

**SALFORD DIOCESE
INSPECTION REPORT**



**ST. ETHELBERT'S
ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Bolton**

Inspection date February 2007
Reporting Inspector Mrs. Mary McGrail

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 258
Appropriate authority The governing body
Chair of Governors Rev. Allan Swift
Headteacher(Acting) Mrs. Mandy Messham
Religious Education Co-ordinator Mrs. Anne McCoy
Date of previous inspection November 2001

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	
Overall effectiveness of the school	1	Explanation of the Grades 1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3 = Satisfactory 4 = Inadequate
Leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school	1	
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	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.Ethelbert's is a Roman Catholic voluntary aided primary school in the Diocese of Salford. It serves the parishes of St.Ethelbert and St.Vincent in Deane, Bolton. It is one of two Catholic schools within the parishes. The school is situated on the outskirts of the town centre. The learners come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The age range of the learners is from 3 to 11years. The indicative admission number is 30 and there are currently 258 learners on roll of whom 228 are baptised Catholics. Learners live in a variety of housing including privately owned properties, local authority and housing association properties. 11% of the learners are eligible for free school meals. 35 have been identified as having special educational needs and 1 has a statutory statement of special educational need. Of the 13 teachers 10 (77%) are Catholics.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St Ethelbert's is an outstanding Catholic school. It is very effective in offering its learners a traditional Catholic education in an environment where its precepts of "Love, Care and Share" permeate all aspects of the school's life. The high quality of the leadership provided by the acting headteacher fully supported by her senior management team and the knowledgeable governing body are a tribute to the memory of the previous head who died prematurely last year. Learners enjoy school and respond well to the high expectations of the hard working, dedicated staff. Strong home, school and parish links ensure learners and parents are fully supported on their faith journeys. The school is firmly at the heart of the parishes it serves. Learners are very well behaved, polite and friendly. They have good attitudes to their learning and take great pride in the presentation of their work. They demonstrate a respect for themselves and each other and are developing a strong sense of responsibility. The school is very successful in promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its learners.

Improvement since the last inspection

Following the last Section 23 inspection in November 2001 the school has experienced a traumatic time. The current acting head was appointed as deputy in 2003. In September 2004 she was appointed acting head when the headteacher became seriously ill. Two senior teachers from within the school were appointed acting deputies. The governors hope to make a permanent appointment of headteacher from September 2007. The school has been refurbished creating a new office block, staff room and purpose built Foundation Stage Unit. On going refurbishment will enable disabled access and facilities to be improved.

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation is detailed, honest, thorough and objective. The leadership and management of the school have the vision, experience and commitment to ensure the continued development of this very successful Catholic school as it lives out the aims of its Mission Statement. The governing body shares this vision. The school's capacity to improve is therefore good.

What the school should do to improve further

- There are no major issues to address. The school should continue to implement and develop its current practice of rigorously monitoring and evaluating the Religious Education provision.

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 is reviewed yearly and clearly represents the overall aims of the school. It is prominently displayed throughout the school and permeates all aspects of school life. The governors, well led by the chair of governors and his vice-chair, play a leading role in the monitoring and evaluation of the overall provision. Their role as critical friends to the school has been developed by the acting headteacher as part of her National Professional Qualification for Headship. The governors' planned and organised visits to school help facilitate their monitoring. Very detailed reports from the dedicated and experienced Religious Education co-ordinator further inform the governing body. The parish priest in his role as designated governor for Religious Education visits the school weekly and monitors learners' work. The acting headteacher and Religious Education co-ordinator keep detailed records of their effective monitoring and evaluation strategies. The Sacramental Programme is very well organised and this ensures that the strong home, school, parish links fully support learners and their families on their faith journey. The Religious Education co-ordinator gives good support to her non Catholic colleagues. 7 teachers hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies or its equivalent. Other staff have enrolled on the course to achieve the qualification. The Religious Education co-ordinator has a performance management objective related to her role in the school.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Provision for collective worship at St. Ethelbert's school is outstanding. There is a clear policy statement for prayer and worship which has a high profile in the school. Throughout the school year learners, parents and parishioners are offered a wide range of rich and meaningful opportunities to develop their relationship with God. Whole school Masses are celebrated in church for Holy Days and at the beginning and end of each term. Class Masses are celebrated in school each week. In all these celebrations learners play a full and active role. Parishioners are invited to attend. Celebrations to welcome learners and their families into the Nursery and Reception class are held yearly. Even the youngest learners are fully involved in these liturgical celebrations. Whole school and key stage assemblies are held weekly and a "Praise" assembly is held each half term.. Weekly class led assemblies, to which parents and parishioners are invited, are of a very high quality. The assembly during inspection involved all the learners in the class, praising and thanking God through drama, readings, music and song. It was outstanding. Class collective worship has been a feature of the provision for several years. These weekly sessions reflect the liturgical year or a theme from the Religious Education curriculum. These are genuine spiritual experiences for all involved. Learners respond reverently and respectfully. In all prayer sessions observed during inspection learners responded in an appropriate manner. They know the traditional prayers of the church and are happy to share their spontaneous prayers with others. Every classroom has an attractive focal point for prayer and throughout the school learners' spirituality is illustrated through prayer, effective displays and symbols of its faith life .

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are good overall with several outstanding features. Learners enter the Foundation Stage with standards broadly in line with national expectations. In the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 they make good progress. By the end of Key Stage 1 they have a good factual knowledge of their faith and are able to write their version of stories heard. They are able to write simple prayers and use good religious vocabulary when discussing their ideas. During Key Stage 2 they maintain this good progress. They have a good knowledge of the work of CAFOD and know that they have a responsibility to care for all God's creation. The older learners understand the concept of vocation and have an impressive knowledge of the Jewish faith. By the end of the Key Stage they have a good factual knowledge of their own faith. The standard of marking in classes is very high. Good work is suitably praised and very detailed comments made on how work could be improved or extended. Learners have a good sense of right and wrong. They show respect for each other and are developing a strong sense of responsibility. They appreciate their involvement in school decisions through the school council and through their role as peer mediators. The learners give generous support to local, national and international charities. The strong community links, through the parish, enhance the overall standards and achievement

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The inspector agrees with the school that the quality of teaching and learning is good with some outstanding features. All lessons have a clear focus. Resources are carefully prepared and used effectively to enhance the learning process. Technology is also used very effectively by teachers and learners. The power point presentation by the oldest learners, following a lesson on the Jewish faith, was impressive. A range of teaching styles is evident and designed to meet the requirements of the lesson content and age of learners. All learners are encouraged to be involved in the lessons and tasks are set which meet their needs. Appropriate time is allocated for discussion and sufficient time given for tasks to be completed. The school has been developing its assessment procedures over several years and has now fully implemented the diocesan scheme. Work is moderated by teachers. The older learners have examples of assessments in their work books. Learners have a good attitude to their learning. They listen attentively to the teacher and respect others' contributions to the discussions. They settle down quickly to their written tasks and produce quality presentations. Learners co-operate well in pairs, small groups and as members of a larger class group. Behaviour at all times is very good.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The Religious Education curriculum has been assessed by the school as good. The inspector judges it to be outstanding. There is a clear policy for curriculum Religious Education and all lessons are well planned using the diocesan *REvision 2000* guidelines. The time allocated to curriculum Religious Education meets both national and diocesan requirements. The time allocated to individual lessons in upper Key Stage 2 allows learners the opportunity to produce quality work appropriate to their age and ability. World faiths are taught using the diocesan programme. The input of parents of other faiths enhances the overall provision. Visitors to school and learners' visits to other places of worship are a feature of the extended Religious Education curriculum. There is a thriving school choir which meets after school and whose repertoire reflects the liturgical year and the Religious Education curriculum. The school has an excellent range of quality resources, available for both teachers' and learners' use, impacting positively on the overall provision. High quality and well planned class led assemblies, plus the many opportunities for learners to be involved in the preparation and celebration of Mass in school and in church, all contribute to the Religious Education curriculum. The support and involvement of the parish priest is acknowledged and appreciated by learners and staff. The well organised parish Sacramental Programme also supports the school's provision for Religious Education and its positive impact on the learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education is outstanding. The Religious Education co-ordinator has been in post for 9 years and is extremely enthusiastic about her role. She leads by example and is a very good role model for all teaching staff. Her record keeping is meticulous. Detailed records are kept on assemblies and Masses and other liturgical celebrations. Her planning is thorough and she undertakes her role in monitoring and evaluating the Religious Education provision in a supportive manner. She herself is very well supported and encouraged by the acting headteacher who insists that Religious Education has a very high profile in the school. Governors are kept well informed by the co-ordinator's detailed yearly reports and she meets regularly with the designated governor for Religious Education. The co-ordinator ensures that colleagues are kept fully informed of diocesan developments by regular inputs into staff meetings. She has also led in-service sessions for other primary schools in Bolton. Attendance at diocesan meetings contributes to her own professional development. She ensures the high quality of Religious Education displays, reflects the faith life of the school. She is currently examining ways of linking the SEAL project with the *REvision 2000* guidelines. Resources for Religious Education and collective worship are regularly audited and carefully catalogued.