

**SALFORD DIOCESE
INSPECTION REPORT**

**ST. PAUL'S
ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Feniscowles Blackburn**



Inspection date November 2005
 Reporting Inspector Miss P. J. Jones
 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 198
 Appropriate authority The governing body
 Chair of Governors Mr. J. Slater
 Headteacher Mrs R. M. Morris
 Religious Education Co-ordinator Miss C. McKee
 Date of previous inspection September 1999

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades 1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3 = Satisfactory 4 = Inadequate
Overall effectiveness of the school	1	
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	

The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Paul's is a Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic Primary School serving the Catholic communities of St Mary and St John (Pleasington Priory) and St Paul's, Feniscowles. The school is situated within the Blackburn with Darwen Education Authority and is on the western outskirts of the town. The school's buildings are enhanced by open fields at the back of the school with a large playing field for the learners. The school has been on this site since 1973. The school's families come from a range of both privately owned and local authority housing. The school building and grounds have recently undergone substantial improvements. The admission number is 30 and there are 198 pupils on roll all of whom are Catholics. 3% of pupils receive free school meals and 18 pupils are on the special educational needs register with three having a statement of special educational needs. 10 of the 12 teachers (83%) are Catholics.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St Paul's is an outstanding school. The leadership and management ensure that it is a welcoming, caring, happy and stimulating environment where the uniqueness of each individual is recognised and celebrated. The staff are a dedicated, committed and hardworking team who strive to live out and be exemplary role models for the learners. The quality of relationships between leadership and staff is recognised through the recent renewal of the school's 'Investors in People' award. Staff are committed to improving their skills as practitioners and to attending relevant in-service training to develop further the quality of teaching in the school. Relationships with parents are very good and they appreciate their involvement in attending assemblies, concerts and other events. Parental responses to the annual questionnaires acknowledge the support given to the learners by the school. Responses are also a way for parents to request where further improvements could be made. The school listens and responds to parental and learners' views. High standards of expectations in teaching and learning are evident by the quality of provision in Religious Education and prayer and worship. Transition arrangements between the school and the link high school ensure a smooth transition for pupils at the end of Year 6. The school is very proud of the achievements of former pupils particularly in supplying head boy and head girl pupils. The behaviour of the learners is exemplary. They are courteous and respectful to visitors and are very keen to show how much they love and take great pride in their school.

Improvement since the last inspection

At the last Section 23 inspection in September 1999 the school had no key issues. The report commented that the school was committed to ensuring that targets identified in the School Development Plan were addressed with clear objectives for improving the religious life of the school. These objectives were to be monitored against identified success criteria to evaluate the impact on the school. The school's self evaluation has identified where improvements have been made since the last inspection. More resources have been purchased for curriculum Religious Education and prayer and worship. Improvements have also included enabling more pupils to participate in assemblies as well as further developing the role of the Religious Education co-ordinator.

Capacity to improve

The leadership of the school has a clear vision for the school's future needs and developments. The headteacher is strongly supported by her deputy, the parish priest, governors, Religious Education co-ordinator and hard working, dedicated staff. The school is not complacent about its achievements and demonstrates a very good capacity to improve. The monitoring and action planning work undertaken by the Religious Education co-ordinator has identified what should be done to develop the subject further. The inspector agrees with the school's judgement about what it needs to do to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Introduce the revised Diocesan assessment procedures in curriculum Religious Education in order to inform future judgements on standards of attainment and the quality of teaching and learning.
- To develop opportunities for the Religious Education co-ordinator to further improve her monitoring skills by observing lessons in order to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of St Paul's are outstanding. The headteacher and deputy have a clear vision of the nature of the Catholic school and governors are very supportive of all that the school has achieved. The effective governing body, led by a dedicated and committed chair of governors, is very aware of the religious dimensions of the school which is evident in the detailed information given by the headteacher in her termly reports. There is a Religious Education governor who, with other governors, supports school/parish celebrations and acts of worship. The school's Mission Statement was reviewed earlier this year to enable all stakeholders to contribute and make the mission of the school more central to all its developments. A banner 'Reach for the Stars' to celebrate the Mission Statement will shortly be hung in the newly extended school hall. The school leadership acknowledges the unique faith journey of each child both within the school and parish communities. The parish priest is a frequent and much loved visitor to the school. He celebrates Mass and attends the liturgical celebrations in school and parish. The commitment of the school and home ensures that the parish Sacramental Programme is well supported. The children enjoy their 'Faith Friends' from the parish who offer support during the time of preparation. The quality of relationships between staff and learners is further strengthened by the exemplary care and guidance which the school gives to the learners. Effective and efficient systems have been established to monitor and evaluate all aspects of the school's Catholic life including school and parish events, the Religious Education curriculum and prayer and worship. The principles of the excellence and enjoyment curriculum reinforce the school's agenda that 'every child matters' to ensure that creativity and a sense of awe and wonder are embedded within the religious character of this school.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Provision for collective worship is good with some outstanding features. The policy for prayer and worship was reviewed in summer 2005. Collective worship is an integral part of the daily life of the school and contributes to learners' spiritual, moral and cultural development. The school provides a rich variety of experiences for the pupils throughout the liturgical year, either as a whole school community or within class. This is an outstanding aspect of the school. There are focal points of worship within each classroom and in areas around the school to promote the religious ethos of the school. Assemblies are well planned and appropriate for the age and interest of the pupils. Pupils have responded positively by participating in whole school and class assemblies. The Advent assembly arranged by the deputy headteacher involved pupils from each year group explaining the meaning of the Jesse Tree and Advent wreath. The learners spoke well, displayed great respect and reverence and sang their hymns enthusiastically. Foundation and Year 1 learners emphasised the importance within the Mission Statement of thanking God for the people who look after them in school. Resources for prayer and worship have significantly increased and are effectively used to enhance the prayer life of the school. The teachers aim to ensure that the pupils' prayer experiences develop as the pupils move up the school. The personal, social, health curriculum has contributed to improving collective worship. During the inspection the 'Cool to be Kind' anti bullying day involved each staff member and each pupil making a gift for their 'named' person in the school to celebrate his or her uniqueness. These gifts brought great happiness to each recipient. Pupils can place any worries or concerns they have in a 'Worry Box' provided for them. They know that their concerns will be addressed. The development of the School Council with its logo 'Everyone Matters' enables all learners' views about the school to be considered. An example of the learners' care for others less fortunate than themselves was shown by the collection of over ninety shoeboxes to be sent overseas. The school is extremely generous in its commitment to support CAFOD, Tsunami appeal, St Joseph's Penny and other charities including the school's close association with the children of Bethlehem.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall achievement and standards in Religious Education are good with some examples of outstanding work. The headteacher and the Religious Education co-ordinator monitor attainment and progress throughout the school. The staff have high expectations in challenging and supporting the pupils in all their learning. Evidence from the co-ordinator's detailed files supports the school's evaluation that most learners achieve well relative to prior attainment. Monitoring occurs in accordance with the school's ongoing evaluation cycle. This involves scrutiny of work, to support good standards throughout the school and teachers' planning together with lesson observations. This aspect of the school's work is outstanding. Areas for development within Religious Education are included within the school improvement plan priorities. The school has identified that more familiarisation with the new assessment arrangements provided by the Diocese is required. This will be addressed in the spring term.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The inspector agrees that the quality of teaching and learning in religious education is good. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge of the curriculum as evident in their planning and quality of work scrutiny. A very good lesson in Year 3 focused on previous learning about the sacrament of reconciliation. The law of love was clear through good questioning by the teacher and answers given by the learners. The learners listened attentively to the story of the Good Shepherd. The teacher challenged the learners themselves to make the links between the message of the story and the sacrament of reconciliation. The lesson had pace and time was used effectively. Differentiated work was set to meet the learners with additional learning needs with the use of new technology further enhancing the quality of teaching for the learners. Resources for religious education have been improved. Developed and focused assessments follow the *REvision 2000* guidelines which are undertaken each term with the co-ordinator monitoring and evaluating the outcomes. Classrooms are well organised and lessons contribute to the general spirituality and moral development of the learners. Displays both within classrooms and around the school highlight the importance of the teaching and learning within Religious Education.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

Overall the quality of the Religious Education curriculum is good. The school follows the *REvision 2000* guidelines with time allocated for Religious Education meeting national and diocesan requirements. The curriculum has been enhanced with the introduction of the World Religions scheme of work which has been implemented in time outside the requirements for Religious Education. An example of work undertaken by some of the learners demonstrates interest, understanding and respect for different faiths and beliefs. A great deal of discussion time is given as part of the curriculum where the learners can develop an awareness of each others views and opinions. Great emphasis is placed on the learners having opportunities to make choices and decisions and to take responsibility for their actions. Examples of work undertaken by pupils show a respect and understanding of other religions which is very much part of the society where the children live. The school recognises the cultural diversity around the school and a week of raising awareness concerning faiths and beliefs is planned in the spring term 2006. The introduction of 'In the Beginning' scheme of work to support understanding of personal relationships will begin in the spring term. Parents, staff and governors are supportive of this scheme.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education are outstanding. The school has a highly effective and motivated Religious Education co-ordinator who has developed her role over the past few years with the guidance of the leadership team. There are updated policies in place for Religious Education, prayer and worship, pastoral care and pupil support. The co-ordinator's subject files are very comprehensive outlining all the arrangements that are made throughout the school for Religious Education and prayer and worship together with records of assemblies. A recent development ensures that parents are fully informed of the curriculum being taught throughout the year. This information has been well received and appreciated by the parents. The co-ordinator has worked effectively to develop systems for the planning, monitoring and evaluation of curriculum Religious Education throughout the year. The Leadership team is involved in monitoring Religious Education lessons. The Religious Education co-ordinator has not as yet undertaken lesson observations. This would be an area for development in order to support her judgements on the quality of teaching and learning in the subject.