

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St William of York is a voluntary aided RC Primary School serving the parish of St William of York in Great Lever, Bolton. The school is situated within a mile of Bolton town-centre and is part of Great Lever Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder. There is considerable social and economic disadvantage in the area. Housing is mostly local authority and housing association rented property. Learners' ages range from 3 to 11 years. The admission number is 30 and there are 206 on roll plus 52 part-time nursery places. 130 learners are Catholic. There is a significantly changing profile with an increasing number of children from different faiths and cultures. Almost 30 per cent of the learners whose first language is not English speak 20 languages other than English. 28 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals. 49 pupils are identified as having special educational needs and three have a statement. Four of the seven full-time teachers and 3 of the part time teachers are Catholics -70% of the staff. The nursery nurse has responsibility for the nursery. There is a teaching assistant in every class.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St William of York is a good school. The leadership and management ensure that it is a welcoming, caring, happy and stimulating environment where all know that they are cared for and loved. It aims through the fulfilment of its mission and ethos to provide a Catholic education whilst embracing pupils of diverse cultures and faiths with no barriers existing. All staff are dedicated, committed and hard-working and strive to help the school to grow and develop. They maintain high standards and provide the best possible outcomes. This is evident in the provision for prayer and worship, the quality of relationships and the quality of teaching and learning. Staff are committed to their own development and to ensuring that all aspects of the curriculum provide for individual learners' needs.

Improvement since the last inspection

Following the last Section 23 inspection in September 2000 the school has addressed the key issues. The headteacher ensures provision of quality supply cover from in-house arrangements or from known supply teachers which is appropriate to each age group. The school has clear guidelines on information to be included in short-term planning for Religious Education with an agreed format used and monitored. The quality and quantity expected of learners' written work is agreed and understood by all staff. Assessment activities are part of teachers' planning and monitoring and these are ongoing. Assessment tasks take place half termly and results are recorded. Pupils' written work is scrutinised by the headteacher. Teachers' files are regularly monitored and lessons observed with subsequent feedback and staff development. Assessment is being reviewed and developed using a staff in-service day and Religious Education advisory help to link it more closely to levels of attainment.

Capacity to improve

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school's further needs and developments. She is strongly supported by the governing body and the hard-working, committed staff. The School Improvement Plan, drawn up in consultation with governors, all staff and pupils, outlines the school's current priorities and aids their delivery. This is good evidence of the school's capacity to continue to improve. There is a recognised need to address the increasingly diverse nature and ability of the pupil intake. All changes, particularly those related to intake, have required understanding resulting in review and necessary action.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve written planning for prayer and collective worship to assist in its monitoring and evaluation.
- Develop planning for differentiated tasks in curriculum Religious Education in order to promote further progress in classes of mixed cultures, faiths and languages.
- Complete the review of assessment procedures in curriculum Religious Education in order to inform future judgments on standards of attainment and the quality of teaching and learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management are good. This reflects the school's Mission Statement which was drawn up and is owned by staff, governors, parents and children and impacts on the whole ethos and life the school. Governors are supportive and work well in their committees. They are involved in shaping the life and direction of the school and are committed to its Catholicity in promoting racial awareness and inclusion. They work well as a team and have promoted initiatives and changes which have moved the school forward. The chair of governors, who is also the Religious Education governor, is both a friend and a regular visitor to the school. He celebrates Mass weekly and shares other liturgical celebrations at appropriate times. He visits lessons and meets regularly with the head teacher to discuss issues relating to Religious Education. A further governor is the Sacramental Programme leader who is regularly involved with the school and provides feedback to the governing body. The headteacher reports termly to the governing body on curriculum Religious Education and the governors' curriculum committee monitors the progress of the School Improvement Plan. The headteacher is hard working and has a clear vision for the future development of the school. Strongly supported by managers at all levels she ensures that the clear directions in the improvement plan ensure the best possible provision for learners to maximize their potential. Management decisions reflect the distinctive nature of the Catholic life of the school. All staff are totally committed to the school's Catholicity, values and high standards. They contribute as a strong team with shared input.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The quality of collective worship is good. The school has a recently reviewed written policy for prayer and worship with clear guidelines. The school is committed to providing a rich variety of opportunities and experiences which are relevant to the children and take account of their different personal, social and religious development in respect of race and culture. On Mondays the headteacher leads a whole school assembly linked to the liturgy and on Fridays one which includes the celebration of achievements and awards. On Thursdays teachers lead key stage assemblies related to curriculum Religious Education. Parents are invited to liturgical celebrations and to class assemblies led and presented by learners. Some teachers include prayer and worship in weekly planning. There is a need to improve written planning for prayer and worship in order to ensure more effective monitoring and evaluation. Learners are encouraged to explore various methods of private and individual prayer as well as group and traditional prayer in formal and informal settings. All learners respond well with reverence and respect and enjoy music and singing hymns. There is a parish mass in school each Friday for classes in turn. Alternative acts of worship are provided for those whose parents do not wish their children to attend. Some governors regularly attend Mass and prayer and worship celebrations. Collective worship is an integral part of school life and contributes to learners' spiritual, moral and cultural development. Many quality resources are in place to support this and there is a prayer focal point in every classroom.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education are satisfactory. Most learners achieve well and meet the required set targets by the end of Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1 increasing diversity with a large percentage of learners from different faiths and cultures creates a need to address the provision of tasks for all abilities. The standard of learners' written work throughout the school is variable but overall satisfactory. There is a need for all teachers to meet the school's agreed expectations of the quality and quantity of learners' written work enabling secure judgments in the monitoring, assessment and evaluation process. Monitoring is ongoing with regular checks on progress to ensure improvement through assessment and evaluation. All learners know and understand the Catholic beliefs, values and way of life. They are encouraged to relate this to their own lives, to follow Jesus' example, to show their love of God and make appropriate choices. All know about and respect other faiths and cultures. There is obvious good knowledge of Bible stories and God's love for them. Learners clearly enjoy curriculum Religious Education. They respond confidently to opportunities to use research skills, explore ideas, discuss, question and make decisions. Behaviour is very good and there are structures in place to promote and reward this positively. The combination of example set by staff, quality of teaching, provision for prayer and worship and curriculum content all ensure good spiritual, moral and cultural development. Through prayer, good works and fund raising learners show care for others in need both in school and beyond.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning is good. It focuses on the distinctiveness of this Catholic school and its commitment to the multi-faith, multicultural and multi-ethnic nature of the intake. The teachers work very hard. Overall they have a secure knowledge and understanding of Religious Education and *REvision 2000*. They guide and support teaching assistants well. Medium-term planning is thorough and includes learning objectives, teaching activities, tasks, use of resources and opportunities for prayer and worship. Assessment activities and evaluation inform progress and future planning. Not all teachers plan tasks for pupils with differing abilities and learning needs. This is to be addressed. Teachers work hard to achieve the best possible learning outcomes. They set challenging tasks to deepen learners' knowledge and understanding and to motivate them. Management and organisation in all classes is very good. Behaviour is good with all pupils being co-operative, attentive and involved. They clearly enjoy the varied, interesting teaching styles and tasks and experiences offered. They work well together, share ideas and respect others' views. This was very evident in two lessons about kinds of prayer, its value and the challenging questions the parish priest had to answer. Good use of quality resources enhances learning and pupils use computers where appropriate. Parents are happy with their children's achievements in Religious Education. Some parents help in school when needed and all are informed of work covered by their children in Religious Education.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The quality of the Religious Education curriculum is good. There is a clear written policy. The school uses the *REvision 2000* guidelines very successfully with time allocated meeting national and diocesan requirements. Over the past two years the school has experienced changing needs. Observation shows that learners whose first language is English, or are reasonably fluent in English, receive their entitlement and benefit from teachers' thorough planning, challenges and tasks and progress well. Those pupils who have recently arrived at school or whose English is poor require a more practical Religious Education curriculum with extra help. Classroom assistants help with this but more specific set tasks are needed. All pupils are receiving spiritual guidance and all take part in the Religious Education lessons and prayer and worship. The high priority of curriculum Religious Education reflects the school's mission "to provide the highest quality of Catholic education, to welcome families, parish and the wider community, showing respect for everyone". Many opportunities are provided to celebrate the cultural diversity and enhance the harmony that prevails in school. Provision for in-service and staff development is very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education are good. The head teacher is currently the Religious Education co-ordinator. She is committed to the importance and quality of Religious Education as central to the life and ethos of the school. Her qualifications, knowledge and experience have been instrumental in leading the school forward in its concern to provide, with the governors' agreement, the best teaching and learning to ensure equal opportunities for all learners. New written policies for prayer and worship, curriculum Religious Education and clear systems for planning, assessment and evaluation are in place. The headteacher scrutinises pupils' written work regularly, monitors teachers' written planning, observes lessons, gives feedback and organises opportunities for personal and staff development as well as leading and monitoring prayer and worship. More written evidence of planning for collective worship would help this process. Resulting from observations she has ensured the provision and organisation of many quality resources to embrace the whole Religious Education curriculum, prayer and worship and other cultures and beliefs. She ensures required time allocation for Religious Education and seeks always to help and support staff, constantly aware of the importance of good relationships and a happy, orderly school. Another teacher is to shadow her co-coordinating role during this academic year. This exercise needs to be rigorously managed for a successful change in role to take place as Religious Education is central to the life of the school and because of the need to address the diverse demands of the changing intake and its implications for the future.