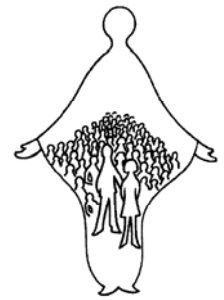


**SALFORD DIOCESE
INSPECTION REPORT**



**ST. MARY'S
ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Chipping, Preston**

Inspection date November 2006

Reporting Inspector Mr. J. Brierley

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 35
 Appropriate authority The governing body
 Chair of Governors Mr. D. Hall
 Headteacher Mrs. M. Smith
 Religious Education Co-ordinator Mrs. M. Smith
 Date of previous inspection December 2001

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	2	
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 Mary's is a small Roman Catholic voluntary aided primary school serving the parish of St Mary in the village of Chipping. It serves a rural area with little social or economic deprivation. Attainment on entry varies because of significant differences from year to year in the small numbers entering Reception. All learners are from white British backgrounds. The school provides education for pupils aged from 4 - 11. The standard admission number is 10 and there are currently 35 pupils on roll of whom 35 are Catholics. 6% of children are eligible for free school meals. 8 pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and 2 have a statutory statement of special educational need. 4 out of 4 teachers are Catholics (100%).

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St Mary's is a good Catholic school seeking to provide a rich, broad and equitable curriculum which prepares children to be active and confident participants in the rapidly developing twenty-first century. The headteacher and school governors have a shared commitment to an innovative approach both in the way the governors manage the school and how they plan to nurture and promote learning in the school. The school has a warm, caring environment in which all aspects of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. Pupils are articulate, confident, well behaved, polite and friendly with a very good attitude to their learning. Children enjoy coming to school because 'the teachers make learning fun and interesting'. Teaching is good overall with some outstanding teaching observed during the inspection. The headteacher who is also the Religious Education co-ordinator is working hard to develop a project based learning approach to meet the Salford diocesan *REvision 2000* learning objectives. An example of this is in the teaching of creation where the children start with scripture readings and develop their understanding of God's creation through being actively involved in the development of the school's orchard and rich woodland area. The Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 children grow vegetables in the school garden. The children are encouraged to develop their learning by seeking advice, reporting back and acquiring knowledge in a way that is interesting and memorable for them.

Improvement since the last inspection

Following the last Section 23 inspection in December 2001 the school has developed the use of information communication technology to support teaching in Religious Education. Children are taught to become skilled in using media rich resources and are given greater access to technology. In this way they are enabled to collaborate with people beyond the classroom.

Capacity to improve

There is very good capacity for improvement because the headteacher and governors have successfully evaluated their school and are constantly seeking improvement. St Mary's is an innovative school with a clear vision for independent and personalised learning for its children. The fact that this view is shared by staff, governors, parents and children enhances the school's capacity for improvement. Parents are delighted with the education their children receive at St Mary's and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development they achieve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide a staff professional development programme to enable collective worship to become more varied and vibrant
- Implement, monitor and evaluate the Salford Diocesan assessment and standardisation guidelines for curriculum Religious Education.
- Continue to use *REvision 2000* objectives in planning for project based learning in Religious Education.
- Implement, monitor and evaluate 'Living and Loving', the school's own programme for developing relationships.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of St Mary's are good. The headteacher and governors work closely together and have accurately evaluated their school. The small number on roll results in all the children in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 being taught in one class and all the children in Key Stage 2 being taught together in another class. The headteacher's commitment and enthusiasm have led to successful and positive outcomes from this organisation and to the development of curriculum planning and teaching strategies which produce independent and personalised learning in Religious Education. The governors fully support their headteacher in her innovative and forward looking approach in delivering Religious Education. They have introduced their own futuristic method of governance which breaks away from the more traditional committee system of governance. To help them in this the governors have established their own interactive website as a means of giving governors immediate access to information regarding school issues while providing a means of communication for its working parties. This system means that. "full governing body meetings are a celebration of successfully completing a piece of work" where resolutions are ratified. There is a strong parental presence on the governing body. Staff and governors share the same ideal in wanting their children to have a real understanding of what they are taught in Religious Education so that Religious Education is meaningful and memorable to them. This results in confident and articulate children who can talk about their religion with real understanding. Key Stage 2 children are elected to the 'School Meeting' which is fully managed by themselves and is responsible for raising pupil and community issues and then striving to find solutions.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Provision for collective worship is good. There is a regular pattern of collective prayer and worship with whole school assemblies on Monday and Friday each week. The children are closely involved in planning and taking responsibility for presenting acts of worship, choosing symbols and selecting appropriate prayers. The whole school assembly and class based opportunity for collective worship witnessed in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 class showed the children to be reverent, prayerful and spiritual. The children were encouraged to reflect and pray to God in their own words and even the youngest children showed a confidence in saying their own individual prayers out loud for the benefit of all. The children have collaborated on writing a school prayer. During the school year parents and parishioners attend collective acts of worship at harvest time, during Advent, on Maundy Thursday and at an end of year celebration. There is no planning file or record of assemblies. Collective worship is often led by children in individual classes and each class has a focus for prayer. The school is to look at prayer and worship as part of its review of Religious Education. The school's self evaluation has identified the need for further staff development to enable collective worship to become more varied and vibrant. Prior to his transfer before the beginning of the autumn term the parish priest had been a frequent visitor to the school and had encouraged the children to take an active part in parish masses.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The inspector agrees with the school's evaluation that achievement and standards in Religious Education are good overall. However, evidence seen during the inspection indicates that standards are better than good in some areas of learning. The faith knowledge displayed by the Key Stage 2 class during the lesson observed and during discussions with three separate groups of pupils was well remembered and understood from previous lessons. The completed tasks recorded by Key Stage 1 children in their exercise books, or on the Key Stage 2 laptops, made available during the inspection, did not always fully match, or do justice to, the quality of understanding articulated by the children in Key Stage 2 during the inspection. The school plans to bring more structure to the assessment of Religious Education in order to meet the needs of all pupils in mixed aged classes. It also intends to implement the Salford Diocesan assessment and standardisation guidelines for curriculum Religious Education. These will record pupil progress and meet learners' individual needs. The school is encouraged to adopt such an assessment system as soon as possible and to monitor and evaluate the outcomes.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Although the inspector agrees with the school's own evaluation that the quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good overall there was again evidence of some outstanding features seen during inspection. All teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge and all lessons observed were at least good. The lesson observed in Key Stage 2, however, contained outstanding characteristics. The lesson was an early one in a series exploring the story of Jonah. The teacher challenged the children through leading a discussion to tease out the children's depth of understanding of the story while providing opportunities for the children to explore what the story tells us about God. The children rose to the challenge presented by the teacher and demonstrated good ability to share their concept of the story and its symbolism. Tasks set for the children reflected the school's emphasis on independent and personalised learning. The teacher set different and differentiated tasks for ten groups to take into account the different age ranges and levels of ability. The children were eager to respond to their own task and assist other groups with theirs. One group was asked to produce a picture and story sequence on individual cards so that Year 1 children would be able to order the story as part of their work on Jonah. Another group wrote the story of Jonah as a modern day play. The work records kept by children in their exercise books or on laptops did not always do justice to the quality of the teaching and learning which they had experienced during earlier project based learning. Similarly records of teachers' planning for earlier projects were not always available and this is an area for development.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The school has evaluated achievement and standards in Religious Education as good and inspection judgements would support this evaluation overall. Religious Education and prayer and worship have a high profile in the school as demonstrated in the central display in the school hall. This display often reflects the school's change of prayer focus during the school year. At least 10% of teaching time is allocated to Religious Education in all classes. The school's innovative approach to teaching and learning places great emphasis on providing meaningful learning experiences to develop learners' life skills for the twenty-first century. The school stimulates the learners' interest by encouraging children to seek advice, report back and acquire knowledge in a way that is interesting and memorable for them. The successful use of the school's project based learning approach to the teaching of Religious Education was witnessed during inspection. The school is encouraged to continue to use *REvision 2000* objectives in its planning for project based learning in Religious Education. The development of recorded plans will help staff to monitor and evaluate effectively Religious Education and also the standards reached in such learning. Work on other faiths also features in projects. During the Key Stage 2 study of Jonah one of the groups was given the task of reading about the Jewish feast of Yom Kippur and finding out why the feast included the reading of the story of Jonah.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education are good with some outstanding characteristics. The headteacher who is also the Religious Education co-ordinator is working closely with governors on a development programme to promote good governance. The previous parish priest who acted as the governor with responsibility for Religious education was transferred to other duties in another parish at the beginning of the term and has not yet been replaced. The governors are looking to appoint another governor to the role of Religious Education governor. Relationships between governors, staff, parents and children are excellent. The headteacher has outstanding qualities and a clear understanding of what needs to be done in the school to improve an already good provision for Religious Education. This also includes the ongoing implementation of 'Living and Loving', the school's own programme for developing relationships, together with its monitoring and evaluation. The school is encouraged to continue with this work. The governors, a number of whom are actively involved in the every day life of the school, share the headteacher's enthusiasm and commitment to the school and her passion for the project based learning approach to Religious Education. The headteacher and governors have accurately evaluated Religious Education in their school and identified areas for development.