

**SALFORD DIOCESE
INSPECTION REPORT**



**ST. ANTONY'S
ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Blackburn**

Inspection date December 2006

Reporting Inspector Mrs. Pamela Parden

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

Type of School Catholic Primary
 Age range of pupils 3-11
 Number on roll 201
 Appropriate authority The governing body
 Chair of Governors Mrs. J. Georgy
 Headteacher Mrs. M. Crompton
 Religious Education Co-ordinator Mrs. R. Gallagher
 Date of previous inspection October 2001

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	
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	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	1	
<i>The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements</i>		

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Antony's is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic Primary school serving the parishes of St. Antony and Christ the King, Shadsworth and St. Theresa of the Child Jesus, Intack. Some housing in the locality is owner occupied but most is local authority and housing association rented property. The Shadsworth estate is an area with many social and economic problems. Learners range from 3 to 11 years. There are 201 pupils on roll with an additional 23 in the Nursery. 140 pupils are Catholics. There is a changing pupil profile with an increasing number of children from different faiths while 4.1% study English as an additional language. 34% of pupils are currently eligible for free school meals. 32 pupils are identified as having special educational needs and 1 has a statutory statement of special educational need. 8 of the 10 teachers (80%) are Catholics.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

The overall effectiveness of the school is good and in some instances outstanding. It is a very welcoming, happy, caring, and safe school which fulfils well its commitment to ensuring the best possible education for all pupils. It is a community based on Christian values with Jesus as its inspiration. It provides a stimulating environment in which each individual is respected, cared for and loved and in which the talents of all are nurtured. The staff work well as a team and are good role models. They are dedicated, committed and hard working and strive to ensure that the school grows and develops. The strong Catholic ethos ensures very good provision for the pupils' spiritual and moral development. This results from the strength of the headteacher's leadership, well supported by the senior staff, together with good provision for Religious Education and prayer and worship. Teaching is good and relationships within the school are positive. The head teacher has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and development needs and supports all staff in their professional development.

Improvement since the last inspection

The school has fully addressed the key issues arising from the last Section 23 Inspection in October 2001. Religious Education lessons are well planned by the teachers ensuring that all pupils are challenged appropriately. There is valuable support from teaching assistants. The Religious Education co-ordinator organizes the timetable for worship and celebrations and provides effective support for class teachers, sometimes working alongside them. She attends appropriate courses and provides feed back to staff. Assessment of pupils' work is fully operational and systems for the monitoring and evaluation of both teaching and learning are in place. Quality resources have been purchased to support this.

Capacity to improve

The head teacher has a clear vision of the school's future needs and development. She is ably assisted by the senior staff and Religious Education co-ordinator and well supported by the hard working and committed staff. Religious Education features as a priority in the School Improvement Plan which has been drawn up in consultation with governors and staff. Effective systems for the monitoring and evaluation of curriculum Religious Education are in place. The school's capacity to improve is therefore very good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Complete the review of the use of "Here I Am" as soon as possible.
- Identify which areas of "Here I Am" link with *REvision 2000* and implement them.

THE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are good and the Catholic faith is at the centre of its life. The Mission Statement, reviewed annually and rewritten two years ago by staff, governors, some parents and children, underpins all that takes place in the school. The governing body is well informed and works diligently in its committees. The chair of governors meets with the headteacher each week and, as link governor for Religious Education, works closely with the coordinator. She attends relevant courses, monitors progress and feeds back to the governing body. The headteacher and Religious Education coordinator also report regularly to the governors and this forms part of their monitoring of school improvement. Strategies are in place for the monitoring and evaluation of the school's Catholic life and these lead to the identification of priorities in the School Improvement Plan. Staff are encouraged to exercise responsibilities and to take advantage of opportunities for professional development. All the staff and assistants are hard working and committed to the school's Catholicity and its values. Home, school and parish links are good and the parish priest is much involved in the school. The school itself gives good support to the parish Sacramental Programme. Links with the associated Catholic high school are strong and there is successful networking between the schools.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The quality of prayer and worship is outstanding. Teachers follow the school's comprehensive written policy and include collective worship in their weekly planning. St. Antony's is committed to helping all pupils, parents and staff to develop a personal relationship with God through prayer and worship providing a rich variety of opportunities and experiences to this end. The headteacher leads Monday assemblies which include awards and celebrations. Weekly key stage Assemblies are led by teachers in rota once each term and are of a very high standard. All are structured and recorded for the year by the Religious Education coordinator. Parents are invited to liturgical celebrations, Masses and assemblies. Classes pray at regular set times daily and each class has a weekly, extended worship celebration based on the lesson topic being covered at that time. In the excellent one observed during inspection learners were involved in planning, preparation and presentation. These celebrations are reflective, thought provoking and reverent and there is a high standard of hymn singing. Pupils participate competently and confidently in different forms of prayer in both formal and informal settings. Their confidence was particularly evident in their readings and responses during Mass. At Mass times focused alternative celebration is provided for children of other faiths. All prayer and worship observed was reverent and respectful and a spiritual experience. The school has many quality resources which are used to enhance the liturgical displays and focal points around the school and in classrooms. The school's provision ensures that worship is an integral part of school life influencing learners' spiritual and moral development. Staff themselves share a time of prayer and reflection together at the end of each week.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are good especially given the diversity of pupils' achievements and understanding on entry to school. The outcomes of the teachers' assessment of individual children's ability and progress enable appropriate targets to be set. Pupils meet or surpass these targets during each key stage achieving well by the end of Key Stage 2. The standard of learners' written work is mostly satisfactory and sometimes good, resulting from continuous monitoring. Children use relevant and appropriate language and respond very well in discussion and role play. Attitudes and values are understood through prayer and discussion and this was very evident even in the Nursery and Foundation Years. All learners know and understand the Catholic beliefs and way of life. They are encouraged to relate this to their own lives, to follow Jesus' example and to show their love of God in making appropriate choices. Learners know about and respect other faiths and cultures. They demonstrate a good knowledge of the Bible and God's love for them as was seen in lessons in Years 5 and 6 and in the Bible referencing used in Year 4. They respond confidently to opportunities to use research skills, explore ideas and discuss questions. Behaviour is outstanding and this is achieved through mutual respect and the school's belief that every child matters. Learners undertake responsibilities as 'buddies' and as team and play leaders. A school council is being introduced and the learners are encouraged to show care for those in need, both in school and beyond, through prayer, good works and fund raising.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall with some outstanding features in Key Stage 2. All teachers have a good knowledge of the Religious Education curriculum and they share their own faith with their pupils to enhance their learning. Thorough planning includes clearly stated objectives, tasks appropriately linked to ability levels and good use of resources. Assessment activities and detailed records of individual pupils inform future planning to support progress. Creative use of quality resources and interesting tasks set to challenge all abilities were observed in all classes. High expectations and work set to match pupils' needs were seen to result in the best possible outcomes. The excellent use of teaching assistants ensures that all abilities benefit. Classroom management and organisation is very good and behaviour observed was outstanding. Pupils are co-operative and attentive and obviously enjoy a variety of teaching styles. This was particularly evident in one class when, after research and discussion, individuals took the 'hot seat' to respond to questions drawn up by others in the class about the Magi, their journey and their gifts. Learners work well together in pairs or groups. They share ideas and respect the ideas of others. In one Key Stage 1 lesson related to Advent they discussed reasons for giving gifts and also the ways in which God shows His gift of love to us. Parents are happy with their children's achievements in Religious Education. They receive information about work to be covered each half term as well as weekly newsletters. Some parents also help in school when needed.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The quality of the Religious Education curriculum is good. There is a clear written policy with the aim, "in the light of the Gospel to accompany individuals on their way towards achieving their full capability". Time allocated for curriculum Religious Education meets required guidelines. The school is committed to the diocesan *REvision 2000* scheme of work and a computer programme with related objectives is in place to assist planning, monitoring, evaluation and assessment. The 'Here I Am' programme has also been used during the current term in order to familiarize the staff with its use as an additional and effective resource. The related planning is thorough with appropriate provision for individual need. The use of the programme is being monitored and evaluated and an audit of possible future benefits is being carefully kept. All the planning and teaching is linked to the required attainment targets and pupil assessment is the same as the one for *REvision 2000*. Having completed the review of the use of "Here I Am" the school should identify which areas link with *REvision 2000* and implement them. The school aims to widen its approach and use the best materials and resources available as well as linking Religious Education to other curricular areas in order to enrich provision. This was particularly evident in assemblies. There is a very good supply of quality resources and interactive white boards are well used to enhance learning. A scheme of work related to understanding and respecting other faiths and cultures is in use throughout the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education are outstanding. Governors and headteacher are committed to the importance and quality of Religious Education as central to the school's whole life and ethos. Comprehensive written policies for curriculum Religious Education, spiritual and moral development and prayer and worship are in place and regularly reviewed. The headteacher works alongside the Religious Education co-ordinator in development planning and observing lessons. Time is allocated for the co-ordinator to attend diocesan courses, monitor and evaluate teachers' planning and scrutinise learners' work. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic, dedicated and conscientious. Her experience and example are instrumental in leading the school forward in its drive to provide the best possible teaching and learning in Religious Education. She supports colleagues in assembly preparation and lesson planning when needed and works with the music co-ordinator in the preparation of music for Mass. Her influence and dedication help to create the atmosphere of respect which permeates the school. The link governor for Religious Education attends relevant in-service training and meets regularly with the co-ordinator. The parish priest demonstrates a similar commitment as he contributes both to curriculum Religious Education and the spiritual life of the school.