

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. ANTONY'S ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Shadsworth Road Blackburn BB1 2HP

Inspection date June 2010
 Reporting Inspector Miss M. C. Whalley
 Inspection carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School Catholic Primary
 URN 119516
 Age range of pupils 3-11
 Number on roll 225
 Appropriate authority The governing body
 Chair of Governors Mrs. J. Georgy
 Headteacher Mrs. E. Grimshaw
 Religious Education Co-ordinator Mrs. R. Gallagher
 Date of previous inspection December 2006

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

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Antony's is a Roman Catholic voluntary aided primary school in the Diocese of Salford. It serves the parish of the Holy Family. The closure of Christ the King and St. Antony's Church which was situated next to the school has caused a period of change and adaptation. The current churches in the parish (St. Teresa and St. Joseph) are both over a mile away. However, the school and parish work together to prepare the children for the Sacramental Programme and the Crossroads programme. The school is situated in an urban area. The age range of the pupils is from 3 to 11 years. The standard admission number is 30. There are currently 225 pupils on roll and 122 are baptised Catholics. 15% of the children are minority ethnic in origin. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is double the national average at 40%. The school has identified 71 pupils who have special educational needs with 7 pupils having a statutory statement of special educational need. 8 out of 11 of the teaching staff (73%) are Catholics.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

Overall the effectiveness of St. Antony's as a Catholic school is satisfactory. Whilst the leadership and management are inadequate the school nevertheless does have features which are satisfactory and some which are good. It has a good Catholic ethos. All staff promote a warm and welcoming environment in which most aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils are polite and friendly and have a good attitude to their learning. They are encouraged to support and care for each other and this is particularly evident in the respect they show to children of other religious faiths. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some good teaching observed during the inspection. Teaching assistants support the teachers well on the whole. Staff are positive role models for pupils and are dedicated, committed and hard working.

Improvement since the last inspection.

Following the last Section 48 inspection in December 2006 the school has addressed the issues identified and satisfactorily resolved them. This is due to the leadership of the co-ordinator for Religious Education. There has been a period of adaptation as the church was closed and parishes have amalgamated. There was a period of instability in the leadership of the school and there is currently an acting headteacher. The L.E.A. has further interim plans in place to develop the leadership of the school.

Capacity to improve

The school's capacity for further improvement is satisfactory. Some of the priorities for development have been identified by the headteacher and these are linked into the school development plan.

What the school should do to improve further

- Resolve the lack of clarity regarding provision for the ongoing leadership of the school.
- Further develop collective worship to contribute to community cohesion.
- Provide more challenging work for the children with opportunities to write more extensively.
- Improve the monitoring and evaluation of the delivery of the Religious Education curriculum.
- Ensure that more staff take responsibility for the teaching of Religious Education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are inadequate overall although there are some features which are satisfactory. An example of the inadequacy is the lack of clarity and communication within the governing body regarding the provision for leadership within the school. A satisfactory feature is that there is recognition of this under the leadership of the current acting headteacher and a commitment to resolving the issues in question. The co-ordinator for Religious Education has a clear understanding of her role and a good knowledge of her subject. She has led her subject through some difficult periods of transition. The parish priest celebrates Mass each term in school for the Catholic children. The nominated governor for Religious Education is a parish catechist and supports the children and their families in the preparation for the Sacramental Programme. The quality of relationships between staff and learners is strengthened by the inclusive nature of the provision for pupils with special educational needs. There is good liaison between outside agencies and the school. The school has identified that further development is required with regard to its contribution to community cohesion and is encouraged to do this. The school Mission Statement is reviewed on a regular basis and members of the school community are encouraged to contribute. Five members of staff have the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Provision for collective worship is satisfactory overall with some good features. The school has a policy for collective worship. Opportunities for prayer and worship are provided on a daily basis. These include whole school, key stage and class worship and no children are withdrawn from them. During the year specific liturgical celebrations are provided for pupils. For example there are special devotions to Our Lady during May and in October the focus is on the rosary. Prayer and worship are used as opportunities to support the gospel teaching. In the collective worship observed during inspection the children listened well and prayed with reverence and respect. They sang the hymns with enthusiasm. This would have been further enhanced if the children themselves had been involved in the planning of the worship. Catechists support the school in the teaching of the Sacramental Programme. The parish priest celebrates Mass each term for the Catholic children in school. Whereas it is clear that collective worship does provide good support for the children's spiritual and moral development it needs to be further developed in order that it can make a more substantial contribution to community cohesion. In every classroom there is a focal point for prayer and a particularly good example of this is to be found in the Nursery.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are satisfactory with elements that are good. Pupils with special needs are supported by teaching assistants and the behaviour of the learners is good. They demonstrate respect and compassion for others and have a good awareness of moral and social issues. The school supports both local and global needs. Pupils demonstrated some good factual knowledge of their faith when discussing issues with the inspector. They were aware of their responsibilities to the people close to them and discussed fund raising for people in need in the wider community. All learners show a genuine interest in the Catholic faith, enjoy their Religious Education lessons and are developing an awareness and interest in other faiths and cultures. This will be further enhanced in the future when the school develops further its contribution to community cohesion. On the whole the teachers' marking praises good work and special effort. In some cases constructive comments also encourage learners to reflect on their responses to lessons and to improve their work. The children would benefit from more challenging work and from the opportunity to develop extensive pieces of writing of their own. Religious Education contributes overall to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the learners.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall the quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is satisfactory with some good features. The teaching observed during inspection ranged from satisfactory to good. The pupils are well behaved and their attitude to learning is good. They enjoy attending school and feel safe there. Teachers demonstrate a sound knowledge of the subject although it is the co-ordinator for Religious Education who teaches the subject to all the classes in the school except two. Teaching assistants work hard overall and support both the pupils and the staff but lesson planning would be enhanced further if it included more provision for children with special needs. There is a need to set high expectations so as to challenge learners and deepen their knowledge and understanding. Lesson observations have not been undertaken recently by the co-ordinator for Religious Education. Teachers use a variety of teaching styles to engage their pupils. For example, the children's response to identifying the gifts, talents and special qualities of each other demonstrated their knowledge well. The recording of assessment is thorough. Displays of pupils' work both within the classroom and around the school highlight the importance of the teaching and learning within Religious Education. Resources are good and utilised well.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The quality of the Religious Education curriculum is good. School policies for Religious Education and collective worship are regularly reviewed and support the development of the Religious Education curriculum. In accordance with the requirements of the Bishops of England and Wales 10% of the teaching time is allocated to the subject. The school follows the diocesan scheme of work. The school uses a good range of resources and materials. These are supplemented by activities relating to the liturgical year and by providing opportunities for the children to work alongside the Marist Sisters and to take part in retreat days. Community cohesion is embraced through the use of the diocesan World Faiths scheme. This would be further enhanced by the use of artefacts relevant to other religions and extra-curricular visits. No children are withdrawn from the teaching of Religious Education. In-service training and staff meetings ensure that provision for Religious Education is kept under review. The headteacher regularly discusses issues relating to Religious Education with the co-ordinator and reports each term to the governing body about the developments in Religious Education. Finance for Religious Education is given the same priority as other core subjects in the School Development Plan. The curriculum makes a good contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the children.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education are satisfactory with some good features. In particular the co-ordinator has a clear knowledge of her role and leads with enthusiasm. She has worked well during a challenging time of change and adaptation. Staff are informed of developments through staff meetings. There is a policy for Religious Education and time allocation for Religious Education meets national and diocesan requirements. Although curriculum Religious Education features in the School Development Plan there is currently no Action Plan in place for the subject. The role of the co-ordinator will be enhanced when there is a return to the systems and routines that were clearly in place at the previous inspection. These include regular meetings with the governor for Religious Education, attending courses relating to the wider Religious Education curriculum, improving monitoring by undertaking lesson observations and carrying out scrutinies of the children's work. There is also a need to prepare all staff to take the responsibility for the teaching of Religious Education in the future. The school is encouraged to address these issues. It is clear that the school's Mission Statement, "where each individual is warmly welcomed and respected" is reflected and promoted by both staff and children alike by the open, welcoming and caring ethos experience by the inspector.