

**SALFORD DIOCESE
INSPECTION REPORT**



**OUR LADY OF LOURDES ROMAN CATHOLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Rudgwick Drive Brandlesholme Bury BL8 1YA

Inspection date February 2009

Reporting Inspector Mrs. K. A. Morris

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

Type of School	Catholic Primary
URN	105337
Age range of pupils	4 -11
Number on roll	140
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of Governors	Mr. T. H .Wright
Headteacher	Mrs. D. M. Kiernan
Religious Education Co-ordinator	Mrs. D. M. Kiernan
Date of previous inspection	December 2005

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

Our Lady of Lourdes is a Roman Catholic voluntary aided primary school in the Diocese of Salford. It is situated in the semi-rural setting of Brandlesholme district 2 miles from the centre of Bury and serves the parish of Our Lady of Good Counsel and Guardian Angels in Bury. The school draws pupils from varied socio-economic backgrounds from the surrounding area of mixed privately owned and council property. The age range of pupils is 4 to 11 and the indicative admission number is 20. There are 140 children on roll of whom 130 are baptised Catholics. 11.5% are known to be eligible for free school meals and 24 children have been identified as having special needs with 2 children having a statutory statement of special educational need. Of the 7 teachers 6 (92%) are Catholics and 5 hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies or equivalent. 1 teacher is currently studying for this qualification.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

Our Lady of Lourdes is an outstanding school with a strong Catholic ethos and truly dedicated staff. Leadership and management ensure a warm, caring, vibrant and inclusive environment in which all aspects of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. The Religious Education programme is well planned and further enhanced by the provision for prayer and worship, the quality of relationships and the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers are well supported by the good deployment of teaching assistants, administrative and janitorial staff. Staff at all levels are dedicated to the school. They are good role models for the pupils and demonstrate excellent levels of care. Teachers work hard and successfully to make activities practical and fun and they match what they teach to the needs of the different ages and ability groups in their classes. Learners are very well behaved, friendly and polite. They have good attitudes to their learning and respond well to the quality of teaching they experience. Strong home, school and parish links ensure learners and parents are fully supported on their faith journeys.

Improvement since the last inspection

Following the last Section 48 inspection in December 2005 the school has successfully addressed all issues arising. A job description is in place for the co-ordinator for curriculum Religious Education. The school has adopted the Salford diocesan guidelines for assessment and systems are in place for the monitoring of curriculum Religious Education and prayer and worship. The building, car park and playground have been extended to accommodate growing numbers. The before and after school club, which also provides holiday care, has been established. The school has achieved Healthy Schools and Active School status and the Football Association Kite Mark. The school also works closely with the associated Catholic high school as part of a science project linked to its beacon status and also with the mathematics, languages and music departments.

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation is thorough, objective and realistic. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and she is well supported by her deputy and hardworking staff. The parish priest and active governing body, led by a knowledgeable chair, also give very good support. There is a genuine commitment to ensuring all involved in the school community recognise the important role they play in its future development. Capacity to improve is therefore outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to implement the *Moving the Vision On* diocesan guidelines for curriculum Religious Education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are outstanding. The Mission Statement and the children's version, which is reviewed annually, permeate all aspects of the life of the school and are prominently displayed throughout it. Its success is due chiefly to the exceptional team spirit pervading the school which enjoys strong leadership by the headteacher, dedicated deputy and the wholehearted support of the staff. The school benefits to the full from a very knowledgeable and supportive parish priest together with a governing body which discusses and revises Religious Education policies on a regular basis. A shared vision for the ongoing development of the school as a Catholic community is reflected in governor appointments of committed Catholic teachers to the staff. The parish priest and the chair of governors who are regular visitors to the school demonstrate excellent knowledge and understanding of school life. The headteacher and governors work well together as an effective team. They successfully ensure that all pupils, regardless of race and religion, have equal opportunities in a cohesive and supportive environment which is accessible to pupils with a range of additional needs. Governors are seen as "critical friends" who hold the school to account for its performance. Their input is valued. The school is firmly at the heart of its parish community, enjoys close links with its sister school, associated high school and other schools in the area. The school fully supports the Sacramental Programme which is valued as a successful aspect of parish life.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Provision for collective worship is outstanding. It is a key feature of the school pervading all aspects of its life and underpinned by the clear Religious Education policy which includes prayer and worship. Learners, parents, staff and parishioners are offered a range of rich and meaningful opportunities to develop their relationship with God. Mass is celebrated on alternate weeks and on feast and Holy Days. Assemblies and non-eucharistic services reflecting the liturgical calendar are celebrated with the parish priest, parents and parishioners. Celebrations are planned and led by different classes in order that all pupils are given an opportunity to participate. They involve drama, readings, music, singing and the pupils' own prayers. The quality of collective worship and the children's response are monitored regularly by the headteacher. During inspection the theme of the assembly was the presentation of Jesus in the Temple. The headteacher led the assembly with learners actively involved. A pupil flautist and the Manchester Cantata, who were visiting school to enrich the learners' music curriculum, accompanied the hymn singing. Themes for Religious celebrations are planned termly by the headteacher and parish priest. They are evaluated and recorded by staff and the headteacher. In collective and class worship observed during the inspection all children prayed with reverence and respect demonstrating an awareness of the importance of prayer in their lives. Celebration assemblies are undertaken weekly when learners are commended for work, behaviour and manners and a variety of achievements. All learners are included and involved in collective worship and no learner is withdrawn. The school continues to develop the opportunities for collective worship including visiting speakers from other faiths and cultures thus demonstrating their awareness of diversity in the community.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are outstanding. Learners enter Early Years Foundation Stage with skills which are broadly typical for their age. Excellent progress is made in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 by the end of which learners are able to relate verbally and in their pictorial and written work biblical stories they have heard. They know by Baptism that they are members of God's family and that He made and loves them. Progress by the end of Key Stage 2 is excellent. Learners have excellent factual knowledge of their faith. All learners are able to use religious vocabulary and know prayers appropriate to their age. They are aware of, and respect, the faith diversity of their peers. They understand that they have a responsibility to protect God's creation and they know the difference between right and wrong. They enjoy and respond positively to Religious Education, take pride in their work and are well motivated. Across the whole community there is a feeling of self-worth and self-esteem. This has been further enhanced by the introduction of the school council, the charity fund raising committee, special friends, and no blame approach to bullying. Learners are increasingly aware of God's presence in their lives and of His love and forgiveness. They are developing a strong sense of responsibility and are aware of the needs of others and support a number of local and worldwide charities.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is outstanding. Teachers have high expectations for themselves and their learners and work hard using a variety of interactive strategies. They demonstrate good subject knowledge, an understanding of Religious Education and make good use of the diocesan *REvision 2000* guidelines. *Moving the Vision On* has been introduced. Detailed planning, with clearly stated objectives and outcomes, leads to well structured lessons incorporating an excellent range of activities and effective use of resources. Assessment systems have been developed to evaluate teaching and learning and provide a focus for future planning. Levelling of learners' work is well established and a profile of pupils' work is readily available. Information technology is widely used to support teaching and learning and teachers capitalise on opportunities to link Religious Education across the curriculum. Management and organisation in all classes are excellent. Behaviour is exemplary with pupils working co-operatively or independently. During inspection drama and "hot seating" were used very effectively as a tool for learning how Moses would have felt when he and the Israelites were crossing the desert. The "maze", used as an activity when learners were fulfilling their "learning intention" as to how we can make choices to know God's way, was a firm favourite for all learners. When the youngest pupils were sent with photographs to discuss Baptism in their "talk groups" they did so with confidence and ease. All pupils demonstrated a mature attitude to their learning and the teachers' approaches and skills promoted optimum learning. All lessons were outstanding.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The Religious Education curriculum is outstanding. Religious Education features as a key element in both school improvement and financial planning. At least 10% of teaching time is allocated to the subject. As part of the school's contribution to community cohesion world faiths are taught using the diocesan recommended guidelines. Additionally there are links, through the parish, to a school in Kenya and the sponsorship of the education of a child in Peru. The *REvision 2000* guidelines are followed throughout and the school is in the process of introducing *Moving the Vision On* which it is urged to implement fully as soon as possible. Diocesan guidelines are supplemented by activities relating to the liturgical year and a range of other resources and experiences. An impressive range of extra-curricular learning opportunities further enhances the curriculum. This includes art, cycling, choir, sport, drama, gardening and gymnastics. There is a residential visit to Breatton Park Activity Centre in Shropshire and Lenten and summer day retreats for Year 6 when they join with the other primary school in the parish. Teachers' planning is thorough and together with pupils' learning is monitored by the headteacher through scrutiny of work and lesson observations. Appropriate feedback is given and acted upon by individuals and whole staff to ensure good quality teaching and learning. Religious practices are under constant review. Curriculum Religious Education and prayer and worship are linked effectively together to ensure that both knowledge and understanding and spiritual development are promoted to the full. No learner is withdrawn from Religious Education lessons.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The school has assessed the leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education as outstanding. Inspection evidence agrees with this judgement. The dynamic headteacher, who is also the co-ordinator for curriculum Religious Education, has excellent knowledge of her subject, a clear vision for her role within the school and provides strong leadership and direction. She is well placed to advise and support her motivated staff and governors. She leads by example and is a very good role model for all staff. She leads staff through regular meetings and continues her own personal professional development by attending diocesan courses and involving diocesan teacher advisers. Her excellent record keeping includes the use of monitoring and evaluating to determine and identify priorities for future development of teaching and learning and prayer and worship. Procedures introduced since the last inspection include the use of monitoring, levelling and tracking of pupils' learning. She is fully supported by the governors and in particular the parish priest who is the designated governor for Religious Education. Governors are kept fully informed of developments in curriculum Religious Education and prayer and worship through written and verbal reports from the headteacher and from their visits to school. Resources for Religious Education and prayer and worship are good. Attractive displays throughout the premises reflect the faith life of Our Lady of Lourdes where Religious Education and prayer and worship have a high profile.