

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Wulstan's is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school which serves the parishes of St Wulstan and Our Lady and St Hubert. It is in the Overton ward of Great Harwood and the children come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The age range of learners is 4 to 11 and the indicative admission number is 25. There are 141 pupils on roll and 135 of these are Catholic. All but 2 of the learners have English as their first language. 5.6% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. 27 pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and 2 of these have a statement of special educational need. 8 of the 9 teachers (89%) are Catholics.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St Wulstan's is a good school with some outstanding features. It has strong Catholic values which establish a good climate for work with Christ at the centre. This judgement reflects the school's own evaluation of its Catholic life and provision for Religious Education. The standards achieved in curriculum Religious Education are good with pupils achieving well and making good progress in each key stage. Teaching is good and the curriculum is well planned. The formal monitoring and assessment of teaching and learning in Religious Education is excellent. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary showing respect for themselves and others. The range and quality of provision for collective worship is outstanding. There is a very strong Catholic ethos in the school and excellent provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development. The headteacher leads the school very well and has a clear view of its strengths and areas for development. Relationships within the school and with the wider community are excellent.

Improvement since the last inspection

Following the last Section 23 inspection in November 2001 the school was judged to be very successful in promoting pupils' spiritual and moral development and in providing very good opportunities for collective worship. It needed to develop work on monitoring and evaluation and to ensure the provision made for pupils of mixed abilities was consistent throughout the school. Since then the school has responded very well to the issues raised in the last inspection. The headteacher and Religious Education co-ordinator have raised standards by establishing effective systems to monitor and evaluate curriculum Religious Education and to make the curriculum accessible to all.

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation is mostly accurate. It relates to the School Development Plan and priorities for Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school have an appropriate place in its action plans. The headteacher has a clear understanding of the direction the school should take. The senior management team, staff and governors are committed to improvement. There is good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the standards in curriculum Religious Education still further by developing the use of resources such as the interactive whiteboards.

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's version is displayed throughout the school and encourages pupils to "become the Catholic person I need to be". 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 and Religious Education co-ordinator reports. The chair of governors and the parish priest are frequent and welcome visitors to the school. The headteacher has a clear vision of the nature of the Catholic school and, together with the senior management team, promotes the Catholic life of the school very effectively. All staff fully support the 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 parish based Sacramental Preparation Programme is well planned and fully supported by the school. Children are given many opportunities to care for those less fortunate than themselves by supporting such things as St. Joseph's Penny, CAFOD, the shoebox appeal and by inviting the local senior citizens and housebound to a concert in school.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Provision for collective worship in the school is outstanding in relation to the range and quality of opportunity provided. The comprehensive policy for prayer and worship outlines the many and varied opportunities provided which give pupils a wealth of different prayerful experiences. Whole school Masses are held termly and class Masses fortnightly. Weekly whole school and key stage assemblies follow the planned themes for the year. The class worship observed in Key Stage 1 during the inspection period helped children to understand that we are each different and each known by Jesus. Learners are fully involved in the different forms of collective worship and are starting to plan them. The school is encouraged to continue with this. The outstanding assembly observed during the inspection used scripture reading, music, the children's personal prayers and a time for reflection to put across the message that God always gives us another chance. All pupils joined in the prayers and hymns reverently and respectfully. The assembly was greatly appreciated by the large number of parents, grandparents and parishioners present. Lenten devotions include Stations of the Cross and a Last Supper celebration where pupils share a meal and take part in the washing of the feet. Liturgical celebrations throughout the year include the Greening of the Cross, May devotions to Our Lady, Harvest and the Rosary. Prayer tables and excellent displays throughout the school provide opportunities for prayer and reflection.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education are good. Pupils' attainment on entry to school is slightly below national expectations. Pupils make good progress in school and by Year 6 standards are good. Learners with special educational needs are well supported by teaching and support staff and achieve well. Challenge is provided for the more able pupils. The headteacher and Religious Education co-ordinator monitor progress through scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work and through lesson observations. The school was involved in the preparation of the diocesan assessment scheme which is now well established. Standardisation and levelling of pupils' work is also in place. Pupils are confident in discussion and respond to teachers' questioning with good understanding and knowledge. They write independently and are able to explain the meaning of bible stories. They write in a variety of styles with the most able doing so very effectively. They have a secure knowledge of the life and teachings of Jesus and are able to apply their learning to their own lives. The school provides well for pupils' spiritual and moral development and children have a clear understanding of right and wrong. Pupils' behaviour during the inspection period was excellent. They show respect for themselves and others. Pupils are given opportunities to develop responsibility, independence and leadership skills through the Suggestion Box, Circle Time and older children caring for younger ones.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The inspector agrees with the school that the quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good. The teaching observed varied from satisfactory to outstanding. Lessons are well prepared and mostly conducted at a good pace which maintains pupils' interest and keeps them on task. Work is provided which matches learners' needs including support from teachers and teaching assistants for the less able and challenge for the more able. Questioning is effective with good use of open ended questions. The use of interactive whiteboards is developing. The school is encouraged to raise the standards in curriculum Religious Education still further by continuing to develop the use of resources such as the interactive whiteboards. Teachers mostly have high expectations of pupils and use a variety of methods to retain interest and enjoyment. This was particularly evident in an outstanding lesson observed in upper Key Stage 2 on Peter's denial of Jesus. A video clip, hot seating, group work and a range of appropriate tasks kept pupils involved and helped them to understand Peter's feelings. The interactive whiteboard was used throughout to keep the object of the lesson in pupils' minds. All teachers ensure that pupils understand the purpose of the lesson and consolidate with a plenary session at the end. Assessment and standardisation are used effectively. Excellent marking enables learners to raise the standard of their work. Pupils are well behaved and respect the views of others. They respond to teachers' questioning with knowledge and understanding.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The Religious Education curriculum is good. It complies with local and national expectations with regard to time allocated. It is well planned following diocesan guidelines for mixed age classes. Long, medium and short term planning is well organised. Progress is seen throughout the school. The curriculum is made accessible to all pupils. Less able pupils are well supported and more able pupils challenged to achieve their potential. The headteacher and Religious Education co-ordinator set clear direction for the teaching of Religious Education. Monitoring and evaluation are well established. Assessment, standardisation and tracking of pupils' work are well developed. The diocesan guidelines on the study of world religions are used to enable pupils to develop respect and 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 provided by the school. It is also strengthened by the very good relationships between school, parents, parish and the associated high school. Visitors to the school and a range of extra curricular activities further enhance the provision.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education is good with some outstanding features. Governors have improved their understanding of what is required through meetings with the headteacher and Religious Education co-ordinator. The parish priest is a frequent visitor to the school and the chair of governors, who is also the link governor for Religious Education, is very active in the school. The headteacher and Religious Education co-ordinator set a clear direction for Religious Education in the school. The school's self evaluation is mostly accurate. The effective and efficient systems of monitoring and evaluation of curriculum Religious Education which have been established include scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work and lesson observations. The development of assessment and standardisation is excellent. Emphasis has been placed on planning for all abilities in lessons to ensure the curriculum is accessible to all. The school is committed to providing an effective learning environment, good relationships and equality of learning for all with Jesus at the centre. All members of staff uphold the Catholic ethos of the school and help to create an atmosphere of happiness and belonging.