

**SALFORD DIOCESE
INSPECTION REPORT**



**THORNEYHOLME
ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Dunsop Bridge, Clitheroe**

Inspection date February 2006

Reporting Inspector Mrs. Mary McGrail

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 50
 Appropriate authority The governing body
 Chair of Governors Rev. John Chaloner
 Headteacher Mrs. Maureen Stansfield
 Religious Education Co-ordinator Mrs. Maureen Stansfield
 Date of previous inspection October 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	2	
The quality of Collective Worship	3	
Achievement and standards in Religious Education	3	
The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education	2	
The quality of the Religious Education curriculum	3	
Leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education	3	
<i>The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements</i>		

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Thorneyholme is a Roman Catholic voluntary aided primary school in the Diocese of Salford. It is a small rural school serving the parish of St. Hubert in the village of Dunsop Bridge. Many learners travel from outside the immediate locality coming from the surrounding villages, hamlets and farmsteads. The age range of the learners is 4 to 11 years. The admission number which is currently 8 this will be increased to 10 in September 2007. There are 50 learners on roll of whom 19 are baptised Catholics. No learners have been withdrawn from curriculum Religious Education or collective worship. Learners come from above average social and economic backgrounds and 6% are eligible for free school meals. 4 learners have been identified as having special educational needs and 1 has a statutory statement of special educational need. Of the 4 teaching staff 2 are Catholics (50%).

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

Thorneyholme is a good and effective Catholic school. It is particularly successful in creating an ethos where all feel valued as members of the small school community. It offers all its learners a traditional Catholic education in a caring and supportive environment. The leadership and management provided by the governing body and headteacher, fully supported by the parish priest as chair of governors, ensure the school is firmly at the heart of the whole community it serves. Parents are very committed to the school and involved in its daily life. Learners are very well behaved, friendly and polite. They have good attitudes to their learning. The school is successful in promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its learners in a happy and extended “family” atmosphere.

Improvement since the last inspection

Since the last Section 23 inspection in October 2000 a new headteacher has been appointed and has been in post for two years. There have been changes in staff and a newly qualified full time teacher was appointed in September 2005. Standards have improved and the issues identified in the last inspection have been addressed and most satisfactorily resolved. The number of Catholic learners attending the school has increased. Plans have been approved to extend the school in order to provide a hall and a new classroom.

Capacity to improve

The school’s self-evaluation strategies are beginning to have a positive impact on the school’s provision. Monitoring of the teaching of Religious Education and the response of the learners has recently begun. There is a genuine commitment to develop these strategies to ensure that the school continues to provide a quality education to meet the particular needs of all the learners. If these are rigorously developed the school’s capacity to improve will therefore be good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Establish a systematic approach for planning key stage and class collective worship using diocesan guidance thus extending and enriching the learners’ experiences.
- Revise the planning for the Religious Education curriculum in Key Stage 2 in accordance with the *REvision 2000* guidelines to ensure that the individual needs of all learners are met.
- Continue to develop and implement a rigorous system for the monitoring and evaluation of curriculum Religious Education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are good. The Mission Statement, developed by the governors and staff, is reviewed every three years. It permeates all aspects of the life of the school and is at the beginning of all policy statements. The chair of governors has a clear vision for the future of the school shared by the hard working headteacher. This is supported by the dedicated governing body which plays an important role in the daily life of the school and parish. This participation is essential in such a small, rural community. The chair of governors is the designated governor for Religious Education and, during his many visits to school, monitors the provision during his “curriculum walks”. A governor leads the Sacramental Programme preparation which, with the help of the parish priest and school, enables the few learners involved to have individual support and guidance on their faith journey. Several governors attend school Masses held in church. Two thirds of the governing body are Catholics. There are currently no performance management objectives for staff which relate to developing the Catholicity of the school. The headteacher holds the Catholic Teacher’s Certificate qualification and other staff plan to achieve the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies in the future. The school is firmly at the heart of the parish and community which it serves. All learners and parents are treated equally with no learners being withdrawn from any aspect of the Catholic life of the school.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The school has a brief policy statement for collective worship. Provision for collective worship is satisfactory overall with some good aspects. Whole school Masses are celebrated in church for Holy Days and weekly during Advent and Lent. Year 6 leavers have a special Mass at the end of the school year. A file recording these celebrations indicates learners are involved with the readings, prayers and music. Reconciliation services are held during Lent and Advent. Learners are familiar with the traditional prayers of the church and there are examples in their books of individual and spontaneous prayers expressing their spirituality. There is one whole school assembly each week which includes acknowledgement of good work and special effort. The assembly observed during the inspection was well prepared and delivered. Class prayers are held each morning. Class and key stage collective worship which implements the suggestions and material developed by the diocese has not yet become a feature of the provision in school. The school should address this for these opportunities would enhance provision overall and further develop the learners’ experience of prayer and worship. In lesson observations during inspection all learners were respectful when praying. Attractive and effective displays reflect the faith life of the school. Every class has a well maintained and attractive focal area for prayer.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and standards in curriculum Religious Education are satisfactory overall. There are examples of high standards in some areas of curriculum Religious Education. Learners make good progress in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1. By the end of Key Stage 1 they have a good factual knowledge of their faith and most are able to re-write stories they have heard in their own words. Learners use good religious vocabulary to explain their ideas and ask meaningful questions. They show a genuine interest in their Religious Education lessons. In Key Stage 2 suitably challenging tasks which reflect the content of the *REvision 2000* guidelines and which are also specific to the age and ability of all learners are not always evident. Progress in knowledge and understanding of their faith for individual learners is therefore inhibited. However, learners generally do have a sound knowledge of their faith by the end of Key Stage 2 and they are able to use appropriate religious vocabulary in discussions. Learners enjoy their work and their behaviour throughout the school is very good at all times. They show a concern and respect for all God’s creation. The older learners have a sound understanding of their responsibilities through their involvement in the school council. All the children respond generously to a range of charities and many are involved actively in the parish and the community. The good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development supports the learners’ work in Religious Education.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The inspector agrees with the school that the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan individual lessons carefully with a clear focus and lessons are based on the *Revision 2000* guidelines. Resources are carefully prepared, used effectively and enhance the learning process. Good questioning skills are used by the teachers and all learners are involved in discussions. Plenary sessions are well used to bring the lessons to an appropriate conclusion. In the best lessons tasks are set which meet the age and abilities of the year groups in the class. The lesson on “The Lost Sheep” provide evidence of very good teaching and learning. Work is always well marked with praise for special effort and suggestions for improvement. The diocesan assessment strategy is being implemented throughout the school. All learners respond well to their teachers and those who need extra help are also well supported by their teacher or teaching assistant. They listen attentively, respond well to questions and keep on task until the work has been completed. The younger pupils show good learning skills even when not directly supervised. Learners take pride in their presentations. Technology is used effectively to enhance the range of teaching and learning styles. Behaviour in lessons is exemplary. Learners work co-operatively in small groups and as members of a larger class group. The school would benefit from ensuring that the planning methodology used for curriculum coverage in Key Stage 2 is similar that used in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The school has a policy statement for Religious Education which helps to ensure that overall the quality of the Religious Education curriculum is satisfactory. In the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 provision is good. In Key Stage 2 problems involved in delivering each learner’s curriculum entitlement when there are four year groups in the same class, together with a wide range of abilities, are considerable. At this key stage long term planning should be revised in order to ensure that the individual needs of all pupils are met. The school allocates the required 10% of time to curriculum Religious Education. The curriculum is enriched by the good use made of the nearby church and the valued input of the parish priest. Visitors are invited into school to speak to the learners about their faith experiences. The headteacher, who is also the Religious Education co-ordinator, has begun monitoring the learners’ workbooks and observing Religious Education lessons. The school makes very good use of the local environment as a God given natural resource in order to enhance its work. The opportunities provided by regular school Masses and the weekly assembly also impact positively on curricular provision. The few learners each year who are involved in the Sacramental Programme benefit from a personal involvement with the catechist and this is extended to their families. Although the majority of learners are not of the Catholic faith all are treated equally in the classroom situation.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education is satisfactory. The headteacher took on this responsibility when she came to the school and she is the only member of staff who holds the Catholic Teacher’s Certificate. The monitoring of the provision is in its early stages. The headteacher has the commitment and knowledge to ensure that the changes, identified in the School Improvement Plan, as necessary to extend and develop the provision are fully implemented. The school is therefore encouraged in its commitment to the development and implementation of a rigorous system for the monitoring and evaluation of curriculum Religious Education. The parish priest is very supportive and his input is valued and appreciated. The advice and involvement of the diocesan advisers in helping to plan and facilitate these changes would ease the burden. Diocesan courses have been attended but the geographical location of the school and the few staff members available to cover for absent colleagues are difficulties. Resources are adequate and there is a range of books on religious topics available for learners to borrow from the library. However the school would benefit from increasing the number of bibles for learners to use for research purposes.