



INSPECTION REPORT

School: St Anne's and St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

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Headteacher: Miss Felicity Watson

Chair of Governors: Mr Bernard Holden

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 Anne's and St Joseph's is a Roman Catholic voluntary aided primary school in the Diocese of Salford. It serves the parishes of St Anne and St Joseph in the town of Accrington. The school is situated in a residential area on the edge of the town centre. The pupils come from a diverse range of socio economic backgrounds and housing and most are of White British heritage. The admission number is 45 and there are currently 312 children on register aged 4-11 of whom 80% are baptised Catholics. 9% of pupils are entitled to free school meals and 11% have English as an additional language. There are 35 on the special educational needs register of whom 5 have a statement of special educational needs and 5 require intensive support.

There are 14 teachers of whom 93% are Catholic. 6 teachers have the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies and 5 teachers are due to complete the qualification this year.

Overall Effectiveness

Grade 1

St Anne's and St Joseph's is an outstanding Catholic school. The children are very well behaved around the school and in the classrooms and they are well motivated and keen to achieve high standards. There are plenty of opportunities for positive reinforcement and praise and the staff are excellent role models who form good relationships with pupils and parents.

The staff and governors are justly proud of the prayer life of the school and the children are given many opportunities to celebrate Mass, take part in liturgies and assemblies and to learn traditional, reflective and private prayer. Provision for Religious Education is outstanding and is well monitored by the Religious Education coordinator. Standards are high and are continually reviewed and developed.

The headteacher with the support of her staff and governors strives for high achievement through excellence and enjoyment and attention to the spiritual life of the children. They ensure that teaching and learning is not only about academic success but also about developing the whole child for their future place in society.

Capacity for sustained improvement

Grade 1

Capacity for sustained improvement at St Anne's and St Joseph's Catholic school is outstanding. The dedicated and enthusiastic headteacher and her staff are committed to the continuous development of the faith life of the school and the Religious Education curriculum. The senior leadership team have a range of experiences but share the same vision of excellence and are well supported in this by the governing body.

The mission statement is central to everything that happens in the school. In the school entrance is a beautiful mural of St Anne and St Joseph completed recently by a local artist. Above is the statement, 'This is our school. Let love dwell here,' and the staff makes sure that this really happens.

The children feel safe and cared for and the relationships between staff, children and parents is excellent.

Recent changes in the school buildings have enhanced the learning environment and the religious displays in classrooms and around the school have a visual impact on teaching and learning of Religious Education. The Religious Education coordinator ensures that monitoring and evaluation takes place and this informs future developments in the Religious Education curriculum. The new diocesan syllabus, The Way, The Truth and The Life has been implemented throughout the school and staff training has been arranged for the new year to further develop the curriculum.

What the school needs to do to improve further

There are no major issues to address. The school needs to continue to maintain the outstanding practice seen in teaching and learning and in the religious life of the school.

PUPILS

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

Grade 1

St Annes and St Joseph's is an outstanding school. Attainment on entry is below average but pupils make good progress during their time in school and achieve at least national standards by the end of Year 6. There is excellent provision for children with special educational needs and they are actively involved in the life of the school as was seen during inspection in the musicians accompanying the singing. Committed teachers and dedicated support staff also ensure that new arrivals in the school and children with English as a Second Language feel welcome and part of the school community. In one class visited on inspection the children began their prayers with the sign of the cross in Polish to include two children in their class from Poland. Able and gifted children are given opportunities to develop confidence with their questioning skills and critical reflection in well differentiated classroom practice and written work.

Each day begins with a prayer assembly with either the whole school or in individual classrooms. In the headteacher's assembly seen during inspection the children were considering Advent and how they should prepare for Christmas. A highlight of the assembly was the appearance of the white rabbit who was always late and never prepared for anything. Some of the children made a circle around the Advent wreath as they sang, 'Come and join the circle.' All the children were very well behaved and focussed and sang

beautifully to the musical accompaniment. A very good prayer liturgy in year 2 began in a darkened room lit only with candles and quiet music playing in the background. The children had written their own prayers for Advent on a paper hand and these were to form an Advent wreath of prayers to be displayed in the classroom. Two children in Class 9 had written and planned an excellent prayer liturgy on Advent. All the other children in the class were involved with readings and music and a symbolic lighting of the first candle of Advent and there was time for reflection and meditation. There was evidence of other pupil planned assemblies and the children were very keen to plan their own liturgy in the future. Class prayer books form part of the prayer focal areas in each classroom and there was also collections of prayers written by children previously.

Mass is celebrated in school at key points in year including a welcome Mass at the beginning of the school year and Masses on Holy days which are well attended by parents and parishioners. Liturgies are planned in Lent and Advent which take the form of 'readarounds,' which retell, reflect and celebrate the churches seasons of preparation. The sacramental programme is organised through parish catechists and staff support all sacramental celebrations in the two parishes represented in the school. During inspection, children were able to relate their experiences in celebrating the sacraments using the correct language and showing a good understanding of what takes place. The headteacher and staff attend Mass in the local parishes and the headteacher is involved in providing the music on a regular basis.

Leadership skills are developed through the school council which meets regularly with the school leadership team. The group has been involved in fund raising to send to a parish project in Kenya and with the rest of the school they have also helped to raise money for CAFOD, Caritas and other local and national charities. The school has been working with Sports Relief recently to coincide with the Olympics in 2012. The school is also involved with the diocesan relay of prayer and has Serbia as it's partner country. There is an anti-bullying committee of children and staff and this has been instrumental in placing plaques around the playground to remind the children about friendship and caring.

Liaison with the partner high school is very good. There are regular meetings between the headteachers and parish priests and regular joint events are held. There is an annual joint carol service, a youth Mass and a Year 7 welcome Mass attended by staff from St Anne's and St Joseph's. The high school arranges a cross curricular day for pupils from Year 4, 5 and 6 from the feeder schools and transition days are arranged for the Year 6 children who will be joining the school for their secondary education. Curricular meetings between various departments take place and there are plans to develop this further. The headteacher from the High school with some past pupils including the head boy attended the Advent assembly during inspection which was an excellent visual form of partnership for the children and staff.

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

Grade 1

Effective provision for Catholic Education at St Anne's and St Joseph's is outstanding. The quality of teaching and learning is at least good with many outstanding features. Staff are excellent role models with high personal and professional standards and they plan and deliver interesting and interactive lessons. The lessons are creative using many styles and genres. There is a good balance between learning about religion and learning from good example which is seen around the school and in the classrooms. Class 5 children were learning about Advent through the story of Baboushka. A thought tunnel was used to consider what Baboushka may have been thinking after the visit of the three wise men. This good lesson finished with the children passing around a bag of 'positive actions' to help them consider how they could prepare for Christmas during Advent. Children in early years were introduced to the Advent wreath in their learning groups and then talked about how we get ready today for the arrival of a new baby and how it would have been in the time when Jesus was born. The children were then divided into groups working on well planned, differentiated activities covering foundation stage learning goals. The day was very windy but the children in one group really enjoyed taking part in an activity in the outdoor learning area. Class 3 were reflecting on the Annunciation and on God's choice of Mary to be the mother of Jesus. After recapping the story the children moved into ability groups and were involved in developing a role play of Mary and the Angel, writing about Mary's emotions and making and decorating angels. A very good lesson in Year 6 looked at the ten commandments and considered how they would apply to modern life. The children were shown various modern day images on the whiteboard and asked which commandment was being broken and what could be the consequences. The children then joined work groups to complete related activities including role play and discussions on the first commandment. The children were very keen and well behaved and the teacher guided them with praise and encouragement. There were many instances of differentiated work in all the children's books and there was a very high standard of presentation and marking. Expectations in Religious Education compares well with work in other curriculum areas.

World Religions are taught in Key Stage 2 and there are many instances of reference to other faiths and cultures in the life of the school. When the children pray the Muslim children are encouraged to say their own prayers and in other acts of worship the children reflect on different cultures and traditions. Children learning about Judaism took part in a Seder Meal and remembered that this would have been like the meal Jesus took with the apostles at the Last Supper. Children are also learning about Serbia as part of the diocesan relay of prayer leading up to the 2012 Olympic Games. Parents are aware that children can be withdrawn from Prayer and Worship and Religious Curriculum lessons but this has never been requested.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

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

Grade 1

The Catholic life of St Anne's and St Joseph's school is outstanding. The mission statement is central to the school's existence and is seen in policies and all school documents. Parents are kept involved in the life of the school through newsletters and the school website and are welcome at assemblies, Masses and other school events. The 'Friends United', a group of parents and friends of the school, are very supportive in fund raising and in organising events to bring together the school community including a Quiz Night to welcome new parents. Initial home links begin when children are due to start in reception and foundation stage staff visit families in their homes to introduce themselves to the children and their parents. The school is held in high esteem by the parents who are very supportive and cooperative. Parishioners from both parishes are welcomed into school and the school supports their Christmas and summer fairs. There is an excellent relationship with parish catechists and there is collaboration between both groups leading up to the celebration of the sacraments. The school relates well to the community through the knitting club and other parish groups who work with the children.

The Chair of Governors meets regularly both formally and informally with the headteacher and the Religious Education governor meets with the coordinator to consider developments in the curriculum. The governor with responsibility for assessment meets with the senior leadership team to discuss progress including assessment in Religious Education. The governors are also aware of what happens in school through the headteacher's reports and these are responded to and questioned if appropriate. Governors are also sent the minutes of committee meetings and the school newsletters. Religious Education is prioritised in the school development plan and in the school's self evaluation form. The priests from the two parishes are members of the governing body and with the other governors are regularly involved in the life of the school. Governors offer challenge and support and take part in any relevant training from the diocese and local authority.

High expectations in Religious Education are set by the headteacher and Religious Education coordinator. The new syllabus has been adapted to cover the range of abilities in the school and for the mixed age classes. The well organised and informative Religious Education coordinators file includes planning and assessment and monitoring and evaluation. Regular work scrutinies and classroom observations take place and detailed feedback is given to staff. The Religious Education coordinator also prepares an annual report for teachers and governors. Class teachers keep their own assessments and the children's progress is levelled regularly. Religious Education forms 10% of the curriculum and meets diocesan and national guidelines. There are good quality books, resources and artefacts for religious Education which are

stored regularly. Annual plans are drawn up for Religious Education using the 3 year liturgical calendar and this includes the need for review and training. There is training in the new year for all the staff to enhance the new syllabus, five teachers are completing the diocesan Catholic Studies in Religious Education certificate and two teachers have taken part in management training. All staff have a Religious Education objective as part of their performance management assessments.