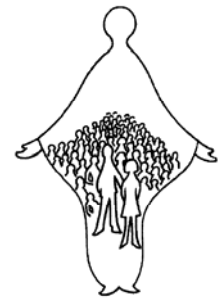


**SALFORD DIOCESE
INSPECTION REPORT**

ST. AMBROSE

ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Princess Road Chorlton-cum-Hardy Manchester M217QA



Inspection date September 2007

Reporting Inspector Mrs. K. A. Morris

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

Type of School	Catholic Primary
URN	105520
Age range of pupils	3 - 11
Number on roll	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of Governors	Rev. Fr. J. P. Earley
Headteacher	Mr. C. Flannery
Religious Education Co-ordinator	Miss H. Timney
Date of previous inspection	June 2002

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades 1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3 = Satisfactory 4 = Inadequate
Overall effectiveness of the school	2	
Leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school	1	
The quality of Collective Worship	2	
Achievement and standards in Religious Education	2	
The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education	2	
The quality of the Religious Education curriculum	1	
Leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education	1	
<i>The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements</i>		

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Ambrose is a Roman Catholic voluntary aided primary school in the Diocese of Salford situated in the Chorlton-cum-Hardy area of South Manchester, an area of significant social deprivation. It serves the parishes of St. Ambrose, Chorlton-cum-Hardy and St. Bernadette, Withington. The age range of the pupils is from 3 to 11 and the indicative admission number is 30. There are 193 children on roll of whom 160 are baptised Catholics. 52% of the learners are known to be eligible for free school meals and 42 children have been identified as having special educational needs with 2 having a statutory statement of special educational need. Of the 11 teachers 10 (92%) are Catholics and 6 hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies or equivalent.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Ambrose is a good school with some outstanding features. It has a strong Catholic ethos. The leadership and management provided by the governing body, led by the knowledgeable chair of governors, together with the experience and commitment of the headteacher and deputy are outstanding. They ensure a warm, caring environment in which all aspects of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The Religious Education programme is well planned and further enhanced by the provision for prayer and worship, the quality of relationships and the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers are well supported by the good deployment of teaching assistants, administrative and janitorial staff. Staff at all levels are dedicated to the school. They are good role models for pupils and are committed and hardworking demonstrating excellent levels of care. Learners are very well behaved, friendly and polite. They have good attitudes to their learning and respond well to the quality of teaching they experience. Strong home, school and parish links ensure learners and parents are fully supported on their faith journeys.

Improvement since the last inspection

The school has successfully addressed the issues arising from the last Section 23 inspection in June 2002. Class timetables include at least 10% of time for curriculum Religious Education. Religious Education and prayer and worship policies have been reviewed. In-service training provided by the diocesan teacher advisers has assisted in the use of assessment procedures and the tracking of learners' progress. Monitoring of teaching and learning by classroom observation has been introduced but requires further development. A quiet prayer room has been established in the school.

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation of its denominational nature is thorough, objective and realistic. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and he is well supported by the deputy, the parish priest, an active and knowledgeable governing body and hardworking staff. There is a genuine commitment to ensuring that all involved in the changing school community recognise the important role they play in its future development. Capacity for on-going improvement is therefore good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further develop the monitoring of teaching and learning in Religious Education through classroom observation.
- Ensure that the school's marking policy is consistently applied to include 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 Mission statement, which was reviewed in 2006 permeates all aspects of the school's life and is prominently displayed throughout the school. The success of the school is due chiefly to the leadership of the headteacher and deputy and the wholehearted support of the staff. They work hard to meet the needs of all pupils against a background of significant social disadvantage. Inspection evidence confirms that the ethos of the school is clearly based on "the dignity of each person". The school also benefits to the full from an active, knowledgeable and supportive governing body which discusses and revises Religious Education policies. A shared vision for the ongoing development of the school as a Catholic community is reflected in the governor appointments of committed Catholic teachers to the staff and the support they give as link governors. The designated governors for Religious Education are a foundation governor, who is also a teaching assistant, and the parish priest who is a very regular visitor to the school where he is well known to pupils and staff. Both designated governors are able to monitor the provision effectively thus keeping other governors fully informed. In addition the detailed reports from the co-ordinator for Religious Education enable governors to monitor closely the work of the school as a faith community. The school is firmly at the heart of the parish and fully supports the Sacramental Programme which is valued as a successful aspect of school life. The programme is led by the school's teaching assistants.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Provision for collective worship is good. The school has an effective policy for prayer and worship which was written with input from the diocesan teacher adviser. The school is committed to providing a variety of spiritual opportunities and experiences which are relevant to the children and take into account their different personal, social and religious development in respect of race and culture. Whole school Masses are held at the beginning and end of term and on Feast Days. Assemblies, key stage, Holy Week and Advent celebrations are planned and celebrated with the parish priest, parents and parishioners. The quality of collective worship and the children's response is monitored regularly by the headteacher and co-ordinator for Religious Education. All learners observed during the inspection prayed with respect and reverence thus demonstrating the developing awareness of the importance of prayer in their lives. Class worship allowed the children "thinking time" to reflect on God's greatness and how we can place our problems in His hands. Key Stage 2 assembly was teacher led with pupils acting out the story of "the talents" and reading bidding prayers. Pupils were reminded of their differing talents and how we should use the different gifts God has given us.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are good. On entry to school assessment records show evidence that the majority of children are achieving below average with a number of children in the early stages of learning English. By the end of Foundation Key Stage learners have made good progress. They know that they are members of God's family and that He loves them. Key Stage 1 learners know prayers relative to their age and are familiar with the stories of the life of Jesus. They know that God created us and gave us different talents and that we are all special. There are clear indicators of very good progress for learners at the end of Key Stage 2. They are familiar with the Gospels and use religious vocabulary and language with understanding. They demonstrate an impressive knowledge of the Holy Mass and transubstantiation. Strategies and systems have been introduced to ensure that this aspect of school's life has been prioritised in order that good standards are achieved and maintained. Pupils make at least good progress and often better. Across the whole community there is a feeling of self-worth and self-esteem. Children are aware of others and this is evidenced by their financial generosity to a number of worldwide and local charities but mainly by their peaceful co-existence within both school and community.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The inspector agrees with the school's evaluation that the quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good. All lessons observed during inspection in the Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 and 2 contained elements of outstanding teaching. Teachers have good knowledge of the diocesan *REvision 2000* guidelines and use this to plan their lessons in detail. Very detailed planning with clearly stated objectives and outcomes lead to well structured lessons incorporating a good range of activities and effective use of resources. Teachers' planning and pupils' learning is monitored by the headteacher and co-ordinator for Religious Education through scrutiny of work. Monitoring through classroom observation has begun and the school is urged to develop this further. Teachers have high expectations and a variety of approaches is used to meet the needs of all pupils. Those pupils requiring extra help are well supported by teaching assistants. Assessment systems have been developed to evaluate teaching and learning. Pupil tracking and levelling have been introduced but require further development. There is a school marking policy. However the school should ensure that this is consistently applied throughout the classes. Management and organisation in all classes is excellent. Behaviour is very good with pupils co-operating when working with others or independently. They listen attentively to the teachers

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The school has assessed the Religious Education curriculum as good. Inspection evidence gathered judges this to be outstanding. Religious Education has a high profile in the school. At least 10% of teaching time in all classes is allocated to the subject. *REvision 2000* guidelines are followed throughout and supplemented by activities relating to the liturgical year and a range of other activities, resources and experiences. A range of extra-curricular learning opportunities further enhances the curriculum. These include sport, music, and information technology. There is a residential visit for Year 5 and Year 6 to Ghyll Head activity centre in the Lake District. Year 3 and Year 6 each have a day's visit to the Marist Centre in Manchester. World faiths are taught using the diocesan programme and through visits to the local Mosque and the Jewish Museum in Manchester. Regular Religious Education meetings ensure that its profile within the school remains high and that practices and the curriculum are under constant review and development. Curriculum Religious Education and collective worship work well together to ensure that both the pupils' knowledge and understanding and spiritual development are promoted to the full.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The school has assessed the leadership and management of Curriculum Religious Education as good. Inspection evidence gathered judges this to be outstanding. The co-ordinator for curriculum Religious Education has excellent knowledge of her subject, a clear vision for her role within the school and provides good leadership and direction. She leads by example and keeps excellent records. This includes the use of monitoring and evaluation to determine and identify priorities for future development. There are plans to further develop the monitoring procedures introduced since the last inspection to include pupil assessment and levelling using the diocesan guidelines. The subject co-ordinator leads staff through regular meetings and continues her own professional development by attending diocesan courses and through the involvement of the diocesan teacher advisers. She is fully supported by the headteacher, the parish priest who is the chair of governors and the other designated governors for Religious Education who is also a teaching assistant in the school. Governors are kept fully informed of Religious Education and prayer and worship by written and verbal reports from the headteacher, link governors and Curriculum Committee reports and by visits to the school attending various celebrations and functions. Resources for Religious Education and collective worship are excellent. Attractive displays throughout the premises reflect the faith life of St. Ambrose where Religious Education and prayer and worship have a high profile.