

INSPECTION REPORT

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ST. GREGORY'S ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Presto Street Farnworth Bolton BL4 8AJ

Inspection date November 2010

Reporting Inspector Mrs. Mary McGrail

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

Type of School Catholic Primary
 URN 105244
 Age range of pupils 4-11
 Number on roll 192
 Appropriate authority The governing body
 Chair of Governors Mrs. Anne Bates
 Headteacher Mr. Gerry Maloney
 Religious Education Co-ordinator Mrs. Debbie Hayes
 Date of previous inspection January 2008

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	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	2	
Leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education	1	

The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Gregory's is a Roman Catholic voluntary aided primary school in the Diocese of Salford. It serves the parishes of St. Gregory in Farnworth and St. John Fisher in Kearsley. The majority of the learners live in the parishes. The school is situated in the town centre of Farnworth in an area which is in one of the most deprived 20% LSOA's in England. The learners come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. Accommodation includes private, rented and local authority housing. The age range of the learners is 4 to 11 years. The indicative admission number is 30 and there are currently 192 learners on roll of whom 142 are baptised Catholics. 20% are eligible for free school meals. 38 learners have been identified as having special educational needs with 2 having a statutory statement of special educational need. A number of learners of different heritage have recently been welcomed into the school. 8 of 10 teachers (80%) are Catholics.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Gregory's is a good Catholic school with many outstanding features. It offers its learners a traditional Catholic education in a safe, caring and secure environment. All in the school community recognise that we are all special as God's creations. Differences and diversity are welcomed and celebrated. It is a happy school where positive relationships, built on mutual respect, are the norm. The experienced headteacher leads a strong team of hardworking staff who have the welfare and the development of the learners at the core of all their efforts. The learners enjoy coming to school and have good attitudes to their learning. Parents are very supportive. The school encourages everyone to share, grow and flourish in faith and love thus realising the aims of its Mission Statement. Collective worship is a strength of the school where learners and their families are fully supported on their faith journey with the help of the parish priest. The governors are very supportive of the school with many working in school on a regular basis and as catechists to support the Sacramental Programme. The school is successful in developing the spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness of the learners and successfully reaches out to include the wider community.

Improvement since the last inspection

Following the last Section 48 inspection in 2008 the school has successfully addressed the issues identified for improvement and resolved them. There have been several changes of staff. A new deputy head was appointed in September 2009. The senior management team has been strengthened and a newly qualified teacher appointed to replace retiring teachers. The Foundation Stage area has been refurbished. An ICT suite has been created and improved security fencing has been installed.

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation is detailed, accurate and honest. Clear priorities have been identified in the Religious Education and Collective Worship Improvement Plan. The governing body, headteacher and senior management team all share a vision for the future development of St. Gregory's. They have the experience, dedication and expertise to realise this vision. Therefore the capacity to improve is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in the written recording of learners' work to ensure that sufficient opportunities are given for all learners to produce their ideas and knowledge in a manner appropriate to their age and ability.
- Ensure that written tasks are suitably challenging in upper Key Stage 2.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are outstanding. The school has a clear and concise Mission Statement which was reviewed two years ago by the whole school community and approved by the learners in the school council. It is due for review in 2011. The aims of the Mission Statement permeate all aspects of the life of the school and are the forefront of all its policies. The knowledgeable governing body is well led by the chair. The governors are very much involved in the daily life of the school as helpers and as catechists giving good support to the school organised Sacramental Programme. The headteacher's reports to governors ensure that they are kept well informed of the provision. The monitoring and evaluation undertaken by the Religious Education co-ordinator and headteacher are reported to governors. The designated governor for Religious Education meets regularly with the Religious Education co-ordinator. There is a strong team ethic and commitment to the Catholicity of the school. Home, school and parish links are strong and attendance at assemblies continues to flourish. 3 teachers hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies or its equivalent qualification. The governing body is advised to encourage all teachers to acquire this qualification. The school involves itself in the wider community through its participation in a variety of activities and is committed to strengthening and extending these links.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Provision for collective worship is outstanding. The school has a policy statement for collective worship and prayer. Whole school Masses are held at the beginning and end of the year and on special feast days. The learners are fully involved in the readings, prayers and music at these celebrations. Family Masses are held on Sundays. Key stage assemblies are held each week. The weekly whole school assembly led by the headteacher, but involving learners from every class, is the "highlight" of the week for learners, parents and parishioners who attend in large numbers. Their comments in the Visitor/Assembly Book indicate how they appreciate and enjoy their participation. The assembly on Saints observed during the inspection was a genuine celebration, through prayers, readings, art and music, of a worshipping community, praising, thanking and petitioning God in a joyful and happy manner. Enthusiastic and melodious singing was a feature of the learners' participation. To complete the assembly the achievements of learners in and out of school were acknowledged and praised. Class collective worship is a feature of the provision. The session attended during the inspection involved all present in a genuine spiritual experience. Teachers' lesson plans indicate opportunities for collective worship linked to the Religious Education curriculum or liturgical year. In all observations of learners at prayer they were reverent and respectful. Prayer is central to the life of the school. Learners are familiar with the traditional prayers of the church but are happy to share their spontaneous prayers with others. A detailed file of Mass and assembly celebrations is kept for reference. The provision is fully inclusive as no learner is withdrawn from any aspect of collective worship. Other faith celebrations are included in assembly themes.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and standards in Religious Education overall are good. Learners enter the Foundation Stage with attainment well below national expectations. They make good progress and by the time they enter Key Stage 1 they are able to form simple letter shapes. This progress continues and by the end of Key Stage 1 they are able to write simple prayers and use good religious vocabulary when explaining their ideas. In Key Stage 2 this good progress is maintained. By the end of the key stage they are adept at making informed judgements on difficult ethical questions. The learners use appropriate religious vocabulary when discussing their knowledge. However in some Key Stage 2 classes learners are given insufficient opportunities to record their ideas in extended pieces of writing. Suitably challenging tasks are not always given to the more able learners. The school is encouraged to continue to address these issues. The learners are very involved in the school through the school council and in their role as ECO warriors. They take their responsibilities as protectors of the environment very seriously. They raise money for several charities locally, nationally and internationally giving generously in their support of an orphanage in Kenya or in a "save the dolphins" campaign. They are very aware of their responsibility to care for the less fortunate in society.

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. Observations during the inspection confirm this judgement. However an example of outstanding teaching and learning was observed with the oldest learners. Lessons are well planned with a clear focus. Teachers demonstrate good questioning skills which encourage further thought and development of ideas. Resources are carefully selected and used effectively to enhance the learning process. Technology is used by both teachers and learners. An outstanding lesson involved an excellent discussion on the ethics involved in stem cell experiments. Teachers have a good knowledge of the Religious Education curriculum and evaluate outcomes for learners. Work is generally well marked with constructive comments made for how work could be improved. Assessments are undertaken on a regular basis and a comprehensive file kept of levelled and moderated work. Termly assessments identify which learners are on target to achieve the appropriate level for their age and ability. Learners have good attitudes to their learning. They listen attentively to the teachers and other class members responses to questions. They are keen to have their say and enthusiastic about their work. When given a written task to complete they settle down quickly and quietly. They work well in pairs and in small discussion groups. Those learners who need extra help are well supported by the teaching assistants. The learners' behaviour at all times is good.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The Religious Education curriculum is good with some outstanding features. All lessons are planned using the *REvision 2000* guidelines. The time allocated to curriculum Religious Education meets both national and diocesan requirements. The school has an up to date policy statement on curriculum Religious Education. The diocesan World Faiths scheme is used to supplement the school's "Diversity Week" when other faiths and cultures are introduced to the learners through, food, music and art. The school welcomes visitors to share their faith experiences with the learners. The school intends to develop links with other faiths through visits to different places of worship. The Salford Youth Mission has lead retreats in school. The school is planning a three day retreat with the Schoenstatt fathers for 2011. The Wednesday Word is sent home with the learners each week. The quality of the provision for collective worship, together with the school organised Sacramental Programme and the support of the parishioners and the parish priest, all impact positively on the Religious Education curriculum. No learner is withdrawn from curriculum Religious Education lessons. The Religious Education curriculum makes a significant contribution to the successful development of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness of the learners.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education are outstanding. The Religious Education co-ordinator has been in post five years. With the support of the headteacher she has developed an effective system for the monitoring of the teachers' planning, the scrutiny of the learners' workbooks and how work is marked and assessed. The headteacher also observes lessons. The co-ordinator keeps detailed records of all her monitoring and governors are kept informed of the ongoing provision in the headteacher reports. The co-ordinator meets regularly with the designated governor for Religious Education who is also a parish catechist. She attends diocesan meetings for her own continuing professional development and to support colleagues in new initiatives. The development plan for Religious Education and collective worship has clear and realistic priorities for further development. Resources have been audited and catalogued and are very well organised by the co-ordinator. They are plentiful and of a good quality reflecting the priority Religious Education has at St. Gregory's. Governors regularly visit the school to attend celebrations and assemblies. Displays throughout the school clearly reflect its faith life.