

**SALFORD DIOCESE  
INSPECTION REPORT**



**ST. JOSEPH'S  
ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL  
DARWEN**

Inspection date March 2006

Reporting Inspector Mrs. Joan Duffin

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

Type of School	Catholic Primary
Age range of pupils	4-11
Number on roll	187
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of Governors	Mr. T. McIver
Headteacher	Mr. A. V. Pearson
Religious Education Co-ordinator	Mrs. B. Saynor
Date of previous inspection	November 2000

<b>The Inspection judgements are:</b>	<b>Grade</b>	
Overall effectiveness of the school	2	Explanation of the Grades  1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3 = Satisfactory 4 = Inadequate
Leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school	2	
The quality of Collective Worship	2	
Achievement and standards in Religious Education	3	
The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education	2	
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**

St. Joseph's is a one-form entry voluntary aided primary school serving the parish of St. Joseph in Darwen. It is situated in a mixed area of private and council housing with some areas of deprivation. The area is partly urban and partly rural. Learners are aged from 4 to 11 years. The indicative number is 24 with a standard admission number of 30. There are no mixed age classes. At present there are 187 pupils on roll all of whom are Catholics. The pupils are mainly white British with some second and third generation Italian children. 8% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. 31 pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and 3 have a statutory statement of special educational need. 6 teachers (75% of the teaching staff) are Catholics. There have been several staff changes during the last two years.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

St Joseph's is a good Catholic school characterised by a warm and friendly atmosphere which establishes a good environment for work. This judgement is mostly in line with the school's own evaluation. The standards attained in curriculum Religious Education are good in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and average in Key Stage 2. Pupils mostly achieve well and make at least satisfactory progress. Teaching is good overall and ranges from satisfactory to outstanding. The curriculum in Religious Education is well planned and adapted to the school's needs. Monitoring, evaluation and assessment of the curriculum need to be further developed to raise standards in Key Stage 2. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. The Catholic ethos of the school is strong with excellent provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development. The headteacher leads the school well and has an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development.

### **Improvement since the last inspection**

The many key issues arising from the last Section 23 inspection in May 2000 have been addressed. *REvision 2000* has been implemented in a structured way. The school's prayer and worship policy has been revised and themes for assemblies are now planned and recorded. Short term planning and assessment in Religious Education together with the role of the governing body have been partially addressed and are in the school's improvement plan for further development. The school has responded well to the issues raised. There is a new Religious Education link governor who is also the assistant parish priest.

### **Capacity to improve**

The school's self-evaluation is mostly accurate. Priorities for improvement in curriculum Religious Education have been identified. The headteacher has an understanding of what needs to be improved and all staff are committed to improvement. There is a good capacity for further improvement.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Fully implement the Salford Diocesan assessment and standardisation guidelines.
- Raise standards in curriculum Religious Education in Key Stage 2 by the more effective use of monitoring and evaluation.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL**

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are good. The revised Mission Statement lies at the heart of the school's aims, policies and expectations. All members of the school community show "value and care for each other in a safe and secure environment". The governing body fulfils its role well in relation to the school's Catholic foundation. It has good knowledge of the Catholic life of the school through headteacher reports, frequent meetings between the headteacher, chair of governors and parish priest and visits to the school by the assistant priest who is also the link governor for Religious Education. Priority is given to employing Catholic teachers where possible and the two non-Catholic teachers are studying for the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. The senior management team and the Religious Education co-ordinator lead staff in promoting learners' spiritual and moral development. There is a strong Catholic ethos in the school characterised by gospel values, inclusion and a spirit of reconciliation. The in-service training on prayer and worship has enabled the school to further develop the opportunities for pupils and staff to follow their faith journey. Resources are good and are reviewed regularly. The parish based Sacramental Programme is planned and run effectively with strong support from the school. Long-standing Catholic families in the parish foster their love of the Catholic faith in the school children. Children are given many opportunities to care for those less fortunate than themselves through as CAFOD, St. Joseph's Penny and shoe boxes.

## **THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

Provision for collective worship in the school is good. The policy for prayer and worship reflects the wide range of opportunities for collective worship which are provided for learners. These include whole school and class Masses, whole school, house and class assemblies and class prayers. The assistant priest is very much involved with the class and school Masses. Key Stage 2 pupils are presently attending Mass weekly during Lent. Advent and Lenten services, including Stations of the Cross, are celebrated in accordance with the liturgical year. Detailed plans and records are kept of Masses and assemblies which follow the liturgical year or the Religious Education curriculum. The parish priest, who is also the vice-chair of governors, has been very supportive in the celebration of Masses and services both in school and in church. There is an altar or focus for prayer and reflection in each classroom which, at this time of year, encourages pupils to use Lent well in preparation for Easter. Pupils are involved in the planning, preparation and presentation of assemblies and Masses. Their own prayers and psalms are used in class devotions. Children respond well at celebrations joining in singing and simple musical accompaniment with enthusiasm. This was seen to good effect in a Key Stage 1 assembly observed during the inspection. They say their prayers with respect and reverence. Parents are welcome to attend Masses and assemblies. Collective worship makes a very good contribution to the excellent spiritual and moral development of learners.

## **ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are satisfactory. Attainment on entry is broadly in line with national standards. Progress in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is good and good standards are attained by the end of Key Stage 1. Satisfactory progress is made in Key Stage 2 but by the end of Key Stage 2 standards in written work are below that expected nationally. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Targets for pupils in Key Stage 2 are not sufficiently challenging. Pupils know and can relate stories from the Old Testament and New Testament. They can explain how incidents in Jesus' life can show us how to behave with love and compassion. Learners enjoy their work in most classes and respond well to questioning. Their behaviour is very good. Assertive discipline is used effectively throughout the school. Any incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with promptly in a spirit of reconciliation. Pupils' spiritual development is clearly rooted in the beliefs of the Catholic Church. They have a secure understanding of the life and teaching of Jesus and are able to apply his teaching to their own lives. They learn that they should respect themselves and others in the wider world. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and the school provides very well for their moral development. The school council is beginning to make a positive contribution to the school. Older children are given many opportunities to look after younger ones.

## **THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good overall. The teaching observed during the inspection ranged from satisfactory to outstanding. Most teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the Religious Education curriculum. Most lessons are well planned and prepared but not all teachers set high expectations and challenge. Learners with special educational needs are well supported. In the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 the lessons observed were at least good and, in one case, outstanding. The outstanding lesson on how we can show love and compassion like Jesus moved at a very good pace and made full use of group, individual and paired working to reinforce the message and to hold learners' interest and enjoyment. In Key Stage 2 the lessons observed were mostly satisfactory. One very good lesson in upper Key Stage 2 gave older pupils the opportunity to discuss ways in which they can restore relationships with their friends and families and with God. The school is starting to use interactive whiteboards to enhance the delivery of some lessons and this could be developed further. Some assessment is in place but the new diocesan guidelines need to be fully implemented. The school is aware of this and is encouraged to address the issue. Learners in most classes show interest in their work and sustain concentration. They respond well to questioning and listen with respect to other opinions. However, the standard of written work seen in Key Stage 2 is below that expected nationally.

## **THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM**

The Religious Education curriculum is good. The diocesan scheme is followed by the school and the time allocated to curriculum Religious Education is in line with national and diocesan requirements. Medium term planning is good and short term planning is being developed. The curriculum is made accessible to all pupils and support provided where necessary. Extra challenge is not always given to higher achievers. Monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum are in place but, together with assessment, need to be used more vigorously to raise standards of attainment in Key Stage 2. The Religious Education policy has recently been reviewed. Areas for development in Religious Education are identified in the School Improvement Plan. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to make a smooth transition to the secondary school through the Crossroads programme and days of reflection. The inclusion of the study of world religions gives pupils the opportunity to understand and respect other religions and cultures. Extra-curricular provision is good with a range of opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and skills in activities such as art and sport. The Religious Education curriculum makes a very good contribution to the spiritual and moral development of learners. It is enriched by the wide range of opportunities for prayer and worship provided by the school. This is supported by the very strong links with parents, the parish and the local community.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education are good. The assistant priest has taken on his new role as link governor for Religious Education with enthusiasm. He is conversant with the curriculum being taught and has become a "buddy" to the Religious Education co-ordinator. The headteacher and Religious Education co-ordinator lead and support their staff effectively. The Religious Education co-ordinator has a clear view of her role and the direction the teaching and learning of Religious Education should be taking. The new diocesan assessment guidelines need to be fully implemented and the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning need to be further developed in order to raise standards in Key Stage 2. Appropriate priority is given to Religious Education in the School Improvement Plan and associated budgetary decisions. 75% of teachers are Catholics and the remaining 25% are studying to obtain the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. Accommodation is mostly good and will be very good when the planned building work is completed. Clean, bright classrooms contribute to the learning environment. Resources are good and used effectively. Relationships within the school are excellent and enhance the enthusiasm and enjoyment of learners.