

**SALFORD DIOCESE  
INSPECTION REPORT**



**ST. MARY'S ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
**Belgrave Street Radcliffe Bury M26 4DG**

Inspection date March 2009  
 Reporting Inspector Mrs. J. Schofield  
 Inspection carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School Catholic Primary  
 URN 105353  
 Age range of pupils 3-11  
 Number on roll 431  
 Appropriate authority The governing body  
 Chair of Governors Mrs. Iris Turner  
 Headteacher Mr. Paul Heaton  
 Religious Education Co-ordinators Mrs Rebecca Gerrard and Mrs Margaret Waring  
 Date of previous inspection February 2006

<b>The Inspection judgements are:</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Explanation of the Grades</b>  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	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 Mary's is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school serving the parishes St. Mary and St. Philip Neri. The two form entry school draws pupils from a varied catchment area consisting of private and council owned homes. There are a number of socially disadvantaged families. Having previously attended the Nursery most pupils enter Foundation Stage with attainment in line with national expectations. The age range of pupils is from 3 to 11 years. The school's admission number is 60. There are currently 431 pupils on roll of whom 428 are baptised Catholics. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is 12%. The school has identified 66 pupils as having special educational needs. 3 pupils have a statutory statement of special need. There are 17 full time teaching staff of whom 13 (76%) are of the Catholic faith.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

St Mary's is a good Catholic school with many outstanding features. The Mission Statement permeates all aspects of the school's life and is prominently displayed around the school. The headteacher is well supported by a strong leadership team and a knowledgeable governing body. Good relationships between staff and pupils are a strength. The school works hard to extend these relationships into the home through consultations and information. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners is good. Pupils are proud of their school. They are well motivated and behaviour is very good. They show care and concern for each other and for those in the world less fortunate than themselves by their generous support for local and world- wide charities. The school maintains strong links with the network of Catholic schools in Bury. The headteacher has assessed the leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school and the leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education to be good. Inspection evidence gathered however indicates these to be of outstanding quality.

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

Since the last inspection there have been a number of staff changes. Eight new staff were appointed seven of whom were newly qualified teachers. The recent demolition of classrooms has made it possible for the building of a new sports hall, community hall and Church. The key issues raised in the last Section 48 inspection have been addressed in part as systems for the observation of teaching and learning are presently only at an early informal stage. Assessment opportunities and activities linked with the diocesan assessment materials are continuing to develop. The strong leadership team supporting the headteacher in the management of the school makes a positive impact on the strength of support for their colleagues. Governors and parents are well-informed regarding curriculum provision and the progress of pupils.

### **Capacity to improve**

The school's self-evaluation is good. The headteacher and governing body share a clear vision for the future development of the school. All involved have the determination and commitment to realise this vision. With the strong support of the leadership team staff work to continue the development of every aspects of the Catholicity of the school. They are committed to their own professional development in their study and delivery of the curriculum and are fully aware of the goals the school is aiming to achieve. There is good evidence in the school's planning for the future that its aim to further develop links with the parish and local people will strengthen community cohesion within the Radcliffe Catholic community. The school has good capacity for further improvement.

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

- Further develop the process of moderation of pupils' assessment tasks so as to create an agreed standard of the levels at which pupils are working.
- Continue to develop the monitoring of teaching and learning as identified in the Religious Education action plan.

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

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are outstanding. All aspects of the daily life and work of the school are a true reflection of its Mission Statement. A positive ethos in which staff, governors and parents work together, enables pupils to develop to their full potential in a Christian environment where everyone is valued and nurtured. Learners are encouraged to accept responsibilities as school councillors, prefects and monitors. The parish priest is a regular and welcome visitor in the school playing an important role in the prayer life of the pupils. The supportive governing body provide challenge and encouragement to the leadership of the school. They are well informed on aspects of Religious Education and the liturgical life of the school through visits to the school and headteacher reports. Their commitment to the development of the Catholic life of the school is reflected in their appointments of Catholic teachers and the funding for ongoing staff training. Partnership with parents who appreciate the care taken of their children is further encouraged through newsletters, parent evenings and good information and reporting regarding the progress of their children. Parents are invited to share in school Masses, assemblies and liturgical celebrations. Members of the staff play an important, supporting role in the parish based Sacramental Programme. The school demonstrates a strong sense of commitment to the local community and works to extend links with the wider community through its generous support of various local and world- wide charities.

## **THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

The provision for collective worship in the school is outstanding. A written policy statement has recently been reviewed and agreed by staff and governors. Throughout the year the pupils, staff and parents are offered a range of opportunities to develop their relationship with God through whole school and year group Masses and well planned assemblies. Such an assembly during inspection presented by Year 2 was an opportunity for everyone to honour Mary the mother of Jesus, to give thanks for their own mothers and pray for them as they celebrate Mother's Day. Every child in the group participated in a symbolic action or a reading during the assembly before giving a flower to each of the mothers present. A pupil then placed flowers on the altar of Our Lady. The assembly was attended by a large number of appreciative parents. A Foundation Stage assembly began with prayers for their friends. The young learners recalled special prayers they had been saying for their mothers. Showing cards, paintings and short prayers they had prepared as gifts on Mother's Day they were eager to suggest small tasks they could do to make their mums happy. The assembly ended with a lovely hymn. At prayer group meetings led by one of the co-ordinators individual prayer and opportunities for quiet reflection encourage reverence and respect and help create meaningful spiritual experiences for the pupils. Opportunities to promote community cohesion occur as themes of respect and reverence for other world faiths are included in special assemblies and the pupils' prayers. The parish priest plays an active role in the prayer life of the school and leads simple prayer services for the very young pupils.

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

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are good. The level of attainment when pupils enter the Nursery is often below average but progress and achievement in Foundation Stage is good. In Key Stage 1 good progress continues and by the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' progress and achievement are very good. In the lessons observed during the inspection learners were always attentive listeners and confident in their response to questioning. They enjoyed their lessons showing an eagerness to learn. Teachers set activities according to pupil's age and ability using support staff well to help all learners achieve at an appropriate level. In Key Stage 1 pupils were able to relate the story of Bartimaeus the blind beggar and talk about his feelings of despair and his joy after meeting Jesus. They are able to write short sentences of independent work retelling bible stories and writing prayers. In Key Stage 2 pupils discuss their work confidently showing good knowledge and using appropriate religious vocabulary. They demonstrate a growing awareness of the beliefs and values of their faith and are able to relate them to their own life experiences. At all time pupils are encouraged to develop Christian values and respect for themselves and others. The older pupils are happy to accept responsibilities and take an active role in caring for the younger learners.

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

The quality of teaching and learning overall is good with some outstanding features in both key stages. All teachers have high expectations of their pupils and use a range of techniques and resources to help pupils achieve well. Good classroom management skills and the effective use of support staff have a positive impact on the progress of pupils. In parallel classes teachers plan together to ensure and refine good practice which addresses the needs of all learners. With the effective use of interactive whiteboards and challenging questioning pupils respond with enthusiasm. Although lesson plans identify learning objectives and teaching strategies some teachers do not show any evaluation of their own teaching or of pupils' achievement. Assessment tasks from the new diocesan materials have recently been introduced and are used each half term. The school is encouraged to develop moderation of these assessments so as to determine more accurately the levels at which pupils are working. A good example of teaching occurred in Year 6. In order to develop the pupil's understanding of a vocation the teacher introduced the hymn "Go tell everyone" describing Jesus' work to spread the good news of the kingdom of God. To explore how a person may discover their vocation the teacher explained how poor social conditions in Turin led John Bosco to realise he must help the poor young people. Pupils wrote their ideas of the practical ways in which John Bosco helped the boys before sharing them with the class. Work for the next lesson was to show the work of John in a news report format.

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

The curriculum for Religious Education is good. Time allocated to religious lessons is in line with national and diocesan requirements. Priorities for the future development of the Religious Education curriculum and prayer and worship have already been identified. Teachers display sound knowledge of the curriculum and are confident in the consistency of their delivery of *REvision 2000* and *Moving the Vision On*. The timetabling of lessons ensures quality time is allowed to enable pupils to produce work of good standard. Teaching assistants play a collaborative role supporting both teachers and pupils within the classroom and in withdrawal groups. Resources have been updated and together with information communication technology they give valuable support to the delivery of the curriculum. School Masses, assemblies and liturgical celebrations also have a positive impact in supporting, enriching and extending the Religious Education curriculum. The diocesan guidelines for the study of other world religions are used in Key Stage 2 giving many opportunities to promote community cohesion through an understanding and respect for other faiths and cultures.

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

The leadership and management of Religious Education are outstanding. The senior leadership team, with the strong support of the governing body, recognises that the on-going development of curriculum Religious Education is a priority affecting the life and work of the school. The governing body is well informed of Religious Education matters through reports from the link governor and the headteacher. The appointment of joint co-ordinators both of whom are members of the school's leadership team has ensured that progress and the development of the curriculum are moving forward quickly. They are able to support staff development through their attendance at regular diocesan courses and in-service training. Aiming to support the staff and further raise standards the scrutiny of planning and learners' workbooks are now part of the monitoring procedure. There is now a need for the co-ordinators to further develop opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and the pupils' learning. Assessment procedures are in place and with further development will help to give a clearer indication of pupils' knowledge and understanding. In-service training encourages all staff to challenge their own practice and be adventurous and creative in their delivery of the curriculum. Governors are encouraged to visit the school for occasions of prayer and worship. The parish priest is a welcome visitor in school and plays an active role in the religious life of the school community.