

INSPECTION REPORT ON THE PROVISION OF DENOMINATIONAL EDUCATION

School name: St. Maria Goretti's Catholic Primary School
 Address: Gamull Lane, Ribbleton, Preston, PR2 6SJ
 Unique Reference Number: 119608
 Name of Headteacher: Mrs Diane Gallagher
 Date of Inspection: 25th November 2009
 Name of Inspector: Mrs Barbara Gardner
 Type of school: Catholic Primary
 Age range of pupils: 4 - 11
 Number on roll: 163
 Appropriate authority: The Governing Body
 Chair of Governors: Vacancy
 Religious Education Co-ordinator: Mrs L Milne
 Date of previous inspection: 26th November 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	2	
The quality of Collective Worship	2	
Religious Education - Achievement and standards	3	
Religious Education - Quality of provision	2	
Religious Education - Pupils' needs and interest	2	
Religious Education – Curriculum leadership and management	2	
Community Cohesion	2	
<i>The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements</i>		

Information about the school:

St Maria Goretti is a voluntary aided Catholic primary school serving the parish of St Maria Goretti in Ribbleton, Preston. There are currently 163 pupils on roll of whom 78 are baptised Catholics and a very small minority are from other world faiths. The majority of pupils transfer to Corpus Christi Catholic High School. After a period of instability in leadership and staffing the school now has an effective senior leadership team and a permanent and stable staffing structure in place.

Overall Effectiveness of the school

The overall effectiveness of the school is good. There is a strong leadership team in place, which has been very effective in building on the good practice, which was just beginning to develop at the last inspection. Although the deputy headteacher is relatively new to the school she is a very experienced subject leader. She works well with the headteacher and is respected by governors. Monitoring is thorough and is followed by appropriate action planning and professional development, which in turn is beginning to impact on standards.

Collective Worship is valued and enjoyed by pupils and staff alike. Pupils talk about the importance prayer has for them and their enjoyment of the different forms it can take.

Standards are satisfactory and children make good progress from a very low baseline. Progress is achieved as a result of teachers having high expectations of their pupils and a good understanding of their different needs.

The leadership team have a good understanding of their local community and they are constantly looking for ways to develop this understanding in their pupils whilst at the same time reaching out to communities both nationally and internationally.

Improvement since the last inspection

The school is making good progress in implementing actions for improvement in the relatively short period since the last inspection, which was only 12 months ago. During that time all staff have continued to work to build on the good practice that was highlighted in the last report. They have made the following progress:

1. To raise standards further in curriculum religious education by ensuring that there is sufficient challenge and that time is given to allow meaningful learning to take place.

Staff are aware of the need to challenge the more able. Evidence from inspection shows that this area is beginning to be addressed and will be consolidated further by INSET planned for the spring term. The current timetable allows sufficient time for meaningful learning to take place and the increasing use of cross-curricular links further enhances learning.

2. Establish base lines for each key stage to improve the monitoring of pupils' progress and standards attained.

A baseline for reception has been established which is similar to the diocesan model but the school acknowledges that baseline for other key stages is a continuing area for development.

3. To develop pupils' opportunities to independently plan and lead worship at age appropriate levels.

Pupils are beginning to be involved at a very simple level and plans are in place to develop this further. The school has followed a clear action plan for Collective Worship, which has included staff training and the modelling of good examples of planning, by teachers for the children. Firm foundations are in place for children to start leading Collective Worship.

4. Governors should strengthen their monitoring of the Catholic ethos of the school and the standards attained by pupils in curriculum RE.

The RE governor is very involved in the school. He works closely with the RE subject leader and is kept informed of standards attained in curriculum RE. This information is shared with the whole governing body.

5. Extend the good working relationships established with the church and parish community to other communities across the local area.

The school is very aware of the community in which it is situated. They have developed very good links with their own parents and teaching staff can talk about the different community groups that they are encouraging the pupils to make links with. They have made links with the local community primary school to share funding and activities.

Capacity to improve

The school's capacity to improve is **good**. The headteacher makes an accurate self-evaluation of teaching and learning in RE and follows this with effective action planning. The subject leader's commitment to her role ensures that all staff are aware of the action plan and supported in implementing it. All governors are kept informed of the results of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in RE. The RE governor is very supportive and works closely with the subject leader with a focus on raising standards. Staff are also committed to raising standards.

What the school should do to improve further:

- Develop a tracking system based on an effective baseline assessment for each key stage in order to monitor the progress made and the standards achieved by individuals and different groups of pupils.
- Continue to develop pupils' leadership in Collective Worship.
- Continue the good work already started to make links with local groups so that pupils have a good understanding of Community Cohesion within their local area.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

Inspection supports the school's judgement that leadership and management of the school are **good**. The school motto, "shining with love, pride and success," which was developed with the children, reflects the school's ethos of nurturing and shared values, which underpin all areas of school life. The whole school community, under the strong leadership of the headteacher, share the same vision and commitment to developing the Catholic life of the school. They do this through their belief in the Gospel values and their enthusiasm and belief in the love of God.

The headteacher and the subject leader make an accurate self-evaluation of the schools strengths and areas for development and they have put in place an action plan which they monitor and evaluate regularly. Religious Education (RE) is an integral part of the whole school improvement plan and it is given priority in all areas of school life.

The headteacher and subject leader provide good quality resources for pupils and staff to enrich teaching and learning and Collective Worship.

Governors are kept informed of progress through both verbal and written reports from the headteacher and the subject leader. The school does not have a chair of governors at present but the newly appointed RE governor is working with the subject leader to support and challenge the school. All governors are supported by regular training from the headteacher and have their own section of the school website where they can be kept up to date and communicate easily with the school.

The school has worked hard to establish the good links that now exist with parents and with the parish. This is supported by the positive responses on the parental questionnaire

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Inspection supports the school's judgement that the quality of Collective Worship is **good**.

The school places a high value on developing meaningful Collective Worship. A variety of artefacts and methods of presentation are used for worship. Pupils respond well to the different opportunities and experiences provided by the school. Staff have had recent training on worship and the impact can be seen in teachers' plans. During inspection the pupils demonstrated that they are respectful and able to take part in quiet reflection. They have a good understanding of the different forms of prayer, formal and informal, and they are given opportunities for personal prayer in their newly opened prayer room.

During inspection the theme for both Key Stages 1 and 2 worship was preparing for Christmas but both were different and appropriate to the age of the children. In both cases pupils were actively involved and enjoyed their worship.

The prayer room is a resource, which is valued by pupils, staff and parents. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their visits to the prayer room with their classes and as individuals and the parents gave their support by making the colourful cushions.

Each classroom has a focus area for worship, which includes contributions from the pupils.

There is a growing number of parents sharing the school's worship in school and in church. Provision for Collective Worship makes a valuable and significant contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

The school judges achievement and standards to be good however inspection finds them to be **satisfactory** at this time. Discussion with pupils, scrutinising pupils' work and examining the portfolio of moderated work provides evidence for this judgement.

The new RE co-ordinator is using the school's own baseline assessment for Reception. This is very similar to the model offered by the diocese and it gives a good basic view of children's knowledge and understanding when they come in to school. This assessment shows that the attainment of these children is below age related expectations on entry. However pupil interviews, scrutiny of work and monitoring of planning during inspection shows that pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage One and in Key Stage Two so that by the end of both key stages standards are broadly in-line with age related expectations. Training has been given on assessing and levelling pupils' work and plans are in place to continue this on a regular basis. As yet there is no tracking system in place to allow the school to monitor the progress of all pupils. Once this is in place, it will allow the school to make more accurate judgments about achievement and attainment and trends over time.

The school expressed a concern that there is more emphasis on learning about religion (Attainment Target One), than on learning from religion (Attainment Target Two), however evidence from inspection shows that there is a good balance between AT1 and AT2.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - QUALITY OF PROVISION

Inspection supports the school's judgement that the quality of provision for RE is **good**. Teachers relate well to the pupils and share their high expectations with them. There is a definite focus on raising attainment throughout the school and teaching is good at both Key Stage One and Key Stage Two. Teachers are committed and enthusiastic and their teaching is creative and imaginative and is based on the teachers' own assessments of the needs of their pupils. The support for pupils with special education needs (SEN) is good and well-informed teaching assistants make a significant contribution in this area by sharing the teachers' planning and supporting their pupils with differentiated activities.

There is clear evidence of differentiation in planning but the school acknowledges that provision for more able pupils remains an area for further development. Other evidence, including discussions with staff, suggests that this aspect of differentiation is already developing. Teachers are more confident in their use of the scheme, "The Way, the Truth and the Life" and are increasingly confident both in adapting it and supplementing it with other resources to meet the needs of pupils.

The school works well with outside agencies such as the Lancashire Inclusion Service (LEIS), representatives of the health service and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) as well as parents to provide additional support for all pupils.

Provision for RE in the Foundation Stage is **good** with a good mix of teacher led and child initiated experiences.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION – PUPILS' NEEDS AND INTEREST

Inspection supports the school's view that this aspect of the school's work is **good**. Pupils are enthusiastic about their RE and they have a good attitude to learning. RE is the favourite subject of many pupils. The curriculum offered and the use of a variety of teaching methods meet the needs of pupils well. During the inspection pupils in Year 2/3 were observed learning about the Trinity and a variety of well planned teaching methods and imaginative, independent activities ensured that the pupils made good progress in their understanding of this difficult topic. In Year 5/6 evidence from discussions with pupils and scrutiny of their work shows that imaginative and varied teaching enables them to move forward in their understanding of the Kingdom of God.

Pupils work well with others and throughout the school; they demonstrate a very caring attitude to others. During inspection this was particularly evident in the care that the older pupils gave to the younger ones and the acceptance of the children in Year 2/3 of a child with severe special needs.

The timetable for RE is arranged to maximise impact and the use of cross-curricular links to consolidate learning was evident from discussions with staff.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION – CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Inspection supports the school's judgement that curriculum leadership and management are **good**. The subject leader is enthusiastic and committed and her senior leadership role ensures that RE has a high profile in school. She is very aware of the strengths and areas for development in her subject, has a clear sense of direction and high expectations for standards. The subject leader and the headteacher use the process of self-evaluation well to monitor progress and to draw up a clear action plan, which is part of the school improvement plan. The subject leader is very effective in sharing this with staff, supporting them as they implement it and monitoring the impact on teaching, learning and standards. The action plan is regularly reviewed and updated.

Staff believe that the improvement in all aspects of RE is due to the support that they are given by the subject leader. Training is valued at all levels and there is regular whole school moderation of RE, which is used as a development tool for teaching and learning. Two members of staff, including the subject leader, are undertaking training for Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS).

The subject leader works closely with the RE governor to ensure that governors are kept up to date through written and verbal reports on progress and standards in RE.

COMMUNITY COHESION

Inspection supports the schools' judgement that the school's work on community cohesion is **good**.

The values of the mission statement are apparent in all areas of school life and are shown particularly in the schools support not only for the pupils, many of whom come from challenging backgrounds, but also for their families. Relationships between all members of the school community are very good at all levels. Staff support each other and pupils demonstrate tolerance and a very caring attitude to one another. Pupils are taught to appreciate and value diversity and difference.

The headteacher is very effective in making the school an important part of the community and she is very aware of the need to teach her pupils about cultural diversity. In order to do this they have provided resources, planned visits and invited people from different groups to visit and talk to the pupils.

Not only is the community welcomed into the school but the school is also aware of the need for the pupils to relate to the different communities within their local area.

The school has good links with other schools in the area and the headteacher has initiated links with schools in Stoke and on the Fylde coast, which gives the children the opportunity to understand the different lives of pupils in our own country.

Pupils learn about life in other countries through theme weeks and there have also been examples of staff from other countries visiting the school and working with the pupils such as a teacher from Pakistan who came to work with children in the Foundation Stage.

The involvement of all sections of the school community in supporting two children in Romania is excellent. Not only is the school involved in fundraising but the children also have links with a school in Braille and there is a Reach Romania committee of children to keep people informed of progress. The two schools communicate in writing and they share examples of work and artefacts relevant to their culture.

Staff use the pupils' work on Fairtrade and for charities such as CAFOD to make good links with issues such as equality and these links have a positive impact on children's learning and attitudes.