

**SALFORD DIOCESE
INSPECTION REPORT**



**BROWNEGE ST. MARY'S ROMAN CATHOLIC
HIGH SCHOOL AND SPORTS COLLEGE**

Station Rd. Bamber Bridge Lancashire PR5 6PB

Inspection date February 2008

Reporting Inspector Mr. A. Slade

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

Type of School	Catholic Secondary
URN	119784
Age range of pupils	11-16
Number on roll	717
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of Governors	Mr. D. Livesey
Headteacher	Mr. M. Reynolds
Head of Religious Education	Mr. S. Brown
Date of previous inspection	December 2003

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

Brownedge St Mary's Roman Catholic High School and Specialist Sports College is an 11-16 voluntary aided school serving the parishes of St Joseph (Brindle), Ss. Mary and Benedict (Bamber Bridge), Our Lady and St Patrick (Walton-le-Dale), St Bede (Clayton Green) Our Lady and St Gerard (Lostock Hall) in South Preston and South Ribble. It is under the trusteeship of the Benedictine monks of Ampleforth. The social and economic background of pupils is broadly average. The planned admission number is 172 and there are 717 pupils on roll. 596 (83%) of the learners are Roman Catholics. 7.5% of pupils qualify for free school meals which is below the national average. 86 are identified as having special educational needs and 22 have a statutory statement of special educational need. 99.1% of pupils have English as their first language. Attainment on entry is average. 27 of the 47 teachers (63%) are Catholics.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

Brownedge St Mary's is a good Catholic School with some outstanding features. This is because the Mission Statement, which has recently been thoroughly reviewed, reflects an all-pervading philosophy which permeates the policies and practices of the school. It states that the school "exists to help all pupils discover their ... talents, to recognise them thankfully as God's gift and to develop them to their full potential. The school seeks to prepare pupils, through the experience of being part of a safe, caring Christian community in school ... to take their place in later life as committed members of the Church and caring members of society." The Statement is supplemented by School Aims, which include those of "encouraging formation in a community of Catholic Christian faith...and ...fostering a caring Christian school" The headteacher and senior staff have a clear vision based upon the Mission Statement. They are supported by an active and informed board of governors. The quality of the provision for both collective worship and Religious Education is good.

Improvement since the last inspection

The five issues arising from the last inspection in December 2003 have been addressed. Ongoing support for professional development is an established procedure in the school. Strategies for monitoring teaching and learning in Religious Education have been adopted and are being developed. A thorough review of Key Stage 3 provision has taken place and is on-going. All pupils in Key Stage 4 now receive 10% curriculum time for Religious Education in line with the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. Links with parishes are in place and whole-school approaches to liturgy and ethos will enhance them further.

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation is good with a realistic and shared awareness of what improvements need to be made. These are based on an accurate assessment of the current situation and practical suggestions for methods to improve it.

What the school should do to improve further

- Maintain the momentum of recently adopted policies aimed at improving GCSE results.
- Continue to monitor the disparity of results between boys and girls and continue with strategies so that boys' results are in line with those of girls.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are outstanding. There is an overarching emphasis given to awareness and implementation of the school's Mission Statement with its Catholic Christian philosophy of developing one's talents within a framework of care for others. This is reinforced in the school's prospectus which states that "as a Catholic school we are proud to be founded on Christ." Furthermore, the school's development plan gives priority to the Catholic ethos and its daily application in school life. All policies are referenced to the Mission Statement and those on matters such as sex education clearly reflect Church teachings. As a result of the leadership team's clear and shared vision, supported by personal commitment, the school has a wide involvement in collective worship and a high standard of pastoral care. There are good standards of behaviour and relationships and there is widespread concern for others. Staff training days have been devoted to "Making the Difference," Catholic ethos and collective worship in form time. An "Ethos and Chaplaincy" committee has been established with a remit including worship and links with parishes. Teachers and pupils of other faiths are fully integrated. The standards of inclusion are very high. The Benedict room is used by pupils who might otherwise have been excluded. Peer mediators have wide-ranging roles and there are the school's own restorative services. The governors give active and informed support to the school and its religious aims. Their formal links include rigorous scrutiny of the Religious Education department through their curriculum committee.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Provision for collective worship is outstanding. There is widespread involvement in an extensive range of liturgical and para-liturgical activities. Form teachers receive booklets containing prayers and readings based on the liturgical life of the Church as well as ideas for special occasions. The school's intranet system gives further support. Prayers are said at staff briefings. There is a well attended voluntary weekly Mass and liturgies for the key periods of the Church's year. The Mass is celebrated by the school's chaplain who is also a governor and help is given by other local priests as required. There is also a rota for one class Mass each week. The chaplaincy and liturgy co-ordinator gives active support and initiates some of the variety of services. Whilst the practice of collective worship is outstanding, it would be useful for the school to formulate a policy as a means for further development. The services have full pupil participation and strong links with school departments, especially music, art and drama. Some services are "signed" by pupils. The weekly year assemblies are prayerfully and thoughtfully conducted but pupil participation is spasmodic. weekly prayer and reflection services are organised and lead by the chapel prefects who are exceptionally energetic. It was they who suggested a prayer garden for which plans have been drawn up. During the inspection, one service was of outstanding religious quality. The school chapel is fully used, well cared for and is a central feature of school life. Due regard is made to the needs of non-Catholic pupils and a recognition of the significance of other world religions. Pupils in Year 7 attend a half-day service of reconciliation at St Mary's church and those in Year 9 have the opportunity to attend residential retreat at Castlerigg Manor, Keswick. The latter is exceptionally popular and valued by the pupils.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are satisfactory. The pupils generally make satisfactory progress relative to their ability and some make good progress. At Key Stage 3 there are good procedures for monitoring pupil progress by means of levels and targets. The GCSE results in Religious Education reveal some progress. In 2005, 49% of candidates entered for GCSE obtained Grades A* to C. In 2006, this dropped to 41% but rose in 2007 to 54%. Whilst these results are below the national average they are only marginally below the school's results in certain core subjects and were during a period of instability in staffing. Almost all candidates obtained Grades A* to G. Some pupils were entered for the Salford Diocesan Certificate and others for the GCSE Short Course and all obtained grades. This variety reflects a commendable policy of entering pupils for their most appropriate examination and thus for all to obtain a qualification in Religious Education. However, the results obtained by boys are lower than those obtained by girls. The school is encouraged to maintain the momentum of recently adopted policies aimed at improving GCSE results and removing the disparity. The results already obtained for stage one of the GCSE course give genuine grounds for optimism for future improved results. Pupils are enthusiastic about their work and are very well behaved. Generous donations are made to a range of charities, for example the Rescue Society, the Kipungani Schools Trust in Kenya, a Benedictine parish in Zimbabwe. The dynamic work of the CAFOD group is particularly outstanding. It raises awareness as well as money besides making a major contribution to the school's worshipping and cultural life.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The inspector agrees with the judgement of the school that the quality of teaching and learning in curriculum Religious Education is good. The department is line-managed by the headteacher and regularly reviewed. Lessons are very well planned, dynamic, enthusiastically taught and well paced. A variety of teaching styles is used with good use of information communication technology. It is clear that the teachers want the pupils to make good progress within a framework of teachers' care and concern for pupils as individuals. The teachers are well qualified, well-informed and have a personal commitment to their subject. Relationships between staff and pupils as well as between pupils themselves are excellent. There is a variety of material to suit the needs of pupils of varying ability. Pupils' routine work is marked. At the end of each module levels of achievement and targets for future progress are well used and pupils are fully aware of their meaning and purpose. Much work has been devoted to ensuring the success of this process. Pupils commented very positively about their Religious Education lessons, stating that they have good teachers and study interesting topics. Lessons were observed which demanded thoughtful responses but always in the context of an atmosphere conducive to learning. There is some good display work in the classrooms and in public areas. The department is fortunate to have a suite of four rooms and full use is made of the facilities thereby provided.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

Overall the quality of the Religious Education curriculum is good. This is because the Salford Diocesan syllabus is fully implemented in Key Stage 3. There has been a thorough revision of the course along with the introduction of a well understood system of levels and targets. In Key Stage 4 the use of the Edexcel syllabus enables pupils to study Catholic issues in depth and with understanding. During the inspection, for example, lessons were observed dealing with the meaning of Lent, prejudice and discrimination and social harmony. All the topics in these syllabuses are relevant to pupils' personal and broader religious development. There is full observance of the directive from the bishops of England and Wales that 10% of curriculum time be given to Religious Education. The curriculum is well supported by a wide range of up to date resources. The involvement of so many pupils in promoting charity work is seen as part of their educational process, as is the case with the many who take part in and organise a range of liturgical events. This refers especially to the chapel prefects. The CAFOD group were heavily involved in the school obtaining Fair Trade status. The curriculum includes a sensitive and thorough study of aspects of other Christian faiths and world religions, particularly Islam, Hinduism and Judaism. There was a recent visit to the Preston Mosque. Thus the Religious Education curriculum makes a specific contribution to community cohesion and citizenship and overall makes a significant contribution to the pupils' moral, cultural and spiritual development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education are good, with outstanding elements. The Religious Education department has an experienced head of department and all the teachers respond well to his leadership. He leads with knowledge, enthusiasm and a quiet determination. He promotes good team work. All the teachers have a shared vision and there are high standards of co-operation, including a willingness "to go the extra mile" as one observer commented. There is an obvious conscientiousness which is a characteristic of the department. Monitoring and evaluating of the department's work is systematic and positive. There is a determination to maintain high standards of teaching and achievement. The recent successful change of examination provider is further testimony to the co-ordinator's leadership skills and a determination to do what is in the pupils' best interests. The headteacher and senior leadership team give active support, as seen in the staffing structure and the provision of excellent facilities and resources. This involves substantial financial commitment which has been continuous. Additionally the posts of second-in-department and liturgy and chaplaincy co-ordinator have recently been created. The department's improvement plan shows an awareness of the current situation with realistic plans for further development. The governors are kept fully aware of the work of the department.