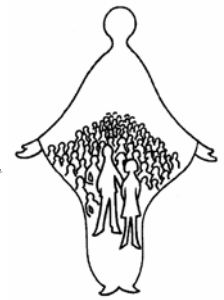


**SALFORD DIOCESE
INSPECTION REPORT**

**SACRED HEART ROMAN CATHOLIC
SCHOOL**

PRIMARY



Central Drive Westhoughton Bolton BL5 3DU

Inspection date November 2008

Reporting Inspector Mrs. Margaret Dolan

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

Type of School Catholic Primary

URN 105243

Age range of pupils 4-11

Number on roll 303

Appropriate authority The governing body

Chair of Governors Rev. Michael Johonnett

Headteacher Mr. Martin Johnson

Religious Education Co-ordinators Mr. Martin Johnson, Mrs. Diane Furlong
and Mrs. Anne Murphy

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	

The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Sacred Heart is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school serving the Sacred Heart parish in the 'village' of Westhoughton, a large dormitory town serving Bolton, Wigan and Manchester. The catchment area is one of relative social advantage. There is a socio-economic mix of housing including a large council estate south of the town centre, housing association homes and privately owned houses. There are 303 learners on roll aged from 4 to 11 of whom 280 are Catholic. 3.3% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. There are 45 children identified as having special educational needs and 1 pupil has a statutory statement of special educational need. There are 18 full and part time teachers of whom 15 (83%) are Catholic. 13 teachers hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies or equivalent.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

The Sacred Heart School is an outstanding Catholic school which is led by a committed and enthusiastic headteacher ably supported by the senior leadership team and staff. The religious inspection took place 9 weeks after the OfSTED inspection and it was evident that the school had worked really hard in consolidating the already well-developed areas of religious life within the school. There is a marked family atmosphere within the school that establishes a good climate for work. Year 6 pupils, named 'gardeners', take responsibility in the playground for children in reception class called the 'seedlings'. This helps the younger children to settle in school as well as developing a sense of community for the older children. The school has strong links with the parish and surrounding community. In Religious Education the children achieve exceptionally well and excellent progress is made in each key stage. The school has strong links with the parish and wider community holding events such as Christmas markets in school.

Improvement since the last inspection

Following the last Section 48 inspection in December 2005 there have been changes in the leadership team including a new headteacher and a new assistant headteacher. There were no key issues in the last inspection but the school has taken note of areas for improvement. There have been changes in teaching and support staff and now every class has allocated support from a teaching assistant. Staff training has taken place on 'Differentiation and Assessment in Religious Education' and staff are now more adept at providing differentiated experiences which are recorded in class celebration books. There is now a quiet room that is used for prayer and worship and a peace garden where children can sit and reflect. The governors are kept well informed of the progress of Religious Education in the headteacher's reports to governors.

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation of the religious life of the school is outstanding. Religious Education is well monitored and there are good examples of children's work in the assessment files. The headteacher is aware of the needs of staff and pupils and there are high expectations of the school community. Religious Education is planned and evaluated methodically and in great detail. The school's capacity to improve is therefore outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- The school should continue to maintain the high standards for the religious life of the school.
- Develop world religions as a separate topic in Key Stage 2.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The headteacher has a clear vision of the direction for the school and, with the Religious Education leader and deputy headteacher, has worked hard to achieve that vision. The religious life of the school is exemplary. Children are polite and well-mannered and show great respect to visitors. Their behaviour is very good and during inspection this was seen particularly in the way they entered the hall for assemblies. The Mission Statement has been reviewed by the governors, staff and children and it is evident in all the school documents. The governors fulfil their responsibilities and share the vision of the school. Governors are kept well informed by the headteacher's comprehensive reports regarding the religious life of the school. There is a designated Religious Education governor who meets regularly with the headteacher to review Religious Education developments in the school. Priority is given to Catholic applicants for teaching posts. Staff have attended in-service training arranged through the diocese on prayer and worship and the headteacher attends diocesan meetings and conferences. The school's commitment to its Catholic life is shown by all staff having a religious objective in their performance management targets. The Monday assembly sets the tone for the week with statements to live by being given to the children and this is then reinforced through SEAL (social and emotional aspects of learning), circle time and other curricular areas including contexts for learning. Children raise money for charities including CAFOD, St Joseph's Penny and HCPT. The Pupil Voice School Council has raised awareness and funds for people in Palestine as part of its being a UNICEF Rights Respecting School. The school is encouraged to continue the work of maintaining high standards in its religious life.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Provision for collective worship is outstanding. There are statements to live by assemblies each Monday morning and celebration assemblies each Friday. At the celebration assemblies the children are rewarded for achievements and behaviour and the statements to live by are reinforced with the expectation that the children will shine like Jesus. Each reward is referred back to the religious life of the school and these are interspersed with songs of love and praise to Jesus. One of the children's particular favourites is "Jesus you're my superhero". This special time enhances community cohesion and strengthens the Catholic spirituality at the heart of the school. Class assemblies are planned around the liturgical year and religious topics and they are recorded and evaluated in the teachers' planning. These plans are monitored by the Religious Education leader and the headteacher. Mass is celebrated regularly in classes and parents regularly attend these Masses. The Mass in Class 11 relating to the November theme of remembering those who have died was planned and prepared by the children. The atmosphere during the Mass was very reverent and the children took part with prayers, readings and role-play. Provision for prayer and worship in the classroom is good. Mass is also celebrated in church on special days and Holy Days. Each class has its own special area and the displays around the area are relevant and well presented. Children record prayer and worship in their religion books and these include photographs. Parents are informed in their welcome pack of their right to withdraw their children from Religious Education and collective worship but this facility has never been requested.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are outstanding. The teachers have high expectations and the work in the children's Religious Education books is generally at least good. During inspection the children were able to discuss their part in the Sacramental Programme and were clear on the correct terms used for the celebration of the sacraments. The children enjoy their Religious Education lessons and were keen to talk about Masses and assemblies they had prepared. They showed a very mature level of understanding of their religious journey and one child said how proud he was to be a Catholic and to live with the rules that Jesus gave us. There is an atmosphere of calm and diligence in the school and the children are keen to produce their best work. When the children were taking part in sustained writing they played quiet music and lit candles in their classrooms to promote a peaceful setting. Children in Reception class were able to relate Advent to preparing for a new baby with the help of one child whose mother is going to have a baby. Year 2 children looked at the items that Mary and Joseph may have taken on their journey to Bethlehem and compared it with their own spiritual journey as they prepare for Christmas. Children learn about other world religions through the diocesan syllabus and the whole school recently celebrated a World Faith week. The school should now develop the study of world religions as a separate topic at Key Stage 2.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is outstanding. The work in the children's books during inspection was of a high standard and the marking was generally good. Planning is clear and concise and the lessons observed were interesting and appropriate to the age of the children. Teachers have high expectations and challenge children on their Religious Education journey. Work is differentiated and a variety of teaching strategies is employed to match the needs of the learners. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively and many opportunities are used to enhance the curriculum with the use of photographs taken and shown consistently throughout the school. Children learn to empathise and are able to discuss emotions as in a Key Stage 2 lesson when the feelings of David's brothers were discussed in relation to the theme of God's chosen people. Assessments are linked to *REvision 2000* and *Moving the Vision On* and these are passed on to the Religious Education leader for monitoring. Different writing genres are used to vary the style for the children and these include poetry, story and play script writing. Religious Education is taught in the classes for at least 10% of the time. Children are attentive in their lessons and complete their work. Parents are very supportive and regularly complete questionnaires on the life of the school. Parents meetings are very well attended.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The Religious Education curriculum is outstanding and consistent. *REvision 2000* and *Moving the Vision On* are used throughout the school and children make steady progress throughout the key stages. The curriculum is broad and balanced and promotes religious and personal development. Children in year 5 had been considering 'looking back and looking forward' by writing about their memories. They thought especially about people who were no longer with them and then considered the good things that they had to look forward to in their lives. Prayer, worship and liturgy are closely woven into all their work in Religious Education and the links with other curricular areas enriches the provision. Work on other faiths and cultures is undertaken throughout the school. The Religious Education curriculum is reviewed regularly with a bi-annual emphasis on Key Stage 2 or Key Stage 1 and Foundation Stage. The review includes lesson observations, book scrutiny and examination of planning files to ensure consistency and progression. Liaison with the associated Catholic high school is good. There are regular Masses for Years 6 and 7 and high school staff attend the Year 6 leavers mass. There are regular visits to the school and members of the high school staff come into the school to meet the children. Staff from the Sacred Heart school attend the annual prize giving at the high school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education is outstanding. The Religious Education subject leader has only co-ordinated the role since September but, with the headteacher and the Religious Education co-ordinator in Key Stage 1, already has a clear understanding of the school's vision for religious education. There is a designated governor who is directly responsible for monitoring the Religious Education curriculum. Teachers spend the required amount of time on Religious Education in accordance with national and diocesan guidelines. A major audit of resources took place in 2007. Each class has its own resources and there are also shared resources in Key Stages 1 and 2. Resources are regularly audited and relevant items are purchased when appropriate. There are religious displays in each classroom and these are changed regularly to fit in with religious topics being covered and the liturgical year. The whiteboard in the hall displays the weekly statement to live by and there is also a reflective prayer area. There is a quiet room where the children are encouraged to pray and on one morning each week before school there is a short prayer service for staff to give them time to reflect on their own spiritual journeys. Visitors come in to school to reinforce the message of helping others and these have included recently a visitor from CAFOD and the use of a video to promote the Christmas Shoebox appeal. Priority is given to Religious Education in the school improvement plan and the headteacher's report to governors. Weekly newsletters to parents begin with the statements to live by and give parents the opportunity to support their children in their religious journey.