

**SALFORD DIOCESE
INSPECTION REPORT**



ST. MARY'S ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

**Devonshire Drive Clayton-le-Moors Accrington
Lancashire BB5 5RJ**

Inspection date October 2008

Reporting Inspector Mrs. Pamela Parden

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

Type of School Catholic Primary
 URN 119659
 Age range of pupils 4-11
 Number on roll 93
 Appropriate authority The governing body
 Chair of Governors Mrs. E. F. Maguire
 Headteacher Mr. A. P. Gallagher
 Religious Education Co-ordinator Mrs. B. S. Dawes
 Date of previous inspection July 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	2	
The quality of Collective Worship	2	
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	

The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Mary's is a voluntary-aided Roman Catholic primary school situated in Clayton-le-Moors near Accrington and serving the parish of St. Mary. Homes range from owner occupied houses, some recently built, to terraced properties and rented council houses and flats. There is a broad socio-economic mix of learners whose ages range from 4 to 11 years. The admission number is 22. There are 93 pupils on roll of whom 73 are Catholics. 18.3% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. 17 have been identified as having special educational needs and 2 have enhanced school action plus funding. 4 of the 7 teachers (57%) are Catholics and all 4 hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies or equivalent.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Mary's is a good Catholic school. The management and leadership work towards ensuring that it provides a welcoming and calm environment in which all know that they are respected, cared for and loved. The mission, "we pray, we work, we play, we care, we do our best" underpins the school's positive attitudes and values and reflects its ethos. The school provides a Catholic education whilst embracing some pupils of other faiths and cultures. Governors, staff and parents work together to promote the spiritual, moral, social, academic and cultural development of learners. This is evident in the provision for prayer and worship, the quality of the Religious Education Curriculum and the positive, caring relationships which exist within the school. The staff are committed to their personal spiritual development, sharing their own faith and leading by example.

Improvement since the last inspection

There were no significant weaknesses identified in the last Section 23 Inspection. However, the school has developed the multicultural aspect of its work. The scheme for social and emotional aspects of learning has been introduced and is in use. Scrutiny and moderation of the learners' work in order to measure the targets achieved has been introduced and outcomes are collated by the Religious Education co-ordinator.

Capacity to improve

The headteacher knows well the strengths of all the staff and uses these to their full potential. The governors are very involved and are, supportive, challenging and constructive. The school recognises the advantages of assessment and recording procedures to inform future judgments on standards of attainment and learning. Teachers are currently working well in introducing this in the school using the diocesan guidelines. The updated diocesan scheme *Moving the Vision On* is being put into use. The headteacher and Religious Education co-ordinator attended all relevant courses and meetings and opportunities for staff development are provided. The staff themselves recognise the value of this and share discussions leading towards the best provision for all individuals. The capacity for further improvement is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Record the outcomes of targets reached by individual learners to plan appropriate tasks in Religious Education to ensure progress and continuity.
- Further develop the use of assessment in Religious Education to track and record the progress of individual learners.
- Update the development plan for Religious Education.

THE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are good. This reflects the impact of the Mission Statement drawn up by governors, staff, parents and learners. Governors are challenging, constructive and supportive and work well in their committees. They are involved in shaping the life and direction of the school and are committed to its Catholicity. The chair of governors meets with the headteacher weekly to discuss relevant issues. The parish priest makes valuable input especially relating to the spiritual life of the school. The headteacher, well supported by the deputy and all the staff, ensures that the distinctive nature of the Catholic life of the school is maintained and developed. Community cohesion and racial awareness are promoted and very good provision is made for the spiritual, moral and cultural development needs of each individual. The staff are committed to the school's high values and standards and work hard to ensure the best possible provision for learners in order to maximise their potential. They contribute very well as a team with shared input and each exercising numerous responsibilities. Learners act as school counsellors and fulfil other responsibilities. Good home and school links exist. The close liaison and involvement of the parish priest and the successful Sacramental Programme ensure good links with the parish. There are also good links with the associated Catholic high school and local Catholic primary schools.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Prayer and collective worship are good with some outstanding features. The school achieves its aim, "to foster a love of prayer by enriching the child's experience of prayer within the school". Its written policy could include mention of its very good provision of opportunities and experiences which promote each learner's personal, social and religious development as well as encouraging respect for race and culture. Staff, pupils and parents are able to share and develop a relationship with God through prayer and worship. Assemblies are well planned, of a high standard and often involve learners in their preparation and presentation. An example was the excellent one observed during inspection when Key Stage 1 children focused on the lost sheep and the harvest through very good readings, prayers, actions and singing. The headteacher leads an assembly weekly for each key stage and one for the whole school. These are based on the liturgy, topical events or curriculum themes. Friday's whole school assembly includes a celebration of achievements and awards. Classes pray at set times during the day and sometimes as part of the Religious Education lesson. The example set by staff and their obvious deep faith encourages sincerity, reverence and respect in the pupils and helps to create meaningful experiences for them. This was very evident in the outstanding prayer service shared with Years 3 on the importance and power of prayer. The vocabulary used by individuals showed good knowledge and understanding and included individual prayers. The children shared quiet reflection and devotion and sang beautifully. There is a prayer focal point in each classroom related to the liturgy or current Religious Education topic. The parish priest plays an active role in the school's prayer and worship. He celebrates Mass for the whole school or individual Key Stage 2 classes and the children help to plan and celebrate the liturgy. Classes in Key Stage 1 have their own special liturgical services. Parents and governors are invited to share in the celebration of Masses and liturgies.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievements and standards in Religious Education are good. In some cases they are very good. Teachers plan from *REvision 2000* alternating programmes of study for mixed-age classes. Assessment of pupils' work and the tracking of individuals' progress is based on level descriptors and targets within the programme. Teachers know the importance of this with wide ability levels in classes. Recording outcomes and setting appropriate targets are areas for development and the school is encouraged to continue recording the outcomes of targets reached by individual learners as an aid to planning appropriate tasks to ensure progress and continuity. Evidence shows most learners achieve well and meet or surpass required set targets by the end of each key stage. The creative, well-organised environment for the Foundation stage provides a happy, challenging start to school life and learning. In the lesson observed on the 'Lost Sheep' resources were well used and presented and the children were totally involved. Learners know and understand the beliefs and values of the Catholic tradition. They can relate this to their own lives in following Jesus' example by showing love for others. They learn about and respect other faiths and cultures. Throughout the key stages there is good knowledge of Bible stories and God's love. Learning and working together contributes to the learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Learners enjoy their lessons and are confident in their responses. They demonstrate good knowledge and understanding and use appropriate vocabulary. Behaviour is very good with structures in place to encourage and reward it. Through prayer, good works and fund-raising learners show concern for others in need in school, the local community and beyond.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good. Teachers are hard working and use *REvision 2000* well. Weekly planning is thorough with all the teachers using a standard format which helps to ensure the success of the two-year rolling programme. Challenging tasks are set with resources and visual aids being used creatively to deepen learners' knowledge and understanding and to motivate them. Very good use is made of teaching assistants who work with groups in mixed ages and abilities. Teachers' marking is positive and constructive. Recently introduced assessment procedures inform teachers of levels of attainment reached by each child. These can be used in future to ensure continuity and progression for each individual. The school is encouraged to continue with this work. Classroom management and behaviour is good with learners being co-operative, attentive and involved. They clearly enjoy the varied and interesting teaching styles, experiences and tasks offered. During inspection they worked well together, shared ideas and respected each other's views. Work on types of prayer in Years 5 and 6 was very challenging and included bible references and good use of the psalms to develop language and understanding. Parents are proud of the school and happy with their children's achievements. They are informed each term of the work to be covered in Religious Education. Some help in school as appropriate and there is an active Parent Teachers' Association.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The quality of the Religious Education curriculum is good. Time allocated for curriculum Religious Education meets national and diocesan guidelines. The written policy includes an aim, "to enable children to experience a living faith in all aspects of school life and its links with our parish and our homes". Community cohesion is well promoted. Teachers follow the *REvision 2000* guidelines on a two-year rolling programme and supplement this with the use of books, artifacts, audio and visual aids. Resources are to be increased as the budget allows but falling rolls have meant constraints on budget allocation. The school recognises learners' individual needs with special attention given to social, moral and spiritual development. The diocesan guidelines on assessment have been introduced together with the shared moderating of learners' assessment activities in order to agree levels of attainment and targets to be set. The school is encouraged to continue its work of developing the use of assessment to track and record the progress of individual learners. Records of achievement are needed to ensure that appropriate tasks can be planned and set in mixed age and ability groups. The work in curriculum Religious Education is well linked to the school's prayer and worship and so is "the basis and reason for the school's foundation..... the faith we live..... our way of life". The Religious Education curriculum also includes work on other faiths and cultures as well as links with other curricular areas. Teachers incorporate into their teaching their own personal faith and experiences and this serves to enhance the children's learning. A variety of extra-curricular opportunities is also offered to them.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education are good. The headteacher is committed to its importance and quality as central to the school's whole life and ethos. He is strongly supported by the deputy headteacher and all staff working as a team to fulfil the mission, "to foster and encourage in each child a loyalty to God and a commitment to the teaching of Jesus Christ through the Catholic faith". The Religious Education co-ordinator is dedicated and zealously manages the subject ensuring it retains a high profile in school life and planning. Needs and priorities have been identified with the involvement of all staff and the development plan for Religious Education now needs to be updated. A successful programme for the assessment of learners' progress related to the targets of attainment has been introduced. Records for each child need to result from this to ensure continuity and progression. The co-ordinator scrutinises teachers' planning and pupils' work giving constructive feedback, evaluating resource needs and providing support for colleagues. She attends diocesan courses and keeps colleagues and governors updated on relevant developments. The introduction and use of the new *Vision On* diocesan material is a current priority. The headteacher's monitoring role is ongoing. Lessons observations take place regularly. All work is supported by the active involvement of the parish priest who is the link governor. He makes a significant contribution to curriculum Religious Education, prayer and worship and the spiritual life of the school family. Governors are informed of work and developments related to curriculum Religious Education and are involved in the review of policies and action plans. They remain concerned for the highest possible standards and outcomes.