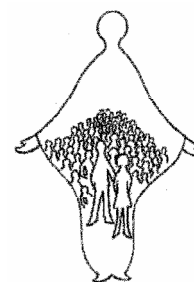


**SALFORD DIOCESE
INSPECTION REPORT**

**SACRED HEART
ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Glencastle Road
Gorton Manchester M18 7NE**



Inspection date May 2007
 Reporting Inspector Mr. J. Brierley
 Inspection carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School Catholic Primary
 URN 105518
 Age range of pupils 3-11
 Number on roll 233
 Appropriate authority The governing body
 Chair of Governors Mr. K. Strath
 Headteacher Mrs. M. Keefe
 Religious Education Co-ordinator Mrs. M. Keefe
 Date of previous inspection Infants: March 2002 Juniors: January 2003

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	2	
The quality of Collective Worship	2	
Achievement and standards in Religious Education	2	
The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education	3	
The quality of the Religious Education curriculum	2	
Leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education	2	
<i>The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements</i>		

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Sacred Heart is an average-sized one form entry Roman Catholic voluntary aided primary school with a 30 place nursery in the Diocese of Salford. It opened in April 2006 following the amalgamation of Sacred Heart Infant and Junior schools and serves the recently amalgamated parish of Sacred Heart and St Francis of Assisi in Gorton, Manchester. This is an area of below average social and economic circumstances three miles from the city centre. The majority of the pupils are of white British heritage with the remainder coming from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds including African Caribbean, Vietnamese, Italian, Polish and settled travellers. The age range of pupils is from 3-11. The indicative admission number is 30 and there are presently 233 pupils on roll including nursery. 200 of the learners are baptised Catholics. 50% of the pupils are eligible for free school meals and 77 pupils have been identified as having special educational needs with 7 children having a statutory statement of special educational need. 8 out of the 10 teachers (80%) are Catholics.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

Overall Sacred Heart is a good Catholic School striving to improve under the leadership of the headteacher. Teaching and learning in curriculum Religious Education is satisfactory and the school is now in the early stages of putting self evaluation strategies and the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning in place. The governing body has recognised the difficulties presented by the amalgamation of the two schools and works closely with the headteacher in prioritising issues for the School Improvement Plan while recognising the need to develop its own monitoring role. The headteacher has made a good start in developing a team approach since the amalgamation and the senior leadership team is attending a National Strategy 'Primary Leadership Programme' course to strengthen collaborative leadership, improve learning and teaching and raise attainment. Members of staff are positive role models for pupils and are dedicated and hard working. The school has a warm, welcoming and caring environment in which all aspects of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils are happy, polite and friendly and develop a good attitude to learning as they progress through the school. They enjoy coming to school and feel safe, secure and valued. Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good teaching observed during the inspection. The Religious Education curriculum is well planned and further enhanced by the provision for prayer and worship and the quality of relationships. The links between home, school and the parish are strengthened by the supportive work of the parish priest and parish sister.

Improvement since the last inspection

At the last inspection the infant and junior schools were separate. Since the inspection of the infant school measures were put in place to develop the experience of staff by providing opportunities for teachers to observe each other's good practice. The junior school continued to develop the pupils' life of prayer and worship and policies for assessment, recording and reporting in Religious Education. The diocesan scheme "World Religions and Peoples of other Faiths" was introduced into the junior school in 2003.

Capacity to improve

The school's capacity to improve is good because the head, staff and governors of the school have a shared recognition of what the school needs to put in place to bring about the successful amalgamation of two schools. Areas for further development in both Religious Education and collective worship have been identified and strategies to bring about improvements are being implemented.

What the school should do to improve further

- Monitor and evaluate the outcomes of the Salford diocesan assessment and standardisation guidelines for curriculum Religious Education implemented from the school in the spring term 2007.
- Implement a programme for monitoring teaching and learning in curriculum Religious Education as a means of raising standards.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are good. The governors, headteacher and staff share the same commitment to the consistent and effective promotion of the Catholic life of the school. Together they have prepared and implemented the School Improvement Plan in which the development of Religious Education takes a prominent place. The headteacher, who is also the Religious Education co-ordinator, has implemented a Religious Education action plan which identifies assessment of learning in Religious Education and the monitoring of teaching and learning as strategies for raising standards. Since the amalgamation all stakeholders have been involved in writing the school's Mission Statement which is prominently displayed in the school. The parish priest, who serves on the governing body, is a regular visitor to the school and works hard to establish strong links between home, school and parish. The prayer and worship and Religious Education policies are to be reviewed in light of the amalgamation of two schools. The chair of governors is a regular visitor to the school and discusses Religious Education and collective worship with the headteacher. The children are given a voice in the school through the elected school council. The school council was able to illustrate to the inspector its role in the school, how well the members of the school community relate to one another and the school's charity work.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Provision for collective worship is good. Every week there is an assembly for each key stage led by the headteacher, deputy head or a teacher. Merit assemblies, at which children's successes in all aspects of school life, are celebrated every Friday. During the course of the year each class leads an assembly to which parents are invited. Classes plan assemblies based on the liturgical year or on a theme they are studying as part of their Religious Education programme. The parish priest celebrates Mass for the whole school on special occasions and arranges class Masses with teachers based on themes being covered in Religious Education. The Key Stage 2 assembly with the theme of 'Joy' and Foundation Stage assembly on the theme, 'We are all part of God's family and must always remember to make others feel welcome' witnessed during the inspection were of good quality. Both assemblies were well planned and conducted in a calm reflective atmosphere. The children were attentive, reverent and respectful throughout. Prayer is also encouraged in the school through interactive displays. In a shared area of Key Stage 1 is a well used 'prayer basket' in which children place their spontaneously written prayers by using the pencils and paper available. In a Key Stage 2 shared area children are invited to 'Shine a light in the world' by writing a prayer on the back of a golden paper flame and attaching it to an unlit candle. Each classroom has a focus for prayer, often with a display of the children's work in curriculum Religious Education in close proximity. Prayer and worship and curriculum Religious Education complement each other in the life of the school.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are good overall. This is particularly evident as children pass through Key Stage 2. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have a growing knowledge and understanding of Catholic, Christian and world faith traditions. Scrutiny of the children's work, teacher planning and completed assessment tasks show that in relation to the level descriptors and attainment targets identified within the Religious Education programmes of study many learners achieve well relative to their below average starting point. The tasks set for children in their exercise books in Years 4, 5 and 6 contain challenge suitable to the age and ability of the children. The teachers are effectively linking the completion of Religious Education tasks with literacy by encouraging children to record their Religious Education through such strategies as play scripts, balanced arguments, letter writing and recounts. Teachers regularly mark learners' work but the quality of marking is inconsistent between classes. Religious Education displays are prominent in most classrooms and shared areas. The school has recently started to bring more structure to the assessment of Religious Education by implementing the diocesan assessment and standardisation guidelines for curriculum Religious Education but requires further development. The school is encouraged to continue to adopt and develop the guidelines and to monitor and evaluate their outcomes.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with some good teaching witnessed during the inspection. Lessons are well planned with very effective use of the interactive whiteboards in Key Stage 2. A good lesson observed in Key Stage 2 with the learning objective 'To understand and know the Fruits of the Holy Spirit and to relate this to why we have gifts and talents and how to use them' challenged the children to think about how the practice of their religion can improve their lives and the lives of others. The lesson was enhanced by the quality of the teacher led discussion and the use of differentiated questioning to keep all the children focused and reinforce their learning. Through collaboration and good questioning by both teacher and learners the children were able to meet successfully the learning objective of the lesson. They identified which of the fruits of the Holy Spirit each child was going to try and live out that day with subsequent reporting back. Scrutiny of exercise books and lesson plans and lesson observations showed that differentiation is mainly by outcome and the planned use of teaching assistants in meeting the needs of different ability groups within the class. There is a need, however, for teachers to plan greater challenge for the more able learners in some classes. The school has carried out an audit of Religious Education resources resulting in the purchase of resource books and religious artefacts. There are further plans to continue to build up Religious Education resources particularly with regard to computer software for use with the interactive whiteboards. In order to raise standards and gain greater consistency in teaching and learning the school needs to implement a programme for monitoring teaching and learning in curriculum Religious Education. The inspector encourages the school to implement such a programme and to evaluate its outcomes.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The school has evaluated the quality of the Religious Education curriculum as good and inspection judgements support this evaluation. The high profile of Religious Education in the school is clearly visible through displays in shared areas and the presence of religious artefacts and a focus for prayer in every classroom. At least 10% of teaching time is allocated to Religious Education in all Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 classes. The school uses the Salford Diocese Religious Education scheme *REvision 2000*. This is supplemented by an annual cycle of religious activities that further stimulate children's knowledge and understanding of their religion and its traditions. The school has prioritised establishing the Salford Diocesan assessment and standardisation guidelines for curriculum Religious Education as a means of tracking pupil progress and attainment. Curriculum Religious Education and collective worship work effectively together to ensure that both knowledge and understanding and spiritual development are promoted to the full. The study of other cultures and faiths has been enhanced by the purchase of relevant resource books and artefacts while following the Salford Diocese scheme 'World Religions and People of Other Faiths'.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education is good. The dedicated leadership of the headteacher, who is also the Religious Education co-ordinator, is gradually bringing about the necessary changes for the successful amalgamation of the two schools. The school's recently formed senior leadership team is supportive in the leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education. The headteacher, senior leadership team and governors agree on the strategies needed to help raise standards of teaching and learning in Religious Education. The Religious Education action plan has been ratified by the governing body and its implementation reported back to governors through the headteacher's reports. By the end of Key Stage 2 learners show a good factual knowledge of their faith and show a genuine interest in their Religious Education lessons. The Key Stage 2 lesson in which learners discussed the feelings, emotions and future actions of the disciples after Jesus had promised to send the Holy Spirit demonstrated how learners are encouraged to discuss the difficulties presented in trying to follow your faith. Learners are also encouraged to discuss moral issues as exemplified by the written exercise given to a Key Stage 2 class which examined the rights and wrongs of how Jesus dealt with the money changers in the temple. The deputy head based in Key Stage 1 actively supports the parish sister and the Sacramental Programme through her work as a catechist. As part of the Sacramental Programme parents and children are encouraged to attend Sunday Mass at which the headteacher and members of staff are present.