

**SALFORD DIOCESE
INSPECTION REPORT**



**OUR LADY OF LOURDES
ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Bury

Inspection date December 2005

Reporting Inspector Mrs. Joan Duffin

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 138
 Appropriate authority The governing body
 Chair of Governors Mr. T. H. Wright
 Headteacher Mrs. D. M. Kiernan
 Religious Education Co-ordinator Mrs. D. M. Kiernan
 Date of previous inspection September 2000

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	
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	1	
Achievement and standards in Religious Education	2	
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	
<i>The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements</i>		

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Our Lady of Lourdes is a small Roman Catholic voluntary aided primary school which, together with its sister school Guardian Angels, serves the parish of Our Lady of Good Counsel and Guardian Angels. Our Lady of Lourdes is situated in a semi-rural setting in the town of Bury and its intake is mainly from local private housing and from the Brandlesholme and Woodhill council estate. There are currently 138 pupils aged between 4 and 11 on roll of whom 99% are Catholics. The indicative admission number is 20. Most children have previously attended a variety of nursery schools and attainment on entry is broadly in line with the national average. 8% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. There are 21 children identified as having special educational needs and none of these has a statement of special educational needs. There have been many staff changes in the past few years. Currently, there are 9 full time and part time teachers employed of whom 4.2 (70%) are Catholics.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

Our Lady of Lourdes is a good Catholic school with a family atmosphere which establishes a very good learning environment. This judgement reflects the school's own evaluation of its Catholic life and provision for Religious Education. The Religious Education curriculum is well planned and adapted to the school's needs. Standards are good and pupils make good progress in each key stage. Teaching is good overall but assessment needs to be developed to raise standards further. Pupils' behaviour is very good. The Catholic ethos of the school is very strong with very good provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development. The quality and range of opportunities for collective worship in the school are outstanding. The headteacher has an accurate view of the school's strengths and development needs.

Improvement since the last inspection

Following the last Section 23 inspection in September 2000 the school has successfully implemented its action plan to address the key issues raised. The school has responded well to these issues. It has put in place systems of monitoring and evaluation to develop teaching and learning and has developed a prayer and worship policy. The school has also extended the teaching of world religions to develop pupils' awareness of other faiths and cultures.

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation is comprehensive and mostly accurate. The headteacher has a good understanding of development needs and the 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 teaching and learning by implementing the diocesan guidelines for assessment
- Create a job description for the Religious Education Coordinator to reflect the very good practice seen.
- Establish a system whereby governors can monitor Religious Education in the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are good. The mission statement is at the heart of all aspects of school life with its emphasis on “the Gospel values of love and forgiveness”. The headteacher has a clear vision of the nature of the Catholic school and the governors are very supportive of her. She sets clear direction for the Catholic life of the school and is ably supported by the senior management team which includes the chair of governors. Priority is given, where possible, to appointing Catholic teachers who hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies although, at present, only 70% of teachers are Catholics. There is no job description in place for the Religious Education coordinator. The school’s self-evaluation is accurate with a very good ability to identify areas for development. There are good links between parish, school and home and strong links with Guardian Angels primary school and St. Gabriel’s high school. The parish priest is the identified governor for Religious Education and, together with a retired priest, is very involved with the Catholic life of the school including provision of Masses and retreats. The parish-based sacramental preparation programme, run jointly with children from Guardian Angels, is very effective and efficient systems are in place to monitor and evaluate it. This is fully supported by the staff and governors of Our Lady of Lourdes.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Provision for collective worship at Our Lady of Lourdes is outstanding. Many opportunities for prayer and worship are provided including school and class Masses, assemblies, class worship and special celebrations such as advent and lenten devotions. Assemblies and masses are planned and recorded and based on the liturgical life of the Church or on special events. Retreats and a wide variety of prayer experiences are provided for all pupils according to their age and ability. Music is a great strength of the school and, together with displays and good quality religious artefacts, enhances the prayer and worship. Pupils are involved in the planning, preparation and celebration of Masses and assemblies. They are very responsive, well-behaved and take full part in the various acts of worship. Curriculum Religious Education is supported and extended by collective worship and this helps learners to develop their own faith life. The nativity play, “Holy Joe”, which was presented by Key Stage 1 children helped them to understand the story of the first Christmas. This was a great example of the cooperation of school, parents and parish as all had contributed with costumes, lights and sound to make the production even more memorable. All the children sang, spoke and acted well. The inspector finds the school’s self-evaluation rather modest and considers the provision of collective worship to be outstanding.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are good. The inspector agrees with the school’s self-evaluation. Pupils’ attainment on entry is about average and by the end of Key Stage 2 it is above average. Good progress is made throughout the school. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are able to use appropriate vocabulary and know stories of the life of Jesus. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils can describe and discuss stories from the Old and New Testaments and can relate events in the life of Jesus to their own lives and experiences. They have some knowledge of other faiths and cultures from their study of world religions. Most learners achieve well relative to prior attainment and the work throughout the school is good with some outstanding examples. Assessment of curriculum Religious Education needs to be developed and it is intended to implement the diocesan guidelines in the next year. Pupils are generally well-behaved and any incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with in a spirit of reconciliation. Bullying is addressed with the No-Blame policy. Learners demonstrate self-respect, compassion for others and concern for the whole of creation. Pupils are given many opportunities to grow in independence and develop leadership skills. Notable examples of this are the School Council and the Charity Group which have given pupils the opportunity to make their views known and to help and support a wide range of projects that take care of people less fortunate than themselves. Special Friends enable older children to support and encourage younger children on entry to school.

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. Teaching was good in three of the five lessons observed and, in one case, outstanding. In a lesson which was satisfactory a few children distracted themselves and others thus hindering learning. Five teachers hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies and one is undertaking the course. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and lessons are well planned and well prepared. Systems are in place to ensure that the more able pupils are challenged and the less able supported by teachers or classroom assistants. Teachers use a wide range of methods to motivate the pupils and mostly have high expectations of their performance. In the outstanding lesson observed on St. Francis' first crib the children were well motivated and their attention and interest were captured throughout. They were able to show their knowledge of the first Christmas and to imagine themselves in the place of Jesus and his family. All teachers ensure pupils understand the objective of the lesson and most consolidate learning with a plenary session at the end. Assessment is not yet being used effectively to inform future planning. The headteacher is aware of this and has included it in her action plan. Learners generally make good progress and show a very good attitude to work.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The Religious Education curriculum is good. It complies with national and diocesan guidelines and is well planned and adapted to the school's requirements for mixed aged classes using diocesan guidelines. It is made accessible to all pupils by including challenge for the more able and support for the less able. The school's Welfare Committee is able to provide help to individuals and families when necessary. Monitoring and evaluation of planning, pupils' work and lesson observations are in place. The new diocesan guidelines for assessment and standardisation are to be included in the school improvement plan. The study of world religions helps to make pupils aware 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 and this is reflected in the enjoyment and achievement of learners. The curriculum is supported by the strong links with parents, parish, sister school and the local community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The school has assessed its leadership and management of Religious Education as good. The findings of the inspection would support this judgement. The headteacher, who is also the Religious Education coordinator, has a clear understanding of her role although this is not yet outlined in a job description. She provides clear educational direction for the teaching and development of curriculum Religious Education. She monitors and evaluates teaching and learning and is aware that assessment systems need to be developed to improve the standards of teaching and learning. The headteacher, senior management team and governors provide an effective learning environment which gives challenge and equality of opportunity to all learners. The time allocation for Religious Education is in accordance with national and diocesan guidelines and timetabling is acceptable. The governors are very supportive of the headteacher and the school but do not yet have a clear knowledge of the delivery of curriculum Religious Education in the school. Systems should be developed to enable them to monitor curriculum Religious Education on a more formal basis. Curriculum Religious Education is given appropriate priority within the school's improvement plan. The excellent relationships that exist in the school are evidence of the school's commitment to supporting all staff and pupils.