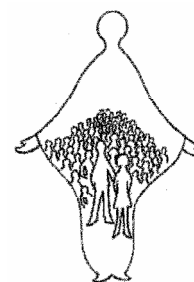


**SALFORD DIOCESE
INSPECTION REPORT**



**OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL
ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Blackley, Manchester**

Inspection date April 2007
 Reporting Inspector Mrs. K. A. Morris
 Inspection carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School Catholic Primary
 Age range of pupils 3-11
 Number on roll 390
 Appropriate authority The governing body
 Chair of Governors Fr. Bryan Cunningham
 Headteacher Mrs. P.J.M. Ganley
 Religious Education Co-ordinator Mrs. S.A. Lyddieth
 Date of previous inspection May 2001

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	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	2	
<i>The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements</i>		

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Our Lady of Mount Carmel is a Roman Catholic voluntary aided primary school in the Diocese of Salford. It serves the parish of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Blackley 3 miles north of the city centre of Manchester. Pupils live in a mix of rented and private housing and are drawn from a wide area of which Harpurhey is deemed to be the most deprived area in the country. The Key Stage 2 premises of the school are situated immediately opposite to the church and presbytery whose meeting rooms are frequently used by teachers and pupils. The buildings housing the Nursery and Key Stage 1 are situated 300 yards further along the road. The age range of the pupils is 3 to 11 and the indicative admission number is 60. There are 390 pupils on roll of whom 386 are baptised Catholics. Just fewer than half the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. 29.4% of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals and 51 pupils have been identified as having special educational needs. 5 learners have a statutory statement of special educational need. 15 of the 16 teachers (94%) are Catholics and 7 hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies or equivalent.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

Our Lady of Mount Carmel is a good school with some outstanding features. It has a strong Catholic ethos. Leadership and management ensure a warm, caring environment in which all aspects of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. The Religious Education curriculum is well planned and further enhanced by the provision for prayer and worship, the quality of relationships and the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers are well supported by teaching assistants, administrative staff and site management. Staff at all levels are dedicated to the school. They are good role models for pupils and are committed and hardworking. They demonstrate excellent levels of care. Pupils are happy to come to school and their behaviour is exemplary. They are mannerly, polite and friendly showing good attitudes to their learning and respond well to the quality of teaching they experience. Pupils, including gifted and talented and those with special educational needs, achieve well as a result of the differentiated Religious Education curriculum which meets the needs of all children. The leadership and management provided by the governing body led by the knowledgeable chair of governors, together with the commitment of the headteacher and the leadership team, are outstanding.

Improvement since the last inspection

The school has successfully addressed the key issues arising from the last Section 23 inspection in May 2001. Advice from the Salford Diocesan teacher advisers and the Cathedral bookshop staff has been sought and resources for curriculum Religious Education and prayer and worship have been purchased and are plentiful. Many improvements to the buildings have been undertaken the latest being the conversion of a cloakroom to a prayer room in the Junior building.

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation is very 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 good Catholic school. The school demonstrates a good capacity for ongoing improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Complete the review of the school's Mission Statement taking into account the views of the staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- Provide a common planning and evaluation format for prayer and worship.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are outstanding. The Mission Statement which was drawn up prior to the appointment of the present headteacher permeates all aspects of the school's life and is prominently displayed throughout the school. It is now in need of review to take into account the changes which the school has undergone. The success of the school is due chiefly to the strong leadership of the headteacher, the leadership team and the wholehearted support of the staff. The school benefits to the full from a very active, knowledgeable and supportive governing body that is involved in shaping the life and direction of the school. A shared vision for the ongoing development of the school as a Catholic community is reflected in governor appointments of committed Catholic teachers to the staff. The parish priest, who is the chair of governors, and the assistant priest have excellent knowledge of school life and are daily visitors to the school. They are well known to the children and staff. The headteacher is hardworking and dedicated to the school. She is strongly supported by the deputy headteachers and staff who are hardworking and committed to the school's Catholicity. Governors are informed of all matters relating to Religious Education in the headteacher's written reports, by visits to the school and a shared "Vision Day" training with senior staff. There are excellent links with a Sacramental Programme co-ordinator who is also the link governor for Religious Education. The school provides strong support for the programme. The school enjoys outstanding relationships with the parish and staff take leading roles as parishioners.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Provision for collective worship is outstanding. It is a key feature of the school and pervades all aspects of school life. It is underpinned by a clear Religious Education policy which includes prayer and worship. This could be further enhanced by the introduction of a common planning format to be used throughout the school and by recording the evaluation of prayer and worship. The school is committed to providing a rich variety of opportunities and experiences. Whole school Masses are celebrated at the beginning and end of each term and on feast days. Class Masses are celebrated weekly and planned and led by different classes in order that pupils are given the opportunity to participate. Assemblies, which are a regular feature of school life, key stage celebrations, Holy Week and Advent services are planned by the pupils and celebrated with the parish priest, governors, parents and parishioners. The assistant priest links Key Stage 1 class liturgies to the following Sunday Mass in church with the "Children's Liturgy" being promoted through this assembly. Pupils have an important role in the church celebrations. For example on Maundy Thursday the priest washes the feet of the Sacramental Programme children and on Good Friday the Year 6 children form a "guard of honour". The quality of collective worship and the children's response is monitored regularly by the headteacher and co-ordinator for Religious Education. The Stations of the Cross were the theme of the Key Stage 2 collective worship observed during the inspection. This was outstanding as was the Year 2 assembly which portrayed the Last Supper and the death and resurrection of Jesus. Both assemblies were led by pupils and included bidding prayers, readings, music, hymns, drama, dance and the opportunity for reflective prayer. All the children prayed with respect and reverence demonstrating the developing awareness of the importance of prayer in their lives. Celebration assemblies are undertaken weekly when children are commended for work, manners, behaviour and achievements. There is evidence of impressive attendance by parents, governors and parishioners at assemblies and Masses.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education are good. In Foundation and Key Stage 1 progress is good. By the end of Key Stage 2 there are clear indicators of very good progress. Strategies and systems have been introduced to ensure that this aspect of the school's life and curriculum has been prioritised in order that good standards be achieved and maintained. There is a clear scheme of work together with a good range of resources. Thorough planning identifies focused objectives and outcomes and highlights differentiation. The inspector's scrutiny of work, together with lesson observations during which pupils were provided with opportunities to debate, question and express themselves in their written work, orally and through information technology, indicate that children make at least good progress and often better. Across the community there is a feeling of self-worth and self-esteem. This has been enhanced by the introduction of a school council, playground friends, altar serves, Marian Apostles and the junior liturgy team. Learners are very aware of God's presence in their lives and of His forgiveness and love. They are aware of the needs of others and this is evidenced by their generosity to a number of local and worldwide charities.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The inspector agrees that teaching and learning in Religious Education are good. Teachers have high expectations for themselves and their learners and work hard using a variety of interactive teaching strategies. They demonstrate good subject knowledge, an understanding of Religious education and make good use of the *REvision 2000* guidelines which have been adapted to cater for the ages and abilities in mixed age classes. Detailed planning with clearly stated objectives which are fully explained to the learners lead to well structured lessons incorporating a good range of activities. Assessment systems have been developed to evaluate teaching and learning and provide a focus for future planning. Levelling of pupils work has begun using the latest Salford Diocesan guidelines. Management and organisation in classes is very good. Behaviour is excellent with pupils co-operating when working with others or independently. They listen well, respond to questions and use religious language appropriate to their age. Teaching assistants provide very good support for those pupils requiring extra help. During the inspection drama was used very effectively as a tool to reinforce learning about Holy Week and Easter. All lessons observed were preparing the learners for the Easter celebrations. The younger pupils were learning about the Last Supper and the Passover and the death of Jesus whilst Year 6 pupils, after finding and reading the Gospel according to St. John depicting the sentencing of Jesus by Pilate, became newspaper reporters. Older learners were able to express their feelings and empathise with how Jesus, Our Lady and the apostles must have felt.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The Religious Education curriculum is outstanding. It has a high profile in the school and is a key element of the school improvement and spending plans. 10% of teaching time in all classes is allocated to the subject. The Salford guidelines *REvision 2000* are followed and supplemented by activities relating to the liturgical year and a range of other resources and experiences. Diocesan recommended guidelines on World Faiths and sex education have also been adopted. Curriculum Religious Education and prayer and worship are beginning to be linked together to ensure that both knowledge and understanding and spiritual development are promoted to the full. The curriculum is further enhanced through a range of extra-curricular learning experiences and activities including a residential visit to Kingswood in North Wales for Year 6. Key Stage 2 pupils visit Our Lady of Schoenstatt Shrine in Kearsley, Bolton. Teachers' planning is thorough and, together with pupils' learning, is monitored by the co-ordinator for Religious Education and the headteacher through work scrutiny and classroom observation. School based and external in-service training is provided for staff. Termly reports to the governors include a significant Religious Education element and are discussed with the nominated governor for Spirituality and Religious Education who also observes curriculum Religious Education lessons. All these processes ensure that the provision for curriculum Religious Education is regularly reviewed and appraised.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The school has assessed the leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education as good. Inspection evidence gathered supports this judgement. The Religious Education co-ordinator who was in post prior to the appointment of the current headteacher has excellent knowledge of her subject and provides good leadership. She offers support to all staff and ensures the provision of quality resources is adequate. She continues her own professional development by attending diocesan courses and conferences and communicates developments in Religious Education at staff meetings. She is fully supported by the headteacher, the designated governor for Religious Education, both of whom are Sacramental Programme co-ordinators, and the parish priest. Attractive displays throughout both premises reflect the faith life of Our Lady of Mount Carmel School where Religious Education and prayer and worship have a high profile. Governors are kept fully informed of developments in Religious Education and prayer and worship by written and verbal reports from the headteacher and the subject co-ordinator. Governors also visit school as class link governors and regularly attend celebrations and functions. They are seen as "critical friends" who hold the school to account and whose input is valued.