

**SALFORD DIOCESE  
INSPECTION REPORT**



**OUR LADY AND ST GERARD'S  
ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL  
Lostock Hall, Preston**

Inspection date January 2006

Reporting Inspector Mrs. Pamela Parden

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

Type of School Catholic Primary  
 Age range of pupils 4-11  
 Number on roll 284  
 Appropriate authority The governing body  
 Chair of Governors Mr. Kevin Lythe  
 Headteacher Mrs. Janet Malone  
 Religious Education Co-ordinator Mrs. Janet Malone  
 Date of previous inspection May 2000

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

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Our Lady and St. Gerard's is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school serving the parish of Our Lady and St. Gerard, Lostock Hall. It is part of the Ampleforth Trust and in the Diocese of Salford. The school is housed on two sites approximately 200 metres apart linked by a footpath. The school has a socio-economic mix of learners and the housing in the catchment ranges from local authority and housing association rented property to privately owned homes. The age range of pupils is from 4 to 11 years and the indicative admission number is 50. There are 284 pupils on roll of whom 275 are baptized Catholics. 8% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs is 18 and 6 have a statutory statement of special educational need. There are 8 full time and 5 part time teachers and 9 (70%) are Catholics.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

Our Lady and St Gerard's is a good Catholic school. The leadership and management ensure that it provides a welcoming, happy and calm environment in which all know that they are cared for and loved. The school's positive attitudes and values reflect its Mission and strong Catholic ethos admirably. Governors, teachers, parents and parishioners work well together to promote the spiritual, moral, social, academic and cultural development of the children. The school emphasises the value of all individuals and nurtures them on their faith journey in loving God and following Jesus' example. There is a strong awareness of the values of love, respect and reconciliation and a realisation that God is at the centre of the whole life of the school. This results from the headteacher's leadership and is evident in the provision for prayer and worship, the quality of relationships and the teaching and learning. The headteacher has a good understanding of the school's strengths and development needs.

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

There were no key issues arising from the last Section 23 Inspection. However the school has moved forward. The recently appointed headteacher has attended diocesan courses and consulted diocesan religious education advisers to assist her in prioritising the school's development needs. A multi-faith teaching scheme is now in place and followed throughout the school. The parish priest and sister regularly visit school and are actively involved in its religious life providing good support for the parish links. Prayer and worship have been developed and staff take more responsibility for leading assemblies. There is now a link governor for Religious Education.

### **Capacity to improve**

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school's further needs and developments. These relate to *REvision 2000*, target setting for pupils, development of teachers' planning and assessment and evaluation procedures. It is intended to support these through in-service training and professional development for staff. The staff themselves have been involved in the discussions on these matters and recognize the value of the proposed improvements. The headteacher is well supported by the governors who have been involved in the construction of the three year development plan. The school's capacity to improve is therefore good.

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

- Establish an agreed framework for planning prayer and worship and curriculum Religious Education.
- Ensure that teachers know the level descriptors and attainment targets identified within the Religious Education programmes of study.
- Increase the quantity of learners' written work in Religious Education.
- Increase the time allocation for curriculum Religious Education throughout the school to the 10% required by the Bishops of England and Wales
- Complete the review of assessment in curriculum Religious Education and implement the recently published Salford Diocesan Assessment Procedures.

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

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are good ensuring that the Catholic faith is at the centre of the school. The Mission Statement which was drawn up by staff, governors and some parents impacts on the whole ethos of the school and is reviewed annually. The governing body is well informed and supportive and many governors are involved in the daily life of the school. They are committed to helping to shape the life and direction of the school. The recently appointed parish priest and sister take very active roles assisting in all aspects of prayer and worship and supporting the spiritual development of pupils. There is also a recently appointed link governor for Religious Education who is enthusiastic about the role and involved in school life. The headteacher reports regularly to the governing body on curriculum Religious Education and this now forms part of the governor monitoring of school improvement. The headteacher is well supported by senior staff in ensuring the ongoing development of the Catholic life of the school and, with vision, she works to provide effectively for the needs of all. Opportunities are in place for staff to exercise responsibility and also for learners to act as buddies or school council members. The school strongly supports the Sacramental Programme which is well led and co-ordinated by the parish sister.

## **THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

The quality of collective worship is good. The school has a written policy aiming, "to provide opportunities for pupils and staff to contribute in thought and word, to listen or to take an active part in the organisation and leading of the worship". The headteacher leads whole school assemblies on Mondays and Fridays. In the former she introduces a theme relating to the Religious Education curriculum or liturgy which promotes a positive week for the whole school community. Teachers in turn lead assemblies for each key stage also related to curriculum Religious Education. All assemblies are well organised and children are actively engaged in their planning, preparation and presentation. Some teachers also include prayer and worship in their weekly planning and the school is encouraged in its intention to develop this further with an agreed format. Classes pray at set, regular times each day or as an extension of their lessons. Learners are encouraged to explore various forms of private and individual prayer as well as group and traditional prayer in formal and informal settings. The prayer observed during inspection was reflective and thought provoking. The pupils responded well with reverence and respect and enjoyed music and singing hymns. Parents are invited to liturgical celebrations in church and to whole school or weekly Masses prepared by classes in turn. It is clear that prayer and collective worship are important and integral parts of school life influencing learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are good. Teachers' planning related to *REvision 2000* helps learners to meet required standards by the end of each key stage. There is a need for all staff to know the level descriptors and targets within the *REvision 2000* programme. Written work, although limited, is generally of a good standard. Evaluation and assessment procedures assist monitoring but there is a need to increase the quantity of learners' written work in some cases to enable secure judgments to be made and this issue should be addressed by the school. Learners know and understand the beliefs, values and way of life of the Catholic tradition. They can relate this to their own lives in following Jesus' example showing love of God and making appropriate choices. They know about and respect other faiths and cultures. Most learners enjoy their lessons, especially when set appropriate challenges or tasks. They respond confidently when given the opportunity to use research skills, explore values and engage in discussion. They demonstrate very good use of appropriate vocabulary and terms. Behaviour is very good with structures in place to promote, encourage and reward this positively. The environment for Foundation Stage is well organized and creative and provides for the children a happy, challenging start to school life and learning. They enjoyed seeing photographs from their visit to church and learnt much from each other's Baptism photographs and memorabilia in the lesson observed. Throughout the key stages there is good knowledge of Bible stories and God's love. Learners know the importance of family, school and parish and of using their talents and respect for God's creation. Example set by staff, prayer, worship and curriculum content all promote good spiritual, moral and cultural development. Through prayer, good work and fund-raising learners show care for others in need both in school and beyond.

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

Overall the quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is satisfactory with some good aspects. The teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the *REvision 2000* programme. They plan their objectives for each week but there is considerable variation in the planning framework. Use of the diocesan planning format is being developed so that all teachers include collective worship, resource requirements and assessment and evaluation procedures. Not all teachers plan tasks for pupils with differing abilities and learning needs. This is to be addressed and will assist the school in making the best use of classroom assistants. Teaching was good where high expectations were observed and work was set to match and challenge learners' needs and so the best outcomes and results were achieved. In some cases children spend too long listening to the teacher and lose interest. New interactive whiteboards are being introduced to enhance learning. Religious Education displays in classrooms relate to curriculum Religious Education and are of a high standard. Classroom management and organisation is generally good and some stimulating teaching techniques were observed. Behaviour is very good and learners are co-operative and attentive. They clearly enjoy varied, interesting teaching styles, tasks and experiences offered. They work well together, share ideas and respect others' views. Where quality resources are used learning is enhanced. Some parents help in school when needed and all are informed of activities and assemblies throughout the year.

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

Overall the quality of the Religious Education curriculum is satisfactory although the time allocated to the subject is only 4.5% at Reception and Key Stage 1 and 6.4% at Key Stage 2. This is well below the 10% which is recommended by the Bishops of England and Wales. The school should now complete its revision of time allocation for curriculum Religious Education as soon as possible. The headteacher is revising the policy for curriculum Religious Education. The school aims to offer all learners opportunities to realise their full potential in an environment in which Christ's teaching informs every aspect of the school's life. The uniqueness and value of each individual is central to this. In recognizing abilities and talents targets for Religious Education are to be set in order to support the personal development of each learner. All teachers follow the *REvision 2000* programme. Medium and short term planning includes objectives, activities and evaluation. It is supplemented with books, materials, assemblies, celebrations and artefacts. A common planning framework providing for differentiation together with assessment and monitoring procedures have been identified as areas for development. Job share issues and the existence of mixed age class groups impact further on planning. These planning issues are already being addressed and the school is encouraged to continue in this work. The school works to ensure that there are cross-curricular links between Religious Education and other curriculum areas and a work scheme related to the understanding and respecting other faiths and cultures is now in use.

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

The leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education are good. The headteacher is currently the Religious Education co-ordinator. Her vision for the school is very clear and development priorities have been established. She is committed to Religious Education as being central to the life and ethos of the school and she encourages Christian values and beliefs to grow and spread throughout. She is instrumental in leading the school forward in its concern to promote the spiritual, moral and social development of all learners. She has accessed support from the Salford Diocese in order to familiarise herself with the *REvision 2000* programme. Policies for prayer and worship and curriculum Religious Education are being revised. Systems for planning, assessment activities and evaluation are being put in place. A review of assessment procedures in curriculum Religious Education following diocesan guidelines is planned and the school is encouraged to continue with this work. The headteacher intends to increase the provision of quality resources to embrace the whole Religious Education curriculum, prayer and worship and other cultures and beliefs. The headteacher is also seeking ways to create teamwork in order to support the ongoing development of curriculum Religious Education. Initiatives to develop links with the church have had a positive effect. The parish priest and sister visit the school often and contribute to the spiritual development of learners and staff.