

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. MARY'S ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Holcombe Drive Burnley Lancashire BB10 4BH

Inspection date March 2010
 Reporting Inspector Miss M. C. Whalley
 Inspection carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School Catholic Primary
 URN 119703
 Age range of pupils 3-11
 Number on roll 323
 Appropriate authority The governing body
 Chair of Governors Mr. A. Hutchinson
 Headteacher Mr. I. Jones
 Religious Education Co-ordinators Mrs. S. Mullen and Mrs. P. Giltrow-Shaw

Date of previous inspection January 2007

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

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Mary's is a Roman Catholic voluntary aided primary school in the Diocese of Salford. It serves the parish of St. Mary of the Assumption in Burnley. The school is located close to the town centre and comprises three separate buildings: Nursery, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The pupils come from a wide catchment area but a large percentage live in areas of high deprivation. The school is larger than average and most pupils are of white British heritage. The age range of the pupils is from 3 to 11 years. The standard admission number is 38 and there are currently 323 pupils on roll. 207 are baptised Catholics. The religious profile of the children entering the school has changed in recent years and thus the percentage of Catholic children in Key Stage 1 is now 20% lower than that in Key Stage 2. 22% are eligible for free school meals and this is above average. The school has identified 53 pupils as having special educational needs and 4 have a statement of special educational need. 44 pupils are on School Action plus. 12 out of 13 of the teaching staff (92%) are Catholics.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

Provision for Religious Education is satisfactory. The school is aware of the next steps for development. All staff promote a warm and welcoming environment in which the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. The inclusive nature of the school and the provision for pupils with special educational needs are examples of the above. The school provides opportunities for prayer and worship both within the school and in church. Pupils are polite and friendly, have a good attitude to their learning overall and enjoy coming to school. They are encouraged to support and care for each other and this is particularly evident in the respect and care shown to those pupils with special needs. Teaching assistants support the teachers well. The new chair of governors and the headteacher look forward to leading the school into the future.

Improvement since the last inspection

Following the last Section 48 inspection in January 2007 the acting headteacher has been appointed as headteacher and a new deputy headteacher has been appointed from within the school. A new chair of governors was appointed in November 2009 and a clergy governor who had already worked closely with the school was appointed link governor for Religious Education. One of the four key issues arising from the previous Section 48 inspection has been addressed. The remainder have only been partially addressed and have not yet been satisfactorily resolved or begun.

Capacity to improve

The school is aware that issues arising from the previous inspection remain to be addressed and the capacity to improve is judged to be satisfactory. The school is encouraged to address outstanding issues in a structured and systematic way and to make this a priority.

What the school should do to improve further

- Establish consistency in the application of the assessment procedures in Religious Education throughout the school and apply more rigorous tracking of pupil progress.
- Ensure that the time allocated for curriculum Religious Education is used effectively to enable learners in upper Key Stage 2 to produce extended pieces of independent writing appropriate to their age and ability as identified at the last inspection.
- Ensure that the curriculum at Key Stage 2 meets the needs of the mixed-age classes as identified at the last inspection.
- Raise standards of attainment by implementing the monitoring and evaluating of the planning, delivery and assessment of curriculum Religious Education throughout the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are satisfactory with some elements that are good. The Religious Education governor plays an active role in school life and is a frequent visitor to the school. His commitment and support for both the staff and the children underpins the religious life of the school. He meets with the headteacher and Religious Education co-ordinators, celebrates whole school Masses and leads liturgical celebrations. He reports to the governing body. The chair of governors meets regularly with the headteacher. The governing body should now be more formally involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the Religious Education curriculum. The quality of the relationships between staff and learners is strengthened by the inclusive nature of the provision for pupils with special educational needs. There is good liaison between outside agencies and the school. An example of this is the therapeutic and emotional support provided for pupils and their families. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good and examples of this include Place2Be, a Nurture group, the Bridge Project and visits to mosques and the Jewish museum. The school Mission Statement has been reviewed and is displayed throughout the school. Eight members of staff have the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The school has judged the provision for collective worship as good. The inspector agrees. Throughout the school year opportunities for liturgical celebrations are provided for pupils. They celebrate Masses in church each term. Weekly whole school assemblies are led by the headteacher and each class leads an assembly twice during the year. No children are withdrawn from collective worship. During the collective worship observed throughout the inspection the children listened well and prayed with reverence and respect. Catechists support the school in the teaching of the Sacramental Programme at church. Prayer and worship is seen as an opportunity to support the gospel teaching. Families are encouraged to be involved via the distribution of the "Wednesday Word". To further enhance the children's experience the school is encouraged to implement collective worship in accordance with the Salford Diocesan guidelines. In every classroom there is a focus for prayer and these are used by pupils and teachers. In the Nursery this has been arranged with particular care and attention and it is clear that in several classes the children's own prayers and work are valued. The school would benefit from greater involvement from the wider community in collective worship.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are satisfactory. Although the recording of assessment has been implemented, inconsistency in the application of assessment and record keeping impairs judgement. The monitoring and evaluation of assessment has yet to be introduced. The school is encouraged to do so and thus raise standards of work by analysing pupils' progress and identifying for pupils how they might improve. Pupils with special needs are well supported by good use of teaching assistants. Pupils demonstrated good factual knowledge and understanding of their faith appropriate to their age when discussing issues with the inspector. They were aware of their responsibilities both to the people close to them and to the wider community and how to support them in practical ways. All learners show a genuine interest in the Catholic faith, enjoy their Religious Education lessons and are developing an awareness and interest in other faiths and cultures. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. It varies from no response to teacher's praising good work and special effort and providing constructive comments to encourage learners to reflect on their responses to lessons and to improve their work.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education overall is satisfactory. The teaching observed during the inspection ranged from satisfactory to good. In the good lessons there is clear attention to detail and a good rapport between the teachers and the pupils. Pupils take part in their lessons with enthusiasm. Teachers demonstrate a sound knowledge of the subject. The pupils are well behaved overall and their attitude to learning is good. Teachers use a variety of teaching styles to engage their pupils, for example, in the Foundation Stage when the children were asked to discuss issues with a partner the response was focused and pupils demonstrated their knowledge well. Teaching assistants work hard and support both the pupils and the staff well. The recording of assessment has been implemented but is not monitored. No lesson observations are carried out by the subject leaders. The scrutiny of work is not carried out. As identified at the last inspection the school should introduce the monitoring and evaluation of planning, lesson observation, and assessment. Alongside the scrutiny of pupils' books, this will raise the standard of work produced and assist with the evaluation of pupils' progress. Resources are satisfactory and are utilised well.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The quality of the Religious Education curriculum is satisfactory. Religious Education has a very high profile in the school. School policies are regularly reviewed and support the Religious Education curriculum. In accordance with the requirements of the Bishops of England and Wales 10% of the teaching time is allocated to the subject. The timetables indicated that many lessons in Religious Education are placed at the end of the day and one class had two lessons on the same day. The written work in upper Key Stage 2 does not reflect the age and ability of the pupils. As at the last inspection the school is encouraged to examine the balance of the timetable and the timing of the lessons for Religious Education in order to enable learners in Upper Key Stage 2 to produce extended pieces of independent writing appropriate to their age and ability. The mixed age planning is still a cause for concern and the school is encouraged to seek further advice from the diocese. The school uses a range of resources and materials. These are supplemented by activities relating to the liturgical year and by a range of learning experiences. As already noted community cohesion is embraced through the Bridge Project, fund raising for local and global areas and extra-curricular visit to Mosques and the Jewish museum. No children are withdrawn from the teaching of Religious Education. The headteacher discusses issues relating to Religious Education with both the Religious Education governor and the chair of governors on a regular basis. The Religious Education governor reports each term to the governing body about the developments in the subject and finance for it is given the same priority as other core subjects in the School Development Plan.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education are satisfactory. One of the two subject co-ordinators took up the role for a second time in September 2009 and both are aware that changes need to be made to fulfil their role more effectively. In particular provision needs to be made for the systematic monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in Religious Education. Although this features in the School Development Plan there is as yet no formal monitoring of teacher planning or scrutiny of pupils' work or provision for lesson observations. The need for more rigorous application of these procedures was identified at the last inspection. The headteacher is aware of the need to develop the role of the subject co-ordinators in these areas. The chair of governors is supportive of the religious curriculum in the school. With the support of the headteacher it is intended that the co-ordinators will continue to attend diocesan in-service training and implement a more rigorous and structured approach to their role. This in turn should assist in raising attainment and standards in Religious Education. The school ensures that the Religious Education curriculum promotes social cohesion through its links to outside agencies and other faiths, managed by the headteacher, and by providing equality of opportunity for pupils with special educational needs. Through its fundraising the school also promotes respect and practical support for local, national and global issues.

