

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. JOSEPH'S ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Shepherd Cross Street Halliwell Bolton BL1 3EJ

Inspection date November 2009

Reporting Inspector Mrs. M. Dolan

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

Type of School Catholic Primary
 URN 10523
 Age range of pupils 4-11
 Number on roll 200
 Appropriate authority The governing body
 Chair of Governors Rev. Fr. P. Tansey
 Headteacher Mr. M. Crawford
 Religious Education Co-ordinator Mr. M. Crawford
 Date of previous inspection October 2006

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	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 voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school serving the parish of St. Joseph in Halliwell which is a district close to the centre of Bolton. The majority of the pupils live in privately owned terraced houses or low cost rented accommodation. About two thirds of the school population reside in Halliwell and Crompton, two of the most deprived wards in Bolton. There are currently 200 pupils on roll aged from 4 - 11 years. The school does not have a nursery. 120 of the children are Roman Catholic and a small number belong to other Christian denominations. There is a small cohort of Moslem and Hindu children. 13% of pupils have English as an additional language. 33% of pupils are eligible for free school meals and 64 have been identified as having special educational needs. None of the pupils has a statement of special educational need. Pupils are admitted to the school from 12 different pre-school settings. Attainment on entry to the school is wide ranging with many children being below the national average. There are 7 full time teachers and 3 part time teachers. 7 teachers (70%) are Catholics and 3 teachers have the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies or equivalent. 1 teacher is studying for the certificate and 2 other members of staff have committed to apply for the course.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's is a good Catholic school. It is led by an enthusiastic headteacher ably supported by the senior management team. The chair of governors who is also parish priest is a frequent and welcome visitor to the school and the school is at the heart of the parish. Relationships are good between staff and pupils and the teachers have high expectations of the children in Religious Education. The staff are good role models. The headteacher is also the Religious Education co-ordinator and he is well aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. In Religious Education the pupils achieve well and make good progress. During the inspection the children were well behaved, polite and friendly and showed a good attitude to their learning. Year 6 pupils help as playleaders in the infant playground and they also help in Reception class with the 'Bus Brush' project which is aimed to encourage dental hygiene. The Catholic ethos of the school is strong with very good provision for the pupil's spiritual and moral development.

Improvement since the last inspection

Following the last Section 48 inspection in October 2006 key issues have been addressed successfully. The Mission Statement has been reviewed with the staff and governors taking into account the views of the pupils through classroom consultation and it is regularly shared with parents and carers. There is long term planning for Masses, liturgies and assemblies and prayer and worship takes place in the classrooms each day and at the end of Religious Education topics. The Religious Education co-ordinator has undertaken staff training and there is evidence of assessment and levelling in the teachers' files.

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation is good. Religious Education is well monitored with regular classroom observations and scrutiny of children's work and planning. The staff and children are well aware of the high expectations of the headteacher and good progress is being made. The school's capacity to improve is therefore good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Review the performance management policy to include a Religious Education objective for staff.
- Establish a central area for Religious Education books and artefacts including resources for world religions in addition to classroom resources.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are good. The Mission Statement of the school is reviewed regularly and there is to be another review at the staff and governors' training day in the new year. The Mission Statement underpins all that happens in the school and it is evident in the school's practice, procedures and policies. Religious Education is addressed in the school development plan. The governing body is fully informed of the Catholic aspects of the school life through the headteacher's report and visits to the school. Religious Education is given prominence in the report. There is a named governor with responsibility for the Catholic life of the school. Developments in Religious Education are discussed by the headteacher and the chair of governors and the newly appointed Religious Education governor is developing links with the parish and school. The Catholic ethos of the school is implicit in the school's inclusivity and in the daily care and guidance of each child. It is fostered through worship, celebrations and charitable works. The Catholic life of the school and its commitment to community cohesion is further enhanced by the number of charities it supports including CAFOD, Rainbow Family Trust, Bolton Hospice, The Catholic Rescue Society and Operation Christmas Child. In the last year the school raised a substantial sum for charities. Tolerance and respect is actively promoted throughout the school. Catholic teachers are given priority when appointing new staff and those who do not have the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies are encouraged to obtain this qualification. 1 member of staff is on the course and 2 other members of staff are committed to begin the course. There is currently no Religious Education objective for performance management and this is due to be discussed by the staff.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Provision for collective worship is good. The school has a policy for prayer and worship and there are daily opportunities appropriate to the ages of the pupils. The inspector was able to watch a very good Key Stage 1 and Reception assembly where the children looked at creation and God's love. The children took part reverentially in the assembly led by the parish priest and were very keen to answer questions. A good number of parents were present and this added to the sense of community for the children. The assembly for Key Stage 2 children was based on the anti-bullying day organised by the school. The headteacher led the assembly in prayer and then talked to the children about respecting difference in others. Children read prayers including one written by a Year 6 child. There was a time of reflection with quiet music and the assembly finished with a hymn. A lesson in Year 2 about listening to God finished with the children sitting in a circle around a lighted candle passing around a wooden cross giving examples of the kind of things 'God would want us to do'. The children took part attentively and with reverence. No parents have asked for their children to be withdrawn from prayer and worship and all children, including those from other faiths, respond positively during times of prayer and worship. A programme of Masses, liturgies and assemblies is agreed and parents are invited to attend. Children are actively involved in planning liturgies and assemblies.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are good. Work in children's books is of a good standard and during inspection the children were keen to talk about the work they had completed in their Religious Education lessons. Children in Reception class were learning about 'being kind to one another' through a beautifully read story of the birthday present. They learnt that the best gifts we give to others are often free. Formal assessment of children's work in Religious Education is conducted in line with the diocesan guidelines. There is an annual monitoring programme and Religious Education lessons are observed formally by the co-ordinator in the summer term. He scrutinises the children's books with them, asking questions about the work they have done. During inspection the older children were able to talk confidently about receiving the sacraments of Holy Communion and Confirmation. The behaviour of the children is very good and the children are happy and keen to come to school. The school has a clear behaviour policy that reflects attitudes of respect for self and others. There are clear strategies to deal positively with anti-social behaviour such as bullying and racism. On the day of inspection all the school took part in an 'anti-bullying' wear blue to school day when constant reference was made to how special we all are and the need to respect the difference in others. Through Religious Education and other aspects of the curriculum, most noticeably personal, social

and health education, the children are developing a sense of wonder and a sense of the presence of God in their lives. Through the school council and the opportunities given to older pupils to care for younger ones children grow in responsibility and develop leadership skills.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The inspector agrees with the school that the quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good. The school follows the diocesan scheme for Religious Education and all staff plan appropriately. Planning is clear and children who need help with their work are ably assisted by competent teaching assistants. Teachers employ a wide range of teaching strategies in delivering Religious Education and regular use of information technology supports teaching and learning. The lesson observed in Year 4 began with a powerpoint presentation reflecting on human life and the children went on to discuss what a baby needs in order to grow and develop. The children then completed a pyramid of needs considering what we need physically, emotionally and spiritually to grow into fully developed human beings. In a Year 6 lesson children were asked to make their own covenant with God and this is to be reviewed later in the year. The children listened carefully and were very responsive when asked to recall previous work on God's covenant with Moses. They took their covenant seriously and wrote in a respectful working quietness while music was being played. In accordance with national and diocesan guidelines 10% of teaching time is devoted to Religious Education. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and the work in their Religious Education books is marked in line with the school's marking policy. All the classrooms have a display area that includes a 'holy area' and there are some very good examples of children's work on display. The classrooms are well resourced but better use of books and artefacts would be achieved by a central area of resource as well as the classroom resources especially for world religions.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The Religious Education curriculum is good. The school follows diocesan guidelines and teaches Religious Education for the correct number of hours. The curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of the children and it supports the values that the school proclaims in its mission statement. The curriculum is balanced and broadly based and prepares the children well for the next stage in their education. There are excellent links with the high school and liaison between the schools leads to good transition arrangements for the children. There are strong links between the religious curriculum and the personal, social and health education curriculum. The Religious Education curriculum is enriched by outside visits including the Jewish Museum and by engaging with pupils of other religions in the classes to portray similarities and to extol the presence of God in all our lives. Children have written their own prayers and these are used in assemblies or as part of the displays in the classrooms. The school's use of achievement awards and its provision of a wide range of enrichment activities encourage all the pupils to develop their full potential and this also promotes personal spiritual development and positive self awareness. The children recently attended a gymnastics event where they competed very successfully against children from other primary schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education are good. The Religious Education co-ordinator, who is also the headteacher, has a clear understanding of the school's expectations and there is a governor who is directly responsible for the monitoring of Religious Education in the school. The governor is a parishioner and is a regular visitor in school. The sacramental programme is parish based with strong support from the school. Links with the community also involve Harvest Masses, Stations of the Cross and Christmas celebrations with parents and parishioners. The school follows the diocesan world religions syllabus to develop respect and understanding within the ethnically mixed area surrounding the school. Well planned work is monitored and evaluated and work throughout the school shows continuity and progression. Resources are well managed and sufficient to deliver the curriculum. Religious Education is given a high priority and is regarded as a core subject area in curriculum development planning. The school is well placed to develop Religious Education further and to continue to fulfil its Mission Statement.