

**SALFORD DIOCESE
INSPECTION REPORT**



**ST. CHARLES
ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Rishton**

Inspection date March 2006

Reporting Inspector Mrs. Pamela Parden

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 191
 Appropriate authority The governing body
 Chair of Governors Rev. Fr. M. C. Dowd
 Headteacher Mrs. D. Casey
 Religious Education Co-ordinator Mrs. D. Casey
 Date of previous inspection November 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	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	2	
<i>The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements</i>		

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Charles' is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school serving the parish of St. Charles Borromeo. It is situated in the industrial town of Rishton on the outskirts of Blackburn. The housing in the catchment area ranges from local authority and housing association rented property to privately owned semi-detached and detached homes. The school has a diverse socio-economic mix of learners whose ages range from 4 to 11 years. The admission number is 30. There are 191 pupils on roll of whom 186 are baptized Catholics. 10% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. 42 of the children have been identified as having special educational needs and 6 have a statutory statement of special educational need. 10 of the 11 teachers (91%) are Catholics.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St Charles is a good Catholic school with some outstanding features. The leadership and management ensure that the school provides a welcoming, happy and caring environment where all know that they are cared for and loved. The school's positive attitudes and values reflect its mission to "bring forth Christ" and its strong Catholic ethos admirably. Governors, teachers, parents and parishioners work well together to promote the spiritual, moral, social, academic and cultural development of the children. The school emphasises the value of all individuals and nurtures them on their faith journey in loving God and following Jesus' example. All staff are dedicated, committed and hard working and strive to help the school grow and develop. They aim to maintain high standards and achieve the best possible outcomes. The headteacher's strong leadership is evident in the provision for prayer and worship, the quality of relationships and the teaching and learning. She has a good understanding of the school's strengths and development needs. The strong Catholic ethos ensures very good provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development.

Improvement since the last inspection

The school has fully addressed the key issues arising from the last Section 23 Inspection in November 2000. Strong home, school, parish links now exist. The parish priest regularly visits school to meet staff and children, He shares lessons and prayer and worship and celebrates Mass with classes in turn. He discusses school issues with the headteacher each week. The school works closely with parish catechists and supports sacramental preparation. Parents are informed of the Religious Education to be taught during the year and they enjoy sharing masses, assemblies and other liturgical celebrations. Parish newsletters are distributed throughout the school. The headteacher who is also the Religious Education co-ordinator has worked with the parish priest, the diocese and catechists to review and update written policies for prayer and worship and curriculum Religious Education. These now reflect the provision in the school, support good practice and serve as working documents.

Capacity to improve

The school's capacity to improve is good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school's future needs and developments. She is very strongly supported by the governing body and hard-working, committed staff. The School Improvement Plan, drawn up in consultation with governors, all staff and some pupils, outlines the school's current priorities and provides for their delivery. This is very good evidence of the school's capacity to continue to improve. Religious Education has been identified as high priority for this current school year and the parish priest is closely involved with its development. Issues include a review of the Religious Education policy, curriculum provision for more able pupils, continued development of prayer and worship and resources.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide written evidence of prayer and worship for monitoring purposes.
- Increase the quantity of learners' written work in Religious Education.
- Ensure that written records reflect the differentiated tasks which are set to meet the needs of all pupils in mixed ability groups in Religious Education.
- Complete the work begun on developing assessment in Religious Education throughout the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are outstanding. The Catholic faith is at the centre of the school's life reflecting its mission to "bring forth Christ". The Mission Statement, reviewed annually, was drawn up and is owned by staff, governors, parents and learners and impacts on the whole life and ethos of the school. The parish priest gives a strong lead as chair of governors. All governors are enthusiastic, challenging and supportive and work well in their committees helping to shape the life and direction of the school. They visit regularly, observe lessons and provide support. Appointing practising and committed Catholic class teachers is a priority. The link governor for Religious Education works with the headteacher in monitoring progress and both feedback regularly to governors. The high quality of the headteacher's leadership, supported by senior staff, ensures the development of the Catholic life of the school and its mission. Through her vision and understanding she provides effectively for the needs of all learners in promoting their spiritual and moral development. She is also the Religious Education co-ordinator. She utilises teachers' strengths and provides for their professional development. She has a clear vision for the future development of the school and involves governors and staff in planning this. Staff work hard and are totally committed to the school's Catholicity and its values and high standards. They contribute as a strong, happy team with shared input. Home, school, parish links are good. The school strongly supports the parish Sacramental Programme and has good links with St Augustine's High School.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The quality of collective worship is good. The school's written prayer and worship policy was reviewed in June 2005. It reflects the Mission Statement and aims, "to encourage and develop a life of Christian prayer and worship within all members of the school community". A rich variety of relevant opportunities and experiences is provided to this end. A calendar of the year's themes for assemblies is followed to provide continuity. The emphasis can be moral, spiritual, religious, curricular or social. Each week the headteacher and staff in rote lead an assembly for each key stage. The headteacher leads the Friday assembly which includes the presentation of awards. Assemblies include leading by example, use of quality resources, symbols, candles, visual aids, music and hymn singing. They are well prepared and organised with active input by learners. No written plans are evidenced. Classes pray at regular set times during the day. Each class has a prayer focal point and this can relate to a current theme and aids well planned class prayer services. Private, individual, meditative, group and traditional prayers were observed during inspection. All were reverent and respectful. Prayer is an important part of school life influencing learners' spiritual and moral development. The parish priest is strongly committed to this. He shares prayer times and assemblies and celebrates a very special Mass weekly for classes in turn or for the whole school. Parents share in these masses, assemblies and other liturgical celebrations. All classes are involved in some Sunday masses during the year. Children are invited to pray the Rosary together each Friday lunchtime.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are good overall and in some cases outstanding. Teachers' planning from *REvision 2000*, evaluation and assessment ensure progression and help most learners to achieve the required standards by the end of each key stage. There is a need to increase the quality and quantity of learners' written work in some cases to enable secure judgments to be made. Learners know and understand the beliefs, values and way of life of the Catholic tradition. They can relate this to their own lives in following Jesus' example showing love of God and making appropriate choices. All know about and respect other faiths and cultures. Most learners enjoy their lessons. Appropriate, challenging tasks and activities, effective use of resources and interactive white boards enhance lessons resulting in good learning outcomes. Learners confidently use research skills, explore ideas and discuss issues. They demonstrate good use of appropriate vocabulary and terms. Behaviour is very good with structures in place to promote, encourage and reward this positively. The creative, well-organised environment for the Foundation Stage provides a happy, challenging start to school life and learning. The children's motivation, involvement, use of resources, singing, responses and use of language were evidence of the good standards of attainment throughout Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2 attainment is good overall and sometimes outstanding. Bible referencing skills were observed leading to a good knowledge of its stories together with an understanding of God's love.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall the quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers are well qualified and generally have a secure knowledge and understanding of the REvision 2000 programme. They plan learning objectives for each week but there is some variation in the planning framework which does not facilitate the monitoring process. Written plans do not always reflect the tasks which are set for pupils with differing abilities or the good use of classroom assistants. The school is encouraged to address this issue. Teachers have high expectations and work hard to achieve the best possible learning outcomes. They set challenging tasks to deepen learners' knowledge and understanding and to motivate them. In all classes observed during inspection there was creative and interesting use of resources. Continuous assessment opportunities and a formal assessment at the end of each unit inform the teachers and parents of each child's progress. Management and organisation in all classes observed was very good. Behaviour is very good and most pupils are co-operative, attentive and involved. They clearly enjoy the varied and interesting teaching styles and the tasks and experiences offered. Learners work well together, share ideas and respect each other's views. This was very evident in a lesson related to St Peter's denial and also in one about the prodigal son. Parents are happy with the Catholic life of the school and their children's achievements in religious education. They are informed of the work to be covered each year and receive regular newsletters. Some parents help in school if needed.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The quality of the Religious Education curriculum is good. There is a clear written policy with the aim, "to bring the children closer to God by studying the Gospels and Christ's teaching and providing a sound basis for the development of each individual". Time allocated for curriculum Religious Education meets national and diocesan guidelines. The school must ensure that Sacramental Programme work with catechists does not encroach upon curriculum time. Teachers follow the *REvision 2000* Programme. This is supplemented by additional books, artifacts and other materials. Good use is made of computers, the internet and interactive white boards. Overall the school uses a very good range of quality resources which are listed and catalogued. The curriculum provides for all learners to make good progress. The teachers ensure that all learners are actively involved in class discussion, presentations or drama but there is a need to ensure that written tasks are appropriate for all abilities. Teachers share the example of their own personal faith and experiences to enhance learning and to increase spiritual and moral development. Links with other curriculum areas enrich the provision. The school works well to ensure a broadly based Religious Education curriculum. Work on other faiths and cultures is undertaken throughout the school. The headteacher attends all relevant diocesan cluster meetings or courses and leads staff meetings to inform colleagues of curriculum developments. She constantly works to assist teachers in their personal and professional development in order to achieve the best possible outcomes for pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education are good and the headteacher is the co-ordinator. Her vision for the school is very clear and she is committed to the importance and quality of Religious Education as central to its whole life and ethos. Her knowledge, experience and example are instrumental in leading the school forward in her concern to provide, with the governors' agreement and support, teaching and learning which ensures the best possible opportunities and standards. Written policies for curriculum Religious Education, prayer and worship and assemblies, agreed by all staff and governors, are in place. Systems for planning, assessment and evaluation are followed but there is a need for all to agree the content for these. The new diocesan assessment guidelines are in the early stages of implementation and the school will benefit from the completion of this work. The head teacher scrutinises pupils' work annually and teachers' plans and assessments each half term. She observes lessons and gives constructive feedback which promotes staff development. In-service training also supports this. The link governor for Religious Education is well informed and involved in the monitoring and evaluation of provision. The headteacher, in reporting regularly on Religious Education to the governing body, ensures that that the high priority placed upon it for the current year remains.