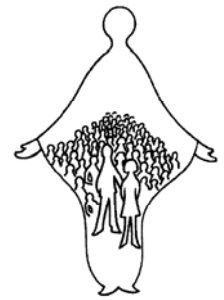


**SALFORD DIOCESE  
INSPECTION REPORT**



**ST. BERNARD'S  
ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL  
Burnage Lane Burnage Manchester M19 1DR**

Inspection date September 2007

Reporting Inspector Mrs. J. Schofield

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

Type of School Catholic Primary  
 URN 105541  
 Age range of pupils 3-11  
 Number on roll 372  
 Appropriate authority The governing body  
 Chair of Governors Mr. James Walsh  
 Headteacher Mr. Patrick Gallagher  
 Religious Education Co-ordinator Mr. Patrick Gallagher  
 Date of previous inspection June 2002

| <b>The Inspection judgements are:</b>                                  | <b>Grade</b> | <b>Explanation of the Grades</b><br><br>1 = Outstanding<br>2 = Good<br>3 = Satisfactory<br>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                       | 2            |   |
| 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            | 1            |   |
| <i>The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements</i> |              |   |

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

The school is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school serving the parish of St Bernard in Burnage. Situated south of the city of Manchester the school draws pupils with varied socio-economic backgrounds from the surrounding area of mainly council owned property. There are 75 pupils in the school who live outside the parish. Attainment of many pupils on entry to the Nursery is often below the national average in social and communication skills. The age range of pupils is from 3 to 11 years. The school's admission number is 45. There are currently 372 pupils on roll of whom 340 are baptised Catholics. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is 30%. The school has identified 85 pupils as having special educational needs. 6 pupils have a statutory statement of special need. There are 17 full time teaching staff 15 of whom are of the Catholic faith (88%).

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

St Bernard's is a good Catholic school with some outstanding features. The school's Mission Statement is displayed in the main areas of the building. The caring, inclusive ethos is a strong foundation for the happy environment in which the community of staff, pupils and parents are valued and nurtured. Good relationships between staff and pupils are a strength of the school and extend into the home through consultations and information. The spiritual, moral, and social and cultural development of learners is good. Planning, monitoring and the resources supporting the Religious Education curriculum are good. High quality assemblies and classroom worship also give good support to the curriculum. Pupils are well motivated and behaviour is very good. From Foundation Stage to the end of Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress. The headteacher has rightly assessed the leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school to be outstanding. Inspection evidence gathered indicates collective worship and leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education also to be of outstanding quality.

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

Since the last inspection the school has undergone significant changes in staff personnel including the appointment of a new headteacher. The appointment of eleven newly qualified teachers over a period of three years has been a challenge for the school in both the support required and the monitoring of the delivery of the religious curriculum. The key issues raised in the last Section 23 Inspection have been addressed in part. Systems for the observation of teaching and learning are in place. However assessment opportunities and activities are not yet sufficiently developed to allow the levelling of pupils' work to be linked with diocesan assessment materials. A core leadership team supports the headteacher in the management of the school. This team makes a positive impact on the strength of support for their colleagues. Governors and parents are well-informed regarding curriculum provision and the progress of pupils.

### **Capacity to improve**

The school's self-evaluation is comprehensive. The governors, headteacher and deputy share a vision for the future development of the school. Together with the strong leadership team they are committed to the continuing development of all aspects of the Catholicity of the school. The newly qualified teachers are committed to their own personal development in their study for the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. There is good evidence in the monitoring of the curriculum and prayer and worship that all members of the school community are fully aware of the goals the school aims to achieve. The school has good capacity for further improvement

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

- Further develop the use of the Salford Diocese assessment materials in order to create a portfolio of examples of the levels at which pupils are working.
- Support the new Religious Education co-ordinator in the development of his or her role.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL**

The leadership and management of the Catholic Life of the school are outstanding. All aspects of the daily life and work of the school are a true reflection of its Mission Statement. A positive ethos in which staff, governors and parents work together ensures pupils develop to their full potential in a true Christian environment where all are valued. The parish priest, who is the link governor, is a regular visitor in the school playing an important role in the religious life of the pupils. The governing body are well informed on aspects of Religious Education and the liturgical life of the school through headteacher reports. Their shared vision for the ongoing development of the Catholic life of the school is reflected in their appointments of committed Catholic teachers and the funding for ongoing staff training. The good relationships that currently exist between the home, school and parish family are a strength. Partnership with parents is further encouraged through newsletters, parent evenings and good information and reporting regarding the progress of their children. Parents are invited to share in school masses, assemblies and liturgical celebrations. Staff from the school play a full part in the parish Sacramental Programme and the pupils extend the school's links with the wider community through their support for various local and world wide charities.

## **THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

The provision for collective worship in the school is outstanding. Daily acts of worship occur in a variety of settings. All are carefully planned, organised, celebrated and recorded and are a regular and integral part of the pupils' prayer life. In all worship observed during the inspection the pupils prayed with reverence and respect demonstrating the growing importance of prayer in their daily lives. Each classroom has a focus area for prayer and worship and pupils' work is displayed reflecting the topics studied. An assembly for Years 5 and 6 led by the headteacher focused on Jesus and His message in the Sermon on the Mount. In discussion pupils were aware of rules they live by in school in order to make it a better place. Posters displaying each Beatitude were displayed. The meaning of each was elicited from the pupils who suggested that "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth" meant they must show humanity and gentleness to others. The meaning of each Beatitude was applied to school life and the pupils' behaviour towards others. Pupils prayed with reverence and respect during opportunities for quiet reflection. Their mission for the day which was to practise one of the virtues they had identified from the beatitudes. A class Mass prepared by Year 3 to celebrate the work of St. Vincent de Paul was shared with the parish family in church. Every member of the class was involved as a reader, an altar server or in the offertory procession. All the occasions of prayer and worship observed were enhanced by the pupils joyful singing which made them a spiritually uplifting experience for those present. The opportunities for the pupils to lead collective worship within the school and parish make a significant contribution in promoting living Christian faith.

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

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education are good. The level of attainment when pupils enter the Nursery is often below average in social and communication skills. Progress and achievement in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is good. By the end Key Stage 2 progress is very good. In the lessons observed, learners were able to build on their prior knowledge and attainment. They were always attentive listeners, who responded well to questioning and participated in lively discussions. Teachers set activities according to pupil's age and ability and used support staff well to help learners achieve at an appropriate level. Early in Key Stage 1 learners are beginning to write short sentences of independent work retelling stories and writing prayers. In Key Stage 2 good oral work in discussions and longer pieces of independent writing continue to develop as pupils record their work in a wide variety of forms. As they move through Key Stage 2 learners have a growing awareness of the beliefs and values of their faith and are able to relate them to their own life experiences. This is evident in the understanding and empathy shown by pupils trained by the deputy head as mediators to help solve problems and disputes between their peers. At all times pupils are encouraged to develop Christian values and respect for themselves and others.

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

The quality of teaching and learning overall is good with some outstanding features in Key Stage 2. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils. Using a range of techniques and resources along with praise and encouragement, teachers demonstrate good classroom management skills to which pupils respond with enthusiasm and so achieve well. Effective use of support staff has a positive impact on the behaviour and progress of pupils. Good use of white boards and information communication technology create further interest and enjoyment in the classroom. Lesson plans identify clear learning objectives and teaching strategies but as yet many do not include any evaluation of their own teaching or of pupils' achievement. Assessment tasks from *REvision 2000* are identified. However staff are not yet familiar with the new diocesan assessment materials. The school is encouraged to develop further their work of assessment in order to determine the level at which a pupil is working. All teaching areas are bright and stimulating learning environments with colourful displays of pupils' work. A very good example of teaching occurred in Year 6. Pupils recalled their previous learning of how God's presence was manifested in the Old and New Testaments. A powerpoint presentation of people doing God's work in the world enabled pupils to recognise that the scenes revealed the "Fruits of the Holy Spirit" in action. This prompted small group discussions recalling occasions when they had observed or practised these virtues themselves. The pupils' written activities were evidence of their good understanding of their role as witnesses to God's presence in the world today.

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

The curriculum for Religious Education is good. Time allocated to religious lessons is broadly in line with national and diocesan requirements. Priorities for the future development of the Religious Education curriculum and prayer and worship have already been identified. Teachers are knowledgeable and confident in the consistency of their delivery of *REvision 2000*. Timetabling of lessons ensures that quality time is allowed to enable pupils to produce work of a good standard. Teaching assistants play an important role supporting teachers and pupils within the classroom. Good resources including information communication technology give valuable support to the delivery of the curriculum. School Masses together with assemblies and liturgical celebrations have a positive impact in supporting, enriching and extending the Religious Education curriculum at the school. The study of World Religions although currently linked to other curriculum areas is not yet fully developed. The school plays a leading role in the preparation of pupils for the parish Sacramental Programme.

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

The leadership and management of Religious Education are outstanding. Reflecting on the importance of the role of the Religious Education co-ordinator the headteacher assumed this responsibility on the resignation of the previous co-ordinator. Working closely with the deputy and the parish priest, the on-going development of curriculum Religious Education has been a priority affecting the life and work of the school. The headteacher's reports to governors ensure that they are well informed of Religious Education matters. The leadership team work hard to ensure that progress and the development of the curriculum are frequently reviewed. A new co-ordinator will be appointed soon and the school is committed to supporting whoever that will be in the development of his or her role. Aiming to support the newly qualified staff and further raise standards, the monitoring of teaching and learning through observations has been a priority. Scrutiny of planning and learners' workbooks is also part of this monitoring procedure. Some assessment procedures are in place and, with further development, will help to give a clearer indication of pupils' knowledge and understanding. In-service training encourages all staff to challenge their own practice and be adventurous and creative in their delivery of the curriculum. Governors are encouraged to visit the school for occasions of prayer and worship. The parish priest is a welcome visitor in school and plays an active role in the religious life of the school community.