

**SALFORD DIOCESE  
INSPECTION REPORT**



**ST JOHN THE BAPTIST  
ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL  
Thames Avenue Burnley Lancashire BB10 2PZ**

Inspection date February 2008

Reporting Inspector Mr. J. Brierley

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

Type of School	Catholic Primary
URN	131683
Age range of pupils	4-11
Number on roll	267
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of Governors	Mr. D. Hartley
Headteacher	Mr. K. Heakin
Religious Education Co-ordinators	Miss J. M. Flood and Mrs. F. Harding
Dates of previous inspections	Infant School October 2003 Junior School October 2002

<b>The Inspection judgements are:</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Explanation of the Grades</b>  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	1	
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 John the Baptist's is an average sized Roman Catholic voluntary aided primary school serving the parish of St John the Baptist in Burnley. The school was opened in 2006 following the amalgamation of the separate infant and junior schools. It is planned to complete building work on the Key Stage 2 site to house Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 pupils during 2008 but at the time of the inspection pupils were still accommodated in the original buildings on two sites, approximately one mile apart. The majority of the pupils are of white British heritage from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The age range of pupils is from 4 to 11 years. The indicative admission number is 30 and there are presently 267 pupils on roll. On starting school most children's attainment is below that expected of the age group. 220 of the learners (82%) are baptised Catholics. 35 of the pupils (13%) claim free school meals and 55 (21%) have been identified as having special educational needs with 6 children having a statutory statement of special educational need. 9 out of the 11 teachers (82%) are Catholics.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

St John the Baptist's is a good Catholic school successfully meeting the challenges presented by the amalgamation of two schools. The enthusiastic and experienced school leadership team led by a dedicated headteacher and supported by a committed staff are both encouraged and challenged by a conscientious governing body in their ongoing efforts to raise standards. 'Every Child Matters' is central to the School Development Plan. All staff aim at providing a high standard in Religious Education and across the curriculum. The school successfully promotes the personal development and well being of all learners and has a warm, welcoming and caring environment in which all aspects of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are of a high standard. Parents think highly of their school and are informed of events through weekly newsletters. Pupils are well-behaved, polite and friendly and enjoy their education in a happy and secure atmosphere engendered by the very good relationships between all members of the school community. The children display a good attitude to learning. The work of the Foundation Stage in settling children, with levels of skill below those typical for their age, into school life is steadily and consistently built on through Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Overall teaching and learning in the school is good. The Religious Education curriculum is based on the Salford Diocese *REvision 2000* syllabus but incorporates other schemes, opportunities for prayer and worship and the study of world faiths. The links between the school and the parish are strengthened and maintained by the committed work of the chair of governors, parish priest and curate.

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

At the time of the last Religious Education inspection the school was still two separate infant and junior schools. The planned improvements arising from the last inspections are continuing to be successfully embedded since the amalgamation. The school has purchased and used further resources for the teaching of Religious Education and is improving pupil assessment by adopting the Salford diocese assessment guidelines. The roles of the Religious Education co-ordinators have been extended to include monitoring of teaching and learning. The use of information communication technology in Religious Education has been advanced through the purchase of interactive whiteboards and related resources.

### **Capacity to improve**

The school's capacity to improve is good and will be greatly aided by the consolidation onto one site. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and areas for development have been identified in the School Development Plan. The headteacher, senior leaders and the highly dedicated governors work and plan together to bring about improvement.

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

- Develop a planning format for curriculum Religious Education to include learning objectives, activities to meet the objectives and opportunities for prayer and evaluation.
- Continue to establish, monitor and evaluate the outcomes of the Salford diocesan assessment and standardisation guidelines for curriculum Religious Education in a consistent manner across the school.
- Broaden the range of exercise book tasks in Key Stage 2 to further stimulate and challenge the more able learners in 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 good with outstanding features. The governing body provides strategic direction and challenge in support of the headteacher and the leadership team in promoting the Catholic life of the school. The experienced school leadership team takes corporate responsibility for the life of the school and its members are clear in their roles and responsibilities with regard to leading and managing the Catholic life of the school. The chair of governors, who has a high profile in both the school and parish, and members of the governing body are regular visitors to the school. They actively support the spiritual life of the school by attending assemblies and school Masses. Governors monitor the Catholic life of the school through their termly visits to see the school in action. The school works in close partnership with the parish in preparing children for the Sacramental Programme. In support of social cohesion the governors and school leadership set the clear objective, 'To promote the community cohesion strategy in the local community' in its School Development Plan. The Mission Statement is central to the life of the school and is at present being reviewed to make it even more meaningful and inspirational to the school community. The school is to adopt a school motto to match the Mission Statement. Parents are given a voice in school matters through termly meetings of the 'Parents Consultation Group'. The elected pupil school council has been consulted during the Mission Statement review and drafting of a school motto.

## **THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

The provision for collective worship is outstanding. Whole school and key stage Masses, at which parents are present, are celebrated on special occasions. Class Masses are arranged between teachers and priests either in line with the liturgical year or on a curriculum Religious Education theme. The headteacher leads a junior assembly on Mondays and an infant assembly on Tuesdays with a member of the senior leadership team leading an infant assembly on Mondays and a junior assembly on Tuesdays. Infant classes and junior classes take it in turn to lead an assembly for their departments. After class led assemblies parents and friends are invited to stay for refreshments. The school's recently reviewed Prayer and Worship Policy gives clear guidance as to the purpose of praying together and the required content and presentation methods to be included in assemblies. The Key Stage 2 assembly led by the headteacher during inspection celebrated the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. The theme was related directly to the shrine at Lourdes through an internet link. Throughout the assembly the behaviour of the children was reverent, attentive and exemplary. The school further enhances prayer and worship by providing staff and children with the opportunity to participate in voluntary prayer through the well attended lunchtime Rosary club during October. The cohesive nature of collective worship has sought to involve members of the local and wider community and has involved themes to include fair-trade, CAFOD, Muslim Global Relief and visits to a local mosque.

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

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are good. The children make consistently good progress in Religious Education as evidenced by the scrutiny of children's work, pupil assessments and lessons observed during the inspection. Planning for curriculum Religious Education is monitored by the Religious Education co-ordinators but is seen as an area for development and the school is encouraged to develop a planning format for curriculum Religious Education to include learning objectives, activities to meet the objectives and opportunities for prayer and evaluation. The assessment of children's work has become more informed since the adoption of the diocesan assessment and standardisation guidelines for curriculum Religious Education. The school is in the early stages of tracking pupil progress in curriculum Religious Education through cohort matrices which record individual pupil progress. In Key Stage 1 a portfolio of levelled work provides examples for reference and identifies the reasons for the awarding of a level. The school is encouraged to continue to establish, monitor and evaluate the outcomes of the Salford diocesan assessment and standardisation guidelines for curriculum Religious Education in a consistent manner across the school. The school invites visitors to the school to help stimulate the interest of the learners during curriculum Religious Education lessons. During the inspection a Year 3 lesson on baptism involved the parish priest, complete with baptismal register, carrying out a 'pretend baptism' while the chair of governors helped deliver a good lesson based on the use of talents and the ministries of the church.

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

The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good. All lessons observed during the inspection were at least satisfactory with some outstanding teaching. The headteacher and Religious Education co-ordinators monitor the teaching and learning in curriculum Religious Education through lesson observations, scrutiny of exercise books and scrutiny of teacher planning. During the Religious Education lessons observed during the inspection the children demonstrated good subject knowledge and responded readily and enthusiastically to the subject. A Year 6 lesson on the Jewish celebration of Hanukkah saw learners being challenged through thought provoking questioning and stimulated through the use of an interactive whiteboard presentation. They were encouraged to concentrate by completing a differentiated written task while watching and listening to the presentation. Teachers make good use of the interactive whiteboards as a means of enhancing learning. A Reception class became engrossed in a lesson on baptism by watching a power point presentation. A Year 2 lesson on Lent was enhanced by the use of the interactive whiteboard - 'leading the children along the journey through Lent - to get to God via Jesus'. Marking of pupils' work is at its best when teachers fully adhere to the school's marking policy which states that 'marking should 'give advice on improvement'. As an aid to raising standards the inspector encourages teachers in Key Stage 2 to broaden the range of exercise book tasks to stimulate and challenge the more able learners.

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

The quality of the Religious Education curriculum is good. The significance of curriculum Religious Education in the school is immediately visible through prominent Religious Education displays in classrooms and shared areas. The displays are supplemented by the presence of religious artefacts and high quality focal points for prayer in every classroom. The Religious Education curriculum is fully based on the Salford diocesan *REvision 2000* guidelines and supplemented by other schemes and an array of teaching resources. Since the last inspection the school has made significant progress in its use of information communication technology in Religious Education. In Key Stage 1 good use is being made of 'Talking Books' whereby children add their own commentary to photographs of themselves engaged in Religious Education activities. The Religious Education curriculum seeks to promote community cohesion by having a programme of activities by which pupils can visit other places of worship and other communities. The school is an active participant in the local initiative 'Building Bridges' and has established strong links with another local primary school which has 100% Asian heritage. The school also teaches its pupils about the wider community through its use of the diocesan guidelines 'World Religions and People of other Faiths'. Regular inclusion of Religious Education on the agenda of staff meetings and governors' meetings ensures that its profile within the school remains high and that Religious Education curriculum is under constant review and development.

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

Leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education are good with outstanding features. The chair of governors, who is also the Religious Education link governor, is a regular visitor to the school and discusses the Catholic life of the school and curriculum Religious Education with the headteacher and Religious Education co-ordinators. The governing body support, encourage and challenge the leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education through its curriculum committee. The school has two Religious Education co-ordinators with shared responsibility for the subject but specific responsibility for monitoring either the infant or junior curriculum. Both coordinators conscientiously work hard at maintaining Religious Education as a school priority. They are supported in their work by the headteacher and senior leadership team and a governing body devoted to ensuring that Religious Education is given a primary status on the school timetable and maintained as a key purpose of school life. The School Development Plan, ratified by the governing body, has identified three areas for continued development as an aid to raising standards in Religious Education as well as continuing to improve resources. This report encourages the school to continue the work in these three areas. The parish priest, governors, school leadership and staff actively promote their shared vision of how their school should meet the needs of its learners and wider community. Together they ensure that Religious Education impacts on every area of school life and have succeeded in correctly evaluating their school.