

**SALFORD DIOCESE
INSPECTION REPORT**



**ST. JOSEPH'S
ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Wellington Road Todmorden Calderdale OL14 5HP**

Inspection date January 2008
 Reporting Inspector Mrs. Joan Duffin
 Inspection carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School Catholic Primary
 URN 107560
 Age range of pupils 3-11
 Number on roll 105
 Appropriate authority The governing body
 Chair of Governors Miss C. McNicholas
 Headteacher Mrs. M. Cooper
 Religious Education Co-ordinator Mrs. J. Frain
 Date of previous inspection July 2003

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades 1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3 = Satisfactory 4 = Inadequate
Overall effectiveness of the school	3	
Leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school	2	
The quality of Collective Worship	2	
Achievement and standards in Religious Education	3	
The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education	3	
The quality of the Religious Education curriculum	2	
Leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education	3	

The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Joseph's is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school serving the parish of St. Joseph in Todmorden. The school is situated in the centre of Todmorden on the border of Lancashire and Yorkshire in Calderdale. The area is one of mixed housing which includes hill top farms and council accommodation. The age range of learners is 3 to 11. The indicative admission number is 22 and there are currently 105 pupils on roll. 83 (79%) of pupils are baptised Catholic. The learners are mostly white British but there is a significant intake of Polish pupils (11%) who have English as a second language. 15.2% of learners are eligible for free school meals. 21 pupils have been identified as having special educational needs. 2 of these pupils have a statement of special educational need. All five teachers (100%) are Catholic.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's is a satisfactory Roman Catholic primary school with some good qualities. The school is marked by a happy, friendly atmosphere which establishes a good climate for work. The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are good. Governors challenge and support the headteacher. The quality and range of opportunities for collective worship are good. The Mission Statement lies at the heart of the school's aims and expectations. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The standards attained by pupils in curriculum Religious Education are satisfactory. Learners of below average ability are well supported and achieve well but pupils of higher ability are not always challenged to achieve their potential. Monitoring and assessment systems are in place but the findings are not yet used effectively to enable pupils to improve their work. Levelling of pupils' work needs to be developed. The Religious Education curriculum is well planned and adapted to pupils' needs. Pupils' behaviour is good. They show respect for themselves and others. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is very good. Community cohesion is strongly promoted. The local Polish community is welcomed into the school. There are close relationships between the school, parents, parish and the wider community.

Improvement since the last inspection

Following the last Section 23 inspection in July 2003 the school was asked to enable all members of staff to improve their professional competence; to further strengthen the partnership between home, school and parish; to develop procedures for the monitoring and assessment of curriculum Religious Education and to enlarge the resources for curriculum Religious Education. Since then the school has responded well to most of the issues raised.

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation is mostly accurate. Religious Education has an appropriate place in the School Improvement Plan and Religious Education Action Plans. The headteacher has a clear understanding of the direction the school should take and the senior management team, all staff and governors are committed to improvement. There is good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Share good practice within the school and with other schools to raise teachers' levels of competency.
- Raise the standards achieved in curriculum Religious Education by making better use of the information gained from assessment and monitoring.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are good. The governing body fulfils its role well in respect of its Catholic foundation and is both challenging to, and supportive of, the headteacher. The headteacher has a clear vision of the nature of the Catholic school and, together with the governing body, judges that the school is moving forward in all aspects of its life and work. The inspector would agree with this. The Mission Statement lies at the heart of the school's aims, policies and expectations. The child friendly version is on display around the school. The headteacher sets a clear direction for the school and the school's self evaluation is mostly accurate. The Religious Education co-ordinator has a good understanding of her role and fulfils it well. There is a strong Catholic ethos in the school characterised by Gospel values and inclusion. The school strongly promotes social cohesion. All staff fully support and uphold the Catholic nature of the school in all they do. The parish based Sacramental Preparation Programme is planned and run effectively with strong support from the school. The parish priest is a frequent and welcome visitor to the school and there is a good relationship between the school, parents, the parish and the wider community. Children are given many opportunities to care for those less fortunate than themselves through donations to CAFOD, St. Joseph's Penny and the mayor's charities and by supporting the Ferney Lee School and singing for local groups.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Provision for collective worship is good both in respect of its quality and range. The policy for prayer and worship reflects the range of opportunities for collective worship provided for learners. These include whole school and class Masses, assemblies, classroom prayer services and special liturgical celebrations such as Stations of the Cross, Harvest Mass and May Procession. A written and pictorial record is kept of these celebrations. There are prayer tables in all classes which give pupils opportunity for personal prayer and reflection. Learners are involved in the planning, preparation and presentation of Masses and assemblies and take a full part in them. The assembly observed during inspection included reference to the Polish traditions of Christmas and used singing and a group of violinists to good effect. The very good classroom liturgy observed in the Foundation Stage created a reverent atmosphere in which the children could thank God for their families. Drama, music, children's own personal reflections and traditional prayers are used in the Masses, liturgies, assemblies and other celebrations. Parents are invited to attend the weekly praise assemblies and major celebrations. Collective worship makes a good contribution to the spiritual and moral development of learners.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education are satisfactory. Pupils' attainment on entry to school is below that expected nationally. They make progress and, by Year 6, attainment is about average. Pupils with lower than average ability are supported and achieve well. Those of higher ability are not always challenged to achieve their potential. The diocesan scheme of assessment and standardisation has been adopted but the findings are not yet being used effectively to raise standards in curriculum Religious Education. Levelling of pupils' work is at a very early stage and needs to be developed further. The standard of writing in curriculum Religious Education is about average. Learners enjoy their work in most classes and respond well to questioning. Orally pupils have a clear understanding of the life and teachings of Jesus and are able to apply his teaching to their own lives. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and their behaviour during the inspection was very good. The school provides well for their spiritual and moral development. The school council, eco council and Buddy system make a positive contribution to the school and give pupils the opportunity to develop independence and responsibility.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning in curriculum Religious Education is satisfactory. Teaching in the lessons observed during the inspection ranged from satisfactory to good. Lessons are well prepared and mostly conducted at a good pace which maintains pupils' interest and enjoyment. However, not all teachers have high expectations or set challenging targets. The school is therefore encouraged to develop the sharing of good practice within the school and with other schools to raise teachers' levels of competency. Questioning is usually effective with good use of open ended questions. In some lessons pupils were not motivated and on task throughout the lesson. A good example of holding pupils' interest was seen in a good lesson in Key Stage 1 where hot seating and an effective true or false plenary session enabled pupils to remember the story of Jesus being lost in the temple. In a lower Key Stage 2 lesson on Jesus in the desert a circle time type of activity was used to good effect to help learners understand how they resisted temptation when they were tempted to do wrong. Learners with special educational needs were well supported by teachers and support workers to enable them to access the curriculum. Use of the interactive whiteboards is developing well. Marking is generally good with teachers taking the opportunity to point out to pupils how they can improve their work. Learners are well behaved and mostly show interest in their work.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The Religious Education curriculum is good. It complies with local and national expectations with regard to time allocated. It is well planned following diocesan guidelines and is adapted for mixed age classes. Progress is seen throughout the school. The curriculum is made accessible to all pupils. Less able pupils are well supported. More challenge could be given to more able pupils. The headteacher and Religious Education co-ordinator set clear direction for the teaching of Religious Education. Systems of monitoring and evaluation have been established. Assessment procedures are in place but need to be developed further to include levelling of pupils' work. The diocesan guidelines on the study of other world religions have been adopted and other opportunities are taken to promote community cohesion and an understanding of other races and cultures. The local Polish community is welcomed and every opportunity taken to include them. The Religious Education curriculum makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. It is enriched by the wide range of opportunities for prayer and worship in the school. It is also strengthened by the very good relationships within the school and between the school, parents, parish, associated high school and the local community. A range of extra-curricular activities, including Parish Pals, further enhance the provision.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education is satisfactory with some good features. Governors provide challenge and support to the headteacher. The link governor for Religious Education is closely involved with the work of the school and the parish priest is a frequent visitor. The headteacher is aware that more work needs to be done in enabling teachers to share good practice and improve their teaching. The Religious Education co-ordinator has a clear understanding of her role and is committed to developing it. The systems for monitoring and evaluation that have been established include scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work. Levelling of pupils' work needs to be included in the assessment procedures and more use made of the information obtained to raise the standards of pupils' work. The time allocated to curriculum Religious Education is in accordance with national and diocesan guidelines. Resources are good and the use of information technology in Religious Education is developing well. All staff and governors are committed to provide an effective Catholic learning environment for their pupils. Relationships in the school are good and help to provide equality of opportunity for all. The bright environment is enhanced by attractive displays around the school.