

**SALFORD DIOCESE
INSPECTION REPORT**



**ST. JOHN BOSCO
ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Hall Moss Road Blackley Manchester M9 7AT

Inspection date July 2008

Reporting Inspector Mr. J. Brierley

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

Type of School Catholic Primary
 URN 105530
 Age range of pupils 3-11
 Number on roll 224
 Appropriate authority The governing body
 Chair of Governors Mr D. Fleming
 Headteacher Mrs. M. Woodward
 Religious Education Co-ordinator Mrs. S. Ryan
 Date of previous inspection April 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	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	2	

The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St. John Bosco is an average sized Roman Catholic voluntary aided primary school serving the parish of St. John Bosco in Blackley, Manchester, an area of considerable social and economic deprivation undergoing a major programme of regeneration. Most pupils are of white British heritage although the proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is steadily increasing. On starting school indicators suggest the majority of the children's attainment is below national expectation for the age group. The age range of pupils is from 3 to 11 years. The indicative admission number is 30 and there are 224 pupils on roll including nursery. 194 of the learners (87%) are baptised Catholics. 37% are eligible for free school meals and 40 have been identified as having special educational needs with 3 having a statutory statement of special educational need. All 11 teachers (100%) are Catholics.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St. John Bosco is a good Catholic school with outstanding features. The headteacher and the senior management team are well supported by a committed governing body and conscientious staff who constantly strive to meet the needs of pupils. Together they are putting effective structures in place to raise standards further based on a shared and clear vision which *'recognises the unique value of each child in God's creation'*. The Catholic life of the school underpins all that happens in the school making it a very welcoming and caring environment in which all aspects of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are of a very high standard. Staff and governors work hard to ensure the excellent personal development of the children. This results in the children being confident, happy, well-behaved, polite and friendly. By the time the children reach Year 6 they have developed a good attitude towards learning and have made good progress from their starting point on entering school. The school leadership has created a staffing structure which provides a high standard of support for children with learning difficulties and teaching is good. Governors, school leadership and staff at all levels work hard to provide pupils with a vibrant, colourful and stimulating learning environment. Relationships within the school community are excellent and extend across home, school and parish boundaries. Parents are consulted and kept well informed about the school, pupil progress and parish events. The school has achieved the Healthy School Award, Active Mark and Financial Management Standard in Schools Award.

Improvement since the last inspection

Following the last Section 23 inspection in April 2005 the school has put strategies in place to keep the governing body informed of developments in Religious Education. Assemblies have been developed to include children across the age groups and school documentation has been amended to include parental right to request withdrawal of children from collective worship and curriculum Religious Education

Capacity to improve

The school's capacity to improve is good because the governors and school leadership have a clear vision of how they want their school to be and are putting effective self evaluation strategies in place to continue to raise standards.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to implement, establish and evaluate an assessment system which will track the progress of pupils in curriculum Religious Education
- Develop and implement short term planning for curriculum Religious Education which identifies the learning objectives, teaching and learning activities and resources to meet the objectives and provide evaluation opportunities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are outstanding. The dedicated headteacher, governing body and staff have a shared vision of the distinctive nature of the school and a commitment to promoting the Catholic life of the school. Together they have prepared and implemented the School Development Plan in which the development of both prayer and worship opportunities for children and assessment in Religious Education take a prominent place. The school's Mission Statement is displayed in the school and is evident in school policies. The Mission Statement has an impact on school life and rightly claims that - *'Everything that we aim to achieve will be based on the teaching and practice of the Catholic church'*. The children are encouraged on a daily basis to live the Mission Statement and to reflect upon their actions and how their actions influence others. The school has sought to develop community cohesion through its links with home and parish and other schools in the area while embracing an understanding of other faiths and cultures through its Religious Education curriculum. The school has welcomed an increasing number of children from ethnic minorities. Year 6 children serve as playground buddies helping children enjoy their playtime. The pupils are provided with a voice on matters relating to school through its elected school council. During the inspection members of the school council described how they felt valued by the staff of the school, how well the members of the school community relate to each other and how the school helps others through its charity work.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The provision for collective worship is outstanding. The school's prayer and worship policy statement aims *'to deepen the children's relationship with God – a relationship will only grow if there is communication – through daily prayer'*. Children are encouraged to experience a variety of prayer through silent prayer, spontaneous prayer, gesture and action and formal prayer. The parish priest celebrates Mass for the whole school on special occasions such as the Welcome Mass for reception children, special feast days and a Year 6 leavers' Mass. Children help lead these Masses to which parents and parishioners are invited. The headteacher leads weekly assemblies for each Key Stage and a weekly 'Special Mention' assembly to which parents are invited. At these whole school assemblies children present and celebrate their good work often from curriculum Religious Education. The Early Years co-ordinator leads an assembly for her department each week. Children are invited to help lead assemblies. During the inspection the headteacher and deputy head led a very well planned assembly and hymn practice which linked appropriate hymns to children's readings and headteacher statements about St. Peter and St. Paul. The class based prayer and worship witnessed in Year 2, based on 'Footprints in the Sand', created 'sacred space' in which to reflect and pray. Prayer meetings for Key Stage 2 children during October, Advent and Holy Week are enthusiastically attended by large groups of children during the lunch hour. Year 6 children attend an annual two day retreat at Schoenstatt Shrine, Kearsley.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are good. The school is putting strategies in place to help raise standards. The school has recently reviewed its Religious Education Policy Statement and placed the implementation of a whole school assessment system on its School Development Plan for 2007-2008. The school has introduced a monitoring programme for Religious Education to involve the nominated Religious Education governor who reports to the full governing body. Teachers are aware of the individual needs of children and the school leadership has employed support staff to assist teachers in meeting those needs. Differentiation of set pupil tasks in exercise books is mainly by outcome and through additional support provided by teachers and able teaching assistants. The children are making consistent and continuous progression in Religious Education. The standard of work in the Religious Education exercise books is good but further opportunities to provide tasks that stretch the more able pupils could be included. The challenge presented by thought provoking questions asked during a Year 6 lesson on 'gifts and talents' exemplified a high level of teacher expectation causing children to think and reflect about using gifts and talents. Children's work is marked regularly but would benefit from a consistent approach that seeks to tell children how to improve their work or ask those thought provoking questions to stimulate further thinking. The school is encouraged to continue to implement, establish and evaluate an assessment system which will track the progress of pupils in curriculum Religious Education.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good with outstanding features. Teachers observed during the inspection are secure in their faith and displayed very good subject knowledge. The teaching methods used in the school are selected to match the age and ability of the children and encourage children to achieve a high standard of work. Children respond well to their teachers and enjoy the very good relationships that exist between staff and pupils resulting in a very happy and stimulating atmosphere for teaching and learning. This was evident in all lessons observed during the inspection where the behaviour of children was a credit to themselves and their teachers. The lessons observed in Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2 contained outstanding features. The lesson in Year 1 on ‘the feeding of the five thousand’ involved role play and bread for everyone in the room. During this lesson the teacher and teaching assistant worked effectively as a team keeping the children focused and engrossed in the planned and differentiated tasks. The lesson observed in Year 3 set out a clear learning objective and then moved at pace to ensure that the objective was achieved by energised and enthusiastic learners. The school is at present deciding between schemes of work and teachers use long and medium term planning which identify each term’s learning objectives. The school is encouraged to develop and implement short term planning for curriculum Religious Education which identifies the learning objectives, teaching and learning activities and resources to meet the objectives and provide evaluation opportunities.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The quality of the Religious Education curriculum is good. The significance of curriculum Religious Education in the school is immediately visible through the prominence given to the Mission Statement and Religious Education displays in classrooms and shared areas. The displays are supplemented by the presence of religious artefacts and well presented focal points for prayer in classrooms. The Religious Education curriculum in the school is at a stage of transition. The Salford diocesan *REvision 2000* guidelines are used alongside the Catholic Truth Society scheme ‘The Way, The Truth and the Life’ in Key Stages 1 and 2 while the diocesan updated ‘Moving the Vision On’ is used in the Foundation Stage. The staff are in the process of evaluating the way forward for their school as ‘Moving the Vision On’ is to be published by the diocese for the remaining Key Stages. The Religious Education curriculum promotes community cohesion through the study of other cultures and religions and a programme of activities and visitors from other faiths and cultures. The curriculum is further enriched by the growing number of children from ethnic minority backgrounds who present the school with opportunities to learn about their faiths and cultures. The school is engendering a spirit within the school whereby curriculum Religious Education and collective worship work effectively together to ensure that both knowledge and understanding and spiritual development are promoted to the full and in line with the school’s Mission Statement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education are good with outstanding features. The parish priest and chair of governors are regular and welcome visitors to the school. The school’s nominated Religious Education governor is enthusiastic about her subject and works hard to give it prominence in the school. She visits the school to meet the children, observe lessons and talk to the Religious Education co-ordinator and other staff about developments in Religious Education at least once each term. The Religious Education governor then presents a detailed termly report to the headteacher and the governing body regarding curriculum Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school. The school’s Religious Education co-ordinator supported by the headteacher and staff is in the process of implementing an assessment system. This process is being evaluated at each stage as the school decides how to harmonise its use of the Religious Education schemes under discussion. Displays in classrooms and shared areas reflect the importance attached to curriculum Religious Education within the school. The headteacher, staff and governors have a shared vision which places Religious Education at the centre of the school’s curriculum. This is further enhanced by the parish, home and school working together in the context of a Catholic community. This is typified by the Sacramental Programme being described by the parish priest as - *‘the pulse within parish life every year involving the school and parish working as one for the benefit of our children’*.