

INSPECTION REPORT

St Malachy's RC Primary School, Eggington Street, Collyhurst, Manchester, M40 7RG

Inspection date Friday, 16th October 2015

Reporting Inspectors Mr Dennis Harrison
 Mrs Anne Heard

Inspection carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Type of School | Primary |
| URN | 105532 |
| Age range of pupils | 3-11 |
| Number on roll | 233 |
| Appropriate authority | The Governing Body |
| Chair of Governors | Vacant |
| Headteacher | Mrs Janine Parker |
| Religious Education Subject Leader | Claire O'Brien |
| Date of previous inspection | March 2010 |

| The Inspection judgements are: | Grade | Explanation of the Grades 1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3=Requires Improvement 4 = Inadequate |
|---|-------|--|
| Overall effectiveness of the school | 1 | |
| The quality of Catholic Leadership | 1 | |
| The quality of the Word of God community | 1 | |
| The quality of the Welcome community | 1 | |
| The quality of Welfare | 1 | |
| The quality of Worship | 1 | |
| The quality of Witness | 1 | |
| The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements | | |

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

St Malachy's RC Primary School is located in the Collyhurst area of North Manchester, an area of considerable social deprivation. The school is part of the parish community of St Malachy's, St Patrick's and St Edmund's, led by parish priest Fr Ged Murphy. There 233 children on roll of which 90% are baptised Roman Catholic. 57% of children are from ethnic minority groups with 27% having English as a second language. 46% of children are entitled to a free school meal and 51% having entitlement to a free school meal in the last 6 years. Mobility is low, being less than 2%. All teachers are Catholic, with five possessing the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies and three successfully completing the Catholic Leadership Programme. The headteacher joined the school in September 2014.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS OUTSTANDING

There is something very special happening at St Malachy's! Although the school serves an area not without its challenges, the headteacher and her team, ably supported by a committed and well informed governing body, have created a school that provides an outstanding Catholic education for its children. The parish priest is a much loved and welcome person in this community. This is a joyful and vibrant place where the children and their families feel a keen sense of belonging. The children love being at St Malachy's and are proud of everything the school stands for. Whether it be the warm welcome on arrival, or the exceptional partnership with parents, St Malachy's is a haven of calmness and harmony within its community. Parents are full of praise for the school and feel there is always a friendly face or a shoulder to cry on. They appreciate the high expectations that the staff have of the children and each other. As one parent stated, 'We are blessed to have our children here. There is no limit to what you can ask – it is just like talking to another parent or a friend'. The links with local schools, agencies and services, especially the Lalley Centre, demonstrates to the children that working together as a loving, wide and extended family is a strong part of our Catholic family tradition. From generally low starting points the children are nurtured and, with total commitment and dedication from the entire team, make outstanding progress in their learning, especially in RE. Teaching observed was always good and on many occasions outstanding. The work in children's books is impressive and they enjoy learning about their faith and how to be a child of God. One pupil, in trying to sum up in a word how lovely his school is, came up with the word 'blestful'. We understand exactly what he means!

THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- The highly effective and inspirational leadership of the school from the Headteacher, who is superbly supported by the Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body.
- The strong sense of community that provides outstanding Welcome, Welfare and Witness.
- The commitment and high expectations of all staff that ensure the school continues to improve and give the absolute best for the children.
- All adults go the extra mile so that the children have exceptionally positive memories of their faith journey at St Malachy's.

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

The headteacher, who has been in post for just over one year, has wisely built on the journey of school improvement commenced before her arrival. She has gained the respect of the entire school community and has set an ambitious course to ensure the children can enjoy a superb, broad, fulfilling and rewarding experience at St Malachy's. She is determined, as are all staff and leaders, to allow each child to shine in any way they can, as children of God. She is full of praise for the determined efforts of her leaders and colleagues, and they know they are valued. Hence staff morale is extremely high and there is a belief that nothing will stand in the way of the children having the best possible Catholic education. Hence the children grow in faith and love with exceptional role models. The deputy headteacher, who has been at the school for many years,

has played a pivotal role in welcoming new staff and providing a constant thread of stability that has allowed the school to manage change effectively. Leaders at all levels are growing in confidence. This impacts very positively on the rate of progress that the children make, as does the strong team ethic that is evident across the school. This is especially the case demonstrated by the RE subject leader, who leads her area with skill and determination resulting in RE having the highest possible status. The governing body, under the spiritual guidance of the parish priest, has led the school through changing times. The governors appreciate how much the school has now moved forward and wish to provide every encouragement and support to the staff to ensure this exciting journey continues. They believe the successes of the school are precious and treasure them knowing how important the school is in this community in providing a rich experience for the children.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORD OF GOD IS OUTSTANDING

Religious Education is core to the education of children attending St. Malachy's. The school's rigorous approach to early literacy enhances the children's confidence and outcomes in RE. They become willing and confident writers. From the Early Years, the children are taught about the Word of God and a simple baseline assessment is administered to assess the children's knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs and symbols. An outstanding and engaging lesson was observed in the Reception class where the children were immersed in their learning about the Rites of Baptism and belonging to God's family. All areas of the classroom including teacher led activities had been carefully planned to ensure quality religious learning for the children.

In a KS1 class, the children benefited from excellent use of support and learnt about welcome in baptism. The lesson had pace and purpose, giving the children time to talk about their learning, to have support in their writing and to produce very good pieces of work. Teaching was enhanced by the positive atmosphere and the outstanding behaviour of the children. This was also the case in a KS2 class where the exceptional use of language helped the children to understand deeply the concepts of vocations and commitment.

Further observations of other lessons showed a delivery of a well matched curriculum. Assessment opportunities were used effectively to monitor and evaluate learning. Considerable thought has been placed in ensuring that the religious education at St. Malachy's is deep, progressive and creative, ensuring that children become independent and reflective learners. Religious literacy is developed thoroughly from Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 6 providing opportunities for inspirational teaching and learning.

THE QUALITY OF THE WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING

The quality of welcome is exceptional at St. Malachy's where the strong bonds between parents, children, staff and the wider community, including the Brothers and Sisters who visit the school, are clearly evident.

The new entrance area to the school provides a warm and welcoming atmosphere. It ensures an opportunity for all to feel included and welcomed in to the school. The atmosphere throughout the school reflects a strong sense of belonging. There is an all-consuming pride in everyone who is part of St. Malachy's community which reverberates through every aspect of school life.

The welcome received by all at the school reflects the commitment to the Good News lived and is proclaimed and witnessed through school policies, the excellent behaviour of the pupils and a clear and a genuine respect for all within the diverse community of St. Malachy's.

Parents are very committed to this school and talked very positively about how they feel listened to and supported. The staff at St. Malachy's are approachable and caring; they talked with great pride about the exceptional outreach work achieved by the children, staff and parents. Particular mention was given to the FAST project and how successful it had been in reaching families from different cultures to make them feel part of the school community.

THE QUALITY OF THE WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING

Over the last year St Malachy's has transformed its partnership with families and it is now clear to all that there is exemplary practice in this area. Parents have total trust in the school. Barriers no longer exist and parents value the way all staff are prepared to listen, give of their time and make things better. The parents have their own room to meet in. They can enjoy a cup of tea, chat and feel a part of all that is happening in this busy school. St Malachy's is a certified FAST school (Families and Schools Together) and this has seen numerous families have the opportunity to come into school, enjoy developing new skills and to get to know

one another better. This has opened the door for building confidence and giving better opportunities to those involved to be a valued part of the community. It has impacted very positively on the lives of the children. It really matters to this school that every child and every family get the best of care. The staff go the extra mile, reach out and ensure that troubled waters are calmed and that no one feels isolated or marginalised. Significantly the whole community thrives on supporting people in need, both near and far. The school unites in a spirit of kindness and charity, despite many families finding it hard to afford the everyday cost of living. The children are beautifully cared for and know they are loved and valued. As children face challenging times in their lives the school is ready to step in and support. The children have received support for their emotional intelligence through a specific scheme that personalises what they need on an individual basis. This supports those more vulnerable so that they feel safe and secure. Hence welfare is an outstanding feature of St Malachy's.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

Although the school graded this area as good, inspectors witnessed only outstanding examples of wide and rich experiences of prayer and worship. The children approach all acts of worship with reverence and respect. At the whole school Harvest assembly the children praised God in song, accompanied by exceptionally gifted musicians. It was a joyful occasion attended by almost a hundred parents and visitors. Children performed with confidence and skill. The sense of pride in their achievements and their almsgiving was clearly evident to everyone present. Child-led meditation is a special feature of St Malachy's. Even the younger children pray and meditate beautifully. In a Key Stage 1 class the children examined different pictures of Our Lady and discussed how she may be feeling in each picture. A time of prayerful meditation was beautifully observed, giving the children time to enjoy peacefully the moment and to think of why Our Lady said 'Yes' to God. Similarly in a lower Key Stage 2 class a calm and peaceful session of prayer was expertly led by the children as they placed themselves into the presence of God and meditated mindfully in total silence. The children talked confidently about Worship and how, by sharing many opportunities for different types of prayer, their school has become a happier and more peaceful place. The staff pray together as the beginning of each day and this affirms the sincerity of the Mission of the school in a profound and meaningful way.

THE QUALITY OF THE WITNESS IS OUTSTANDING

The School has been astutely organised to create a calming and enriching environment. In the words of St Benedict 'nothing harsh or burdensome' exists at St Malachy's. The school's mission statement has been recently reviewed with the children. It is beautifully worded and is accessible to all. It sets a tone for the day to day spiritual life of the school which is steeped in the values of the Gospels and where Jesus is at the heart of this wonderful school. Indeed it is a joy to witness how Catholic traditions and teachings ebb and flow into each and every room, providing an atmosphere of prayer and peace. The children are led by Chaplains who take their role very seriously and are inspiring role models. They link with older Chaplains from the High School and this helps to define a maturity in their work. The school has excellent links locally with community groups, other schools and charities. Despite the lack of material riches that many of the families experience they are kind beyond words, both in their work for charity and the time they give for others. The children, encouraged by the staff and their parents, reach out to those in need with big hearts. They learn and play well together and the school thoroughly deserves its excellent reputation. All children learn to play a musical instrument and the school band plays wonderful music in praise of God! Hence the school bears witness to its mission and vision in an outstanding way.

AGREED AREA FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- To continue to build on the outstanding progress the school has made in recent times and to celebrate the blessings that this hard work is bringing into the lives of the children and families at St Malachy's.

Tuesday, 20 October 2015

Dear children,

Thanks you so much for the lovely warm welcome that you gave us on the day of your RE inspection. We are pleased to say that we think St Malachy's is a truly special place. It is not just because your school looks so impressive as you approach it but because of the special things inside!

Mrs Parker is an excellent headteacher because she makes everyone feel that they have an important job to do and because she really cares. She asks all the teachers and helpers to do their best to make your days at school very enjoyable. We also really loved all your hard work – your lovely books, the way you become close to God by special prayers, by being kind and by sharing impressive talents. It is great to see how your mums and dads get into school so much and how they help the teachers by supporting you in your learning.

We will not forget how friendly you are and how well you treat one another. One of the best things to have is a wonderful school where everyone gets along and where you all get better and better at being children of God. That is so much to smile about.

So look after your school and everyone who belongs there – you have done amazingly well and you should be really proud to have an outstanding Catholic school!

God Bless

Mr Harrison and Mrs Heard
(Section 48 Inspectors)

Summary Report to Parents

On 16th October 2015 the school was inspected in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

The full report has been made available to the school and can also be accessed via both the school website and the Education section on the website of the Diocese of Salford.

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