

**SALFORD DIOCESE
INSPECTION REPORT**



**MOUNT CARMEL
ROMAN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL
Accrington**

Inspection date July 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	776
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of Governors	Mr. D. Ford
Headteacher	Miss K. Ryan
Head of Religious Education	Mr. A. Fowler
Date of previous inspection	September 1999

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	
Overall effectiveness of the school	2	Explanation of the Grades 1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3 = Satisfactory 4 = Inadequate
Leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school	2	
The quality of Collective Worship	2	
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	2	
<i>The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements</i>		

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Mount Carmel is an 11-16 voluntary aided Roman Catholic co-educational comprehensive school. It provides education for the pupils living in the associated parishes of St. Mary (Oswaldtwistle), St. Mary (Clayton) and St. Anne and St. Joseph (Accrington). Learners come from a full range of socio-economic backgrounds but with 49% coming from one of the most deprived wards in the United Kingdom. The indicative admission number is 162 and there are currently 776 learners on roll of whom 606 are baptised Roman Catholics. 15.1 % of learners take free school meals although the percentage of those entitled to do so is greater. There are 195 learners identified as having special educational needs and of these 28 have a statutory statement of special educational need. The number of Catholic teachers in the school is 19 and this represents 43 % of the total staff.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

Mount Carmel is a good Catholic school. The starting point for all its policies and initiatives is the school Mission Statement which is prominently displayed in classrooms throughout the school and features in the learners' planners. Leadership of the school is good with outstanding input from the governing body whose members, enthusiastically led by the chair, play an active part in promoting high standards academically, spiritually and pastorally. The headteacher is committed to raising standards and pursues this goal energetically and imaginatively. In this she is supported by an extended management team which shares her determination to drive the school forward. Collective worship and prayer play a major part in enriching the spiritual lives of the pupils and valued contributions to liturgies are made by all sections of the school community. Learners pray regularly in school and are offered opportunities to take part in extra-curricular experiences which enrich the school's provision. A wide range of support mechanisms exist to ensure that pastoral care has a high priority while the active involvement of learners in supporting each other would indicate that it is outstanding. Links with partner primary schools are excellent and arrangements are in place to ensure that the school and sixth form colleges are mutually supportive. Learners behave well in school and there is a culture of reward for good behaviour and success. Learners like their school and they are proud of its achievements. They feel secure and value the work of the teachers and of their peers who support them through their work as prefects or peer mentors. They are able to play an active part in the school through its council and the opportunities for extra-curricular activities are many and varied. Learners make generous contributions to a variety of charities. Standards and achievement in Religious Education are good and the department continues to enrich the lives of the pupils. It also plays a major role in promoting the liturgical life of the whole community. The department has benefited from having a curriculum leader of great experience who is an exemplar of good practice in teaching and learning. Funding for Religious Education is in line with that of other major departments and time allocation at Key Stage 3 is 8% while at Key Stage 4 it rises to 10%.

Improvement since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the Religious Education department has raised standards at Key Stage 4 through a number of strategies which include self-evaluation, lesson observation, good planning and a review of the syllabus to tailor it to the learners' needs.

Capacity to improve

The school's capacity to evaluate itself and improve is good. Leadership is committed to continue to raise standards in all aspects of school life. The Religious Education department, encouraged by recent success, is intent on raising achievement further. Monitoring arrangements are in place and the school's recently introduced tracking programme will lead to improved target setting and communication.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase in-service training relating to the spiritual life of the school to further enrich and develop its mission.
- Develop the prayer life of the school through the creation of a prayer room or similar facility.
- Keep under review the Religious Education syllabus at Key Stage 4 in order to further raise achievement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The school and the inspector agree that the leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are good. At governor level these are outstanding. The chair is actively involved in all aspects of management and is a frequent visitor to the school. Governor sub-committees are chaired by members with expertise in their fields which ensures quality. Major departments enjoy the benefits of having link governors and curriculum leaders attend meetings to make presentations to the governing body. Until recently the school enjoyed the benefit of having a link governor for Religious Education who supported the department and met regularly with the curriculum leader. A new appointment is to be made in the near future. The headteacher provides inspired leadership and, with the enthusiastic support of her extended senior management team, has led the school to significant progress since the last inspection. Pupil care is a strength of the school starting with a comprehensive induction programme which leads into peer mentoring with Year 8 learners and a lower school section of the school council which gives a voice in the school to younger learners. Senior learners progress to become prefects and members of the upper school section of the school council. The school pastoral system is house based with form and house tutors playing their part in supporting the Catholic life of the school. The school Mission Statement is the starting point for all initiatives and is at the heart of the school's policies. Some additional in-service training on the Catholic life of the school to induct a number of recently appointed teachers would be appropriate at this time.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The inspector agrees with the school's judgement that the quality of collective worship is good. A programme rich in variety of opportunities for prayer and worship is planned annually by the school. Holy Days are celebrated in school with whole school celebrations and voluntary Masses are celebrated by local clergy who give generously of their time. They also contribute to the penitential services which take place in Lent. Assemblies are planned to parallel the Church liturgical year and major national, international and charity events. Whole school and house assemblies take place weekly, the former led by members of the senior management team and the latter by house tutors. At all these events learners are involved in a variety of ways through reading, music or through providing technological support in preparing power point presentations. Learners treat these occasions with respect and reverence. When not in assemblies the pupils pray at registration time. The Religious Education department has produced a booklet of prayers and a CD containing suitable themes to support form tutors in this. Learners are offered the opportunity to attend the school's annual retreat whilst all year groups share the benefits of a "Discovery Day" giving them the opportunity to pray and reflect. The Religious Education department plays a leading role in this provision. Although accommodation is at a premium the creation of a centre for prayer would be a great asset to the department and to the school as a whole.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The school considers achievement and standards in Religious Education to be good and the inspector concurs. The department has put in place a number of measures since the last inspection to focus on raising achievement and these are now bearing fruit. At Key Stage 3 the syllabus, whilst following the Diocesan Guidelines, has been adapted to suit the needs of the learners. Assessment takes place half-termly. Learners are able to identify the levels at which they are working and are setting themselves targets to maintain progress. Learners at Key Stage 4 are working on a new and more appropriate syllabus to which they are responding well with significantly improved achievement. This should be kept under review to ensure that all learners achieve their full potential. It is also expected that boys' performance in the subject will improve. The learners' work at both key stages is good and they clearly take pride in it. Lessons are planned using the school-wide format. Quality checking and support through lesson observation maintain the drive to raise standards and achievement. Learners work well and enjoy their work. They behave well in class and the school ethos of respect can be seen in the classroom and in other areas of school life. Relationships are a strength of the school and the pastoral care system supports and encourages learners who support others through taking on responsibilities as prefects, peer mentors and members of the school council. The school's work for charity and its Amnesty International group enable it to recognise its place in the wider global community.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The school and the inspector agree that the quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good. The department is currently staffed by two full time experienced, well qualified teachers, an experienced supply teacher and by two experienced members of the senior management team. In the lessons observed teaching was good, with a variety of styles evident and with good use of information communication technology. Teaching was pitched at the ability of the learners and the work was generally challenging. Regular assessments ensure that parents, learners and teachers are kept informed of progress and targets. Learners responded well to questioning and were eager to share information and opinions. They behaved well and showed respect for their teachers and for the subject. Good relationships in the classroom led to good learning and a willingness to learn from others. The quality of written work is good and exercise books are marked though not always consistently across the department. Schemes of work are in place and have been adapted to the needs of the learners. Lessons are planned using the school-wide format. The department is suited in three well appointed rooms with a range of excellent facilities, including interactive whiteboards, projectors, and a variety of audio-visual equipment. Learners in Religious Education receive 8% of curriculum time in Key Stage 3 and 10 % in Key Stage 4.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The inspector agrees with the school that the quality of the Religious Education curriculum is good. The school scheme of work for Key Stage 3 is in place and is available in CD form and on the school website. It broadly follows the Diocesan Guidelines and has been adapted to meet the needs of the learners. It is well supported with appropriate texts and teaching materials and incorporates the use of some information communication technology. Following a review of the Key Stage 4 syllabus the school has taken on a new examination board syllabus. Coupled with departmental initiatives this has resulted in significant improvement in achievement at this stage. Self-evaluation and lesson observation by the curriculum leader and by the senior management team support good delivery of the curriculum. It is further enriched through the school's extra-curricular provision which includes opportunities for personal development as responsible young people and personal spiritual development through retreats and days of discovery. Learners enjoy their lessons and are familiar with the requirements of the syllabus. They are able to make judgements on their work and set themselves targets for further progress.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The inspector supports the school's judgement that leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education is good. The department is led by an experienced and knowledgeable curriculum leader. He is a dedicated and enthusiastic teacher who is a role model for others. He is supported by the headteacher as his line manager and encouraged by the governing body through the link-governor. The department is making progress in raising achievement and departmental initiatives have played a significant part in this. Communication is good and members meet regularly to review curriculum, assessment and target setting. The curriculum leader meets regularly with the headteacher and the link-governor to review teaching and learning in the department. The department plays a major role in supporting the spiritual development of the learners. Materials are prepared for assemblies and form time. Liturgies are planned with input from other departments. Retreats and days of discovery are organised and led and the work of the school Amnesty International group is encouraged. The department is housed in suited rooms with good facilities and benefits from funding that is on a par with other major curriculum areas.