

**SALFORD DIOCESE**  
**INSPECTION REPORT**



**ST SEBASTIAN'S**  
**ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
**Douglas Green Pendleton Salford M6 6ET**

Inspection date November 2007

Reporting Inspector Mrs. J. Schofield

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

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Type of School	Catholic Primary
URN	105963
Age range of pupils	3-11
Number on roll	128
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of Governors	Rev. Canon L. Houlihan
Headteacher	Mr Eugene McDermott
Religious Education Co-ordinator	Mr. Eugene McDermot
Date of previous inspection	March 2003

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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	2	
The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements		

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

The school is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school situated in the Pendleton district of Salford and serving the parish of St Sebastian. Pupils are drawn from an area of high levels of both social and economic disadvantage. It is a small school with 128 pupils on roll including a Nursery class. There are currently 19 pupils in the school who live outside the parish. Attainment of many pupils on entry to the Nursery is often below average in social and communication skills. The age range of pupils is from 3 to 11 years. The school's admission number is 21. 86 of the pupils (67%) are baptised Catholics. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is 50%. The school has identified 18 pupils as having special educational needs. 2 pupils have a statutory statement of special educational need. All of the 7 full time teaching staff are of the Catholic faith.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

St Sebastian's is a good Catholic school with some outstanding features. The school's Mission Statement is displayed in the main areas of the building. The school's inclusive ethos is a strong foundation for the happy environment in which all members of the community are nurtured. Good relationships between the staff and pupils are a strength of the school family as the worth and self esteem of everyone is recognised and encouraged. The spiritual, moral, and social and development of learners is good. Clear planning and effective teaching together with high quality assemblies and classroom worship ensure good support for the Religious Education curriculum. Pupils are well motivated and behaviour is good. From Foundation Stage to the end of Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress. The headteacher has accurately assessed the leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school to be outstanding. Inspection evidence gathered also indicates the quality of collective worship to be outstanding.

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

Since the last inspection the school has undergone a number of changes in staff personnel. A new co-ordinator for Religious Education has recently been appointed. The key issues raised in the last Section 23 Inspection have been addressed in full. Systems for the observation of teaching and learning are in place but not yet fully developed. Assessment opportunities and activities have been developed but the levelling of pupils' work is not yet fully linked with diocesan assessment materials. There is a strong leadership team supporting the headteacher in the management of the school. This team make a positive impact on the strength of support for their colleagues. Governors and parents are well-informed regarding curriculum provision and the progress of pupils.

### **Capacity to improve**

The school's self-evaluation is comprehensive. The governors and headteacher have a shared vision for the ongoing development of the school. The strong leadership team is committed to the continuing development of all aspects of the Catholicity of the school. There is good evidence in the teaching and prayer and worship that all members of the school community are fully aware of the goals the school is aiming to achieve. The school has good capacity for further improvement

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

- Further develop the use of the Salford diocese assessment materials in order to create a portfolio of examples of the levels at which pupils are working.
- Continue to support the new Religious Education co-ordinator in the development of her role.

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

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are outstanding. All aspects of the daily life and work of the school are a true reflection of its Mission Statement. A children's version of the statement is displayed within the school. The leadership team promotes a positive ethos based on Gospel values in which staff, governors and parents work together to ensure pupils develop to their full potential in a true Christian environment. The parish priest is a regular and welcome visitor in the school playing an important role in the religious life of the pupils. As chair of governors he meets regularly with the headteacher. The governors are well informed on aspects of Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school through headteacher reports and their presence at assemblies and religious celebrations. Their shared vision for the ongoing development of the Catholic life of the school is reflected in the appointment of committed Catholic teachers. Good relationships exist between the home, school and parish family and are a strength. Partnership with parents is further encouraged through newsletters, parent evenings and good information and reporting regarding the progress of their children. Parents are invited to share in school Masses, assemblies and liturgical celebrations. The school maintains good links with the diocesan advisors. School staff, with support from the governing body, play a leading role in the preparation of pupils for the Sacraments of Initiation and extend school links into the community through the support of various local and world wide charities

## **THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

The provision for collective worship in the school is outstanding. Opportunities for prayer and worship are carefully planned, organised, celebrated and recorded. The rich and meaningful opportunities for worship that were observed during inspection are an integral part of the pupils' prayer life. In collective worship the pupils prayed with reverence and respect during opportunities for quiet reflection. This demonstrated a growing awareness of the importance of prayer in their daily lives. Each classroom has a focus area for prayer and worship. Pupils' work reflecting the topics they have studied is well displayed. An act of collective worship in Year 4 focused on giving thanks to God for all that was good in their lives. Recognising the presence of God in their midst pupils gathered to the quiet Taize music "O Lord listen to my prayer." Following a reading of Psalm 39 the group reflected on the might and mystery of God. The teacher and pupils read out their prayers which were then pinned to the class prayer board. Reminding the children of the many ways we can pray to God the worship concluded with a hymn accompanied by recorders. Each child received a prayer card to help him or her remember God's gift of friendship. A whole school assembly led by the headteacher was an opportunity to recall the many people killed in wartime and also the school's recent loss in the death of a dinner lady. Pupils understood God was always present in their lives even at times of worry or sadness and sang His words in the hymn "I will be with you" Following readings of prayers and poems the assembly concluded praising God singing "How great is our God". Opportunities to share worship with the school and parish family contribute to promoting a living Christian faith. No pupils are withdrawn from collective worship.

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

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education are good. The level of attainment when pupils enter the Nursery is below average in social and communication skills. Progress and achievement in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is good. By the end Key Stage 2 progress is very good. At the end of both Key Stages standards are in line with those expected in the diocesan programme of work. In all lessons observed learners were able to build on their prior knowledge and attainment. They were always attentive listeners who responded well to questioning and participated enthusiastically in group or class discussions. Teachers set activities to suit the age and ability of their pupils and used support staff well to help learners achieve at an appropriate level. By the end of Key Stage 1 learners are beginning to write short sentences of independent work. In Key Stage 2 oral work in discussions is very good. Well presented independent writing continues to develop as pupils record their work in a variety of forms. In Nursery the children were able to recall their recent visit to the church and draw pictures of things they had seen. Year 6 pupils identified Old Testament characters chosen by God for a special purpose. They understood that their own baptism was a sign that they had become a chosen one of God. As they move through the school learners grow in their awareness of the beliefs and values of their faith and are able to relate them to their own life experiences.

## **THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

The quality of teaching and learning overall is good with some outstanding features in both key stages. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and use a range of techniques and resources to encourage and support learning and meet the needs of all learners. Effective support staff have a positive impact on the behaviour of the pupils. Praise and encouragement are a strong feature of teaching resulting in learners achieving well. Lesson plans identify clear learning objectives and teaching strategies but not always any evaluation of teaching or pupils' achievement. Assessment tasks from *Revision 2000* are completed each half term. However the diocesan assessment materials are not yet fully in use. The school is encouraged to develop further *its* work of assessment in order to determine the level at which a pupil is working. Well organised classrooms are bright and stimulating learning environments with colourful displays of pupils' work. A very good example of teaching occurred in the Year 2 class. The young learners recalled the occasion when God spoke to Moses from the burning bush making it a "holy place" Individually they gathered round their prayer table and each one called a further pupil who responded with the words "Here I am" Sitting quietly they were encouraged to offer to Jesus the thoughts and feelings they had experienced that day and in the stillness listen to God's response. Many pupils volunteered to share with the class what they felt God wanted them to do. Reinforcing the point of the importance of listening to God the pupils heard and understood the story of Samuel and Eli through a well dramatised story.

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

The curriculum for Religious Education is good. The Salford diocesan guidelines are firmly established in the school and supplemented by activities relating to the liturgical year. Time allocated to religious lessons is broadly in line with national and diocesan requirements. Staff are knowledgeable and confident in the consistency of their delivery of *REvision 2000*. They plan their lessons well and ensure that quality time allows pupils to produce work of a good standard. Teaching assistants play an important role supporting teachers and pupils within the classroom. The purchase of good resources for use with information communication technology would give additional valuable support to the delivery of the curriculum. School Masses together with assemblies and liturgical celebrations have a positive impact in supporting, enriching and extending the Religious Education curriculum offered to the pupils. The study of World Religions at Key Stage 2, although linked to other curriculum areas, is not yet fully developed. Staff from the school play a leading role in the preparation of pupils for the Sacramental Programme. No pupils have been withdrawn from curriculum Religious Education.

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

The leadership and management of Religious Education are good. Working closely together the headteacher and the parish priest have a shared vision for the on-going development of curriculum Religious Education as a priority affecting the life and work of the school. Headteacher reports to governors ensure they are well informed of Religious Education matters. The leadership team work hard to ensure that progress and the development of the curriculum are frequently reviewed. During the long term sickness of the previous co-ordinator the headteacher assumed the role. However a new Religious Education co-ordinator was appointed recently and is currently shadowing the headteacher before taking up the role next term. The school should continue to support her in the development of her role. Aiming to support the staff and further raise standards the monitoring of teaching and learning through observations has already been identified as a future area for development. Scrutiny of planning and learners' workbooks will also form part of this monitoring procedure. Assessment procedures are in place and with further development will help to give a clearer indication of pupils' knowledge and understanding. In-service training will encourage all staff to challenge their own practice and be adventurous and creative in their delivery of the curriculum. Governors are encouraged to visit the school for occasions of prayer and worship. The parish priest is a welcome visitor in school and plays an important and active role in the religious life of the school community.