

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. JOSEPH'S ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Pot Hall Wilton Grove Heywood Rochdale OL10 2AA

Inspection date June 2010
 Reporting Inspector Mrs. Mary McGrail
 Inspection carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School Catholic Primary
 URN 105833
 Age range of pupils 4-11
 Number on roll 295
 Appropriate authority The governing body
 Chair of Governors Rev. Fr. Paul Daly
 Headteacher Mr. Anthony J. Gleeson
 Religious Education Co-ordinator Mrs. C. O'Sullivan
 Date of previous inspection December 2006

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	
<i>The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements</i>		

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Josephs is a Roman Catholic voluntary aided primary school in the Diocese of Salford. It serves the parish of St. Joseph in Heywood and is situated quite close to the town centre at a distance from the parish church. The majority of learners come from the parish. Learners are from a wide range of socio economic backgrounds with 64% living in areas of high multiple deprivation. Learners live in private and local authority accommodation. The age range of the learners is 4 to 11 years. The indicative admission number is 45 and there are currently 295 learners on roll of whom 229 are baptised Catholics. 17% are eligible for free school meals. 68 learners have been identified as having special educational needs with 2 having a statutory statement of special educational need. The school has a low but increasing number of ethnic minority learners. All 13 teachers (100%) are Catholics.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's is a good Catholic school with some outstanding features. It offers its learners a traditional Catholic education in a caring and secure environment where everyone is valued and relationships are positive. Strong spiritual values are promoted to ensure that the school fully realises the aims of its Mission Statement. It is firmly at the heart of the parish it serves. School and parish links are very strong, fostered and developed through the successful Sacramental Programme. The parish priest and school fully support the learners and their families on their faith journey. The parish priest's involvement in the daily life of the school and his commitment to the school's collective worship is recognised and appreciated by learners, staff and parents. Learners are very polite and friendly and their behaviour at all times is excellent. They enjoy coming to school and being members of a "happy and kind community". The school makes very good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the learners. Learners have good attitudes to their learning and work hard to achieve the expectations of the teachers. The school is fully committed to extending and enhancing its role in the wider community.

Improvement since the last inspection

Following the last Section 48 inspection in 2006 the school has seen several changes. The school has addressed the issues identified in the last inspection and successfully resolved the majority. The new headteacher was appointed in September 2009. He had previously been the deputy. A new deputy has been appointed for September 2010. The school has 2 assistant head teachers in Key Stages 1 and 2. 2 teachers left for promotion and 2 newly qualified teachers were appointed in September 2009. A new community room and "Thinc" room have been established. Plans for the refurbishment of the Foundation Stage are in the discussion stage as is the replacement of the roof. The parish priest has recently taken on the responsibility for Our Lady and St. Paul's parish in Heywood.

Capacity to improve

The school's self evaluation is detailed, honest and accurate. The headteacher and senior management team, fully supported by the knowledgeable parish priest as chair of the governing body, have the determination and commitment to realise their vision for the future development of the school. The capacity to improve is therefore good.

What the school should do to improve further.

- Enable all learners in Key Stage 2 to have sufficient opportunities to produce extended pieces of writing in Religious Education lessons.
- Extend the assessment system to include the moderation of levels awarded in order to ensure consistency of standards throughout the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are outstanding. The school has a Mission Statement developed several years ago. It is planned to review and amend this to ensure it is more easily understood by the learners. It permeates all aspects of the life of the school and is at the forefront of all policies. It is on display throughout the school. The headteacher, who has been in post since September, has a clear vision for the future development of the school. He is fully supported by his senior management team and gives very good leadership to the school. He successfully completed a MA in Catholic School Leadership in 2009. His detailed reports to governors are supplemented with the very good report from the Religious Education co-ordinator ensuring governors are well informed of the overall provision. The frequent visits from the parish priest as chair of governors together with his input into collective worship and the regular visits of other governors to the school ensure a proactive governor role in the daily life of the school. The school gives very good support to the Sacramental Programme initiative. The Religious Education co-ordinator, with the support of the headteacher, monitors and evaluates curriculum Religious Education. All teachers are Catholics and 10 hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies or its equivalent qualification. The establishment of a parents' room for meetings and the provision of educational courses for the local community are strengthening and extending the schools contribution to community cohesion.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Provision for collective worship is outstanding and is based on the school's clear policy statement recently updated by the Religious Education co-ordinator for the governing bodies' approval. Throughout the school year learners, parents, staff and parishioners are welcomed into the worshipping community through assemblies and Masses thus strengthening their relationship with God. Whole school Masses are celebrated at the beginning and end of term. Class Masses and prayer services are celebrated in school on alternate weeks. Classes lead assemblies on a rota system each week. Parents, governors and parishioners are invited and attend in growing numbers. In all these celebrations learners are fully involved in the planning and presentations which include praising, thanking and petitioning God with readings, prayers, drama and music. Class collective worship is a feature of the provision. The whole school assembly and class worship attended during the inspection were both impressive examples of the spiritual ethos throughout the school. The "signing" of the hymns and the reverence of the learners at prayer are a credit to the school. The introduction of the "statements to live by" has had a considerable impact on the learners. Prayer has a high profile in school. Learners are familiar with the traditional prayers of the church. Opportunities for private, collective and reflective prayer are offered and Year 6 learners keep a prayer journal. The provision is fully inclusive as no learner is withdrawn. Assembly themes demonstrate how respect for and understanding of all faiths is encouraged.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are good overall. Learners enter the Foundation Stage with attainment in line with national expectations although a significant number are below in communication and language skills. Good progress is made and by the end of Key Stage 1 learners are able to use appropriate religious vocabulary when discussing their knowledge and many are able to retell stories they have heard in their own words and record these in a legible manner. Progress in Key Stage 2 is inconsistent. The oldest learners at the end of the key stage have a good factual knowledge of their faith and record this knowledge in an appropriate format. In some classes insufficient opportunities are given for learners to produce extended pieces of writing of quality and quantity on religious topics. The school is encouraged to address this issue. Learners appreciate their involvement in school decisions through the school council and the Eco club. They show a good understanding of their responsibility to care for the less fortunate in society and generate generous support for local, national and international charities. The older learners are happy to accept their responsibility to care for the youngest learners who enjoy their links with their "special friends" in Year 6. The yearly "teddy bears picnic" is a highlight of the school year.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The inspector agrees with the school that the quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good and lessons observed during the inspection confirm this judgement. Teachers plan their lessons with a clear focus. They explain the lesson objectives clearly to the learners at the beginning of the lesson including their expectations. Teachers demonstrate good questioning skills and involve all learners in the discussions. Teaching strategies are used which meet the requirements of the content of the lesson and the age of the learners. Resources are carefully selected and used effectively to enhance the learning process. Technology is used appropriately and those learners who need extra help are well supported by the teaching assistants. The assessment process suggested by the diocese is used appropriately and examples of levelled work are kept by all teachers including individual records for each learner. The school is encouraged to moderate the levels awarded and the marking of work to ensure consistency of standards throughout the school. Work is well marked in the majority of classes. Constructive comments are included in some classes and “objective achieved” stamps give immediate feedback to the learners. Learners have good attitudes to their learning showing a genuine interest and enthusiasm for their work. They are keen to be involved in discussions and listen attentively. They work collaboratively in small groups and pairs. They discuss their work sensibly and are always well behaved.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The Religious Education curriculum is good. The school has an up to date policy statement recently reviewed by the Religious Education co-ordinator and awaiting ratification by the governing body. All lesson plans are based on the diocesan guidelines supplemented by the “Hear I am” scheme. The time allocated to curriculum Religious Education meets both national and diocesan requirements. The “World Faiths Week” held during the summer term and based on the diocesan scheme helps to support the school’s contribution to community cohesion. Visitors into school talking about their faith and visits out of school to places of worship for other faiths all impact positively on the overall provision. The quality of the collective worship, the parish organised Sacramental Programme and the “statements to live by” scheme all make a considerable contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the learners. The SEAL project and the Year 6 yearly retreat extend the range of opportunities offered to the learners. No learner is withdrawn from Religious Education lessons.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education are good with some outstanding features. The Religious Education co-ordinator has been in post since September 2009 when she took on this additional responsibility. She is an experienced teacher and has made a very good start to this new responsibility. She is fully supported by the headteacher and has regular meetings with him and the chair of governors on developing the provision in the school. She has evaluated current practice through observation, discussions with the learners and scrutiny of their workbooks. Teachers’ lesson plans are examined. The evaluation of this monitoring is explained in her annual report to governors ensuring they are fully aware of the situation. She has a clear vision for the future development of curriculum Religious Education and collective worship. She has a performance management objective related to her role which has involved reviewing the policies for Religious Education and collective worship. Together with other members of the senior management team she attends diocesan courses for her continuing professional development. Resources are to be audited and supplemented as necessary. The designated governor for Religious Education is a regular visitor to the school’s liturgical celebrations. All classes have a focal area for prayer and displays throughout the school clearly reflect its faith life.