

**SALFORD DIOCESE  
INSPECTION REPORT**



**ST. AUGUSTINE'S  
ROMAN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL**

**Elker Lane Billington Clitheroe Lancashire BB7 9JA**

Inspection date February 2009

Reporting Inspector Mr. W. Ryan

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

|                             |                             |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Type of School              | Catholic Secondary          |
| URN                         | 119801                      |
| Age range of pupils         | 11-16                       |
| Number on roll              | 1058                        |
| Appropriate authority       | the governing body          |
| Chair of Governors          | Rev. Fr. E. Willoughby S.J. |
| Head teacher                | Mr. A. McNamara             |
| Head of Religious Education | Mrs. M. Wells               |
| Date of previous inspection | February 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                          | 1            |   |
| 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  | 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**

St. Augustine's is an 11-16 voluntary aided Roman Catholic co-educational high school. It is a specialist Science and Languages College and has Leading Edge status. The school serves an area which is socially and geographically large and diverse. It provides education for pupils living in the contributory parishes of St. Hubert (Dunsop Bridge), St. Michael and St. John (Clitheroe), St. Mary (Langho), St. Mary (Sabden), St. Mary (Osbaldeston) Our Lady and St. Hubert and St. Wulstan (Great Harwood), St. Charles (Rishton), St. John the Baptist (Padiham) and English Martyrs (Whalley). The indicative admission number is 205 and there are currently 1058 learners on roll of whom 1010 (95.5%) are baptised Roman Catholics. 5.2 % of learners are eligible for free school meals. The school has identified 178 learners as having special educational needs and of these 51 have a statutory statement of special educational need. 47 of the school's 61 teachers (77%) are Catholics.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

St. Augustine's is an outstanding and progressive Catholic school. Stakeholders share, value and work assiduously to realise the ideals of the Mission statement to, "...encourage, inspire, challenge and care for each other, to be open to the wider world about us and to celebrate together our reasons for living and hoping". This is evidenced in leadership, planning, teaching and learning, pastoral support, worship, relationships and documentation. Governors continue to support and challenge themselves and the school's managers to maintain the momentum of improvement. Diverse skills and experience enable governors to fulfil their role of critical friends to the school, while the chair and clergy governors make a significant and valued contribution to supporting the school's Catholic ethos. Dynamic and inspired leadership from the headteacher, with committed support from a strong school leadership team, coupled with a dedicated and highly skilled staff maintain the focus on improving standards and achievement. Provision for prayer and worship is outstanding. These are not an addition to the school curriculum. They dovetail naturally into the rich variety of experiences which are part of everyday life at St. Augustine's. Learners are not spectators - they are enthusiastic participants. Members of the Religious Education department with colleagues from music and drama play prominent roles in developing the school's spiritual provision. St. Augustine's is a happy school. Learners recognise and value the care they receive, both academic and pastoral. The role of the form tutor is highly valued. Arrangements for welcoming learners to the school are excellent and well devised strategies are in place, largely through peer support, to ensure that the learners feel secure and valued. Relationships in the school are outstanding and teachers work hard to encourage good learning and progress. Excellent behaviour and politeness among the pupils reflect the school mission. An ethos of encouragement and reward leads to well-motivated learners who make good progress in a welcoming environment. Parents speak highly of the school and its management. They support and value the work of the teachers and recognise the progress the learners are making. Students are actively engaged in supporting each other through their work as members of the school council, prefects, catechists, Eucharistic Ministers, buddies, peer mentors and paired readers. Concern for others motivates the learners to give generously to a variety of charities, the dedication of the CAFOD group being notable. Funding for Religious Education is in line with other major faculties. The school allocates Religious Education 8% of teaching time at Key Stage 3 and 10% at Key Stage 4.

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

No key issues arose from the last inspection. However the school has undertaken a formal evaluation, along Diocesan lines, of chaplaincy provision. A liturgy assistant now works with the Religious Education department for two days per week.

### **Capacity to improve**

Capacity for self-evaluation and further improvement is outstanding. The commitment to raising achievement and enriching the lives of the learners remains. The Religious Education department is making excellent progress.

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

- There are no significant issues to be addressed.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL**

The school deems the leadership and management of its Catholic life to be outstanding. Evidence gathered during the inspection supports this view. Ownership of St. Augustine's Mission Statement is shared by all stakeholders. The governing body provides expertise and leadership which challenges and supports the headteacher and school leadership team in their efforts to continue to raise standards. Through its link governor structure and regular reports from departmental heads, the governing body evaluates, monitors and supports the school's academic, spiritual and pastoral provision. Religious Education and liturgy in particular benefit not only from a link governor but also from the enthusiastic support offered by members of the clergy on the governing body. Governors attend and participate in major liturgical events celebrated in school in addition to providing strong links with contributory parishes. Dynamic and inspirational leadership by the headteacher maintains the drive to further develop the school as a Catholic community. He enjoys enthusiastic support from a dedicated school leadership team. The Religious Education department leads and energetically supports others in developing the school's ethos. Robust pastoral care arrangements and excellent support for the varying needs of the learners engender a sense of welcome and inclusion which in turn lead learners to value their school and its family spirit. In the words of one parent, "We feel that the Catholic ethos and teaching at the school is excellent and our children have been made to feel very much part of a family, which supports and celebrates each other". Parents are kept informed of progress through regular reports while communication between school and home is excellent. Links with partner primary schools are exemplary, featuring memorable liturgies as part of the school's transition arrangements. Links with local non Christian schools are strong and involvement in the Ribble Valley R.E. Network enables learners to interact with learners of other faiths. Attendance is excellent, indicating that pupils enjoy attending school and sharing its success. Generous and varied charity fundraising raises awareness of, and strengthens links with, the wider global community.

## **THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

The inspector agrees with the school's judgement that the quality of collective worship is outstanding. The school's chaplaincy group, whose membership includes the headteacher, school managers, members of the Religious Education department and curriculum and pastoral leaders plans the liturgical calendar. Liturgies are celebrated throughout the year, initiated by a welcome celebration for new intake learners. Advent and Lenten liturgies prepare the community for the major celebrations of Christmas and Easter while Holy Days are marked by opportunities for school celebrations of Holy Mass. Members of the community have the opportunity to attend Services of Reconciliation. Liturgies are meticulously prepared making expert and judicious use of information communication technology to engage the community. At a recent Mass, celebrated to mark the school achieving Languages College status, prayers and readings were delivered in a range of languages by teachers and students. Learners are attentive and pray with reverence. Prayer is a central feature of school life. Staff meetings and briefings start with prayers. Assemblies, led by the year tutors, together with registrations and form time, feature opportunities for prayer. The school prayer book is a valuable resource for form tutors and is supported on the school intranet with prayers for the day and themes for the week. Learners pray with respect and at an assembly and registration observed during inspection the reverence with which they prayed was commendable. The chapel is described by the pupils as a place of peace where "we can pray and reflect. We also use it in lesson times". Though small this room is well resourced and valued by the community. Learners are provided with a number of opportunities to attend residential retreats. There have been no requests for pupils to be withdrawn from prayer and worship occasions.

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

The school considers achievement and standards in Religious Education to be good. The inspection evidence indicates that this is an accurate assessment overall. Achievement at Key Stage 3 continues to rise, through excellent teaching, appropriate teaching resources and a syllabus which is kept under review. Evidence supports the view that the school is maintaining the upward trend in Religious Education achievement at Key Stage 4. Standards of teaching in the Religious Education department are outstanding.. Learners take pride in their work. They demonstrate the ability to work co-operatively together. Learning is enhanced by excellent behaviour, respect for the subject and the mutual respect that exists between pupils and teachers. Membership of the CAFOD group, meetings of the prayer group, voluntary Mass on Fridays, oversubscribed residential retreats and catechists and Eucharistic Ministers chosen among the pupils are indications of the impact that Religious Education has on the spiritual life of the school. Members of the Religious Education department lead by example and make admirable role models for those in their care.

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

The school considers the quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education to be outstanding and the inspector agrees with this judgement. Detailed and well resourced schemes of work based on the Salford Diocese Guidelines are used to very good effect in Key Stage 3 while Key Stage 4 learners study the Edexcel Christian modules which feature a number of opportunities to learn about and evaluate other Religions and opinions. Lessons are very well planned and are presented in interesting and challenging format to the learners. It is noteworthy that schemes of work take into account local circumstances and topics of particular interest to the school. Information communication technology is effectively and extensively used to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. Assessment is robust and informs planning. Parents and learners are canvassed for their views on teaching and learning, while the school tracking programme keeps them informed of progress. Marking and assessment enables the learners to identify targets and rewards encourage progress. Lessons observed during the inspection were generally of a very high order with most teaching being outstanding. The pace of lessons was suited to the ability of the learners and a variety of teaching strategies was used to engage the differing styles of learning among them. Learners responded well. They were attentive, respected the contributions made by fellow learners and treated the teachers and subject matter with appropriate respect. The school makes excellent provision for learners with special educational needs through comprehensive support from a team of teaching assistants whose work is valued at all levels.

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

The school considers the quality of the Religious Education curriculum to be outstanding. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that this is an accurate judgement. The Key Stage 3 scheme of work follows the Diocesan Guidelines for years 7, 8 and 9. These are tailored to the needs of the learners and specific features of the school. It is well supported with appropriate texts and teaching materials and incorporates excellent use of information communication technology coupled with very good printed resources. Lesson plans for both Key Stages as well as assessment tasks are all in place. When questioned learners are aware of the level to which they are working and can set themselves targets to make further progress. Evaluating learners' work within the department is leading to rising standards and raising learners' expectations. At both key stages learners have the opportunities to learn about those of other Faiths and to evaluate their beliefs. Further opportunities for personal development exist through the school's prayer life and an awareness of the needs of others. The school's charity portfolio is extensive.

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

The school and the inspector share the judgement that leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education are outstanding. The head of department, who is also the school's Leading Edge co-ordinator, supported by the curriculum lead teacher, leads a well qualified and highly motivated team with skill and enthusiasm. She has a clear vision for the department and the energy, organisation and drive to realise it. In this she is supported by the school leadership team through her line manager and by the Governing Body through her link governor. Sound self-evaluation, lesson observations and good communication within the department assist in creating a successful team which continues to raise standards and achievement. The department is housed in a suite of specialist classrooms, well equipped in terms of information communication technology and staffed by teachers endowed with the skills to make good use of it. The school chapel is adjacent to the department and provides it with an additional resource which is used to good effect by its members. Funding is good, with additional moneys available for liturgy. 10% of curriculum time is allocated to Religious Studies at Key Stage 4 while Key Stage 3 receives 8%.