

**SALFORD DIOCESE
INSPECTION REPORT**



**HOLY INFANT AND ST ANTHONY
ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Bolton

Inspection date November 2005

Reporting Inspector Mrs. K. A. Morris

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 194
 Appropriate authority The governing body
 Chair of Governors Rev.Fr. J C Wright
 Headteacher Mrs. C. M. Lawton
 Religious Education Co-ordinator Mrs. C. M. Lawton
 Date of previous inspection October 2003

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	2	
Leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education	1	
<i>The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements</i>		

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Holy Infant & St. Anthony's is a Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic Primary School serving the parish of Holy Infant & St. Anthony in Astley Bridge, Bolton. The school is situated in close proximity to the church. The school has a wide catchment area drawing in learners from a range of socio-economic backgrounds and a mixture of privately owned and local authority rented accommodation. The school admits pupils from 4 to 11 years of age, with an indicative admission number of 30. Current number on roll is 194. 90% of pupils are baptised Roman Catholic and are resident in the parish. Approximately 13% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. 34 pupils are identified as having special educational needs and 4 have a statutory statement. 8 full-time permanent teachers are Roman Catholic. The current headteacher joined the school in 2003 when Ofsted designated the school as having serious weaknesses. Since then there have been considerable changes in staffing, with 3 teachers leaving and 3, including the new deputy headteacher, joining the school. Ofsted removed the school from the serious weaknesses category in September 2005. The Local Education Authority now recommends the school as a centre of good practice, having recently awarded it Leading School status.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

Holy Infant & St. Anthony is an outstanding school with an exceptionally strong Catholic ethos. It is driven by its Mission Statement, which was drawn up by pupils, staff, parents and governors. Leadership and management ensure a welcoming, caring, stimulating environment in which all aspects of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Staff at all levels provide strong positive role models for pupils and are dedicated, committed and hardworking. They demonstrate a Catholic vision of education.

Improvement since the last inspection

Following the last Section 23 inspection in 2003 the school has addressed the key issues. All class timetables include at least 10% curriculum Religious Education. There is now a consistent approach to planning and focused and extremely thorough systems of monitoring, evaluation and review with related feedback. The development and extension of the use of assessment ensures that tasks set meet the needs of all pupils. There is a good range of high quality resources, both literature and artefacts, to support both prayer and worship and curriculum Religious Education. There is very high quality leadership which provides clear direction for the school. This has had a significant impact on the development of Religious Education over the last two years.

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation matches the findings of the inspection exactly and shows good capacity to improve. The headteacher's energy and drive have moved the school forward significantly and she demonstrates a clear vision for the school's needs and development. She is strongly supported by the parish priest, who is the chair of governors, the active and knowledgeable governing body and the hard-working, committed staff. A new Religious Education policy was drawn up after consultation with governors and staff. This is regularly reviewed and supplemented with additional guidelines as appropriate.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to develop assessment in curriculum Religious Education by accurate levelling of samples of work using the latest Diocesan guidelines

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of the Catholic Life of the school are outstanding. This is chiefly due to the exceptionally strong leadership of the headteacher, the dedicated leadership team and the whole-hearted support of all staff. The school benefits to the full from a very active, knowledgeable and supportive governing body. The parish priest, who is also the chair of governors and link governor for Religious education, is a daily visitor to the school and is well-known to children and staff. He has an impressive knowledge and understanding of all aspects of school life. Governors discuss and review Religious Education policies and meet with staff to review the Mission Statement and aims of the school. This enables governors to monitor closely the work of the school as a faith community. The parish Sacramental Programme co-ordinator who is also a governor and helper has very close links with staff and children and has developed a keen awareness of Religious Education in school.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Provision for collective worship is outstanding. It is a key feature of the school and pervades all aspects of school life. It is underpinned by a clear Religious Education policy, which includes prayer and worship, and by associated detailed guidelines for the development of this aspect of the school. Whole school Masses are held at the beginning and end of term and on Holy Days. Assemblies, key stage services including Key Stage 1 celebrations, Stations of the Cross and carol services are planned and celebrated with the parish priest, parents and parishioners. A common planning format is followed for class collective worship and assemblies which includes and evaluates key elements such as gathering, focusing, reflecting and responding. The quality of collective worship and the children's response is monitored regularly by the headteacher. All learners observed are fully involved and supported in the planning and of celebrations which include readings, drama, music, art and personal and reflective prayer. At the time of the inspection all children, even the youngest, prayed with respect and reverence demonstrating the developing awareness of the importance of prayer in their lives. Class worship in Year 1 was very good with all learners having an active role in bringing gifts and their own prayer to their little altar/prayer table. Most were confident and able to share their thoughts on the different ways to share love for others. They could express themselves clearly as to what makes others happy or unhappy clearly demonstrating their knowledge of right and wrong. Other collective worship included drama and music and was based on the Holy Souls and Remembrance Day. These older pupils demonstrated knowledge of the liturgical year and the importance of praying for the Holy Souls.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are good. Very clear and effective strategies and systems introduced since the 2003 inspection have ensured that this key aspect of the school's life and curriculum has been prioritised in order that high standards be achieved and maintained. Scrutiny of work, assessment books and the portfolio of work indicate that children make at least good progress and often better. This good progress is well supported by a clear scheme of work, a wide range of resources and very thorough planning which identifies focused objectives and outcomes and highlights appropriate differentiation. In observations learners were provided with opportunities to debate, question and express themselves both orally and in their written and art work. Children respond extremely positively to Religious Education. They enjoy the subject, are well motivated and take great pride in their work.

Across the whole community there is a feeling of self-worth and self-esteem. Learners are increasingly aware of God's presence in their lives and of His love and forgiveness. They are aware of the needs of others and this is evidenced by their generosity to a number of worldwide and local charities.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have high expectations for themselves and their learners. They demonstrate a secure knowledge of the Salford Guidelines and work very hard using a wide variety of interactive teaching strategies. Very detailed planning with clearly stated objectives and outcomes lead to well structured lessons incorporating a good range of activities and effective use of resources. Evaluation of lessons is evident and, together with short term assessment, informs planning thus ensuring learners of all abilities, including those with special needs and the more able, are appropriately challenged in order to maximise their progress and to ensure inclusion. This is further supported by effective use of half term assessments. Appropriate differentiation is identified and is well informed by assessment including consistent application of the school's marking policy.

Management and organisation in all classes is very good. Behaviour is very good with pupils co-operating when working with others or independently. This was evident in the lesson where pupils were learning about the prophets and relating this to the modern day and their own lives. They listened intently and questioned with sensitivity respecting the views of their peers. Younger pupils responded well to the role-play they performed after the discussion on "The Good Samaritan". During the plenary of this lesson the answers to the question "What have you learned today?" showed a depth of understanding relating to their own lives.

All staff are totally committed to the Catholicity of the school with its high standards and values.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The Religious Education curriculum is good. Religious Education has a very high profile in the school, both as a key element of the school improvement and spending plans. At least 10% of teaching time in all classes is allocated to the subject. The diocesan *Revision 2000* guidelines are followed throughout and supplemented by activities relating to the liturgical year and by a range of other resources and learning experiences. Teachers' planning is thorough and together with pupils' learning is closely monitored by the headteacher through scrutiny and observation. Regular Religious Education staff meetings ensure that its profile within the school remains high and that practices and the curriculum are under constant review and development. The headteacher's monitoring of work, lessons and planning further inform this review. Appropriate feedback is given and acted upon by individuals and whole staff to ensure good quality teaching and learning. Half-termly assessments are recorded in workbooks. Curriculum Religious Education and collective worship work extremely effectively together to ensure that both knowledge and understanding and spiritual development are promoted to the full. Termly reports to the governors include a significant Religious Education element and are discussed fully with extensive input from the nominated governor for Religious Education. These processes help to ensure that curriculum Religious Education is regularly and critically appraised, reviewed and improved.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The school has assessed the leadership and management of Religious Education as outstanding. Inspection evidence gathered supports this judgement. The headteacher who is also the co-ordinator for Religious Education has excellent knowledge of her subject and is well placed to advise and support her very supportive staff and governors. The regular and rigorous monitoring procedures, which she instigated prior to the last inspection, have been further developed thus providing her with very clear insight into standards, strengths and areas for development. The co-ordinator has a clear vision of her role within the school and provides strong leadership and direction. Her key strategic position as headteacher helps to ensure that religious education is held first and foremost in the life of the school. She can fully appreciate and promote the way in which Religious Education pervades the school and fully involves stakeholders at all levels of decision making. Governors are kept fully informed of Religious Education and prayer and worship by written and verbal reports from the headteacher, link governor and Curriculum Committee reports and by visits to the school attending various celebrations and functions. They are seen as "critical friends" whose input is valued.