

**SALFORD DIOCESE  
INSPECTION REPORT**



**HOLLY MOUNT  
ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL  
Bury**

Inspection date February 2007

Reporting Inspector Mrs. Pamela Parden

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	283
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of Governors	Mr. Maurice Sidorczuk
Headteacher	Mr. David Golding
Religious Education Co-ordinator	Mrs. Kathleen Baker
Date of previous inspection	June 2001

<b>The Inspection judgements are:</b>	<b>Grade</b>	
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	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**

Holly Mount is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic Primary school serving St. Hilda's parish, Tottington and with many learners coming from all areas of Bury and beyond. The school is situated approximately one and a half miles from St. Hilda's Church and has an advantaged intake. Housing is mainly owner occupied being detached or semi-detached properties. The age range of pupils is from 4 to 11 years and the admission number is 45. There are 283 children on roll of whom 279 are baptised Catholics. 0.7% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. 33 pupils are identified as having special educational needs with none currently having a statutory statement of special educational need. All 15 of the teachers (8 full time and 7 part time) are Catholics.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

The overall effectiveness of Holly Mount School is good with a number of outstanding features. It is a very welcoming, happy and caring school. It fulfils well its commitment to nurturing the talents of all and building a community based on Christian values with Jesus as its inspiration. It provides a clean, stimulating environment in which each individual is respected, cared for and loved and which reflects its aim "to encourage children to build a personal relationship with God". All staff are good role models, hard working and committed to maintaining the strong Catholic ethos which pervades all aspects of the school's life. The headteacher's strong leadership, well supported by senior staff, the Religious Education co-ordinator, the parish priest and governors ensures good provision for Religious Education, prayer and worship and the development of positive relationships. This also results in the very good spiritual and moral development of the pupils. The headteacher has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and development needs and supports all staff in their own professional development.

### **Improvement since the last inspection**

The key issues from the last Section 23 Inspection in June 2001 have been fully addressed. The school's curriculum Religious Education policy clearly reflects the school's good practice and incorporates assessment exercises. An assessment system for Religious Education, linked to levels of attainment, has also been introduced. The prayer and worship policy has been reviewed and now incorporates the fine practice evident in the daily life of the school. Input from the Zion Mission Team has brought fresh ideas to the school and a day of prayer and worship, with partner schools and diocesan staff, provided experiences which have further enhanced the school's provision.

### **Capacity to improve**

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school's future needs. He is challenged and encouraged by the governing body and well supported by the senior management team and Religious Education co-ordinator. Staff work hard to achieve good outcomes for all learners. Religious Education and prayer and worship are vital parts of the school's life. Thorough self-evaluation, monitoring and assessment arrangements lead to the identification of priorities which will help to move the school on even further. Advice from the Salford diocese and other agencies is utilised and opportunities for staff development are encouraged. The school's capacity to improve is therefore good.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure consistency throughout the school in the planning and setting of tasks to deepen all learners' knowledge and understanding in mixed age and ability classes.

## **THE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL**

The school's leadership and management are outstanding in putting the Catholic faith at the centre of its life. They ensure that the Mission Statement and aims drawn up by staff, governors and parents are regularly reviewed and impact on the whole ethos of the school. Governors are well informed and both challenging and supportive. They work well in their committees and individually. The parish priest of St Hilda's has a significant and valuable role as link governor for Religious Education and each governor is linked to a class. The high quality of the headteacher's leadership, together with good support from senior staff and the Religious Education co-ordinator, are major factors in the continuing development of the Catholic life of the school. All staff are hard-working and committed to the school's Catholicity and all but one have the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies or equivalent. Appropriate strategies for self-evaluation are in place leading to identifying priorities and drawing up the School Improvement Plan. Relationships throughout the school are very good and learners are encouraged to exercise responsibilities. They act as peer tutors, playground pals and school counsellors. Home, school, parish links are outstanding and strong support is provided for the parish Sacramental Programme. Networking between Catholic schools in the area and links with the associated Catholic high school are very successful.

## **THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

The quality of collective worship is outstanding. Teachers follow the school's regularly reviewed, comprehensive policy. The school is committed to helping staff, pupils and parents to develop a personal relationship with God through prayer and worship and provides a rich variety of opportunities and experiences to this end. Each term the Religious Education co-ordinator draws up a programme of class Masses and suggests topics for assemblies. These are usually linked to the liturgy or *REvision 2000*. There are two weekly assemblies for each key stage led by the headteacher or a senior member of staff and Friday's whole school assemblies are led by classes in rota. Assemblies are well planned and of a high standard. They include pupil participation, drama and a high standard of hymn singing. There are opportunities for reflection and children pray reverently. Classes pray at regular set times during the day or as part of the Religious Education lesson and each class has a weekly prayer service. Private, individual, meditative and traditional prayers were observed during inspection. The parish priest plays an active role in the school's prayer and worship and in regular Eucharistic celebrations, both in classes or on special occasions for the whole school. Voluntary opportunities are provided for Rosary during October and Stations of the Cross in Lent. Prayer focal points are provided in classrooms and around the school. The example set by teachers and governors and their obvious deep faith encourage reverence and respect in the pupils thus supporting their spiritual and moral development. A substantial number of parents share celebrations and presentations in school. The senior staff work with the Religious Education co-ordinator in supporting all colleagues and ensuring that quality resources are available for prayer and worship.

## **ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Achievement and standards are good overall and in some areas outstanding. Teachers plan from the Salford diocesan guidelines *REvision 2000*. The overall level of ability of learners on entry to school is above average. The overlapping of age-groups in some classes has created a need to look closely at progress and continuity. The recent introduction of the diocesan programme for the assessment and recording of individual learner's achievement and progress will assist in setting appropriate targets and tasks as part of the planning. The school is encouraged to develop this work. Most pupils meet or exceed targets by the end of each key stage and teachers recognise the scope for further extending in-depth responses from more able pupils. Learners co-operate and respond in a very capable and mature way. They were observed to enjoy their lessons, especially when set appropriate tasks and challenges. They know and understand the Catholic beliefs, values and way of life and can relate these to their own personal lives at home, in school and in the parish. They know about and respect other beliefs and cultures. This was evident in a lesson in Year 6 when learners discussed Judaism and compared it with their own practices and beliefs. There is good knowledge of the Bible. Children use relevant and appropriate language and respond well in discussion, role-play and presentation. They are encouraged to use research skills and explore shared ideas. Behaviour is very good. This is achieved through mutual respect, sharing, and reconciliation and appropriate structures are in place to promote, encourage and reward it. Through prayers, good works and fund-raising learners show caring for others in need both in school and beyond.

## **THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. In some cases it is outstanding. The teachers are well qualified and have a secure knowledge and understanding of the *REvision 2000* guidelines. All plan from this.

The use of assessment and observations leads to detailed records being kept for individual pupils. Some use of challenging tasks to deepen learners' knowledge and understanding in mixed aged and ability classes was observed during inspection. In some cases constructive marking by teachers helped learners to develop thoughts and ideas. The school is encouraged to ensure that there is consistency in this area of work. The outcomes of assessment of targets achieved will assist in this. There is good use of quality resources to enhance learning and the interactive white boards, introduced into every classroom, are proving to be a valuable teaching and learning aid. Classrooms are spacious and classroom management and organisation are good. Pupils' behaviour is very good. They are co-operative and attentive and clearly enjoy the motivation and challenge of varied teaching techniques. They enjoy sharing others' experiences and views and are confident in offering or expressing their own thoughts and ideas. This was very evident in a lesson in Year 4 about pilgrimages and times of meditation and reflection. The pupils asked many questions and expressed their own views and opinions. Parents are kept informed of work to be covered and of their children's progress in Religious Education.

## **THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM**

The quality of the Religious Education curriculum is good. The school follows a clear written policy with the belief that, "Our principal educational task is to help our children to know, understand and appreciate our Catholic faith in the spirit of our school's Mission Statement". Provision for curriculum Religious Education meets national and diocesan guidelines. The suggested activities from *REvision 2000* are highlighted to guide short-term planning. Some learning objectives and areas to be covered are annotated on the photocopied planning guides. Space for this is limited so monitoring is not easy. Work is supplemented by the use of additional quality resources, the use of interactive white boards, information technology and audio-visual aids. Teachers aim for all learners to be actively involved in class discussion, presentations or drama but there is a need in some classes to ensure that tasks are appropriate for all abilities. The outcomes of the recently introduced programme for assessment of individual learner's progress and targets achieved can now lead to a review of the planning to be sure that the needs of each individual are met especially in mixed-ability and mixed-age classes. Teachers are committed to their pupils and willingly share their time, example and personal faith experiences to enhance learning. The school works well to ensure a broadly based Religious Education curriculum and links to other curriculum areas enrich provision. Work on other faiths and cultures is undertaken throughout the school and links, to include visits, have been forged with outside groups. A wide range of extra-curricular opportunities is offered to pupils to help them realise their full potential in an environment to which Christ's example and teaching are central.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

The leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education are good. The governors and headteacher are committed to ensuring that, "Religious teaching is part of the essential foundation of our school. It makes the school distinctive." Consequently, its development is a high priority through its 'core' inclusion in the school development process. In formulating the development plan the headteacher's vision is clear and supported by shared enthusiasm from the senior management team, the Religious Education co-ordinator and governors. Comprehensive written policies for curriculum Religious Education and prayer and worship are in place and regularly reviewed. The headteacher works closely with the Religious Education co-ordinator in all aspects of development, planning and lesson observation. On a regular basis members of the senior management team jointly monitor and evaluate pupils' work and teachers' planning. Constructive written feedback is given to each teacher every half term. This is a time-consuming exercise with 10 classes and some teachers with job share. The management team's dedication and commitment are instrumental in the drive to provide high quality teaching and learning in Religious Education. Staff development is promoted through attendance at relevant diocesan courses. Governors are supportive, well informed and take an active role in the school's religious life in pursuit of its aims. The parish priest and link governor for Religious Education is a regular visitor providing much help and guidance.