

**SALFORD DIOCESE
INSPECTION REPORT**



**ST. JOSEPH'S
ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
RAMSBOTTOM**

Inspection date November 2005

Reporting Inspector Mrs. J. Duffin

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

Type of School Catholic Primary
 Age range of pupils 3-11
 Number on roll 192
 Appropriate authority The governing body
 Chair of Governors Mr. W. McSorley
 Headteacher Mrs. P. Leatherbarrow
 Religious Education Co-ordinator Mr. D.Marsh
 Date of previous inspection June 2000

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

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Joseph's is a one-form entry voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school serving the parish of St. Joseph's in Ramsbottom. Ramsbottom is situated north of Bury and comprises mainly private housing with a small number of council owned properties. The school is sited with mainly terraced housing on three sides. The age-range of children attending St. Joseph's is from 3 to 11 years. The indicative admission number is 26. Of the 192 children currently on roll all but 4 are Catholics. 5.6% of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. 21 children are identified as having special educational needs of whom 3 have statements. 9 of the 10 teachers (90%) are Catholics.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Joseph's is an outstanding Catholic school marked by a warm, caring atmosphere where the relationships create an excellent climate for spiritual and moral development and an opportunity for all to develop fully their talents and skills. The school's own evaluation is rather more modest in some areas. Standards are very high and pupils achieve very well and make very good progress. Teaching is outstanding and assessment and self-evaluation provide excellent guidance for learning. The curriculum in Religious Education is very well planned and adapted to the school's needs. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. The Catholic ethos of the school is very strong with excellent provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development. The headteacher leads the school very well and has an accurate view of the school's strengths and development needs.

Improvement since the last inspection

Following the last Section 23 inspection in June 2000 the school was found to be deficient in the time spent on curriculum Religious Education. This has now been addressed and the school fully complies with national and diocesan requirements.

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation is accurate and comprehensive although the final judgements are somewhat modest in some areas. The headteacher has a very good view of continuing development needs and these are reflected in the school's priorities and its development plan.

What the school should do to improve further

Continue with the following priorities for development which have already been established by the school:

- Further involvement of governors in monitoring the work of the school.
- Adoption of the new diocesan assessment guidelines.
- Improve the children's awareness of other faiths and cultures.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of St. Joseph's are outstanding. The governing body fulfils its role very well. It is fully aware of the Catholic life of the school and is involved in the drawing up of policies and in self-evaluation. Priority is given to ensuring that Catholic teachers who hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies are employed if possible. Self-evaluation is mostly accurate but rather modest in some aspects. There is a designated Religious Education governor who is also the designated governor for special educational needs. The governors intend to develop further their monitoring of the work of the school. The outstanding headteacher and senior management team set very clear direction for the school which is effective in leading to improvement and promoting a high quality of care and education. They are also effective in leading and developing the Catholic life of the school. Religious Education objectives are included in the performance management of teachers.

The Mission Statement is clear and concise and "Love one another as I have loved you" is at the heart of the school's aims, policies and expectations. It is displayed throughout the school and in the church and has a positive influence in promoting learners' spiritual and moral development and in developing the school's special Catholic ethos.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Provision for collective worship at St. Joseph's is outstanding. Many opportunities for prayer and worship are offered to the children including school and class masses, assemblies, class worship and special celebrations such as Advent and Lenten services. The weekly assemblies are based on that week's liturgy or events in the life of the school. The very good assembly observed took the gospel reading of the wise and foolish bridesmaids and related it to the pupils' own lives. The various acts of worship and the school and class prayer themes such as "God is Our Special Friend" enhance the spiritual and moral development of the learners. There is a clear and concise policy for prayer and worship underpinning the provision. Assemblies and Masses are planned, recorded and evaluated. Class worship is used to extend and support the curriculum and to help learners develop their own faith life. Good quality religious artefacts, displays, music and candles are effectively used to enhance the acts of worship. Pupils are fully involved in collective acts of worship, often using their own prayers and reflections. They respond well, singing and praying reverently and respectfully, listening attentively and speaking clearly. The formal prayers of the church are known and used alongside the pupils' own prayers. Parents, parishioners and governors are welcomed to the Masses and assemblies. Parish and school collaborate closely in the sacramental preparation programme. Staff pray together and recently took part in a retreat at Whalley Abbey.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are outstanding. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is above average. By the end of Year 6 attainment in Religious Education is well above the levels expected locally and nationally. Learners make very good progress in the school. This progress is checked by the assessment and evaluation systems developed in the school. This will be even more effective when the new assessment guidelines and level descriptors advocated by the diocese are adopted as planned. Pupils with special educational needs are supported as necessary by support workers, teachers and volunteer helpers and make good progress. Learners are confident in discussion and are able to use the correct vocabulary appropriately. Written work is at least good and often excellent using a variety of styles including narrative, psalms and poetry. Pupils have a good knowledge of stories from the Old Testament and a secure understanding of the life of Jesus. They are able to relate his teachings to their own lives. Their spiritual development is clearly rooted in the beliefs of the Catholic Church. Children have a clear understanding of right and wrong and the school provides well for moral development. Behaviour is excellent and any examples of poor behaviour are dealt with quickly and effectively in a spirit of reconciliation. The children respect themselves and each other. Independence and leadership are encouraged by school and class councils and a system of older children helping younger ones.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The inspector agrees with the school's judgement that teaching and learning in the school is outstanding. Teaching is at least very good and, in most cases, outstanding. All but one of the teachers hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies or at least two modules of it and secure knowledge of the Religious Education curriculum is shown in planning and in the lessons observed. The quality of planning is excellent with clear learning objectives and opportunities for assessment identified together with expected outcomes. Learners are challenged and high expectations set - for example pupils in upper Key Stage 2 were asked to put themselves in the place of David when writing their psalm. A variety of teaching methods is used, including the use of interactive whiteboards in Key Stage 2 and of PowerPoint presentations in Key Stage 1, to enable all children to access the curriculum. Support is given by teachers, support staff and voluntary helpers to individuals or groups of children as required. Classroom management and organisation are very effective in supporting learning. Pupils are well behaved, very responsive, settle to their tasks quickly and are enthusiastic in their learning. They take responsibility for their learning and show pride in their work.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The Religious Education curriculum is outstanding. It now meets national and diocesan requirements since the time given to curriculum Religious Education was revised after the last inspection. The curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of individual learners by challenging the more able and supporting the less able. It is enriched by prayer and worship, visits to church, the caring relationships in the school, the cross-curricular links and the extra-curricular provision. Teachers' planning, lessons and children's work are monitored and scrutinised and informative feedback provided. A system of self-evaluation is being developed in the school and plans are in place to include the new diocesan guidelines for assessment later in the academic year. Judaism is studied in key Stage 2 and it is intended to extend this to other faiths. The parents of the very few non-Catholic children in the school have been given the opportunity to remove their children from curriculum Religious Education but none have taken it. Curriculum provision makes an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development and is supported by strong links with the parents, parish and local community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The school has assessed its leadership and management of Religious Education as good. The inspector disagrees and finds it outstanding. The governors and headteacher fully support the Religious Education co-ordinator in his role and have a shared vision for the Religious Education in the school. The headteacher has plans to involve governors further in developing their understanding of curriculum Religious Education provision in the school. The Religious Education co-ordinator has a clear understanding of his role and is very effective in providing educational direction for the teaching and development of curriculum Religious Education. He has recently developed a system of self-evaluation for teachers and, together with the headteacher, monitors teaching and learning efficiently. Priority is given to Religious Education in the school's development plan and Religious Education objectives are included in performance management. Resources are adequate, audited regularly and supplemented when possible. An example would be the recent acquisition of artefacts for prayer and worship and materials for other faiths. The school's Mission Statement, "The purpose of our community is to recognise the worth and dignity of all and to fully develop the talents of each person", reflects the school's commitment to supporting its teachers and learners.