

**INSPECTION REPORT**

**ST. OSWALD'S  
 ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Hartley Avenue Accrington Lancashire BB50NN**

Inspection date April 2010

Reporting Inspector Joan Duffin

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

Type of School Catholic Primary

URN 119657

Age range of pupils 3-11

Number on roll 160

Appropriate authority The governing body

Chair of Governors Mr. John Jordan

Headteacher Mr. Jeff Brown

Religious Education Co-ordinator Mr. Jeff Brown (Acting)

Date of previous inspection February 2007

<b>The Inspection judgements are:</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Explanation of the Grades</b>  1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3 = Satisfactory 4 = Inadequate
Overall effectiveness of the school	2	
Leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school	2	
The quality of Collective Worship	2	
Achievement and standards in Religious Education	3	
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	2	

*The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements*

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

St. Oswald's, Accrington is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school. It is one of three primary schools which serve the parish of St. Mary in Oswaldtwistle. It is situated in a semi-rural area above Accrington town centre which has significant social and economic disadvantage. The age range of learners is from 3 to 11. The indicative admission number is 17. There are currently 112 pupils attending the main school and 48 part time pupils in the Nursery. 43 pupils are baptised Catholic. 51 pupils, mainly Pakistani but including some Polish, speak English as an additional language. 35% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. 36 pupils have been identified as having special educational needs. None has a statement of special educational need. 4 of the 8 teachers (50%) are Catholic.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

St. Oswald's is a good school. There is a happy, caring, welcoming atmosphere. The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are good. The governing body fulfils its role well with regard to its Catholic foundation. The Mission Statement lies at the heart of the school's aims, policies and expectations. The range and quality of provision for collective worship is good. There is very good provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development. Teaching and learning are good. The standards achieved in curriculum Religious Education are satisfactory. The information obtained from the established systems of monitoring and assessment needs to be used more effectively to raise standards and to ensure that all pupils are given the opportunity to achieve their potential. The leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education are good. Governors have a role to play in the monitoring of provision. Pupils' behaviour is excellent; they show respect for themselves and others. Many opportunities are taken to promote community cohesion and develop pupils' respect for, and understanding of, other faiths and cultures. The caring relationships within the school are very strong. There are good relationships with parents, parish and the wider community.

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

Following the last Section 48 inspection in February 2007 the school was asked to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning in curriculum Religious Education and the outcomes of assessment. The school has worked towards this and made good progress.

### **Capacity to improve**

The school's self-evaluation is accurate. Priorities for Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school have an appropriate place in the School Improvement Plan and in its action plans. The headteacher has a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and its areas for development. The headteacher, staff and governors are committed to improvement. There is, therefore, good capacity for further improvement.

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

- Raise the standards in curriculum Religious Education further, especially for the most able pupils, by making more effective use of the information obtained from assessment and tracking of pupils' work.

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

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are good. The governing body fulfils its role well in respect of its Catholic foundation appointing Catholic teachers where possible. It has knowledge of the school through headteacher reports and the regular involvement in the school of several of the governors. The parish priest is a frequent and welcome visitor to the school which is one of three primary schools in his parish. The headteacher has a clear vision of the nature of the Catholic school. The revised Mission Statement lies at the heart of the school's aims, policies and expectations especially with its aim to help pupils to find love and goodness here. The school prayer is displayed and used throughout the school. The headteacher, who is also acting Religious Education co-ordinator at the moment, sets a clear direction for the school. The school strongly promotes community cohesion and is a warm and welcoming haven for Catholic and non-Catholic immigrants. All staff fully support and uphold the Catholic nature of the school in all they do. The Sacramental Preparation Programme is run by the parish with only a few children each year from St Oswald's school taking part. There is a good relationship between the school, parents and parish. Children are given many opportunities to care for those less fortunate than themselves through donations to CAFOD, St. Mary's Meals and the Haiti appeal.

## **THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

Provision for collective worship in the school is good both in respect of its quality and range. The opportunities for prayer and worship include whole school Masses at the beginning and end of term, voluntary Masses before school once a fortnight, whole school, key stage and class assemblies. These are clearly set out in the school's policies. The voluntary Mass on the morning of the inspection was attended by several children. They were able to name several of the priest's vestments and joined in the responses with the aid of a Mass booklet. There are special celebrations throughout the liturgical year such as Harvest, Lenten services, Christmas productions and Carol Services. Learners are involved in the celebrations by providing readings, their own personal prayers and choosing hymns. The whole school assembly observed during the inspection used drama to good effect to tell the story of the Good Shepherd. All the children, including many non-Catholics, were included and responded well. The service was greatly enhanced by the lovely singing. The children were accompanied by a teacher from the Lancashire Music Service who supports them each week. In the class assembly observed pupils continued the story of the Good Shepherd by reflecting on why Jesus is a "good" shepherd and how this affects us. The assembly finished with the children's bidding prayers. The altars and religious displays in the school provide further opportunities for prayer and reflection. There is a good range of artefacts available for collective worship. Parents are invited to attend the weekly praise assembly and the major celebrations in the year. Collective worship makes a good contribution to the spiritual and moral development of learners.

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

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are satisfactory. Pupils' attainment on entry to school is below national expectations. Pupils make progress throughout the school and, by the time they reach Year 6, their attainment is broadly average. Pupils of lower ability are well supported by teachers and support staff and achieve well but pupils of above average ability are not always challenged to achieve their potential. Procedures, including tracking of pupil progress, are in place to raise standards. The results of this tracking now need to be used more effectively to enable all pupils to reach their potential. The diocesan scheme for standardisation and assessment has been adopted and pupils' work is levelled. Findings now need to be used to identify areas for development in curriculum Religious Education. Targets need to be set and used more effectively. The quantity, range and quality of written work are satisfactory. Learners enjoy their work in most classes and respond well to questioning. Pupils have a good understanding of world faith traditions. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and their behaviour during the inspection was excellent. The school provides well for their spiritual and moral development. The School Council, Eco Council and the policy of older children helping younger ones give pupils opportunities to develop independence and responsibility.

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are well planned and mostly conducted at a pace to maintain interest and enjoyment. Questioning is usually good with effective use of open-ended questions. Learning objectives are shared with pupils and plenary sessions are often used to give pupils an opportunity to consolidate their learning. The use of technology is developing well. Pupils are encouraged to ask questions and respond well to the opportunities provided. In a lesson in the Foundation Stage a small group of children learned about baptism through role play. They understood that in baptism we become part of the family of God. A good Key Stage 1 lesson involved storytelling and drama to explore the apostles' reaction to the risen Lord. They then wrote prayers to Jesus praising him as Lord. Hot seating and talking partners were used effectively in a very good lesson in Upper Key Stage 2 to explore the thoughts and feelings of the disciples after the Ascension. Pupils had pre-planned some very pertinent questions and the "disciples" were able to answer them with knowledge and understanding. The quality and range of written work varies across the school from satisfactory to good. The most able pupils are not always challenged to achieve their potential. Marking is generally good with teachers taking the opportunity to advise learners on ways in which they can improve their work. Pupils' behaviour was exemplary throughout the inspection period.

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

The Religious Education curriculum is good. It complies with local and national expectations with regard to time allocated. It is made accessible to all pupils by adapting it for mixed age classes following diocesan guidelines. Systems of monitoring, scrutiny of work and assessment have been established. These are now being used to raise standards but more could be done to identify areas of the Religious Education curriculum which need to be developed. Target-setting could be used more effectively to ensure all pupils are given the opportunity to achieve their potential. Curriculum provision is enhanced by extra-curricular activities, visits to places of interest and visitors to the school. The diocesan guidelines on the study of other world religions have been adopted. Good use is made of the cultural diversity in the school to promote an understanding of other faiths and cultures. Several Polish children have been welcomed into the school. The Religious Education curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. The caring relationships within the school are very strong. The very good relationships between school, parents, parish, the associated high school and the local community further enhance the provision. Parents are happy with the school and the pupils are well behaved and happy to attend. The clean, bright rooms, attractive displays and the quality of the resources create a good environment for work.

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

The school has assessed the leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education as good and the inspector would agree with this judgement. Governors are kept well informed of developments through headteacher reports and involvement in the school. The parish priest, the chair of governors and the link governor for Religious Education are regular visitors to the school. The recently appointed headteacher has a clear vision for the school and is aware of its strengths and areas for development. He is also acting Religious Education co-ordinator at the moment. There are established systems of monitoring and assessment in place. Governors are involved in monitoring the Religious Education provision. Tracking of pupils' progress has been introduced. The information from these systems now needs to be used more effectively to raise standards and ensure that all pupils, especially the most able, are given the opportunity to achieve their potential. The school's self-evaluation is accurate. Appropriate priority is given to Religious Education and the religious life of the school in the school's action plans. The non-Catholic teachers are happy to support the Catholic ethos of the school and are supported in their delivery of the curriculum. Resources are good and used effectively. Relationships within the school are warm and caring. Relationships with the parents and parish community are good. The school is committed to providing an effective learning environment for all.