

SALFORD DIOCESE
INSPECTION REPORT

ST. ANNE'S
ROMAN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL
Glenfield Road
Heaton Chapel Stockport SK4 2QP



Inspection date March 2007
Reporting Inspector Mr. P. V. Foley
Inspection carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School Catholic Secondary
URN 106144
Age range of pupils 11-16
Number on roll 665
Appropriate authority The governing body
Chair of Governors Mrs. S. Clough
Headteacher Mrs. H. Kelly
Head of Religious Education Mr. J. Flynn
Date of previous inspection December 2005

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	
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

St Anne's is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic high school for boys and girls aged 11 to 16 within the Stockport Local Education Authority area serving the contributory parishes of St. Mary, St. Winifred, St Joseph and Our Lady in Stockport. The school is situated in a densely populated urban locality containing some significant areas of deprivation and draws pupils from a wide range of social backgrounds. It is a smaller than average school with an indicative admission number of 150. There are 665 pupils on roll of whom 561 are baptised Catholics. 19% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The number identified as having special educational needs is 130 and 18 have a statutory statement of special educational need. Overall pupils' attainment on entry to the school is close to the national average. 29 of the 42 teachers (70%) are Catholics.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St Anne's is an improving school providing a good Catholic education for its pupils. It is recovering well from earlier staffing difficulties at senior management level. The headteacher has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and a clear vision for the nature of the Catholic school. With good support from the senior leadership team she is now putting into effect the required measures to strengthen the school's Catholic ethos thus enabling it to live out the vision contained in its Mission Statement. The atmosphere for learning has improved and explicit measures aimed at strengthening the school's prayer life are now in place. Governors provide good support for the school and are developing their monitoring function. The school does miss the services of a chaplain but is still working to re-establish a chaplaincy role. A strength of the school's performance continues to be the quality of its provision for Religious Education. The department is effectively led and very well staffed. Good teaching leads consistently to above average examination results and the majority of pupils achieve well.

Improvement since the last inspection

The school is making good overall progress in addressing the issues arising from the last Section 48 Inspection in December 2005. Discussions relating to the establishing of a chaplaincy role within the school are ongoing and strategies to ensure improved provision for collective worship and the school's prayer life well in place. Due to the movement of parish clergy the nominated governor for Religious Education now needs to be replaced. Higher attaining students in Religious Education have been identified and there has been some reorganisation of teaching groups in Key Stage 4 in order to support them. It has not been possible for the school to complete all this work in the short time since the last inspection. At that time the school operated under a federation arrangement with another Catholic high school. The federation headteacher supported the acting headteacher of St. Anne's throughout the school year 2005/6. The acting headteacher was appointed as substantive headteacher from January 2006 and the federation was dissolved in August 2006.

Capacity to improve

Significant changes to the leadership and management of the school in recent times have led to greater stability and more effective improvement planning. The school's self-assessment is objective and honest. Capacity for further improvement is therefore good.

What the school should do to improve further

The school should move to complete the work identified at the last inspection as under:

- Strengthen the role of the governors in monitoring and directing the Catholic life of the school.
- Liaise with the diocese in order to explore ways of re-establishing an effective chaplaincy role within the school.
- Continue to implement and develop monitoring procedures to ensure that the school's expectations for collective worship and its prayer life are met consistently.
- Ensure that the highest attaining pupils in Religious Education lessons are fully stretched.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The inspection evidence supports the school's own view that the leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are now good. Governors are hard working and support the school. The governing body has recently been restructured and the religious life of the school is a regular agenda item at governors' meetings. Governors attend liturgical events at the school and take an active part in them. They are critical friends and provide both challenge and support to the school. The link governor for Religious Education has recently left and there is a need to appoint another governor to this role. It would be of benefit if the remit also included the Catholic life of the school in order to strengthen the governors' overall monitoring role and so support the mission of creating a "Catholic community which shares common values" and "meets people where they are on their faith journey". The headteacher leads by example, well illustrated by her successful introduction of morning prayer and reflection for staff. She, together with the recently constituted senior leadership team, have brought about a fresh emphasis on the spiritual and moral development of the learners to ensure that the school more fully lives out its Mission Statement. An example of this is the continuing work of the "Zone 44" centre which is making sure that pupils at risk of exclusion are now more likely to be successfully re-integrated into the full life of the school. They work hard to ensure that values inherent in the Mission Statement underpin all aspects of school life, are recognised by subject departments and are shared by all members of the school community. School improvement planning clearly reflects the school's fundamental Catholic values.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The quality of collective worship is improving and is now good. However the school is still without a chaplain and is encouraged to continue to liaise with the diocese in order to explore ways of re-establishing an effective chaplaincy role within the school. Notwithstanding there are many strong features in the school's provision. The staff pray together each morning. The Religious Education co-ordinator provides an assembly programme and a very well designed school prayer book which gives really good support to both Catholic and non Catholic form tutors in providing relevant daily prayer for pupils. Assemblies are planned to parallel the liturgical year. The school community prays together on a daily basis either in form time or in year assemblies. The provision for prayer and worship is now being monitored by the liturgy co-ordinator and heads of year. The school is encouraged to continue with this in order to ensure consistency throughout the school. The quality of liturgical celebration on Holy Days and special occasions such as the Year 7 Family Mass is appreciated and valued by parents and pupils. There is an increased level of pupil preparation for, and participation in, liturgical celebrations and the drama and music departments make significant contributions. Year 10 pupils have the opportunity to attend the annual retreat provided at Savio House. Relevant opportunities for prayer and reflection are included in the Religious Education curriculum and these make a valuable contribution to the school's prayer life.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are good. By the end of Key Stage 3 standards remain above average. The use of assessment tasks based on the diocesan levels of attainment shows that overall pupils are achieving well in relation to their ability. The assessment procedures are well used and give pupils an understanding of the level they have reached and what they need to do to improve. As noted at the last inspection pupils at the end of this key stage are well equipped to make good progress in their examination courses in Key Stage 4 because they are beginning to use their knowledge and understanding of their faith to make informed judgement on important issues. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils continue to reach overall above average standards and achieve well relative to their ability on entry to the school. This is supported by the fact that examination results have maintained an improving trend in recent years in both the A*-C and A*-G ranges at GCSE for both boys and girls. The most recent comparative information shows that pupils' performance in Religious Studies is better than in most other subjects and well above the school average for the higher grades. In 2006 a creditable 73% of pupils achieved grades A* to C in GCSE Religious Studies. The difference between boys' and girls' results was minor and boys' improvement in recent times is noteworthy. The school is encouraged to continue its work of ensuring that in Religious Education lessons the highest attaining pupils are fully stretched. In Religious Education lessons pupils are prepared well for life in a multicultural society through investigation of belief and practice of faith communities other than their own. They make a positive contribution to their own school and wider community especially through the school council. They contribute generously to a variety of local and national charities.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good and this is the basis for the good progress which pupils make as they move through the school. All the teachers are specialists in Religious Education and, as noted at the last inspection, are enthusiastic and industrious. Lessons are well planned and the teachers use a range of teaching styles to match curricular objectives with the needs of the learners. Activities are interesting and varied providing active participation in tasks which suits boys particularly well and has contributed significantly to their improved achievement in recent years. Increasingly pupils work in pairs or groups and a focus currently for the department is to develop further opportunities for the latter. Use is made of the assessment for learning process as an aid for the development of skills rather than the mere presentation of knowledge. In the best lessons teachers continue to ensure that pupils know what they are expected to learn and, at the conclusion, are able to reflect on how well they have done. The department applies the school wide behaviour for learning policy which contributes positively to the good behaviour of the learners. Relationships remain very good - an important factor in the learning process. Marking is regular and assessment tasks are used very well to ensure that pupils know what they need to do to improve. This has a positive effect on their motivation to succeed. Teachers know their pupils well and, in the mixed ability classes, ensure that they provide one to one assistance to pupils who have special educational needs.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The inspector agrees with the school that the Religious Education curriculum is good. It is broadly based and designed to promote learners' intellectual and religious development. It also makes a significant contribution to the learners' spiritual and moral development. 10% of curriculum time is allocated to Religious Education at both key stages as recommended by the Bishops of England and Wales. The Key Stage 3 curriculum is based on the Salford Diocesan guidelines and has been revised within the last year to include a study of Judaism in Year 8 and both Buddhism and Islam in Year 9. Schemes of work are well written to meet the needs of most groups of pupils. In Key Stage 4 all pupils are prepared for GCSE and, as noted above, with great success. The school intends to keep the Key Stage 4 examination syllabus under review as circumstances change. Opportunities for prayer and reflection are offered to the pupils at appropriate times during lessons. Within the Religious Education lessons pupils are also given appropriate opportunities to raise and consider Catholic and non-Catholic attitudes to issues which they may face in later adult life. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of visits to local places of worship of other denominations and through visiting speakers representing different faith communities. The Religious Education department is now making more use of information communication technology for both research and teaching and intends to develop this further.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education remains good. The head of department provides clear direction for its work and regular analysis of the subject's performance leads to continuing improvement in results, standards and the overall quality of provision. There is a clear agenda for continued improvement shared by all teachers who support each other well. Team work is good and this will be strengthened by the intended addition of peer observations to departmental lesson observations in order to identify and share good practice. As noted at the last inspection the hard working head of department has created a climate of self analysis leading by example so that teachers are keen to continually improve their practice. The headteacher provides clear and explicit support and the work of the department is well monitored by an identified member of the senior leadership team. This is good practice. Examination and test results are analysed annually and outcomes used effectively in planning. The department continues to have a well-deserved confidence in its own strengths and has met the targets for examination results set by the school in recent years. Since the last inspection the governors' monitoring of the department's work has improved through the nomination of a link governor for Religious Education. However this person has now left the governing body and the school is encouraged to find a replacement as soon as possible.