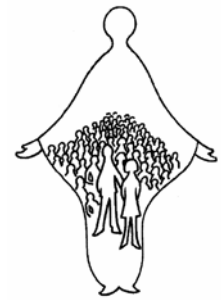


**SALFORD DIOCESE
INSPECTION REPORT**



ST.MARIE'S ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Edward Street The Mosses Bury BL9 0RZ

Inspection date December 2008

Reporting Inspector Mrs. Mary McGrail

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

Type of School Catholic Primary

URN 105335

Age range of pupils 3-11

Number on roll 242

Appropriate authority The governing body

Chair of Governors Mr. J. Hyndman J.P.

Headteacher Mrs. F. M. Robinson

Religious Education Co-ordinators Mrs. F.M. Robinson & Miss. O. Stecyk

Date of previous inspection June 2005

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

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Marie's is a Roman Catholic voluntary aided primary school in the Diocese of Salford. It serves the parish of St. Marie in Bury. The school is situated in the town centre of Bury in one of the poorest areas of the borough. The majority of learners live in the parish although some travel from outside the immediate area. The learners come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. Accommodation comprises private, rented and local authority housing. The age range of the learners is from 3 to 11 years. The indicative admission number is 30 and there are currently 242 learners on roll including 52 part time places in the Nursery. 180 learners are baptised Catholics. 20% of the non Catholic learners are of the Muslim faith. 25% of the learners have English as an additional language with 10% in the early stages of learning English. 15% are eligible for free school meals. 71 learners have been identified as having special educational needs with 3 learners having a statutory statement of special educational need. In recent years many learners have been welcomed from Poland and there are currently 33 Polish learners on roll. All 13 teachers (100%) are Catholics.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Marie's is a good school with many outstanding features. It is very effective in offering its learners a traditional Catholic education in a happy, caring and supportive environment. Difference and diversity are welcomed and celebrated. Parents are very supportive of the school. Learners have good attitudes to their learning and enjoy coming to school. They are friendly, polite and welcoming. They are very aware of the need to respect and recognise all people as children of God. Their behaviour at all times is very good. The school is very successful in promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its learners. Very well planned assemblies, involving the learners in praising, thanking and petitioning God are a strength of the school. Prayer has a high profile in school. The very supportive and knowledgeable governing body is appreciative of the dedicated and experienced headteacher who gives very good leadership to her hardworking staff. The school has developed very strong and productive links with the local community over many years and is a beacon for Catholic schools in the area. The school is very successful in realising the aims of its Mission Statement in its daily life.

Improvement since the last inspection

Following the last Section 23 inspection in June 2005 the school has addressed the issues identified and satisfactorily resolved them. Two teachers have left the school, one for retirement and have been replaced with a newly qualified teacher and a more experienced teacher. The entrance hall, administrative block and headteacher's office have been refurbished. Key Stage 2 classrooms have been repaired and the car park extended. With the support of the Parents Association a Prayer Garden has been established. Following the retirement of the very supportive parish priest in 2006 links with the parish have been weakened.

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation is very detailed, accurate and honest. The headteacher and her deputy have a very clear vision for the future development of the school. The very experienced chair of governors and the governing body share this vision. They all have the dedication and commitment to realise this vision. The appointment of a new parish priest in November 2008 has already had a very significant and positive effect on the school. The capacity to improve therefore is very good.

What the school should do to improve further

- There are no major significant issues to address. The school should continue to provide its learners with a quality education in an environment where all are welcomed and respected as children of God.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school have been judged as outstanding by the school. The inspector agrees. The clear and relevant Mission Statement is reviewed regularly. It permeates all aspects of the life of the school and is at the forefront of all policies. It is on display throughout the school. In the entrance to the school it is translated into Polish and Urdu to ensure all understand its aims. The governing body, headteacher and her deputy give very good leadership through their personal faith and commitment. As joint Religious Education co-ordinators their monitoring and evaluation of the overall provision is exemplary. This monitoring is a component part of the detailed reports from the headteacher to the governing body. This ensures they are well informed. Regular visits to the school by the governors confirm these reports. The governing body is committed to employing Catholic teachers to the school. Seven of the ten full time teachers hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies qualification. Another teacher is in the process of acquiring this qualification. It is a cause for concern that since 2006, on the retirement of the parish priest, the school's input into the Sacramental Programme has been severely restricted. As the school's community is very diverse the school has, over several years, developed strong and supportive links with the local community. The Family Learning project for literacy and numeracy is an example of the school's important contribution to community cohesion.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Provision for collective worship is good with several outstanding features. The school has a policy statement for collective worship. Throughout the year learners, staff and parents are given a range of opportunities to develop their relationship with God through whole school and year group Masses. Well planned and presented whole school and key stage assemblies are a feature of the provision. The one observed during the inspection with the theme of "Jesus the Light of the World" and Advent made excellent links with the celebration of Divali. A Hindu learner had dressed in her celebration clothes and spoke to the others learners about her tradition. This was a good and practical illustration of the school's contribution to community cohesion. Assembly themes reflect the Liturgical year and the Religious Education curriculum. Learners are involved in the presentations on a rota system. Special services are held during Holy Week and at harvest time. Prayer has a high profile in school. Each learner is given a school prayer book. All learners are familiar with the traditional prayers of the church and are happy to share their own spontaneous prayers with others. At all prayerful occasions observed during inspection learners were very respectful as well as praying in their own traditional manner. Class collective worship is carefully planned into the weekly timetable. All learners are fully involved in this inclusive provision and no learner is withdrawn from any aspect of collective worship.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and standards in Religious Education overall are good. Learners enter the Foundation Stage with attainment well below national expectations. Good steady progress is made. By the end of Key Stage 1 many learners are able to record stories they have heard in their own words using well constructed sentences. They use good religious vocabulary in discussions. There are examples of very good presentations by the more able learners. In Key Stage 2 this good progress continues. Learners have a good knowledge of their faith and are able to discuss moral issues sensibly, using appropriate religious vocabulary. They are aware of the necessity to treat all people with respect. They demonstrate a good awareness of other faiths. Significantly given the multi ethnic character of the school no child has been withdrawn from curriculum Religious Education. The learners are keen to support those newcomers to the school whose language skills need to be developed. They appreciate their input into school decisions through the school council. The learners give generous support to local, national and international charities. Learners are happy to accept responsibility with older learners taking a proactive role in caring for the younger learners.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The inspector agrees with the school that the quality of teaching and learning is good. During the inspection an example of outstanding teaching and learning was observed in Key Stage 1. All lessons are carefully planned with appropriate learning objectives which are made very clear to the learners at the beginning of the lessons. Resources are carefully selected and prepared and are used effectively to enhance the learning process. Tasks are set which meet the needs of all learners. Those who need extra help are well supported by the teaching assistants. Good use is made of modern technology by teachers who select a range of teaching styles which meet the requirements of the lesson and age of the learners. All work is carefully marked by teachers with helpful comments made as to how work could be improved. The school has developed an effective system for the assessment of learners' work. Several of the class assessments files are excellent. Learners' work is levelled and moderated. The learners have good attitudes to their learning and they listen attentively to their teachers as well as other learners' input into discussions. Many take great pride in their presentations. They are enthusiastic, interested and enjoy their Religious Education lessons. They work co-operatively in small groups and their behaviour at all times is very good.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The Religious Education curriculum is outstanding. The school has a policy statement for curriculum Religious Education which was reviewed and revised in 2007. All lessons are based on the *REvision 2000 and Moving the Vision On* guidelines. Staff have attended training to prepare for the new curriculum. The diocesan World Faiths programme is used in Key Stage 2. Visitors are invited into school to speak about their own faiths such as Judaism. The Religious Education co-ordinators monitor and cross reference teachers' planning with the Religious Education curriculum to ensure all learners receive the intended curriculum for their age and ability. The time allocated to curriculum Religious Education meets both national and diocesan requirements. The timing of individual lessons is generally appropriate. The school uses the three days spent in school during Holy Week solely for Religious Education lessons and special assemblies. Parents, parishioners and governors are invited to attend. The quality of the assemblies and the class collective worship services, reflect the Religious Education curriculum and the liturgical year thus enhancing the overall curriculum provision. The Religious Education curriculum makes a major contribution to the very successful development of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The school has judged the leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education as good. The inspector judges it to be outstanding. The headteacher and her deputy share this area of responsibility and have done for several years thus ensuring it has a very high profile in school. Their monitoring and evaluating of the provision is exemplary. Detailed records are kept of lesson observations, book and planning monitoring, and assessments. These are evaluated and the findings fed back to the individual teachers. Performance management objectives are then decided. These monitoring outcomes are included in the detailed reports given to the relevant sub-committee of the governing body. The chair of governors has regular meetings with the headteacher. Since 2006 the designated governor for Religious Education has not been as proactive in the school as previously. Both co-ordinators attend the diocesan meetings and feed back information to all staff at meetings. The minutes of these meetings reflect this. Resources are of a good quality. There is an excellent range of books on religious topics, including other faiths and cultures, for learners to use in the library. All classes have an attractive focal area for prayer. Displays throughout the school and in the classrooms clearly reflect the school's faith life.