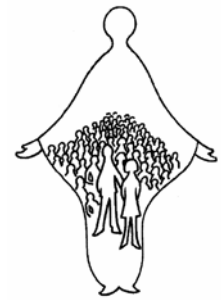


**SALFORD DIOCESE  
INSPECTION REPORT**



**OUR LADY AND ST.GERARD ROMAN CATHOLIC  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Lourdes Avenue Lostock Hall Preston Lancashire PP5  
5TB**

Inspection date November 2008

Reporting Inspector Mrs. Mary McGrail

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

|                                  |                    |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Type of School                   | Catholic Primary   |
| Age range of pupils              | 4-11               |
| Number on roll                   | 260                |
| Appropriate authority            | The governing body |
| Chair of Governors               | Mr. Kevin Lyth     |
| Headteacher                      | Mrs. Janet Malone  |
| Religious Education Co-ordinator | Mrs. Janet Malone  |
| Date of previous inspection      | January 2006       |

| <b>The Inspection judgements are:</b>                        | <b>Grade</b> | <b>Explanation of the Grades</b><br><br>1 = Outstanding<br>2 = Good<br>3 = Satisfactory<br>4 = Inadequate |
|--|--------------|---|
| Overall effectiveness of the school                          | 2            |   |
| Leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school | 1            |   |
| 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            |   |

*The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements*

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Our Lady and St. Gerard is a Roman Catholic voluntary aided primary school in the Diocese of Salford. It serves the parish of Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Gerard Majella in Lostock Hall, Preston. The majority of learners live in the parish although a number do travel from outside the immediate area. The school serves an established and stable community. The learners come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. Accommodation comprises local authority housing, privately owned and rented properties. The age range of the learners is 4 to 11 years. There is a private pre-school unit on the site. The indicative admission number is 50 and there are currently 260 learners on roll of whom 236 are baptised Catholics. 5% are eligible for free school meals. 11 learners have been identified as having special educational needs with 2 having a statutory statement of special educational need. 2 learners of Polish heritage have recently been welcomed into school with English as an additional language. 8 of the 13 teachers (62%) are Catholics.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

Our Lady and St. Gerard's is a good and effective school with several outstanding features. It offers its learners a good traditional Catholic education in a happy, supportive and secure environment. The school is firmly at the heart of the parish it serves. Learners enjoy coming to school and have good attitudes to learning. They appreciate the many opportunities they are given to contribute to their school through their involvement with the school council and their links with other schools and the wider community. Their behaviour is excellent. School, home and parish links are strengthened through the Sacramental Programme and the many social links through parish activities. The dedicated headteacher leads a hardworking school team where every one is valued as having an important contribution to make to this successful school community. The support of the parish priest is appreciated and valued by learners, staff and parents. The school is very successful in developing the spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness of the learners. The informed governing body gives very good support to the school and shares the vision for its future development. The aims of the Mission Statement are realised in the daily life of the school.

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

Following the last Section 48 inspection in January 2006 the school has addressed the issues identified and satisfactorily resolved the majority. Assessment still needs further development. There have been no staff changes but several periods of maternity leave have been covered by supply teachers. Two senior teachers are currently on maternity leave. In September 2008 the school began to operate on one site. Key Stage 2 accommodation has been extended and refurbished. The playground has been extended and play equipment has been enhanced. An area of "soft surface playground" has been provided. Secure fencing has been installed.

### **Capacity to improve**

The school's self-evaluation is honest, detailed and accurate. Clear targets for improvement have been established. The headteacher, well supported by all her staff, shares a clear vision with the supportive governing body for the future development of the school. They have the expertise and determination to realise this vision. Therefore the capacity to improve is good.

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

- Continue to fully implement a rigorous system for the assessment, levelling and moderation of learners work 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 outstanding. The very clear and precise “child friendly” Mission Statement is reviewed every year to ensure its continuing relevance to the learners of the school. It is at the forefront of all policies and permeates all aspects of the life of the school. It is prominently displayed throughout the school. The dedicated parish priest is a regular and welcome visitor to the school. The governing body are well informed about the Religious life of the school through the detailed reports of the headteacher who also has responsibility for this subject. A foundation governor works as a teaching assistant in school and the designated governor for Religious Education is a catechist for the successful parish Sacramental Programme. Other governors are also involved. The headteacher and parish priest play leading roles in the Sacramental Programme. The designated governor meets regularly with the headteacher. Only 4 teachers hold the qualification of the Catholic Certificate in Religious studies or its equivalent. The governing body are proactive in encouraging staff to obtain this qualification. The school has a high profile in the local community. Productive community links have been developed with other schools over several years. The excellent monthly bulletin for parents stresses the importance of the partnership between homes and school.

## **THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

Provision for collective worship is outstanding. The celebration of the Eucharist is central to the life of the school. Whole school Masses are celebrated at the beginning and end of term and on special feast days. Class Masses are celebrated weekly with younger learners “pairing” with the older learners for these celebrations. Learners are fully involved with the readings, prayers and music. Parents and parishioners are invited to these celebrations. Throughout the year opportunities are provided for learners, staff, parents and parishioners to develop their relationship with God through prayer and liturgical celebrations. Whole school assemblies, led by the headteacher, are held weekly. Key stage assemblies, led by staff and learners, on a rota basis are a feature of the provision. Enthusiastic hymn singing reflects the enjoyment the learners derive from their involvement. At all prayerful occasions learners are reverent and respectful. The class collective worship attended during the inspection, prepared and led by a group of Year 3 learners, was an excellent example of class worship and a genuine spiritual experience for all involved. The quality of the overall provision reflects the dedication and support of the parish priest and all staff. A detailed file is kept of assembly themes and Masses. The school has a clear policy statement for collective worship. All learners are involved in this inclusive provision. No learner is withdrawn.

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

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are good with some outstanding features. Clear progress is evident within and between all key stages. Learners enter the Reception class with attainment generally below national expectations. Good progress is made and by the end of Key Stage 1 most learners are able to communicate their ideas using good religious vocabulary and record their version of bible stories and stories from the life of Jesus in simple well constructed sentences. There is evidence of high quality work produced by the more able learners. This progress is maintained in Key Stage 2. Learners have a good factual knowledge of their faith and discuss moral and social issues in a sensible and mature manner. Many record their work with care. Learners appreciate their input into school decisions, through the school council. They have designed the new school badge and logo. A photographic record of the progress on the building developments ensured the school council kept all interested parties fully informed. Older learners act as “Buddies” for the younger learners. Generous support is given to local, national and international charities. The learners often devise their own ideas for fund raising ventures for the charities. Learners are developing a very good sense of citizenship through their involvement in the local community and parish.

## **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. Lessons are carefully planned with appropriate learning objectives. In the lessons observed during inspection these were made very clear at the beginning of the lesson. A range of teaching styles is used to reflect the content of the lesson and the age of the learners. Resources are carefully prepared and used effectively to enhance the learning process. All lessons are planned using the *REvision 2000* and *Moving the Vision On* programmes. Tasks are set which meet the needs of all learners and the few learners who need extra help are very well supported by the teaching assistants. Work is very carefully marked with praise for extra effort and good work. Suggestions are made for how work could be improved. Questions are posed which encourage further thought. Learners reply to these questions in some year groups. The school is in the early stages of developing their system for assessment of curriculum Religious Education. The school is encouraged to further develop a rigorous and comprehensive structure as suggested in the diocesan model. Learners have good attitudes to their learning. They are interested and show a genuine enthusiasm for discussing religious topics. They ask detailed questions to clarify issues and listen attentively to the teachers. Their behaviour at all times is excellent.

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

The Religious Education curriculum is good with some outstanding features. The school has a clear and relevant policy statement for curriculum Religious Education. The diocesan World Faiths programme is used in Key Stage Two. The time allocated to curriculum Religious Education meets both national and diocesan requirements in most classes. In the Reception class additional time from the delivery of a creative curriculum supplements the specified time allocated to curriculum Religious Education. The length of the individual lessons is appropriate for the older learners. Learners enjoy visits to places of worship for other faith communities and good use is made of the nearby parish church. Strong productive links with All Hallows High school, visits from outside speakers on moral and social issues including links with many community schools during "FriendshipWeek" all enhance the overall provision. The frequent visits from the parish priest, together with the weekly children's Liturgy at Sunday Mass, linked to the quality of the collective worship in school, all contribute positively to the Religious Education curriculum. The Religious Education curriculum makes a major contribution to the very successful development of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. No learner is withdrawn from any aspect of curriculum Religious Education.

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

The school has judged the leadership and management of curriculum religious Education as good. The inspector agrees with this judgement. The headteacher is still leading this subject and therefore ensures it has a high profile in school. Monitoring of the overall provision follows the structure for other core subjects. Monitoring of teachers' lesson plans, lesson observations, discussions with learners and scrutiny of their Religious Education workbooks are all undertaken as part of this process. Monitoring outcomes are included in the headteachers' detailed reports to the governing body. The designated governor for Religious Education is a regular visitor to the school and meets regularly with the headteacher. With another governor she acts as a catechist for the Sacramental Programme. There is no formal monitoring of standards and provision by the governing body although the chair of governors visits the school regularly. The headteacher is well supported by the primary diocesan adviser and staff are kept fully informed of developments in Religious Education and prayer and worship. Resources are adequate and supplemented when necessary. All classes have an attractive focal area for prayer and these are re very well used for their intended purpose. Displays throughout the school and in the classrooms clearly reflect the school's faith life.