

SALFORD DIOCESE
INSPECTION REPORT



HOLY TRINITY
ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Halifax Road Brierfield Nelson Lancashire BB9 5BL

Inspection date January 2008
Reporting Inspector Mrs. Pamela Parden
Inspection carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School Catholic Primary
URN 119652
Age range of pupils 4-11
Number on roll 102
Appropriate authority The governing body
Chair of Governors Mrs. S. Barnes
Headteacher Mr. J. Connolly
Religious Education Co-ordinator Mr. J. Connolly
Date of previous inspection October 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	3	
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	
The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements		

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Holy Trinity is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school in the Diocese of Salford. It has recently been linked to the parish of St John Southworth. The school is situated on the edge of the town of Brierfield. Housing ranges from a variety of privately owned homes to tenanted council property. There is a wide socio-economic mix amongst learners whose ages range from 4 to 11 years. The admission number is 15. There are 102 learners on roll. 84 are Catholics and 4% are eligible for free school meals. 11 children have special educational needs. 2 are on roll with School Action Plus funding. 1 has a statement of special educational need and there is 1 looked after child. 4 of the 5 teachers (80%) are Catholics. 4 teachers have the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies or equivalent and 1 Catholic teacher is currently studying for this. There is a part-time teaching assistant in each class with 2 support assistants in Key Stage 2. The school clerk works part time.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

Holy Trinity is a good school. The management and leadership work towards ensuring that it provides a welcoming and calm environment in which all know they are respected, cared for and safe. The Mission Statement, "to go forward together in Christ respecting our neighbour and striving for excellence" underpins the school's positive attitudes and values and reflects its ethos. The school provides a Catholic education whilst embracing pupils of diverse cultures and faiths with no barriers existing. Staff, governors and parents work well together to promote the spiritual, moral, social, academic and cultural development of learners. Teachers are dedicated and hard working. They strive to help the school to grow and develop, to maintain high standards and to provide the best possible outcomes for the learners. This is evident in the quality of teaching and learning, class prayer and worship and the strength of relationships. Staff are committed to their own development and to ensuring that all aspects of the curriculum and school life provide for individual learners' needs.

Improvement since the last inspection

The key issues from the last Section 23 Inspection in November 2003 have been addressed. The prayer and worship policy has been reviewed and revised. It includes the intention to, "provide an opportunity to express in various ways the values that underline the school's outlook and aims to share experiences and the generation of new thoughts and actions". As yet no written plans exist for daily assemblies or collective worship. Learners were not involved in the preparation and planning of the assembly observed during inspection and teaching staff only attend 1 of the 5 assemblies per week. Each half term the headteacher, as Religious Education co-ordinator, scrutinises teachers' planning and learners' written work. He observes lessons giving both oral and written feedback..

Capacity to improve

This is a school with four classes. The headteacher knows well the strengths of all staff and uses these to their full potential. The governors are very supportive, involved, challenging and constructive. The school recognises the advantage of assessment and recording procedures to inform future judgments on standards of attainment and learning and teachers are currently working well on introducing this in the school using the diocesan guidelines. The school has good capacity to improve but there is, however, no written development plan for Religious Education. Following the closure of the local parish church the links with St John Southworth parish have been undertaken with understanding, sensitivity and co-operation. It is now well integrated.

What the school should do to improve further

- Formalise the planning of whole school assemblies and enhance them with more involvement of class teachers and children.
- Complete the introduction of assessment and recording of pupils' attainment in Religious Education to inform future planning and teaching.
- Construct an agreed development plan for Religious Education.
- Further develop the formal arrangements for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in curriculum Religious Education.

THE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are good. This reflects the impact of the Mission Statement drawn up by governors and staff and the general written aims of the school. Governors are very supportive, challenging and constructive and work well in their committees. They are involved in shaping the life and direction of the school and are committed to its Catholicity, promoting racial awareness and inclusion. The chair visits school regularly and, with the Religious Education link governor and other governors, attends some assemblies, class liturgies and Masses. All governors have been involved in the review of the Religious Education and prayer and worship policies. The parish priest makes valuable input into all issues especially those related to the spiritual life of the school. The high profile of the headteacher influences much of its life. With the support of the deputy head and staff he ensures that the distinctive nature of the Catholic life of the school is maintained. Community cohesion is promoted and good provision is made for the spiritual, moral and cultural development needs of each individual. All staff are committed to the school's values and high standards and work hard to ensure the best possible provision for learners in order to maximise their potential. They contribute well as a team with shared input and each exercising numerous responsibilities. Learners act as School Council members, monitors, buddies or playground pals. Home-school links are good. As a result of much close liaison with the parish priest, and through the success of the Sacramental Programme, good links now exist with the parish of St John Southworth since the closure of the school's local church. Links with other local Catholic primary schools are strong.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The quality of collective worship is satisfactory and sometimes good. Much curriculum time is allocated to this. The headteacher takes half hourly assemblies each day related to his chosen topics - one with each key stage and four with the whole school. One includes hymn practice and Friday's assembly includes celebrating special achievements and awards which staff and parents attend. No formal documentation or planning relating to assemblies was available during inspection. The school needs to consider how these assemblies achieve its written aim to "ensure worship is relevant to all ages" and how they could be enhanced by involvement of class teachers and more inclusion of learners in preparation and presentation. The school would now benefit from a clear, structured, written plan for school assemblies to engage all staff. This would enhance the quality of collective worship across the whole school as well as providing opportunities for links with the Religious Education curriculum and extension work in class. The assembly observed invited learners to compare heroes of film or television with real-life heroes and included a short reflection, traditional prayers and a hymn. The pupils' behaviour was outstanding and they were reverent and respectful. Classes pray at set times during each day and each has a well prepared, weekly prayer service. On these occasions the learners input is encouraged and they have the opportunity to explore different types of prayer. Occasionally these are presented to the whole school. Masses and liturgies take place to which parents are invited. Prayer is an important part of school life and influences learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is a prayer focal point in each classroom which sometimes relates to the liturgical year or a curricular theme.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are good and in one class outstanding. The creative, well organised environment for the Foundation Stage provides a very happy, challenging start to school life and learning. In the lesson observed on Baptism resources were well used and presented and all learners were totally involved. They enjoyed making fruit kebabs for a party. Their responses showed good understanding of the importance of family and of Jesus in their lives and God's love for them. All teachers' planning is based on the diocesan scheme REvision 2000. Throughout the key stages each class contains two age groups so the programmes of study for the two years are alternated. Recently introduced assessment of learner's work and the tracking of individual's progress are based on the level descriptors. Most learners achieve well and meet or surpass the required set targets. They know about and understand the beliefs and values of the Catholic faith and traditions and can relate this to their own lives in following Jesus' example. They learn about, and respect, other faiths and cultures. During inspection learners were seen to enjoy their lessons especially when appropriate and challenging tasks were set and good use was made of resources. The learners are confident in response and demonstrate good use of appropriate vocabulary and terms. Behaviour is outstanding with structures in place to promote, encourage and reward this positively. Written work is good and there is obvious good knowledge of the Bible. Through prayers, good works and a fund-raising they show concern for others in need both in school, the local community and beyond.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning is mostly good. In one lesson observed it was outstanding. All teachers have a secure understanding of REvision 2000. Weekly planning is thorough but there is some variation in the planning format which does not easily facilitate the monitoring process. With two year groups in all classes except Foundation an alternating, rolling programme is in place. Observations and evidence show that most teachers set well prepared, appropriate tasks to challenge and motivate the mixed ages and abilities. Very good use is made of teaching assistants working with groups to achieve the best possible outcomes. A good supply of quality learning resources is used. Teachers' marking is helpful, positive and constructive in nearly all cases. Recently introduced assessment procedures inform teachers of the levels of attainment reached by each child. These are to be used in future to ensure continuity and progression for each individual. The school is encouraged to continue with this work. Classroom management and organisation is good. Behaviour is outstanding with learners being co-operative, attentive and involved. They clearly enjoy the varied and interesting teaching styles and the experiences and tasks offered. They were observed to work well together, share ideas and respect each other's views. Questions related to John Bosco asked by learners in Class 4 and answers by individuals on the 'hot spot' showed very good use of appropriate language, understanding and confidence. Parents are proud of the school and happy with the children's achievements. They are informed twice each year of work to be covered in Religious Education. Some parents help in school and there is an active Parents' Association.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The quality of the Religious Education curriculum is good overall although the time allocated for curriculum Religious Education falls a little short of the 10% diocesan and national requirements. The recently reviewed written policy includes the aims to ensure religion "plays a major role within the school's development plan" and "is the whole ethos of the school". At present the development of assessment and recording is taking place successfully but Religious Education does not feature in the written school action plans. The school should now consider drawing up an agreed development plan for Religious Education. All teachers follow the REvision 2000 guidelines and this is supplemented by the use of additional books, artefacts and audio-visual aids. Teachers incorporate into their teaching their own personal faith and experiences to enhance learning and to increase the spiritual and moral development of the children. The school uses cross-curricular links and the schemes of work on World Religion and Peoples of Other Faiths to help learners to understand and respect other faiths and cultures. A community representative works with the school on "Building Bridges". Relationships throughout the school, growing links with the parish and contact with the Pendle Network Community and the Pendle Family of Catholic Schools all impact positively on the development of the Religious Education curriculum in the school. The headteacher attends relevant diocesan meetings or courses and informs staff of curriculum developments. In line with the Pendle schools' Mission Statement, the staff aim to offer all learners opportunities to realise their full potential in a "secure, supportive and stimulating environment in which justice, tolerance, forgiveness and generosity are practiced".

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education are good. The headteacher is the co-ordinator. The key issues from the previous inspection have been addressed. Systems for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning have been put in place. The headteacher is constantly around the school and aware of activities taking place. Each half term he scrutinises teachers' planning and learners' written work and observes lessons. His continuous assessment and knowledge of progress and achievement results from observations as he goes around the school but are not recorded. Further developing the more formal arrangement for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in Religious Education would certainly assist the school as it continues to move forward. The school is committed to the importance and quality of Religious Education as central to its whole ethos. The new diocesan assessment and recording guidelines have been introduced this school year and are progressing well. Staff realise the recorded results of attainment levels for each child will have an impact on future planning. The governors are very supportive. Some visit school on occasions. The chair and Religious Education link governor are involved with monitoring developments in Religious Education. All governors were involved in drawing up the written policies for prayer and worship and Religious Education. They are well informed and concerned to ensure the high priority of the school's Catholicity. The parish priest is vice chair of governors. He is a regular visitor and is actively instrumental in helping the school to move on.