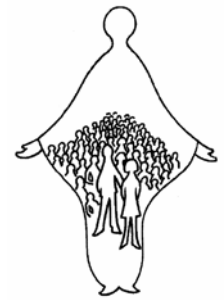


**SALFORD DIOCESE
INSPECTION REPORT**



**ST. JOHN SOUTHWORTH
ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Lomeshaye Road Nelson Lancashire BB9 0DQ**

Inspection date July 2008
 Reporting Inspector Mrs. Mary McGrail
 Inspection carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School Catholic Primary
 URN 119655
 Age range of pupils 4-11
 Number on roll 199
 Appropriate authority The governing body
 Chair of Governors Rev. John N. Price
 Headteacher Mrs. Margaret Borman
 Religious Education Co-ordinator Mrs. Liz Stone
 Date of previous inspection June 2004

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	2	
Leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education	1	

The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St. John Southworth is a Roman Catholic voluntary aided primary school in the Diocese of Salford. It serves the parish of St. John Southworth, Nelson. The school is situated on the edge of the town centre in an area of social deprivation. The majority of learners live in the parish. Learners generally come from a range of socio economically deprived backgrounds. Many live in rented terraced properties. The age range of the learners is 4 to 11 years. The indicative admission number is 30 and there are currently 199 learners on roll of whom 76 are baptised Catholics. Learners of the Islamic faith now account for 44% of the school's intake. Of the 30 learners entering the Foundation Stage in September 2008 6 are baptised Catholics. 20% are eligible for free school meals. 32 learners have been identified as having special educational needs and 6 have a statutory statement of special educational need. 7 of the 10 teachers (70%) are Catholics. An increasing number of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants have been welcomed into the school recently.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St. John Southworth is a good and effective school with many outstanding features. It offers its learners a good traditional Catholic education in an environment where difference and diversity are celebrated and is a beacon for Catholicism in the local community. Positive, supportive and caring relationships are evident throughout the whole school community. All members are valued and respected as the children of God. Home, school and parish links are strong and are nurtured through the parish Sacramental Programme. Learners are happy to come to school and work hard to achieve the expectations of the teachers. They are very well behaved. The dedicated headteacher leads her staff by example and is very well supported by her committed senior management team. The knowledgeable governing body is very well led by the parish priest as chair of governors. His valued support and involvement in the daily life of the school is acknowledged and appreciated by learners, staff and parents. The school is very successful in developing the spiritual, moral social and cultural awareness of the learners. The aims of the Mission Statement are clearly seen as they are "lived" in the daily life of the school.

Improvement since the last inspection

Following the last Section 23 inspection in 2004 the issues identified for improvement have been addressed and successfully resolved. There have been several changes of staff. 5 new teachers have been appointed and the senior management team reorganised. A new classroom has been built, toilets have been refurbished and accessibility improved. Play areas have been improved with a designated play area being provided for the Foundation Stage. Security fencing has been installed and play areas made more secure.

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation is honest, detailed and realistic. Challenging targets for improvement have been established. The headteacher, well supported by her senior management team and staff, shares a clear vision with the supportive governing body for the future development of the school. They have the determination and expertise to realise this vision. Therefore the capacity to improve is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure all learners are given sufficient opportunities to record their Religious knowledge and understanding in extended pieces of writing appropriate to their age and ability. This is particularly important and necessary in upper Key Stage 2.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are outstanding. The clear and precise Mission Statement is reviewed regularly to ensure its continuing relevance to the learners of the school. It is at the forefront of all policies and permeates all aspects of the life of the school. It is on display throughout the school. The dedicated parish priest, as chair of governors, leads an informed governing body. He is a regular visitor to the school and is fully aware of the quality of the provision in Religious Education. Governors are proactive in their role as “critical friends” to the school. The designated governor for Religious Education and the parish link governor are frequent visitors. Meetings between the headteacher, Religious Education co-ordinator and parish priest are held regularly. Detailed reports from the headteacher and Religious Education co-ordinator to the governing body supplement these meetings. The school gives full support to the parish based Sacramental Programme which also involves learners from Holy Trinity school. A governor acts as a catechist. 6 teachers hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies qualification. The governing body is now representative of the diverse community which the school serves and is committed to “building bridges” yet working tirelessly to ensure the Catholic life of the school has the highest priority. The school is fully inclusive.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Provision for collective worship is outstanding. The school has a policy for collective worship which *was* reviewed in February 2008. Throughout the school year learners, staff and parents are given many rich and meaningful opportunities to develop their relationship with God. The Eucharist is central to the life of the school. Masses are celebrated in school and in church on special feast days. The Mass for the leavers on the theme of “Reflections” attended during the inspection was an excellent example of a worshipping community assembling together to praise thank and petition God with readings, mime and music. There was a genuine feeling of celebration and enthusiasm present in this spiritual context. Learners, parents, staff, parishioners and governors were involved. “Praise Assemblies” and key stage assemblies are held weekly. Class collective worship is carefully planned to reflect the Religious Education curriculum and the church’s year. Class meditation is a feature of these sessions. The worship attended in the Foundation Stage was very impressive for such young learners. At all prayerful occasions learners are respectful and reverent. The quality of this provision is a reflection of the dedication and commitment of the parish priest. The learners are familiar with the traditional prayers of the church. They are happy to share their spontaneous prayers with others. The staff attend a weekend retreat each year. A comprehensive file is kept of all celebrations, assemblies and liturgies. All learners are involved in this inclusive provision and no learner is withdrawn from any aspect of prayer and worship.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are good overall. Learners enter the Foundation Stage with attainment well below national expectations. They make very good progress but many are still only beginning to demonstrate emerging writing skills whilst having a good oral knowledge when responding to the teacher. This good progress is maintained in Key Stage 1. The learners are able to name the special friends of Jesus and retell stories they have heard from the bible. They use good religious vocabulary when responding to questions. Some are able to record, in their own words, events from the life of Jesus. In Key Stage 2 progress is inconsistent although good in lower Key Stage 2. The good oral knowledge demonstrated by learners when discussing facts about their faith and other faiths is not replicated in the learners’ written work in some classes. There are examples in upper Key Stage 2 of work of an unacceptable quality being produced by learners which does not reflect either their age or ability. The school is encouraged to address this issue. Learners appreciate their input into the life of the school through their involvement in the school council. They are proud of their efforts as a bronze award ECO school. The learners from Year 6, who are undertaking a scheme to provide finance to enhance the new pond area, are to be commended. Older learners are trained as play workers. The learners give generous support to local, national and international charities.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The inspector agrees with the school that the quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good overall. An example of outstanding teaching was observed in lower Key Stage 2. Lessons are carefully planned with clear learning objectives. Lessons reflect the *REvision 2000* programme. In the best lessons resources are very carefully selected and used effectively to enhance the learning process. A range of teaching styles is used to meet the needs of the lesson content and the age of the learners. Tasks are set which are appropriate to the age and ability of the learners. Learners who need extra help are well supported by the teaching assistants. In the majority of classes work is carefully marked with comments made as to how it could be improved. Special effort is acknowledged and praised. The school has fully implemented the diocesan guidelines for assessment. In most year groups this is exemplary. Each class has a detailed portfolio with a pictorial record of displays, group work and learners recordings. Work is levelled and moderated. Learners have good attitudes to their learning. They listen attentively, are keen to be involved in class discussions, co-operate in pairs and small groups and show a genuine enjoyment and enthusiasm in the Religious Education work. An example of good learning was observed in the Year 3 class on the theme of Moses. The learners were completely enthralled in their lesson. Learners are well behaved at all times.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The Religious Education curriculum is good with several outstanding features. The school has a policy statement for curriculum Religious Education updated in May 2008. All lessons are planned using the *REvision 2000* guidelines. The Religious Education co-ordinator and other teachers have been involved with the diocesan advisers in the new version, *Moving the Vision On*, for the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. This is now used in the school. The World Faiths programme is used in Key Stage 2. The curriculum time allocated to Religious Education meets both national and diocesan requirements in all classes other than one class in Key Stage 2. This omission is already being rectified. Pupils enjoy visits to other places of worship and visitors are invited into school to speak about their faith experiences. The St. Vincent de Paul Society and Lourdes pilgrims are examples of these visitors. Tolerance and understanding of other faiths is encouraged by inviting the Muslim learners to share their own religious experiences with their classmates. The input of the parish priest into curriculum Religious Education together with the weekly childrens' Liturgy at Sunday Mass and the monthly Family Mass all have a positive impact on the overall provision. The Religious Education curriculum makes a major contribution to the very successful development of the learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. No learner is withdrawn from any aspect of curriculum Religious Education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The school has judged the leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education as good. The inspector judges it to be outstanding. The co-ordinator has been in post for 2 years. She is very ably supported by the previous co-ordinator. They have formed a very knowledgeable and supportive team for their colleagues. They lead by their example of very good practice. The co-ordinator keeps meticulous records of her monitoring and evaluation of the provision. Teachers' plans, class portfolios and assessment files are monitored. Findings are evaluated and reported back to teachers. Lesson observations are planned. Termly moderation meetings are organised and a Religious Education action plan has been developed. Resources have been audited and catalogued. An individual assessment record sheet has been developed. Each year teachers complete an audit sheet to evaluate their future needs. The Religious Education co-ordinator attends diocesan meetings for her own continuing professional development. Staff meetings are held to inform teachers of new initiatives. The headteacher gives every encouragement to, and is fully supportive of, the Religious Education co-ordinator. Each classroom has a focal area for prayer and displays throughout the school clearly reflect its faith life and the diverse cultures of the learners.