

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Our Lady and St Anselm is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school serving the parish of St Anselm. The school is situated in a semi rural area on the outskirts of Rochdale. The school's catchment area is one of local authority and private housing containing up to 25% of the most deprived areas in the country. The age range of pupils is from four to eleven years. It is a single form entry school with an admission number of 25. There are currently 120 pupils on roll 91 of whom are of the Catholic faith. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is 3% which is well below the national average. The school has identified 16 pupils as having special educational needs and 2 of these pupils have a statutory statement of special educational need. There are 5 full time teachers and 1 part time teacher of whom 4 (66%) are of the Catholic faith.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

The overall effectiveness of St. Anselm's School is good. The inclusive and caring ethos within its community provides an environment in which all members of its community are valued. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The Religious Education curriculum is well planned, monitored and evaluated. Assemblies and classroom worship of outstanding quality support the curriculum. The teaching observed during inspection was good with many outstanding features. Pupils are well motivated and behave well. From Foundation Stage to the end of Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress. The governors and headteacher have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development within their school

Improvement since the last inspection

Following the last Section 23 inspection in January 2001 the school has addressed in full all of the issues identified in the report. There is a rigorous system in place for the monitoring of planning and teaching and the evaluation of lessons. Staff ensure that their planning in mixed age classes offers differentiated activities for all ability levels within the class. There are whole staff opportunities to monitor and level pupils' work. Funding for extra resources and the good use of interactive whiteboards enhance both teaching and learning.

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation is accurate. The governors and headteacher share a clear vision for developments within the school. Priorities for further development are identified in the School Improvement Plan. The headteacher and senior management team are committed to supporting staff in the development of all aspects of the Catholicity of the school. The school's capacity to improve is judged to be good.

What the school should do to improve further

There are no significant issues to be addressed. The school is encouraged to follow the priorities identified in the School Development Plan as under:

- Further develop the work of assessment by creating a portfolio of examples of the levels at which pupils are working
- Continue the established systems of monitoring teaching and learning.

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 reflected in all aspects of the daily life of the school. The headteacher and senior management promote an ethos in which staff, governors and parents work together to ensure pupils develop to their full potential in a Christian environment. The strong relationships which exist between the staff and pupils ensure that every member of the school community is valued. The governing body has an organised committee structure with well-defined roles. They are well informed of the Catholic life of the school and the Religious Education curriculum by headteacher reports, curriculum and weekly newsletters and through their visits to the school. The parish priest is committed and fully involved in the school's religious life and in pupils' preparation for the Sacramental Programme. Leadership at all levels endeavours to promote both staff and children's spiritual growth upholding the caring, inclusive ethos of the school. The home school partnership is strong. Parents are well informed through parent evenings and curriculum newsletters outlining ways in which they can support their children's learning. They are also encouraged to attend assemblies, class masses and other liturgical celebrations. The school maintains good links with the diocesan advisors and the Religious Education coordinator attends all relevant training, feeding back to staff when appropriate.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Provision for collective worship in the school is outstanding. Prayer and worship are carefully planned, organised, celebrated and recorded. This ensures that a range of meaningful opportunities is a regular and integral part of the pupils' prayer life. A very good example was a whole school assembly attended by some parents and led by the headteacher. The theme was of the wonder of God's creation. The pupils entered in silence. A computer and projector were set up to display on a large screen beautiful colourful pictures of varied aspects of creation. Each picture carried an appropriate descriptive adjective and was part of the work of Year 5/6. Pupils spent a few moments in quiet reflection on their own thoughts of the wonder of creation and the unique nature and talents of every individual. A poem by Brian Keenan entitled *The Human Body Has Two Hands* was introduced. The captivity of the author in the middle east had made him realise the futility of arguments and war. As the poem was recited pupils from Year 6 demonstrated violent and creative actions illustrating that we all have a choice as to how we behave. The words of *Shalom*, the Jewish greeting of peace, were then sung in a round as the pupils, continuing to sing, returned to their classes. In all the occasions of classroom prayer and worship observed pupils showed a growing awareness of the importance of prayer in their lives. The parish church is situated adjacent to the school and the Corpus Christie celebration of Mass was shared with the parish community. A class Mass prepared by Years 3 and 4 was a further meaningful celebration in which pupils fully participated in well prepared readings, reverent prayers and enthusiastic and joyful singing. The school plays a leading role in the parish Sacramental Programme.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are good with outstanding examples in both Key Stages. On entry to Reception attainment of pupils is average. In Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 pupils are making good progress. In early Key Stage 2 pupil progress is good and by the end of the Key Stage progress is very good. At the end of both Key Stages standards are in line with those expected in the diocesan programme of work. In all the lessons observed pupils were able to build on prior knowledge and attainment. In Key Stage 1 the teacher explained what was going to happen during the lesson and then, using quiet music, asked the children to recall anything that had been created by God. Learners demonstrated appreciation and understanding of the story of creation by naming people, the sun and sky and a wide variety of animals and plants. They were able to talk about the Bible from which they had heard the story of creation. The tasks set for each group were well supervised by the support staff enabling each child to achieve according to their ability. From early Key Stage 1 pupils are beginning to write simple pieces of independent work. By the end of Key Stage 2 their independent writing is good and well presented. They are encouraged to record their work in a variety of forms including narrative, poems, prayers and diagrams. Opportunities for all learners to discuss, question and reflect on issues encourage awareness of God's presence in their lives and of His love and forgiveness.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The school has assessed the overall quality of teaching and learning to be good with outstanding features. Inspection evidence gathered agrees with this judgement. Lesson planning is good having clear objectives and a range of differentiated activities to develop each topic. Evaluation of lessons and pupils' learning is evident and assessment tasks from *REvision 2000* are completed. The school has taken on board assessment materials published by the diocese and staff have begun to level pupils' work. Classrooms are stimulating learning environments as teachers use a range of techniques to encourage and support learning. Support staff are used to good effect playing a valuable role in each classroom. The good use of interactive white boards and quality resources create interest and enjoyment in pupils' learning. In a Year 5/6 lesson related to the wonder of creation pupils considered Psalm 148 based on praising God's creation. After discussion with their talk partner they were asked to compose their own psalm. They showed great imagination in their work which they shared with the class. Working in groups the pupils received the outline of a tree and its roots. Following a reading from the prophet Jeremiah pupils recognised we all have natural and spiritual needs. Their task was to relate the tree to their own lives, writing on the roots things we really need in our lives and on the branches what fruit God wants from us. The task provoked good discussion and some excellent results. In lessons observed pupils were well motivated and their behaviour and attitude to learning was good. They listened attentively, responded to questions and used appropriate religious vocabulary in their own questions. They are interested in their work and settle quickly to given tasks.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The curriculum for Religious Education is outstanding. The time allocated to Religious Education lessons is in line with national and diocesan requirements. The school has mixed age classes and has therefore adapted the Salford guidelines *Revision 2000* in order to ensure that all learners receive full coverage of their Religious Education entitlement. Staff are knowledgeable and confident in the consistency of their delivery of the curriculum. Timetabling of lessons ensures quality time is allowed to enable pupils to produce work of high quality. Good use of resources, including ICT and the creative arts gives valuable support to the Religious Education curriculum. Teaching and non-teaching staff share in the planning process, the latter playing an important role in the classroom. The Religious Education coordinator observes lessons and quality feedback is given to ensure the further development of teaching and learning. Half termly assessments are matched to the appropriate level descriptors and attainment targets from the programmes of study. Masses, assemblies and liturgical celebrations have a positive impact in supporting and extending the Religious Education curriculum at the school. The parish priest is the link governor for Religious Education taking a keen interest in Religious Education provision throughout the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The school has assessed the leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education as good. However inspection evidence gathered indicates this to be outstanding. Written and verbal reports from the headteacher to governors ensure they are well informed of religious matters and there is regular governor attendance at assemblies and celebrations. Some governors are currently undergoing training aimed at developing their skills in monitoring the curriculum. The headteacher who is the Religious Education co-ordinator recognises the importance of Religious Education as a core subject affecting the life of this Catholic school. His attendance at diocesan courses allows him to feed back to staff and discuss strategies for further development. Quality resources are updated regularly after consultation with staff. There is an effective curriculum monitoring system aimed at supporting staff and maintaining good standards in both teaching and pupils' learning. This encourages staff to reflect on their practice and be creative in the delivery of their lessons and so improve the impact of both teaching and learning. The school has good links with the Rochdale Catholic Schools group and the Rochdale RC federation.