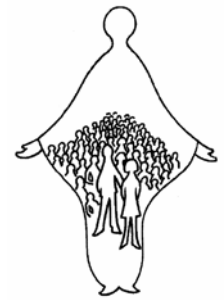


**SALFORD DIOCESE  
INSPECTION REPORT**



**ST. PAUL'S ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL  
Preston Old Road Feniscowles Blackburn BB2 5HZ**

Inspection date November 2008

Reporting Inspector Mrs. Joan Duffin

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

Type of School	Catholic Primary
Age range of pupils	4-11
Number on roll	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of Governors	Mr. J. Slater
Acting Headteacher	Mr. J. Brown
Religious Education Co-ordinator	Miss F. Vause
Date of previous inspection	November 2005

<b>The Inspection judgements are:</b>	<b>Grade</b>	
Overall effectiveness of the school	1	Explanation of the Grades  1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3 = Satisfactory 4 = Inadequate
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	1	
<i>The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements</i>		

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

St. Paul's is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school in Feniscowles, Blackburn. It serves the parish of Pleasington Priory and St. Paul. The school is on the western outskirts of Blackburn and is fortunate to have a large playing field and open fields at the back. The recently appointed headteacher and her deputy are both on maternity leave. An acting headteacher has been appointed for the year and a senior member of staff promoted to acting deputy. The families come from a mixture of privately owned houses and a nearby local authority housing estate. Learners are aged 4 to 11. The indicative admission number is 30 and there are currently 205 children on roll. All but 2 of the children are baptised Catholics. The children are mostly white British. 1 child (0.5%) is eligible for free school meals. 24 pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and 2 of these children have a statement of special educational need. 8 of the 10 teachers (80%) are Catholic.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

St. Paul's is an outstanding Catholic school. It has very strong Catholic values which establish a very good climate for work. The Catholic life of the school and the range and quality of provision for collective worship are outstanding. The outstanding governing body is well informed and offers challenge and support to the headteacher. The acting headteacher is an outstanding leader and has raised the standards in the school even further. He has a clear vision of what makes an excellent Catholic school. He sets clear direction for the teaching of Religious Education and is ably supported by the senior management team. The standards attained in curriculum Religious Education are good. Less able pupils are well supported by teachers and support staff but more able pupils are not always challenged to achieve their potential. Teaching and learning are good. Systems of assessment and standardisation are progressing well. The monitoring role of the newly appointed Religious Education co-ordinator needs to be developed further. The curriculum is well planned. Pupils' behaviour is excellent demonstrating respect for themselves and others. There is excellent provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development. Opportunities are taken to foster pupils' awareness and respect for other faiths and cultures and to promote community cohesion. All members of staff fully support the Catholic ethos of the school. Excellent relationships exist between the school, parents, parish and the wider community.

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

Following the last Section 48 inspection in November 2005 the school was asked to introduce the revised diocesan assessment procedures and to develop the Religious Education co-ordinator's monitoring role. The school has worked hard to address these issues. Assessment procedures are fully in place. Opportunities for the newly appointed co-ordinator to observe lessons have yet to be provided. The school is aware of this and has plans to enable her to do so later in the year.

### **Capacity to improve**

The school's self-evaluation is mostly accurate. Priorities for Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school have an appropriate place in the School Development Plan and in its action plans. The acting 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, an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

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

- Raise the standards of more able pupils by using the results of assessment more effectively and by sharing good practice within the school.
- Develop further the monitoring role of the Religious Education co-ordinator.

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

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are outstanding. The recently revised Mission Statement lies at the heart of the school's aims, policies and expectations. The child-friendly version was developed by the pupils led by the school council. The governing body fulfils its role very well in relation to the school's Catholic foundation. It has knowledge of the Catholic life of the school through headteacher reports and the close involvement of the chair and other governors in the life of the school. The parish priest, who is also a governor, is a frequent and welcome visitor to the school. The acting headteacher has a clear vision of the nature of the Catholic school and, together with the senior management team, promotes the Catholic life of the school very effectively. All staff fully support the many and varied opportunities for prayer and worship in the school and promote learners' spiritual and moral development in all they do. There is a strong Catholic ethos in the school. Community cohesion is strongly promoted. Pupils gain an understanding and respect for other cultures through, for example, the Cultural Diversity Week and the close links with Bethlehem through the parish priest. The parish based Sacramental Preparation Programme is planned and run effectively with strong support from the school and Faith Friends from the parish. Children are given many opportunities to care for those less fortunate than themselves through support for charities such as CAFOD, St. Joseph's Penny, the Bethlehem, Macmillan and Marie Curie appeals.

## **THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

Provision for collective worship in the school is outstanding in relation to the range and opportunity available. The liturgical life of the school is well planned by the headteacher and Religious Education co-ordinator. Whole school Masses are held at the beginning and end of term and on feast days. Class Masses are held regularly. Whole school and class assemblies are held with classroom worship on the days when there is no assembly. Pupils help to prepare the liturgy, choose hymns and lead the celebrations. Music, candles and art work help to create a prayerful experience. The outstanding whole school assembly observed during the inspection was led by Year 6. It celebrated Remembrance Day in song, poetry and prose with a Powerpoint presentation in the background. The children sang beautifully in cannon and spoke clearly. Everyone present, including parents and grandparents, found it a very moving experience. All the children responded prayerfully and respectfully. The classroom worship observed used the story of Noah's Ark to set the scene for making promises to make a new start. Pupils wrote their promises on rainbow paper and some of them shared their promises with the class. Harvest, Christmas and Holy Week celebrations are examples of the liturgies held throughout the year. The school prayer gives the children a sense of belonging. Collective worship makes an excellent contribution to the spiritual and moral development of learners and to promoting community cohesion. The attractive displays and altars around the school provide further opportunities for personal prayer and reflection.

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

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are good. Pupils' attainment on entry to school is slightly above that expected nationally. They make good progress and, by Year 6, their attainment is good. Learners with special educational needs are very well supported by teachers and support staff and achieve well. Learners of above average ability are not always challenged to achieve their potential. The school is aware of this and is intending to target these pupils in the coming year. Systems of assessment and standardisation of pupils' work have been introduced and are developing well. Pupils are confident in discussion and respond to teachers' questioning with knowledge and understanding. They are familiar with stories from the Old Testament. They have a good knowledge of the life and teachings of Jesus and can apply these to their own lives. Pupils' written work covers a range of genres and is mostly well presented. Learners' prayers and reflections are used in collective worship alongside traditional ones. The school provides very well for pupils' spiritual and moral development. The children have a clear idea of right and wrong and they show respect for themselves and others. Their behaviour during the inspection was mostly excellent. Pupils are given opportunities to develop responsibility, independence and leadership skills through the House system, School Council and Buddy system.

## **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. The teaching observed during the inspection ranged from good to very good. Lessons are well prepared and conducted at a pace to maintain interest and enjoyment. Questioning is effective with good use of open-ended questions. The use of technology is well developed. A very good lesson in Lower Key Stage 2 told the parable of the lost sheep using story, drama and learning partners. Photographs of the children performing their mimes were later used in class to help them to re-write the story. In Key Stage 1 a good lesson on Moses emphasised the feelings of the characters involved. The children listened attentively to the story and were able to devise questions for Miriam to be used later in a “hot seating” situation. A good lesson in the Foundation Stage used a carousel of activities including planting poppy seeds and making a symbol of remembrance to explore the ideas of peace and remembrance. The children then used them, together with prayers they had composed, in a short classroom worship. Pupils are encouraged to ask questions and respond well to the opportunity provided. Teachers ensure that learners understand the purpose of the lesson and often consolidate their learning with a plenary session at the end. Marking is good with most teachers taking the opportunity to advise learners of ways in which they can improve their work.

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

The Religious Education curriculum is outstanding. It meets diocesan and national requirements in respect of time allocated to curriculum Religious education. The diocesan curriculum *REvision 2000* is used and the new curriculum, *Moving the Vision On*, is being introduced as it becomes available. Teachers’ planning and pupils’ work are scrutinised and effective feedback given. Systems of assessment ensure that effective teaching and learning are taking place. Excellent resources, including interactive whiteboards, are used to good effect. Curriculum provision is enhanced by prayer and worship, cross-curricular links and the varied extra-curricular activities offered. Study of other world religions and the Cultural Diversity Week promote community cohesion and provide an opportunity for pupils to develop an understanding and respect for other faiths and cultures. The parish priest’s involvement in a seminary in Bethlehem provides a personal link for the children in helping the children of that region. The caring relationships between all members of the school community create an effective learning environment. Involvement of parents, grandparents and parishioners in the school ensure that all members of the community work together for the sake of the children. The clean, bright attractive rooms and excellent displays contribute to the happy environment. Excellent links with the parents, parish, associated high school and the wider community further enhance the provision.

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

The school has assessed its leadership and management of curriculum Religious education as outstanding and the inspector would agree with this judgement. The outstanding governors provide support and challenge to the acting headteacher. The chair of governors and the link governor for Religious Education are well informed of the curriculum and its delivery. The parish priest is a frequent visitor and he knows the children and their families well. The acting headteacher sets a clear direction for the teaching of Religious Education in the school and has not only maintained standards but has helped to raise them. The newly appointed Religious Education co-ordinator has a clear view of her role and is developing it well. The monitoring aspect of her role needs to be developed further and the school is aware of this. The diocesan guidelines for assessment and standardisation are in place together with a tracking system devised by the Religious Education co-ordinator. The non-Catholic teachers have support from the parish priest and from the Religious Education co-ordinator. Religious Education is well represented in the School Development Plan and its action plans. Parents are kept well informed through regular newsletters and their opinions sought. Equality of opportunity for all is promoted and the excellent behaviour contributes to this. All members of staff uphold the Catholic ethos of the school and help to create an atmosphere of happiness and belonging. Parents are happy with the school. The school is committed to creating an effective learning environment with Jesus at the centre.