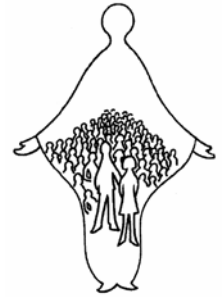


SALFORD DIOCESE
INSPECTION REPORT

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Padiham



Inspection date November 2006

Reporting Inspector Mrs. Joan Duffin

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

Type of School	Catholic Primary
Age range of pupils	3-11
Number on roll	252
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of Governors	Mr. J. Aston-Kilgallon
Headteacher	Mr. J. Carroll
Religious Education Co-ordinator	Mr. J. Carroll
Date of previous inspection	March 2002

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades 1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3 = Satisfactory 4 = Inadequate
Overall effectiveness of the school	1	
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	1	
Leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education	1	
<i>The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements</i>		

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic Primary School caters for pupils aged 3-11 in the parishes of St. John the Baptist and St. Philip the Apostle, Padiham. It serves an area with higher than usual levels of social and economic deprivation on the southern edge of Padiham near Burnley. The indicative admission number is 30 and there are 210 pupils on roll plus 42 part time pupils in the nursery. 206 of the 210 pupils (98%) are Catholics. 9.5% of pupils are eligible for free school meals and 26 pupils are on the special educational needs register. 5 have a statement of special educational needs. 10 of the 11 teachers (91%) are Catholics. 6 teachers have the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies or equivalent and 1 is studying for this.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St John's is an outstanding Catholic school. It has strong catholic values which establish a good climate for work in an atmosphere of love, peace and reconciliation. This judgement reflects the school's own evaluation of its Catholic life and provision for Religious Education. Collective Worship is outstanding in its range and quality. The standards attained in curriculum Religious Education are broadly in line with national expectations and pupils make good progress. Teaching is good and the curriculum is well planned. The formal monitoring of teaching and learning is well established and the development of levelling and standardisation of pupils' work will ensure standards are raised even higher, especially in written work. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. There is a strong Catholic ethos in the school and excellent provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development. The headteacher leads the school very well and has a clear view of its strengths and areas for development. The loving, caring relationships between all members of the school community are a great strength of the school. Parents are very happy with the school as exemplified by the tremendous response to the questionnaire sent out by the school.

Improvement since the last inspection

Following the last Section 23 inspection in March 2002 the school was judged to very successful in promoting pupils' spiritual and moral development and in providing good opportunities for collective worship. It needed to improve its support for less able pupils and to develop the moderation of pupils' work. Since then the school has responded well to the issues raised in the last inspection. The headteacher has raised awareness of the need to make the curriculum accessible to all and has implemented an effective system of monitoring and evaluation.

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation is mostly accurate. The headteacher, staff and governors are committed to improvement and Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school have an appropriate place in the School Improvement Plan. The headteacher has a clear understanding of the direction the school should take and the senior management team, staff and governors are committed to development. There is therefore good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the standards of writing in curriculum Religious Education by the further development of standardisation and levelling of pupils' work.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are outstanding. The Mission Statement, with its simplified version for the children of “Love one another”, can be traced through the school’s aims, policies and expectations. This comes from the close involvement of the governing body and senior management team who understand its importance and relevance to the school. The governing body fulfils its role well appointing Catholic teachers where possible and encouraging them to obtain the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. The parish priest, who is also the designated Religious Education governor, is a frequent and welcome visitor to the school. The headteacher has a clear vision of the nature of the Catholic school and promotes the Catholic life of the school very effectively. The religious life of the school is represented appropriately in staff training and has an appropriate place in the School Improvement Plan. All staff fully support the opportunities for prayer and worship provided for pupils and uphold the Catholic ethos in all they do. Effective and efficient systems have been established to record and monitor aspects of the Catholic life of the school such as liturgical celebrations.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Provision for collective worship in the school is outstanding in respect of frequency, variety and quality. Whole school Masses and Liturgy of the Word are celebrated regularly. Class Masses are prepared and presented by the pupils and enhanced by music and the children’s own prayers. The school’s policy outlines the many and varied opportunities for learners to worship appropriate to their age. This includes whole school and class assemblies and class devotions. Children voluntarily attend, in large numbers, Stations of the Cross and special early morning Masses during Lent as well as the Rosary and other devotions at different seasons. The excellent assembly observed during the inspection focused on “Ubuntu” – our love for one another helps us to become who we are. The children responded thoughtfully and prayed reverently. A painting of Christ by the father of one of the children was used effectively as a focal point. The “Seeds and Gardeners” initiative, between Reception and Year 6 pupils, has a spiritual as well as a practical aspect. The children are bonded together during a liturgy at the start of the year which is very well attended by parents and grandparents. The Golden Book is an intrinsic part of the children’s spiritual development. Altars and displays throughout the school are excellent and provide opportunities for reflection and celebration of the pupils’ work. The parish based Sacramental Preparation Programme is very well supported by the school and fully involves parents and families.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are good with some outstanding features. Pupils’ attainment on entry to school is below national expectations. Pupils make good progress in school and, by Year 6, attainment has risen to be broadly in line with national expectations. Learners with special educational needs are well supported and achieve well. Pupils are confident in discussion and respond to teachers’ questioning with good knowledge and understanding. Orally they have a secure knowledge of the life and teachings of Jesus and are able to apply his teaching to their own lives. The written work in the pupils’ books is of variable standard with the best showing very good ideas, a variety of genres and a standard at or above that expected nationally. Pupils’ own prayers are well written and presented and used in class or school devotions. The school now needs to raise the standard of pupils’ written work to that of their oral responses. The school provides very well for spiritual and moral development and the pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong. Their behaviour during the period of inspection was exemplary. They show respect for themselves and others and develop responsibility and leadership skills through initiatives such as “Seeds and Gardeners” and the school council. Their care for others is shown in their generous support for people less fortunate than themselves in projects such as CAFOD, St. Joseph’s Penny, Children in Need, Love in a Box and the parish based outreach to the world through Justice and Peace.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The inspector judges the quality of teaching and learning as good with some that is outstanding. The teaching observed was mostly outstanding. Lessons are well prepared and mostly conducted in a manner that sustains pupils' interest and enjoyment. This was seen in a lesson in the Foundation Stage where pupils learned the story of the first Christmas through a variety of appropriate activities including story telling, drama, music, art and role play. All pupils were involved and could relate the characters and events of the story. Work is provided which, in most cases, matches learners' needs with very good support for the less able pupils. Challenge for the more able pupils was seen in some classes - notably a lesson in Upper Key Stage 2 where pupils were able to explain the way in which the message God gave to the prophets is still relevant to problems in the world today. Teachers use a range of methods to capture and retain interest including the use of interactive whiteboards and mostly have high expectations of their pupils. Teachers ensure that pupils understand the purpose of the lesson and usually consolidate this with a plenary session at the end. The standard of the work observed in pupils' books was generally not of the same high standard as their oral work. In some cases teachers used levelling and instructive comments when marking pupils' books to enable them to raise the standard of their work. This was not seen generally throughout the school. The development of levelling and standardisation which has been started in the school will help to raise the standard of pupils' written work.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The Religious Education curriculum is outstanding. It meets national and diocesan requirements in respect of the time given to curriculum Religious Education. The curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of individual learners by challenging the more able and supporting the less able. Much emphasis has been placed on this aspect since the last inspection and it is now apparent in teachers' planning and in the lessons observed. Curriculum provision is enhanced by prayer and worship, visits to the church, the cross-curricular links and the extra-curricular provision. Teachers' planning, lessons and pupils' work are monitored, scrutinised and evaluated and effective feedback given. Assessment procedures are in place which ensure effective teaching and learning are taking place. The diocesan guidelines for the study of other faiths are used in Key Stage 2 and many opportunities are used throughout the school to promote understanding and respect for other faiths and cultures. The caring relationships between all members of the school community enrich the Religious Education curriculum. Curriculum provision makes an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development and is supported by strong links with the parents, parish and community. Excellent links with the associated high schools, St. Augustine's in Billington and Blessed Trinity in Burnley, and with Burnley Football Club further enhance curriculum provision. The clean, bright attractive rooms create a good working environment.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The school has assessed its leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education as outstanding and the inspector would agree with this judgement. The governors and headteacher have a clear, shared vision for Religious Education in the school. The chair of governors and the designated governor for Religious Education, who is also the parish priest, are frequent visitors to the school and provide support but also challenge. The headteacher sets a clear direction for curriculum Religious Education and this has led to significant improvements in its monitoring and evaluation. The effective and efficient systems established include monitoring of planning, scrutiny of pupils' work and observation of lessons. Assessment is an essential part of teachers' planning and teaching. Moderation and levelling of pupils' work is developing well. The school is encouraged in this work. The non-Catholic teacher is given effective support by the headteacher and other members of staff. The school is committed to creating an effective learning environment. Excellent relationships and equality of learning for all learners with "Love for one another" at the centre are great strengths of the school.