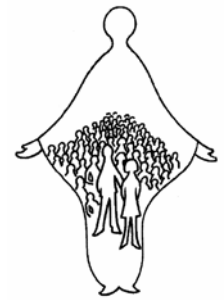


**SALFORD DIOCESE  
INSPECTION REPORT**

**ST. BERNADETTE'S ROMAN CATHOLIC  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Abingdon Avenue Whitefield Manchester M45 8PT**



Inspection date May 2008

Reporting Inspector Mrs. K. A. Morris

Inspection carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Catholic Primary
URN	105347
Age range of pupils	4-11
Number on roll	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of Governors	Mrs. Mary Sawley
Headteacher	Mr. Des Burns
Religious Education Co-ordinator	Miss Sarah O'Keeffe
Date of previous inspection	May 2004

<b>The Inspection judgements are:</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Explanation of the Grades</b>  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	1	
Achievement and standards in Religious Education	1	
The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education	1	
The quality of the Religious Education curriculum	1	
Leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education	1	
<i>The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements</i>		

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

St. Bernadette's is a Roman Catholic voluntary aided primary school in the Diocese of Salford. It serves the parish of St. Bernadette in Whitefield, a residential area close to the town of Bury. Pupils come from both owner occupied properties and rented council housing. The age range of pupils is 4 to 11. The indicative admission number is 30 and there are currently 219 learners on roll all of whom are baptised Catholics. 5 % of the children are eligible for free school meals and 22 learners have been identified as having special educational needs. 2 have a statutory statement of special educational need. Pupils enter the Foundation Stage with skills that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. All 11 teachers (100%) are Catholics and 9 hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies or equivalent. 1 member of the senior management team is completing the diocesan Catholic Leadership programme.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

St Bernadette's is an outstanding school with a strong Catholic ethos. Leadership and management ensure a warm, caring, vibrant and inclusive environment in which all aspects of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. The Religious Education programme is well planned and further enhanced by the provision of prayer and worship. This is supported by the quality of relationships, the quality of teaching and learning and the extended involvement in the parish. Teachers are well supported by the good deployment of teaching assistants, administrative staff and site management. Staff at all levels are dedicated to the school. They are excellent role models for pupils and are committed and hardworking. The learners are happy to come to school and their behaviour is exemplary. They are mannerly, polite and friendly showing good attitudes to their learning and they respond well to the teaching they experience. All pupils, including gifted and talented and those with special educational needs, achieve well as a result of the differentiated Religious Education curriculum which meets their needs in this fully inclusive school. Strong home, school and parish links ensure learners and parents are fully supported on their faith journeys.

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

Following the last Section 23 inspection in May 2004 the school has successfully addressed all issues arising. Assessment, recording and reporting of curriculum Religious Education is well established and the school continues to further this by the use of diocesan guidelines on levelling and tracking learners' work. Breakfast and after-school clubs have been introduced and the school is closely linked to the private nursery, housed in the grounds of the school, which is run by the St. Bernadette's Out Of School Management Committee. Summer play schemes for pupils has also been introduced.

### **Capacity to improve**

The school's self-evaluation is thorough, objective and realistic. The leadership and management of the school have a clear, focused vision for the school. There is a genuine commitment to ensuring that all involved in the school community recognise the important role they play in the future development of this successful Catholic school as it lives out its Mission Statement. The school's capacity to improve is therefore excellent.

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

- Continue to embed the use of assessment and levelling and tracking of learners' work throughout 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 outstanding. The recently reviewed Mission Statement, incorporating a children's version, permeates all aspects of the school's life and is prominently displayed. The exceptional team spirit in the school results from the strong leadership of the head teacher and deputy, well supported by the management team and all the staff. A performance management objective relating to the Catholic life of the school is a feature of the work of the Religious Education co-ordinator. The school benefits from a supportive parish priest and a knowledgeable governing body which discusses and revises Religious Education policies regularly. The chair of governors is also the designated governor for Religious Education and demonstrates a good understanding of school life. A shared vision for the ongoing development of the school as a Catholic community is reflected in governor appointment of committed Catholic teachers to the staff. Staff and governors work well as an effective team ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils in a cohesive and supportive environment. Reports to governors from the headteacher, the Religious Education co-ordinator and the curriculum committee are good practice. Governors visit the school regularly and attend celebrations and functions. They are "critical friends" holding the school to account for its performance and their input is valued. The school is firmly at the heart of the parish it serves and fully supports the Sacramental Programme.

## **THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

Collective worship is outstanding. It is a key feature of the school pervading all aspects of its life and underpinned by the clear Religious Education policy which includes prayer and worship. Learners, parents and staff are offered a range of rich and meaningful opportunities to develop their relationship with God. Whole school masses are celebrated in church at the beginning and end of the academic year, on Holy Days and on Feast Days. Weekly Mass is celebrated in school during Lent. Assemblies and services reflecting the liturgical calendar are celebrated with the parish priest, parents and parishioners. These celebrations involve music, singing and drama and the pupils write their own bidding prayers. The quality of collective worship and the children's response are monitored regularly by the headteacher and co-ordinator for Religious Education. During inspection the theme of the Year 3 worship was "Placing our trust in God". Pupils sat quietly in a circle and with quiet background music were given the opportunity for reflective prayer after which they were invited to say their prayers aloud. This session began with the children making the sign of the cross in French and ended with their playing of musical instruments. The theme of the whole school assembly led by the headteacher was on "Relationships" including our own relationship with God and reminding us of His forgiveness and love. It ended with pupils playing instruments to a very high standard, including the African drums following a visit from a Zimbabwean musician. Pupils sang, "We are marching in the light of Christ" with enthusiasm and gusto. On both occasions children were confident and prayed with respect and reverence.

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

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are outstanding. Learners enter Reception with skills broadly in line with national expectations. Progress in Foundation and Key Stage 1 is excellent. By the end of Key Stage 1 learners are able to relate verbally and in their pictorial work the bible stories they have heard and some are able to write short accounts. Learners have good recall on the stories of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. They know that God made them and that through Baptism they belong to God's family. Key Stage 2 learners have a good factual knowledge of their faith. They are familiar with the Old and New Testaments and are able to produce outstanding quality written work using language appropriate, and in some cases beyond that appropriate, to their age. During inspection learners were able to demonstrate a knowledge of the sacraments, differing forms of prayer and the love and forgiveness of God. The Year 6 learners' knowledge and understanding of the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit was impressive. Very clear and effective strategies and systems introduced since the 2004 inspection have ensured that every aspect of the Religious Education curriculum has been prioritised in order that high standards be achieved and maintained. Children respond positively to Religious Education. They enjoy the subject, are well motivated and take pride in their work. This has been further enhanced by the introduction of the school council and playground "buddies" and "friends". Pupils are developing a strong sense of responsibility and are aware of the needs of others. They support a number of worldwide and local charities.

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

The inspector agrees that the quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education are outstanding. All lessons observed during the inspection in Foundation, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 were outstanding. Teachers have excellent knowledge of the diocesan *REvision 2000* guidelines and use this to plan their lessons. Very detailed planning, with clearly stated objectives and outcomes, leads to well structured lessons incorporating a good range of activities. There is effective use of resources including information and communication technology. Teachers' planning and pupils' learning is monitored by the headteacher and co-ordinator for curriculum Religious Education through scrutiny of work and some classroom observation. Teachers have high expectations and use a variety of approaches to meet the needs of learners. Those learners requiring extra help are well supported by the special needs co-ordinator and by teaching assistants. Assessment systems have been developed to evaluate teaching and learning. Pupil tracking and levelling of learners' work has been introduced and is being further developed. The school is encouraged in this work. There is a school marking policy which is consistently applied throughout the classes. Management and organisation in all classes are excellent. Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning. Behaviour is excellent with pupils demonstrating a mature attitude when working with others or independently. They listen intently to their teachers, respond to questions and are confident with their answers.

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

The Religious Education curriculum is outstanding. Religious Education features both as a key element in school improvement planning and also in spending plans. At least 10% of teaching time is allocated to the subject. Diocesan guidelines on other World Faiths are a feature of the provision. *REvision 2000* guidelines are followed and supplemented by activities relating to the liturgical year. The curriculum is further enhanced through an impressive extra curricular provision including activity based residential visits to the Youth Hostels in York for Year 6 and the Lake District for Year 5. Retreat days run by the Marist Sisters for Years 3 and 6 and the Sion Mission experience contribute to the spiritual, moral and social growth of the children. A post SATs residential visit to Barcelona was included this term. Teachers' planning is thorough and together with pupils' learning is monitored by the headteacher and Religious Education co-ordinator by scrutiny of work and some lesson observations. Religious Education has a high priority in this over-subscribed school and, together with collective worship, features regularly in staff meetings. Religious practices and curriculum are under constant review. Appropriate feedback is given and acted upon by individuals and whole staff to ensure good quality teaching and learning. Curriculum Religious Education and prayer and worship are linked effectively together to ensure that both knowledge and understanding and spiritual development are promoted to the full.

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

The school has assessed the leadership and management as outstanding. Inspection evidence agrees with this judgement. The co-coordinator for Religious Education has excellent knowledge of her subject, a clear vision for her role within the school and provides strong leadership and direction. She leads by example and has furthered the outstanding work of the previous co-ordinator. She continues to keep excellent records of teaching and learning and prayer and worship. Records include the use of monitoring procedures introduced since the last inspection that are continually being developed to include the tracking of pupils' learning. The subject co-ordinator leads staff through regular meetings and continues her own professional development by attending diocesan courses and through the involvement of the diocesan teacher advisers. She is fully supported by the headteacher, the parish priest, the link governor for Religious Education and the 100% Catholic staff. Governors are kept fully informed of Religious Education and prayer and worship by written and verbal reports from the headteacher, the co-ordinator, the designated governor and by their frequent visits to school. Resources for Religious Education and collective worship are excellent. Attractive prayer focal tables and displays throughout the school premises reflect the faith life of St. Bernadette's where Religious Education and prayer and worship have a high profile.