

SALFORD DIOCESE
INSPECTION REPORT



ST. MARY'S ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Watt Street Sabden Clitheroe Lancashire BB7 9ED

Inspection date February 2008

Reporting Inspector Mrs. K. A. Morris

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

Type of School	Catholic Primary
URN	119651
Age range of pupils	4 - 11
Number on roll	59
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of Governors	Mr. Peter Boylan
Headteacher	Mrs. Claire Westwell
Religious Education Co-ordinator	Mrs. Jennifer Robinson
Date of previous inspection	March 2003

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	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	1	
Leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education	1	
The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements		

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Mary's is a small voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school serving the parishes of St. Mary (Sabden), English Martyrs (Whalley) and St. Philip (Padiham). The school is situated in the village of Sabden in the Ribble valley an area of relative social advantage. The pupils live in mostly owner occupied properties and their ages range from 4 to 11 grouped into 3 classes. The indicative admission number is 12 and there are currently 59 learners on roll of whom 44 are baptised Catholics. 6% of the children are known to be eligible for free school meals and 18 learners have been identified as having special educational needs with 2 having a statutory statement of special educational need. A further 4 children receive Enhanced School Action Plus funding. In 2005 the substantive headteacher left the school, St. Mary's was then looked after by 2 associate headteachers, the second of whom became the substantive headteacher in April 2007. Of the 4 teachers 3 (75%) are Catholics and 2 hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies or equivalent.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St Mary's is a good Catholic school with some outstanding features. It has an exceptionally strong Catholic ethos and is driven by its Mission Statement. It is highly effective in offering its learners a good traditional Catholic education in a happy, supportive and caring environment in which all aspects of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Staff are positive role models for pupils demonstrating a Catholic vision of education. The Religious Education programme is well planned and further enhanced by prayer and worship, the quality of relationships and the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers are well supported by the good deployment of teaching assistants, administrative and janitorial staff. All the staff are hardworking and demonstrate excellent levels of care. Learners are well behaved, friendly and polite with good attitudes to their learning. The school is firmly at the heart of St. Mary's parish supporting the parish led Sacramental Programme and has developed strong links with the local community.

Improvement since the last inspection

The school has successfully addressed the key issues arising from last Section 23 inspection in March 2003. After a period of instability staffing is now much more settled. The relatively newly appointed headteacher, supported by the governors and staff, has taken decisive action to move the school forward. Re-organisation of classes has provided learners with a differentiated Religious Education programme of learning more suited to their age groups.

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation is honest, detailed and realistic. The dedicated headteacher provides very good leadership and she is well supported by the parish priest, chair of governors, governors and the hardworking staff. There is a genuine commitment to ensuring that all involved in the school community recognise the important role they play in the school's future development. Capacity for on-going development is therefore excellent.

What the school should do to improve further

- Undertake a review of the Mission Statement to reflect the views of all the present stakeholders.
- Continue to embed the use of assessment and levelling of learners' work in curriculum Religious Education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are good. The Mission Statement, which was drawn in up prior to the appointment of the present headteacher, and its aims permeate all aspects of the school's life and is prominently displayed throughout the school. However, because of the radical changes within the school, the governors are urged to review their Mission Statement to reflect the views of all the present stakeholders. The success of the school is due chiefly to the strong leadership of the headteacher and the support of the staff. The school benefits from an increasingly active and supportive governing body whose chair is a member of the local authority Governor Services and is the editor of Networking Catholic Education Today. He leads training on many aspects of governance and Catholic aspects of Religious Education. Governors are very involved in shaping the life and direction of the school. The parish priest is a regular visitor to the school. He is well known to staff and children and demonstrates excellent knowledge and understanding of all aspects of school life. During his visits he is able to monitor the provision thus keeping other governors fully informed, as does the designated governor for Religious Education who is a parent of a pupil in the school. In addition the detailed reports from the headteacher and co-ordinator for Religious Education enable governors to monitor closely the work of the school as a faith community. Governors discuss and review Religious Education policies

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Provision for collective worship is good. It is a key feature of the school and pervades all aspects of school life. It is underpinned by a clear Religious Education policy which includes prayer and worship. Throughout the year parents, parishioners, staff and learners are offered a range of opportunities to develop their relationship with God. Whole school Masses are celebrated in church every Friday and on other special occasions. The support of the parish priest and his involvement with these and other celebrations are appreciated and acknowledged by staff and parents. Assemblies, which are a regular feature of school life, explore a religious theme which is then concluded in the Friday Mass. At these celebrations the children's involvement consists of readings, music, drama and their own bidding prayers. They also act as altar servers. The weekly "Celebration" assembly is to acknowledge the talents of the pupils both in and out of school. Parents, parishioners and governors are invited to all celebrations. Monitoring of the quality of collective worship and children's response is currently being developed further. In the collective worship observed during inspection all children, even the youngest, prayed with respect and reverence demonstrating the importance of prayer in their lives. Learners are familiar with the traditional prayers of the church and are given opportunities for quiet and reflective prayer during the day.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and standards in Religious Education overall are good. Clear, effective strategies and systems have ensured that this aspect of the school's life and curriculum has achieved good standards. Learners enter the school aged 4 with attainment broadly in line with national expectations. Good consistent progress is made between all key stages. At the end of Key Stage1 learners are able to record their work in simple sentences and pictorially. Their oral knowledge is good and they are able to write or verbalise their own prayers. In Key Stage 2 progress is maintained. Learners have good factual knowledge of their faith. All learners are able to use religious vocabulary and know prayers appropriate to their age. They understand that they have a responsibility to protect God's creation and they know the difference between right and wrong. The school is aware that the standards of writing in Religious Education and other curriculum areas could be higher. This has been addressed via the school's improvement plan which includes a target for the raising of literacy across the curriculum. Assessment of learners' work has been introduced but this needs to be further developed. The school's approach to its own improvement is steadily improving performance. Pupils' spiritual development is clearly rooted in the beliefs of the Catholic Church. They have a secure knowledge of the life and teaching of Jesus and are able to apply His teaching to their own lives and experience. They know that they should respect themselves and each other and moral development is very good. Pupils display a feeling of self-worth and self-esteem. This has been enhanced by the introduction of a school council, "buddies" and playground friends where the older pupils assist the younger children. Learners are aware of God in their lives and of His love and forgiveness. They are aware of the needs of others and this is evidenced by their generosity to local and worldwide charities.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good. Teachers work hard using a variety of interactive teaching strategies. They demonstrate good subject knowledge, an understanding of Religious Education and make good use of *REvision 2000* guidelines. Detailed planning, with clearly stated objectives which are explained to the learners, leads to well structured lessons incorporating a good range of activities. There is good use of a range of resources including information technology which is widely used to support teaching and learning. Teachers capitalise on opportunities to link Religious Education across the curriculum. Assessment procedures have been introduced but the school should continue to develop assessment in curriculum Religious Education by accurate levelling of learners' work using the Salford Diocesan guidelines. To support this development the school is encouraged to undertake and complete the proposed staff training based on these guidelines as soon as possible. Classroom management and organisation are highly effective. Behaviour is outstanding throughout the school with pupils co-operating when working with others or independently. They listen attentively, respond to questions and use appropriate religious vocabulary. They show an interest in their work and an eagerness to learn. Teaching assistants provide very good support for those pupils requiring extra help.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The Religious Education curriculum is outstanding. Religious Education has a high profile in the school and is now a key element of the school development and spending plans. At least 10% of teaching time in all classes is allocated to the subject. The school has an up-to-date policy for Religious Education. All lessons are planned using the *REvision 2000* guidelines supplemented by activities relating to the liturgical year and a range of other resources and experiences. The curriculum is further enhanced through extra-curricular provision including sport, music and reading club. Year 5 pupils experience a day's retreat organised by the associated Catholic high school which gives them the opportunity to meet learners from other contributory primary schools. The diocesan World Faiths programme has been introduced and makes a valuable contribution to cohesion within the school. Teachers' planning is thorough and together with pupils' learning is monitored by the headteacher and co-ordinator for Religious Education through scrutiny of work and lesson observation. Religious Education features regularly on staff meeting agendas and in-service training. This ensures that its profile within the school remains high and that practices and the curriculum are under constant review and development. The successful parish organised Sacramental programme, supported by the school, plays an important role in the overall provision for Religious Education at St. Mary's school. No learner is withdrawn from Religious Education lessons or collective worship.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The leadership and the management of curriculum Religious Education are outstanding. The relatively new headteacher is providing excellent leadership fully supporting the co-ordinator for Religious Education who has excellent knowledge of her subject. They have a clear vision of what must be done to further improve the already good provision in Religious Education and prayer and worship. This has been conveyed to staff and governors who are supportive of their initiatives. The co-ordinator for curriculum Religious Education provides strong leadership and direction. She leads by example and keeps good records. This includes monitoring and evaluation to determine and identify priorities for further development. The co-ordinator leads staff through regular meetings and continues her own professional development by attending diocesan courses. Staff training in Religious Education is an ongoing process. Resources for Religious Education and collective worship are plentiful. Displays throughout the premises reflect the faith life of St. Mary's school where prayer and worship have a high profile. Governors are kept fully informed of developments in Religious Education through reports from the headteacher, the subject co-ordinator, the parish priest and the link governor for Religious Education who is also a parent in the school. Governors also visit the school regularly attending celebrations and functions. They are seen as "critical friends" whose input is valued. The school community is successful in keeping its rule "Treat everyone with kindness, love and respect".