and improving and are continually reviewed and developed. Positive relationships are evident throughout the whole school community. The inspector noted the genuine respect and care children and adults expressed for each other. Under the energetic and inspired leadership of the head teacher and his able, hard working team the school has created an ethos where everyone recognises the need to work together as an "extended family" showing love and concern for all members. Learners enjoy coming to school, are well motivated and keen to achieve. Teachers have high expectations of all children to reach their full potential. Children are friendly, polite and welcoming and their good behaviour is achieved through positive praise and reinforcement. Throughout the day the inspector saw many instances when children were encouraged and challenged to achieve. All staff are excellent role models. The inspector observed three Acts of Worship during the day. Collective worship is a strength of the school. The school offers its learners a wide variety of opportunities to develop their talents. The head teacher, with the support of the governing body ensures that the teaching and learning at St Mary's school is not only about academic success but is primarily about developing the whole child for their future role as a catholic within a global society.

Points for action from the last inspection**1. Further develop the process of moderation of pupils' assessment tasks so as to create an agreed standard of the levels at which pupils are working.**

The school is currently in the process of embedding and teaching "The Way, the Truth and the Life." Inset has been undertaken. The school have begun to use assessment each half term to take the learning forward. The leader wishes to personalise this area for Saint Mary's after further Diocesan training. The leader then intends to create a school portfolio and an assessment folder as per the previous scheme. Scrutiny of work has been conducted.

2. Continue to develop the monitoring of teaching and learning as identified in the Religious Education action plan.

The creation of a dual R.E. leadership role of R.E. co-leader and liturgical life leader in August 2010 and the inclusion of a member of SMT shows the intention of the Governors to lead the school through faith values. The RE co-ordinators monitor and evaluate developments in RE during Key Stage planning sessions each term; through examination of teacher's planning, discussion and informal support. The co-ordinators have been working with staff to implement the assessment tool for RE and the new 'The Way, the Truth, the Life' scheme. The RE link governor plays an active role and has undertaken lesson observations previously. She meets with the R.E. leaders regularly and has attended R.E. INSET. The Parish Priest and leaders meet regularly, formally and informally, to discuss any issues and evaluate progress in RE and Collective Worship. The Chair of Governors, Head teacher and Parish Priest also meet to discuss and to organise opportunities for co-operation between parish and school. The RE leaders present regular written reports to Governors. RE is evident in the School Improvement Plan and Head teacher's Reports.

Capacity to improve

Capacity for sustained improvement at St Mary's is excellent. The head teacher and staff are committed to the continuous development of the faith life of the school. There is also a shared commitment to improve standards and attainment in Religious Education. The mission statement is currently being reviewed. This will involve staff, governors, parents and children. Older children have been given the opportunity of writing their own version of the mission statement. The new statement will strengthen further the unity between parish and school.

The Religious Education and Ethos leaders, with the help of the head teacher and all the staff, have reviewed policies and practices within the school. The enthusiasm and motivation of staff, governors and children ensure that the school will be well placed to build upon good practice and sustain further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

There are no significant areas to be addressed. The school needs to develop an assessment system linked to the Way, the Truth and the Life which will inform future teaching and learning and is adapted for St Mary's. Time must be allocated for the RE leaders to complete lesson observations and opportunities to speak to children, in order to further monitor teaching and learning within the classroom.

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

The inspector judges the lessons observed as good/outstanding. Teachers plan their lessons carefully. Lessons have a clear focus and specific learning objectives which were carefully explained to the children. Resources were carefully chosen and appropriate to the age of the learners. They are well prepared and used effectively to enhance the learning process. In Year 2 children used a small crucifix as a focus while reading their prayers to the group. In lessons observed there was a good mix of direct teacher input, meaningful discussions and tasks set which met the needs of all learners. In Year 6 higher order questioning encouraged the learners to think about their answers and thus extend their learning. There was also good use of ICT. Supportive teaching assistants work closely with teachers and enable all children to access the religious curriculum. During the reception Act of Worship this was particularly evident. All books were carefully marked according to the school's marking policy. Leaders have asked staff to comment in their marking, when a child has been particularly enthusiastic during oral lesson work. Higher ability pupils must be continually challenged to reach their full potential.

Learners have excellent attitudes to their learning. In Year 2 pupils listened attentively to the teacher and listened respectfully to others' comments and prayers during the lesson. In Year 4 the children were challenged to be reporters asking Simeon, Mary, Joseph and others in the temple questions specifically to have an empathy with the emotions of these people. They asked thought provoking questions and in groups had lively discussions on the appropriateness of their ideas. They discussed their work sensibly. There was good use of technical equipment which created enthusiasm in the children for the task in hand. Children's behaviour is very good and during lessons children with special needs were supported really sensitively by TAs. High quality displays in external areas are child centred. There is a rota for updating display boards. The school council and other pupils were able to voice their positive views regarding school life, behaviour, friendships, safety and rewards. Pupils are happy and confident that they are loved. Lunchtimes are positive. The inspector observed happy children returning to class after lunch having been cared for by a committed team of lunchtime staff. The school is kept clean and tidy by a friendly, welcoming site manager.

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education**Grade 1**

The school provides a differentiated curriculum for all, fostering individual potential and celebrating achievements. Those aspects of the curriculum which develop pupils religious and personal development, encouraging care of others and enabling them to strive to develop a sense of stewardship towards the world which God created, and an awareness of global need. This brings a real sense of reality to the range of extra curricular opportunities which raise funds for St Joseph's Penny, Cafod and Macmillan Nurses.

Prayer is central to the life of the school and a key part of every school celebration. Prayer opportunities for staff and pupils are planned and recorded. School and parish work hand in hand in preparing children for their sacramental journey. Year 4 pupils are "Prayer buddies to year 3 pupils. Following the success of the 'papal stone', the school plans to design and build a 'grotto' outdoors as a focus for children's prayer in honour of parents who have passed away. Pupils' liturgical formation is well planned and shows progression. There is a close link with the liturgical life of the church. The themes, chosen by pupils and staff, reflect a deep understanding of the Church's mission and include the spiritual aspirations of all pupils. The inspector observed pupils act with reverence and very keen to participate. In Year 3 pupils

reflected on Christ being the Lamb of God. They sang energetically and joyfully, reflected in silence and joined in prayers appropriately and with confidence. During the KS1 assembly lead by the head teacher, the children celebrated each other's successes. During all acts of prayer and worship good use was made of music, candles and prayer focus to enhance the opportunities for engagement and response. Children have a good understanding of the religious seasons and feasts and are skilled in the use of scripture, religious artefacts, hymns and other forms of prayer. Children often lead the hymns. Altars throughout the school provide opportunities for reflection and celebration.

Leaders and Managers

Grade 1

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. The revised mission statement will further support the faith life after it has been reviewed and modified this year. The love of Christ permeates all aspects of the life of the school. There are excellent home, school and parish links, fostered and strengthened through the active involvement of staff and governors in the life of the parish. The active involvement of both parish priest and governors in collective worship and the Religious Education curriculum is paramount to the life of the school. The governing body is well led by the knowledgeable and supportive chair. The detailed reports prepared by the head teacher and leaders ensure that governors are well informed of all aspects of school life. The school gives excellent support to the Sacramental Programme. Staff lead by their example, many attending church services. Ten of the teachers hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies or its equivalent. The governing body encourages and support all teachers in acquiring this qualification. The Governors ensure additional support is in place for non-Catholic staff by pairing teachers within age groups. Excellent community links have been developed. The school values the importance of working within partnerships to ensure school progress. The school is fully inclusive. It offers morning and after school provision and operates an open door policy for assemblies. Parents discussed with the inspector how the school and parish are supportive and caring. They feel welcome at all times and members of the School/Parish family. The school as expressed by one of the parents is a beacon for Catholic education in the area.