

**SALFORD DIOCESE
INSPECTION REPORT**



**HOLY INFANT & ST. ANTHONY
ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Mitre Street Astley Bridge Bolton BL1 6QJ**

Inspection date January 2009
Reporting Inspector Mrs. Joan Duffin

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

Type of School Catholic Primary
URN 105219
Age range of pupils 4-11
Number on roll 206
Appropriate authority The governing body
Chair of Governors Rev. J. Colin Wright
Headteacher Mrs. C. M. Lawton
Religious Education Co-ordinator Mrs. C. M. Lawton
Date of previous inspection November 2005

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	1	
Achievement and standards in Religious Education	3	
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	2	

The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Holy Infant and St. Anthony is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school which serves the parish of Holy Infant and St. Anthony in Astley Bridge, Bolton. The school has a wide catchment area, drawing in learners from a range of socio-economic backgrounds and a mixture of privately owned and local authority housing which include small pockets of high deprivation. The age range of learners is 4 to 11. The indicative admission number is 30 and there are currently 206 pupils on roll. 185 pupils are baptised Catholics. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with national expectations. The pupils are predominantly white British with English as their first language. 16% of learners are eligible for free school meals. 36 pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and 4 of these have a statement of special educational need. All 9 teachers are Catholics.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

Holy Infant and St. Anthony is a good Catholic school with some outstanding qualities. There is a happy, caring atmosphere which establishes a good climate for work. The range and quality of provision for collective worship is outstanding. There is a strong Catholic ethos in the school and excellent provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development. The standards achieved in curriculum Religious Education are satisfactory. Less able learners are well supported and achieve well but more able pupils are not always challenged to achieve their potential. Well established systems of monitoring and assessment are in place. Tracking of pupil progress and levelling of their work are being developed. The evidence from these systems now needs to be used more effectively to raise standards. Teaching is good and the curriculum is well planned. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They show respect for themselves and others. Governors are knowledgeable and offer support and challenge to the headteacher. The headteacher, who is also the Religious Education coordinator, has a clear vision for the school and, together with the leadership team, leads the school very well. She is aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. Very good relationships exist between the school, parents, parish and the wider community. Pupils are aware of other faiths and cultures and are taught to respect them.

Improvement since the last inspection

Following the last Section 48 inspection in November 2005 the school was asked to continue to develop assessment and levelling in curriculum Religious Education. The school has worked hard to address these issues successfully.

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation is accurate. The headteacher has a very good understanding of development needs. All staff and governors are committed to improvement. There is good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in curriculum Religious Education by using the evidence from the established monitoring and assessment systems more effectively.
- Ensure that learners regularly produce written work in curriculum Religious Education that is appropriate to their age and ability.

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 lies at the heart of the school's aims, policies and expectations. The children truly are "at the heart of all that is done". The governing body fulfils its role well in relation to the school's Catholic foundation. It has knowledge of the Catholic life of the school through headteacher reports and close involvement in the school. The parish priest, who is also chair of governors, is a frequent and welcome visitor to the school and knows the children well. The headteacher, who is also the Religious Education co-ordinator, has a clear vision of the nature of the Catholic school and, together with the leadership team, promotes the Catholic life of the school very effectively. All staff fully support the many and varied opportunities for prayer and worship in the school and promote learners' spiritual and moral development in all they do. There is a strong Catholic ethos in the school characterised by Gospel values and reconciliation. The Sacramental Preparation Programme is run in the school with close co-operation between parish catechists and the school. Children are given many opportunities to care for those less fortunate than themselves and give generously to such charities as CAFOD, the CCRS and Derian House which supports a child in the school. The children sing for local groups. Parents are seen as key partners and agree that this is a very caring school.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Provision for collective worship is outstanding in relation to the range and quality of opportunity provided. The recently revised policies outline the many and varied opportunities provided which give pupils a wealth of prayerful experiences. Whole school Masses are held in church at least termly. Class Masses and liturgies are held regularly. Whole school and key stage assemblies and class worship are held each week. Pupils are fully involved in the preparation and presentation of the different forms of collective worship. The very good assembly observed during the inspection was prepared and planned by Year 6. A prayerful atmosphere was created by the children entering a darkened hall carrying candles which they placed on the altar. They spoke well about working together as a team and acted out effectively the story of Levi, the tax collector. Parents and grandparents are happy to be part of the celebrations as seen in their comments in the Assembly Book. The class collective worship in Key Stage 1 used the thought of the week exploring the different ways we can be part of the community. The children were prayerful and responsive. Liturgical celebrations throughout the year further enhance provision. Collective worship makes an excellent contribution to the spiritual and moral development of learners and to promoting community cohesion. The prayer garden, excellent displays and prayer tables around the school provide further opportunities for personal prayer and reflection.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are satisfactory. Pupils' attainment on entry to school is broadly in line with national expectations. They make progress throughout the school and by Year 6 their attainment is average. Learners with special educational needs are very well supported by teachers and learning assistants and achieve well. Pupils with higher ability are not always challenged to reach their potential. Orally pupils are able to relate stories from the Old and New Testaments. They can talk about Jesus and apply his teaching to their own lives. The standard of writing in curriculum Religious Education varies throughout the school. For example the quality and range of independent writing observed in Upper Key Stage 2 is not of a high enough standard. Learners enjoy their work and respond well to questioning. The diocesan scheme of assessment and standardisation has been implemented but the results are not yet being used effectively to raise standards. Pupils have a clear idea of right and wrong and their behaviour during the inspection was excellent. The school provides well for their spiritual and moral development. The School Council and Friendship Stop make a positive contribution to the school and give pupils the opportunity to develop independence and responsibility. It was their request for a quiet place for prayer which resulted in the prayer garden.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The inspector agrees with the school that the quality of teaching and learning in the school is good. The teaching observed was good. Lessons are very well prepared and conducted at a pace to maintain interest and enjoyment. The work provided matches pupils' needs in most cases although sometimes there is not enough challenge to the more able. Less able pupils are very well supported by teachers and learning support assistants. Questioning is effective with good use of open-ended questions. The use of technology, including interactive whiteboards, is developing well. A good lesson was observed in Key Stage 2 where the teacher used the smartboard and photographs from her own experiences to identify people who need help and to find ways of helping them. The lesson ended with a ceremony of planting seeds of hope. In Key Stage 1 pupils acted out the story of the finding in the temple. They also used the smartboard to depict the life and times of Jesus. The children were able to recount the story and talk about the feelings of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Foundation Stage pupils enacted a baptism. They were able to use appropriate language and could remember the words of baptism. Teachers ensure that pupils understand the purpose of the lesson and many consolidate this with a plenary session. Pupils are well behaved and listen with respect to the views of others. They respond to teachers' questioning with knowledge and understanding.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The quality of the Religious Education curriculum is good. It complies with local and national expectations with regard to time allocated. The new diocesan scheme is being implemented as it becomes available. Supporting resources are used to fill out the curriculum in the meantime. The curriculum is well planned and made accessible to all pupils. Less able children are well supported. More able pupils sometimes need more challenge. The headteacher sets clear direction for the teaching of curriculum Religious Education. Systems of monitoring and evaluation have been established and assessment procedures are in place. These are not yet being used effectively to raise standards in curriculum Religious Education. Opportunities are taken to promote community cohesion and an understanding of other faiths and cultures. The Religious Education curriculum makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. It is enriched by the wide range of opportunities for prayer and worship in the school. Whole school initiatives such as the thought for the week ensure Religious Education is given great prominence. Annual visits to Castlerigg Manor give pupils more opportunities to develop their personal faith journey. A wide range of extra-curricular activities further enhance the provision. Parents appreciate all that the school does for their children and are happy for them to attend. Strong links with the parish, the associated high school and the local community enrich the provision.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The school has assessed its leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education as good and the inspector would agree with this judgement. Governors have a good understanding of the curriculum through regular meetings and reports and their close involvement in the school. The parish priest, who is also chair of governors, often provides support and advice for staff. Recently he ran a training day for staff in the presbytery. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and is aware of its strengths and areas for development. She has chosen to be the Religious Education coordinator because of the importance of the role. Target setting in curriculum Religious Education is being developed. The established systems of monitoring and assessment now need to be used more effectively to raise standards of written work in curriculum Religious Education especially in Upper Key Stage 2. The school's self-assessment is accurate. Appropriate priority is given to Religious Education in the School Improvement Plan and in its action plans. The learning mentor supports learners in the secret garden. Resources are very good and are used effectively. Relationships within the school are excellent and enhance the enthusiasm and enjoyment of learners. The school is committed to providing an effective learning environment, good relationships and equality of learning for all with Jesus and his Church at the centre. The clean, bright, attractive classrooms help to create a good climate for work.