

**SALFORD DIOCESE
INSPECTION REPORT**

**ST.CECILIA'S
ROMAN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL**

Longridge



Inspection date: January 2006

Reporting Inspector: Mr. W. Ryan

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

Type of School	Catholic Secondary
Age range of pupils	11-16
Number on roll	466
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of Governors	Dr. Robert Snape.
Headteacher	Mrs. Margaret Diffley.
Head of Religious Education	Mrs. Mary Beatham.
Date of previous inspection	January 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	2	
Achievement and standards in Religious Education	2	
The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education	1	
The quality of the Religious Education curriculum	2	
Leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education	2	
<i>The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements</i>		

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Cecilia's is a voluntary aided co-educational high school for pupils aged 11 to 16. It serves the contributory parishes of St. Mary (Chipping), St. Wilfred (Longridge), Our Lady and St. Michael (Alston Lane) and SS. Peter and Paul (Ribchester). Pupils come from a full range of social and economic backgrounds with about 25% from socially deprived areas. The indicative admission number is 90. The school is over subscribed and there are currently 466 learners on roll 462 of whom are baptised Catholics. 6 % of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. The number of learners identified as having special educational needs is 70 and of these 12 have a statutory statement of special educational need. There are 20 Catholic teachers representing 60 % of the total teaching staff.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Cecilia's is a good Catholic school with some outstanding features. The school mission drives it forward and its recent review by all members of the school community has strengthened ownership by all concerned. Community spirit and a sense of common purpose are evident in all aspects of school life. Leadership is outstanding. The headteacher, ably supported and challenged by an energetic and enthusiastic governing body, continues to work tirelessly to improve the quality of provision in all areas of school life. The school leadership team, recently extended, makes a significant contribution to achieving this ambition. Pastoral care is outstanding and pupils and staff feel valued. They recognise the quality of the good relationships which exist. Pupils feel safe and happy and value the work of the teachers and other adults involved in their education. They are proud of their school. They are treated with consideration and respect and play their part in improving their learning environment through the school council. The school's Catholic nature is evident in display and worship which is good. Pupils pray together frequently and this provision is improving through the efforts of the liturgy group and the choir. Prayer and worship are constantly under review as management is eager to continue to develop this aspect of the school. Staff and pupil prayer groups meet regularly and liturgical events receive the full support of the clergy from the school's contributory parishes. Pupils respond enthusiastically to appeals for help and give generously to those in need. Standards in curriculum Religious Education are good while teaching and learning in this area are outstanding. The Religious Education department is very well managed by a recently appointed leader who brings to the post great enthusiasm and considerable ability. Pupils at Key Stage 4 now have 10% of curriculum time allocated to Religious Education while those at Key Stage 3 continue to receive 8%.

Improvement since the last inspection

Following the last Section 23 inspection the school has reviewed its Key Stage 4 examination provision and has introduced courses which it believes are more suited to the pupils in particular addressing the issue of boys' results. Curriculum time at Key Stage 4 has now been extended to the required 10 %. However this still remains an issue at Key Stage 3. The school has now acquired Technology College status which has considerably improved its information communication technology provision and the Religious Education department makes good use of this enrichment.

Capacity to improve

The school's ability to evaluate itself and make further improvement is good. Management is committed to raising standards of attainment and there is evidence that progress is being made in this area. Monitoring arrangements for curriculum Religious Education are robust.

What the school should do to improve further

- Support the local clergy in their work for the school by seeking to appoint a Chaplaincy Leader.
- Seek to enhance the school's spiritual provision through the establishment and use of a prayer room.
- Continue to develop assessment procedures in Religious Education.
- Ensure that 10% of curriculum time is allocated to Religious Education at Key Stage 3.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The inspector concurs with the school's judgement that leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are outstanding. The governing body is active and enthusiastic. It fulfils with diligence its role of monitoring and supporting the school management team while Religious Education and the school's prayer life benefit from having a link governor who meets regularly with the headteacher and head of department. The school Mission Statement, recently reviewed as in-service training for the whole community, underpins all school activities and is the starting point for all school policies which are comprehensive. The committee structure ensures that all governors play a part in the school's governance. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school which is shared by the senior management team and reflected in the School Development Plan. Her enthusiasm and dedication, coupled with tremendous dynamism, ensure that the school remains focused on raising standards and achievement and on continuing to develop its spiritual provision. Senior management plays an active part in supporting the school's prayer life and is focused on building upon its strengths thereby increasing its effectiveness. The acquisition of Technology College status has greatly improved the information communication technology available to pupils and several other teaching areas have been refurbished and so providing an environment conducive to good learning.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The inspector agrees with the school that the quality of collective worship is good. Prayer and worship are built into its daily life. Pupils and staff pray daily at assemblies, in form time and at the start of Religious Education lessons. Reflection formed part of the content of lessons observed by the inspector. In addition to this the liturgical life of the church is observed with special services at Lent and Advent, a programme of services to celebrate Holy Week and a weekly voluntary Mass is celebrated by one of the parish clergy who are frequent visitors to the school. The quality of assemblies is good with an increasing part being played by pupils in their celebration. Worship in school is further enhanced through the efforts of the liturgy group which draws its membership from all sections of the school community. The school choir makes a major contribution. Further development of this area through greater pupil involvement, the appointment of a chaplaincy leader and the creation of a prayer room would greatly enrich the school's provision. The garden of remembrance planned by the school community and designed by a former student will be a great asset. In addition there are opportunities for pupils in Years 8 and 10 to take part in retreats at Castlerigg Manor. A staff prayer group meets weekly and shares its worship with the whole staff community while a pupil prayer group meets daily and in holds a weekly prayer service.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The inspector and the school share the judgement that achievement and standards in Religious Education are good. Since her appointment the head of department has built on her predecessor's work in continuing the progress made in raising achievement at Key Stage 4. Public examination results continue to improve. The issue of boys' achievement has been addressed through a review of the examination syllabus at Key Stage 4 while, after consultation with the diocesan secondary adviser, the department has introduced a new programme of study at Key Stage 3. Setting arrangements at Key Stage 4 ensure that additional support is available and is targeted at those most in need. Assessment tasks are set at both Key Stages and the department is in the process of honing and developing these to better inform future planning. The department should continue to develop assessment procedures to support the raising of attainment. Marking is in line with the school marking policy and assists learners in charting their progress. Exercise books contain targets set for individual pupils and reference is made to these by teachers and learners. Within the department there is an ethos of encouragement and challenge coupled with reward for progress and effort. Pupils are well motivated. They value the reward system in the school and appreciate the benefits it brings. Parents are well informed of progress through regular monitoring and reporting which enables them to track progress. Excellent pupil-teacher relationships contribute to raising achievement and standards in the department. The role of the head of department as a Leader in Learning in the school has not only led to raising the quality of teaching in Religious Education but has also raised the status of the department within the school. The Learning Support department makes a valued contribution to Religious Education. Members of the Religious Education department offer support to those with emotional special needs.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The inspector supports the school's judgement that the quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is outstanding. The department is very well staffed by well qualified and competent practitioners. The subject is housed in adjacent rooms providing for excellent communication and sharing of good practice. The learning environment is enhanced by well-presented, relevant and constructive display. All lessons observed during inspection were either good or outstanding with good planning, a variety of teaching styles and clearly defined aims. Lessons are conducted at a good pace and the work is tailored to the needs of the learners. Good planning also ensures that reference is made to previous learning and the learners are familiar with, and able to make good use of, biblical references to support argument and theory. There is ample evidence of the use of information communication technology to encourage learning and judicious use is made of DVDs, overhead projectors and interactive whiteboards in improving learning. Along with English and Communication Technology the department is involved in the Leaders in Learning strategy to develop teaching and learning. Lessons are observed, videoed and analysed to improve the quality of teaching and focus the learners on discovering how they best perform. Regular monitoring of pupils' work within the department takes place as do lesson observations as part of the professional performance agenda. The pupils are actively engaged in their learning. They work well with the teachers and their excellent behaviour and mutually supportive relationships encourage learning.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The school considers the quality of the Religious Education curriculum to be outstanding. The inspector deems it to be good. At Key Stage 3 a new syllabus has been introduced which the department believes to be more relevant to the learners. Planning is thorough and assessment targets are set. Learners respond well to the modules and the work is sufficiently challenging. Assessment tasks are set and marked and pupils are given targets for future learning. Examination results at Key Stage 4 in Religious Education continue to improve. There is some concern over boys' results and the department is addressing this through the introduction of a new syllabus which it feels will encourage improved performance in this area. The school's curriculum is enhanced through assemblies, the prominence given to prayer in its daily life and through the considerable work in which the school is involved to raise awareness of the needs of others. The programme is monitored regularly by the department and by the link governor. Funding for the department is very good and is an indication of the importance that management and governors attach to Religious Education in the school. However curriculum time at Key Stage 3 should be increased to 10% in line with the requirements of the Bishops of England and Wales.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The school and the inspector share the judgement that leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education are good. The recently appointed head of department brings numerous qualities to the post. She is enthusiastic, well organised and is an excellent practitioner. Learners' work is monitored and targets are set to encourage progress. The liturgy group plays a significant part in developing prayer and worship. Planning is very good and the departmental development plan is imaginative and far-reaching. The department reviews its policies, leads in teaching and learning in the school, reviews its programmes of study and makes a valued and significant contribution to the spiritual welfare of both pupils and staff. In-service days are organised for the department and also for the whole school community, notably in reviewing the school Mission Statement. Religious display throughout the school is well presented and relevant. Assemblies are stimulating and capture the attention of the pupils and the department provides resource materials to help in their presentation. The departmental handbook is comprehensive, containing an assembly rota, policies and procedures, examination results analysis and resources. The head of department resources and encourages the prayer groups, organises the retreats and plays a prominent part along with other members of the senior management team in the liturgy group.