

**SALFORD DIOCESE
INSPECTION REPORT**



**ALL SAINTS ROMAN CATHOLIC
LANGUAGE COLLEGE**

**Haslingden Road Rawtenstall Rossendale
Lancashire BB4 6JS**

Inspection date January 2009

Reporting Inspector Anthony Pearson

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

Type of School Catholic Secondary

URN 119797

Age range of pupils 11-16

Number on roll 450

Appropriate authority The governing body

Chair of Governors Mrs. E. Nuttall

Headteacher Mr. Tim Beesley

Head of Religious Education Mrs. Clare Atherton

Date of previous inspection December 2005

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	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	3	
Leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education	2	
<i>The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements</i>		

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

All Saints is a voluntary aided Catholic co-educational comprehensive school for pupils aged 11-16. It is a specialist language college. Situated in the Rossendale Valley of East Lancashire the school serves seven contributory primary schools within the parishes of St Veronica & St. Mary (Haslingden), St James the Less (Rawtenstall), St Peter & St Joseph (Stacksteads), St Mary (Bacup), and St. Anselm (Whitworth). The school is smaller than average with 450 pupils on roll of whom 344 (75%) are baptised Catholics. Many of the most able pupils in the school's catchment area attend a local selective Grammar school. The number of pupils having a statement of special educational need is 13 which is above average. 16% of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals which is also above average. The vast majority of pupils are of white British heritage. They represent the full range of socio-economic backgrounds though a significant minority are from areas characterised by social and economic deprivation. 20 (65%) of the school's 31 teachers are Catholics.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

All Saints is a good and improving Catholic school which has outstanding leadership and management of its Catholic life. The recently appointed headteacher is very well supported by other managers and leaders throughout the school in continuing to build on long established and well-recognised strengths. The school lives out its distinctly Catholic mission in its daily life and is developing its capacity to do so in its relationships with the wider community. Its vision and ethos, rooted in Gospel values, are shared by all members of the school community, catholic and non-catholic alike. There is a tangible feeling throughout the school community that all are valued as unique human beings and are nurtured regardless of past experiences. Pupils are committed to helping those less fortunate than themselves. Collective worship is good overall with some outstanding features such as the high quality programme of assemblies. Pupils have regular opportunities to participate in a programme of Masses and other liturgical experiences such as the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent and Advent. The school recognises that it could, nevertheless, broaden the range of its liturgical provision. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is good and they achieve well to reach average standards in Religious Education by the end of Year 9. However, although GCSE results are steadily improving, they are still below average and girls outperform boys by a significant margin. Whilst teaching and learning are good overall the quality varies too much between individual teachers which inhibits the pace of improvement in standards particularly in Years 10 and 11. The curriculum provided for pupils' Religious Education is satisfactory and improving although the time provided is slightly less than that required. Leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education is good. The quality of self evaluation is good and the department is well supported by the school's senior managers.

Improvement since the last inspection

Following the last Section 48 inspection in December 2005 governors have considered increasing the time allocated to Religious Education from the current 8% to 10% as required by the bishops of England and Wales. Despite best intentions this remains currently beyond resources. The development of secure assessment procedures based on a clear appreciation of pupils' starting points on entry to the school has contributed to the good progress which pupils make by the end of Year 9. The sterling efforts made to update departmental documentation such as schemes of work and to improve the quality of self evaluation has also contributed significantly to improved achievement across the school.

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation is generally accurate and linked to an improving quality of development planning. Taking into account the effectiveness of measures already taken to raise standards and improve the quality of pupils' learning experiences, capacity to improve is therefore good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Identify and implement ways of broadening the range of liturgical experiences provided for pupils.
- Continue the drive to raise standards and improve achievement particularly that of boys in Years 10 and 11.
- Identify ways in which individual teachers' classroom work could be improved and provide guidance accordingly.
- Continue to consider ways of increasing the amount of time provided for Religious Education to meet the requirements of the bishops of England and Wales.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The school judges the leadership and management of its Catholic life to be good. Inspection evidence indicates that it is outstanding. Long established strengths in this area are being further developed and the provision is being enhanced by the recently appointed headteacher. His clearly articulated vision has been quickly recognised and accepted by all stakeholders thus ensuring that Catholic values continue to underpin the whole life and work of the school. Spirituality is the headline element of the school's current development planning with promising early indications of the wholehearted way that this has been accepted by those having responsibilities for the secular curriculum. The school values and sustains all members of its community. Pupils, teachers and parents cite examples of ways in which the school's mission, to ensure that the Catholic faith is taught lived and celebrated in all relationships, is translated into a reality. Pupils themselves recognise and appreciate the way that the more vulnerable are helped to reach their potential. Pupils relish assuming responsibility, for example as members of the thriving school council or as mentors and prefects. They appreciate the opportunity which this provides for them to make a genuine contribution to individuals and the general life of the school. Concern for the less fortunate in the community is seen in the pupils' generous commitment to charitable activity in support of local and national good causes as well as those in the wider world, for example through support given to a Ugandan school. Links with contributory primary schools and parishes are being enhanced. Governors are active, know the school well and are deeply committed to ensuring that the maintenance and further development of its Catholic ethos has a high priority. In discussion with the inspector pupils demonstrated an acute awareness of the strengths of All Saints as a distinctly Catholic school.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The inspection evidence endorses the school's own view that the quality of collective worship is good with some outstanding features. This community, Catholics and non-Catholics alike, takes its prayer life seriously so that it forms a natural part of everyday life for example in setting the right tone at the start of meetings. The family atmosphere of the all-age tutor groups is enhanced by an innovative form of morning prayer in which all pupils actively participate and in which they have the opportunity to reflect regularly on matters which are important to them. A very well devised assembly programme provides the opportunity for all pupils to take an active involvement in experiences which contribute very well to their spiritual and moral development. An assembly observed during inspection was of exceptional quality. Very well rehearsed presentations from the pupils were strongly enhanced by a powerpoint presentation and a video recorded dramatic performance. The whole contained a highly relevant moral message made even more effective by its humorous approach. All pupils have regular opportunities to take part in liturgical experiences at appropriate times of the year which include the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent and Advent. The very hard working co-ordinating chaplain has a regular and much appreciated presence in the school. He recognises and appreciates the respect and sense of full participation demonstrated by pupils in Masses and other liturgical events. The annual residential retreat provided for older pupils is highly appreciated by those who take part. They recognise and appreciate its impact on their spiritual development and self esteem. The school is working hard to enhance and further develop its links with parishes in the community. Within this very positive picture the school recognises that it still needs to do more to broaden the range of pupils' liturgical experiences and allow them to take more responsibility in planning for them.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The school correctly evaluates that achievement and standards in Religious Education are satisfactory overall. GCSE results have improved year on year from a low base since the appointment of the current head of department. Girls' results are improving at a faster rate than those of boys. However results are still below average and overall, pupils do not do well enough in relation to their starting points at the end of Year 9. Current assessment information indicates that pupils in Year 11 are on track to continue the improving trend. Pupils currently in Year 9 are reaching broadly average standards which indicates good progress overall. Similar rates of progress can be seen in the work of some classes in Years 7 and 8 although overall there remains some inconsistency in performance between different classes and groups of pupils. The school should continue its drive to raise standards and achievement, particularly that of boys in Years 10 and 11. Behaviour in lessons is very good. Pupils are attentive and usually very willing to participate in activities. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is a key strength of the school. Their learning experiences and involvement in other activities within the strongly Catholic ethos of the school make a considerable contribution to their spiritual and moral development. For example older pupils are well equipped to evaluate contentious issues such as the plight of the homeless or capital punishment in the light of Gospel values and the Church's teaching.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall the quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is satisfactory. All lessons observed during inspection were satisfactory or good. Classroom relationships are very good and teachers have good subject knowledge. Information technology is used well to enhance the quality of the learning experience for pupils, for example through well chosen video extracts or the use of well designed interactive programmes to challenge pupils' knowledge and understanding. The best learning occurred where teachers matched the learning well to pupils' capabilities and actively involved them in assessing their progress towards clearly defined and appropriate learning objectives. In some otherwise satisfactory lessons, the activities provided and the objectives set failed to take into account the very wide range of attainment in the mixed ability classes. To their credit pupils remain compliant and well behaved even in those lessons when they are not particularly inspired or excited by the teaching or when they are uncertain about exactly what they are expected to do. The school should identify ways in which individual teachers' classroom work could be improved and provide guidance accordingly. The accuracy and reliability of assessment information in Years 7 to 9 has improved in recent years because of the effectiveness of strategies introduced by the current head of department and there is an increasing awareness amongst pupils of what they need to do to reach the challenging targets set for them. However the quality of marking is inconsistent. Most clearly indicates the standards reached and what pupils need to do to improve but there is still some which is restricted to encouraging comments or focuses only the quality of presentation rather than on the learning.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The school rightly judges the quality of the Religious Education curriculum to be satisfactory. It meets the requirements of the Bishops of England and Wales in relation to its content but the amount of time made available to teach it remains slightly below that recommended. This was also the case at the time of the previous inspection. Governors should give this further consideration. Good progress has been made since the appointment of the current head of department in selecting optional elements of the GCSE programme which have taken into account the school's local circumstances and the need to boost achievement, particularly that of boys. This has contributed to the improving performance at GCSE and enhanced pupils growing understanding of what it means to be a member of other local faith communities. Other recently introduced changes to curriculum arrangements in Years 10 and 11, though well devised, have not yet been in place long enough to make a significant positive impact on boys' achievement. The curriculum is enhanced by a highly effective programme of assemblies which contribute well to pupils' spiritual and moral development. The much appreciated residential retreat experiences provided for older pupils additionally contributes significantly to their personal as well as spiritual development. The Religious Education department recognises that it could do more to enhance learning through a broader programme of visits to places of worship and opportunities to share the religious experiences of visitors.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education are good. The hard working head of department has a realistic appreciation of the department's strengths and the ways in which it could be further improved. The quality of self evaluation has recently improved due to a sharper focus on this since the arrival of the recently appointed headteacher. He is able to make use of his significant previous expertise in curriculum Religious Education to support the work of the department not least through his own teaching commitment. The profile of curriculum Religious Education is also enhanced through the teaching commitment provided by other senior leaders. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored well by the head of department through an appropriate programme of lesson observations and work scrutiny. These have been supported very well through the school's own robust means of self evaluation and performance management leading, where teaching needs to be improved, to the provision of appropriate in-service training. Accurate departmental self-review has been translated into a well-devised plan for further improvement. However, this does not yet include any arrangements for monitoring planned improvements or their impact on standards, achievement and quality in Religious Education. Governors have a good understanding of the performance of the Religious Education department which they support well and are prepared to offer challenge when necessary.