

**SALFORD DIOCESE  
INSPECTION REPORT**



**ST. MARY & ST. JOSEPH  
ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Bennington Street Blackburn BB2 3HP**

Inspection date December 2008  
 Reporting Inspector Mrs. J Schofield  
 Inspection carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School Catholic Primary  
 URN 119513  
 Age range of pupils 4-11  
 Number on roll 212  
 Appropriate authority The governing body  
 Chair of Governors Rev. F. Parkinson  
 Acting Headteacher Mrs. Andrea Thomson  
 Religious Education Co-ordinator Ms. Judith Moss  
 Date of previous inspection January 2000

<b>The Inspection judgements are:</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Explanation of the Grades</b>  1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3 = Satisfactory 4 = Inadequate
Overall effectiveness of the school	2	
Leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school	1	
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	1	
<i>The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements</i>		

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

St. Mary and St. Joseph is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school situated in the Audley district of Blackburn and serving the parish of The Holy Family. Pupils are drawn from an area of local authority, rented and terraced accommodation with significant social deprivation. The school's admission number is 30. The current number of pupils on roll is 212 of whom 58 children (27%) are baptised Catholics. No pupils are withdrawn from collective worship or curriculum Religious Education. Many pupils with English as their second language enter the school with social and communication skills below those expected for their age. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is 25%. The school has identified 52 pupils as having special educational needs. There are no pupils with a statutory statement of special educational need. However 5 pupils receive an individual pupil resource allocation the need for which is subject to an annual review. There are 10 full time teachers of whom 7 (70%) are of the Roman Catholic faith.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

St. Mary and St. Joseph is a good Catholic school with many outstanding features. The school's Mission Statement is displayed in the main areas of the building. The school's inclusive ethos is a strong foundation for the happy environment in which every member of the community is valued and nurtured. Good relationships between the staff and pupils are a strength and the worth and self esteem of everyone is recognised and encouraged. The spiritual, moral, and social development of learners is good. Clear planning, and effective teaching combined with assemblies and classroom worship ensure good support for the school's Religious Education curriculum. Pupils are well motivated and behaviour is good. From Foundation Stage to the end of Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress. The acting headteacher has assessed the leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school to be good. Inspection evidence gathered however indicates the leadership and management of this area to be outstanding.

### **Improvement since the last inspection.**

Since the last inspection the school has addressed in full the issues raised. The school continues to offer the best possible opportunities for all pupils in its diverse community. Systems for the monitoring of teaching and learning are well established. Assessment arrangements and activities linked to the new *Vision-On* materials have are being developed. There is a strong leadership team supporting the headteacher in the management of the school. This team make a positive impact on the strength of support for newly qualified staff and their colleagues. Governors and parents are well-informed regarding curriculum provision and the progress of pupils.

### **Capacity to improve**

The school's self-evaluation is comprehensive. The governors and headteacher share a vision for the ongoing development of the school. The strong leadership team is committed to the continuing development of all aspects of the Catholicity of the school whilst at the same time embracing respect and understanding of other faiths and cultures. There is good evidence in both the teaching and prayer and worship that all members of the school community are fully aware of and supportive of the goals the school is aiming to achieve. The school has good capacity for further improvement

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Develop current assessment procedures required from the introduction of the new diocesan assessment materials
- Develop whole staff moderation of assessments in order to provide a more accurate level at which a pupil is working.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL**

The leadership and management of the Catholic Life of the school are outstanding. Relationships within the school are excellent enhancing the enthusiasm and enjoyment of its pupils who are encouraged to take responsibilities as school councillors. The acting headteacher, supported by a strong leadership team has a clear vision for the future of the school. All staff fully embrace the school's Catholic ethos and work effectively as a team committed to every pupil's welfare and progress. The parish priest is a regular weekly visitor to the school. The governing body is aware of the religious dimensions of the school and sets clear direction for the school's Catholic life. They are effective and challenging. Partnership with the parents of the many differing cultural and faith groups is a strength of the school. Parents are invited to share in school Masses, assemblies and liturgical celebrations. Good links are maintained with the diocesan advisors. The school plays a supportive role in the preparation of pupils for the Sacraments of Initiation. The pupils extend links with the wider community through their support for CAFOD and various local and world-wide charities. The promotion of community cohesion is a great strength as the school positively celebrates its diversity, its successes and its inclusive nature. It is an outstanding example of true social cohesion in action.

## **THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

The provision for collective worship in the school is good. Assemblies and opportunities for classroom prayer and worship are carefully planned, organised and celebrated. Pupils are offered various opportunities for spontaneous prayer many of which are used in assemblies, liturgies and Masses. An example of this was the whole school Mass to celebrate Remembrance Day. The Religious Education co-ordinator introduced the theme of the Mass to remind the pupils of the sacrifice made by so many men and women during the two world wars. Pictures of local soldiers who had died were projected on to a screen. During the school Mass pupils of different ages were involved in readings, bidding prayers, the presentation of wreaths and gifts and the enthusiastic singing of appropriate hymns. In all occasions of classroom prayer and worship observed pupils showed a growing awareness of the importance of prayer in their daily lives. No learner is withdrawn from collective worship. The school endeavours to provide spiritual experiences relevant to the diverse faiths and cultures present in the community. The links with the faith community of the parish are good and Mass each First Friday is held in the school. The school staff provide support to the parish catechist for the Sacramental Programme.

## **ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are good. The level of attainment when pupils enter the school is often well below average in social and communication skills. Progress and achievement in Foundation Stage is good. Due to the nature of the school population, by the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 progress is approximately in line with those expected in the diocesan programme of work. The achievement of those pupils often with English as a second language is good. In all the lessons observed, learners were attentive listeners and enthusiastic in their responses to questioning. They participated enthusiastically in discussions and settled well to their given activities. Teachers set activities to suit the age and ability of the pupils and used support staff very effectively to help learners achieve success. Early in key Stage 1 learners are beginning to write short sentences of independent work. As they move through the key stage their independent written work is generally of good standard. In Key Stage 2 oral work in discussions is very good and independent writing is further developed. The discussions within circle time encourage all pupils in the development of Christian values and respect for themselves and others. Pupils are increasingly aware of the needs of others and generously support a number of local and world wide charities.

## **THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good overall with some outstanding features in both key stages. Using a range of techniques including personal life examples and good questioning pupils are encouraged to think deeply. Together with the use of good resources and well planned work teachers are able to meet the needs of all learners. The effective use of support staff has a positive impact on the achievement of the pupils. Lesson plans identify clear learning objectives and teaching strategies and many show an evaluation of their teaching or of pupils' understanding or achievement. Although some assessment tasks are in place the school needs to develop the recent diocesan assessment materials in order to establish a more accurate view of the levels at which a pupil is working. The school is also encouraged to develop the work of whole staff moderation of these assessments. All teaching areas are bright, stimulating environments with colourful displays of pupils' work. A good example of teaching occurred in Year 2. The lesson focussed on the part played by Mary in the Christmas story. The young pupils understood that Mary loved God so much He chose her to be the mother of Jesus. They were able to express the feelings of Mary at the appearance of the Angel Gabriel. The pupils were eager and responsive to complete a "diary entry" recording the visit of the Angel to Mary.

## **THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM**

The curriculum for Religious Education is good. Teachers in Foundation Stage and early Key Stage 1 plan the curriculum from the new diocesan materials *Moving The Vision On*. In Key Stage 2 *REvision 2000* is the structure for planning. The whole Religious Education curriculum is enhanced by the nature of the diverse backgrounds of the learners. Great care is taken to encourage respect for other faiths and cultures through reference to the common elements with other faiths rather than the differences between them. Time allocated to Religious Education lessons is in line with national and diocesan requirements. Staff plan their lessons well ensuring quality time allows pupils to produce work of a good standard. Teaching assistants play an important role supporting teachers and pupils within the classroom. Good resources for use with information communication technology are an additional valuable support to the delivery of the curriculum. School Masses together with assemblies and liturgical celebrations have a positive impact in supporting, enriching and extending the Religious Education curriculum offered to the pupils. The school plays a supporting role in the preparation of pupils for the Sacramental Programme.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

The leadership and management of Religious Education are outstanding. Working closely together the headteacher and the school's leadership team work hard to ensure that progress and the development of the Religious Education curriculum are frequently reviewed. The monitoring of teaching and learning through lesson observations and book scrutinies is in place. This encourages staff to reflect on their practice and be creative in the delivery of their lessons. Assessment procedures are in place and with further development of the new assessment materials linked with staff moderation they will help to give a clearer indication of pupils' knowledge and understanding. The whole school staff recently took part in in-service training for diocesan schools with significant numbers of pupils of other faiths. The co-ordinator for Religious Education works hard to develop celebrations of prayer and worship which emphasise the school's diversity as well as promoting community cohesion within the school and local community. This will encourage all staff to challenge their own practice and be adventurous and creative in their delivery of the curriculum. Governors are encouraged to visit the school for occasions of prayer and worship. The parish priest is a regular and welcome visitor in school and plays an important and active role in the religious life of the school community.