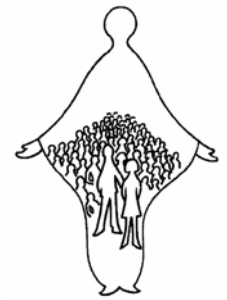


**SALFORD DIOCESE
INSPECTION REPORT**



THORNLEIGH SALESIAN COLLEGE
Sharples Park Bolton BL1 6PQ

Inspection date November 2008

Reporting Inspector Mr. W. Ryan

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

Type of School	Catholic Secondary
URN	105264
Age range of pupils	11-18
Number on roll	1462
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of Governors	Rev. Fr. A. Bailey
Headteacher	Mrs. A. Burrowes
Head of Religious Education	Mr. A. E. Passarello
Date of previous inspection	March 2006

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades 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	2	
The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education	2	
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

Thornleigh Salesian College is an 11 – 18 voluntary aided Roman Catholic co-educational comprehensive school under the trusteeship of the Salesians of Don Bosco and maintained by the Bolton Local Education Authority. It provides education for pupils living in the associated parishes of Holy Infants (Astley Bridge), St. Brendan (Harwood), St. Columba (Tonge Moor), St. John (Bromley Cross), St. Joseph (Halliwell), St. Osmund and St. Andrew (Broughton) and St. Thomas of Canterbury (Heaton). Post 16 education is provided for Catholic students from throughout the Bolton Local Education Authority. Learners come from a broad spectrum of socio-economic backgrounds. The indicative admission number is 230 and there are currently 1462 learners on roll of whom 1374 are baptised Roman Catholics. 10.9% of learners are eligible for free school meals. 313 learners have been identified as having special educational needs and of these 32 have a statutory statement of special educational need. The number of Catholic teachers in the school is 61 and this represents 56% of the total teaching staff.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

Thornleigh Salesian College is an outstanding Catholic school. The Salesian spirit is the driving force behind its policies and procedures. It is a focal point for in service training, and a point of reference for all stakeholders. Governors work hard to encourage and develop the academic and spiritual lives of the school community in the spirit of Saint John Bosco. They challenge and support management at all levels and evaluate the school's progress through their committees. Regular meetings with link departments and with the Senior Leadership Team enable them to encourage the development of the whole school as a Catholic community. The chair, in particular maintains a very close association with the school. The recently appointed headteacher provides dynamic and inspiring leadership in all aspects of school life, leading a recently re-structured and dedicated Senior Management team which supports middle managers in raising standards, whilst making a significant impact on enriching the spiritual lives of the learners. Collective worship is outstanding and the impact that the chaplaincy has on all areas of school life is remarkable. Members of the chaplaincy team, from all sections of the school community, create varied and well planned liturgies throughout the year and support pupils in raising awareness of the needs of others through the school's numerous charities. The respect they show for their faith and the manner in which they celebrate it is a tribute to themselves and their school. The Religious Education department continues to develop its role as second target setting subject of the sports specialism, raising achievement, improving teaching and learning and reviewing and updating its curriculum. The head of department provides very good leadership. Lessons are well planned, delivered and assessed by an experienced and skilled team of teachers. Assessment and judicious use of data are used to inform teaching and learning and members of the department play active parts in developing the charitable work of the school. Learners behave very well. They feel secure and valued. They recognise and value the professionalism of their teachers and respond positively. Relationships throughout the school reflect the Salesian spirit and this enhances the sense of community. Ample opportunities exist for learners to take on responsibilities not only within the school itself but also in the wider community through the many charities which it supports.

Improvement since the last inspection

The appointment of a new headteacher and the re-re-structuring of the Senior Leadership Team in addition to in-service training and focus on the Salesian spirit have impacted positively on the community spirit of the school. Leadership in the Religious Education department continues to improve boys' achievement and funding is appropriate both for the department and in service training.

Capacity to improve

The school's capacity to evaluate itself and make further improvement is good. Leadership is committed to continue the drive to raise standards of achievement and good progress is being made. The monitoring of all areas of school life is robust. Assessment procedures continue to inform learning and raise standards.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to develop the Religious Education department's sound initiatives to improve boys' achievement at Key Stage 4.
- Continue to develop the Bolton Catholic Education Partnership along with links with partner primary schools and local parishes.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The school describes the leadership and management of its Catholic life as good. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that it is outstanding. Procedures, policies and initiatives have as their starting point the teachings of Saint John Bosco and the Salesian spirit. Recent in-service training on this is reflected in relationships in the school community. There is a shared vision, starting with governors who are engaged in supporting and challenging leaders and managers, through to the Chaplaincy, whose influence touches all and to the pupils whose enthusiasm and pride in their school is commendable. The headteacher is an outstanding leader, who, since her appointment, has moved the school significantly forward, both academically and pastorally. She is rightly proud of the inclusive nature of the community and the support it offers to its vulnerable members and to the local community. She enjoys the support of a re-structured, dedicated and skilful leadership team which shares her vision. In relation to the school's Catholic foundation the leadership team leads by example as do members of the Religious Education department. The learners' spiritual development is a priority. The Chaplaincy is a unique strength of the community in that it provides support in so many aspects of school life. Prayer is an everyday feature and its delivery at form time and assembly is outstanding. Assemblies are planned, recorded and evaluated, with the Chaplaincy group providing support materials for those involved in leading them. Learners are supported by a robust pastoral care system in which the roles of year and form tutor are becoming increasingly important. Governors value the contribution that non-Catholic members of staff make to the school.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The school considers the quality of collective worship to be outstanding. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that this judgement is accurate. Major liturgical events in the Church Year are celebrated appropriately by the school community. These include Advent liturgies, carol services, distribution of ashes, Lenten liturgies, Easter celebrations and the observation of Holy Days of Obligation. In addition Holy Mass is celebrated weekly for those who wish to attend. Assemblies take place daily. These are planned and recorded, with input from the school Liturgy Group. The assembly observed during the inspection was a remembrance service presented by the learners, making judicious use of audio-visual technology interspersed with prayers and readings. The school's excellent chapel was full and the learners displayed great respect and prayerfulness. This was a very moving occasion. Those not involved at an assembly pray with their form tutors, who are provided with appropriate prayers and other resources. One such registration observed during the inspection on the theme of "listening to others" succeeded in demonstrating the elements of the Salesian spirit of respect, understanding, affection and humour in a memorable 15 minutes. The school Liturgy group, which includes learners from all three key stages, is dynamic, articulate and innovative in its thinking, a real asset to the school and its liturgies. The school chapel is a superb, well valued and well used resource. The School Chaplain, his assistant, the Chaplaincy Group and the Chaplaincy area, have an enormous impact on the whole school community.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The school considers achievement and standards in Religious Education to be good. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that this is an accurate assessment. Standards in the department are high and continue to rise. Excellent planning, review of syllabus material and robust assessment arrangements all contribute to maintaining progress. On entry pupil achievement is broadly average. Good progress is made in Key Stage 3, while achievement in Key Stage 4 is above the national average. At Key Stage 5 results are satisfactory with intervention strategies introduced to support students. Learners exhibit sound knowledge of Religious Education. Key words are part of their vocabulary and they demonstrate a willingness to engage in the subject. In lessons observed the learners enjoyed their work and played a full part in them. A typical comment was, "We enjoy Religious Education because it is well taught and it is a subject in which we achieve good results". Excellent behaviour and a willingness to engage in lessons enrich the learning experience for all pupils. Strategies introduced to improve boys' achievement have met with some success and these should be further developed. Exercise books are well kept and are marked appropriately. Learners are able to make progress and set realistic targets. They play their part in school through membership of the school council, the school Eco Group, Fair Trade Group, Starting Point Group, which liaises with a refugee project close to the school, Liturgy and Prayer groups and The Negombo Group which manages a twinning with a Salesian school in Sri Lanka. The school also supports many local and diocesan charities. The Religious Education department has successfully introduced interventions to improve boys' achievement. The department should continue to develop these strategies.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The school assesses the quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education to be good. The inspector concurs. The Religious Education department is staffed by well qualified, skilled and experienced practitioners, who are not only teachers but also role models for the learners, in terms of their personal witness in leading and promoting the school's Catholic ethos. Teaching observed was generally good with excellent classroom management, well planned lessons and robust assessment procedures. Good planning ensures sound delivery of the curriculum, while a variety of teaching styles broadens the appeal of the subject. Lessons also focused on catering for a variety of learning styles. In all lessons observed very good use was made of information communication technology. Self assessment procedures, lesson observations and monitoring of planning by the department and by the Senior Management Team are helping to improve teaching while self and peer assessment by the learners is leading to improved learning, enabling the pupils to develop the skills that enable them to identify success and set themselves targets to make further progress. Coupled with the school tracking system this ensures good communication with parents. Learners enjoy their work and take pride in it. They show great respect for their teachers and this contributes in no small way to their learning. They work well together and respect each other's efforts.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The school consider the quality of the Religious Education curriculum to be good. The inspector considers it to be outstanding. At Key Stage 3 the diocesan guidelines are well established and the scheme of work is kept constantly under review to ensure that it reflects the needs of the school and local community. Learners find the content relevant and it engages their interest. No learner has been withdrawn from any aspect of the school's liturgical life. Resource materials have been collated to support the delivery of the curriculum. Changes have been made to the syllabus at Key Stage 4 to ensure that there is an element of social cohesion. For example one element of the course deals with Islam and its teaching on creation. At Key Stage 5 all students follow a General Religious Education course relevant to their needs. The college offers students the opportunity to opt for Religious Studies at AS and A2 levels. The Religious Education department is trialling a scheme to fast track a group of learners at Key Stage 4 to challenge them to improve achievement and to maintain the momentum of their learning. Early indications are that this is achieving the desired result. Learners with special educational needs are well supported through a variety of interventions and through development of work suited to their needs. The curriculum is greatly enhanced by the rich provision of retreats for learners. It is further enriched through the delivery at form level of aspects of the learners' spiritual development. The Religious Education department is allocated 8% of curriculum time in Key Stage 3 while this rises to 12.5% in Key Stage 4.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The inspector considers the leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education to be outstanding. The school considers it to be good. The head of department is an enthusiastic well organised, dedicated, and skilful teacher who enjoys the confidence and support of the governing body and the headteacher. Record keeping and planning are well established, while, through departmental meetings resources are improved and adapted. Members of the department are instrumental in supporting, delivering and enriching the quality of the school's spiritual provision. The department is supported and evaluated through the governors' Ethos Committee to which the head of department reports regularly and through the line manager on the Senior Management Team. Whole school and departmental involvement in the Bolton Catholic Education Partnership is leading to sharing good practice with other secondary schools. This and links with partner primary schools and associated parishes should be further developed. Rooming arrangements are excellent in terms of number and proximity while the department's location adjacent to the Chaplaincy encourages liaison between them. All members of the department are comfortable with, and make good use of, excellent information communication technology provision. The head of department leads training for staff in the use of interactive whiteboards. Display is bright, well presented and relevant. Annual expenditure allocated for the department is good and this compares favourably with other major departments.