



## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

St. Edward's is a Roman Catholic voluntary aided primary school in the Diocese of Salford. It serves the parish of St. Edward in Lees and Sacred Heart and St. William in Uppermill. It is situated to the east of Oldham mid-way between the densely populated town developments and the green-belt of Saddleworth and the pupils come from a mixed area of private and council housing. The school is average in size and the majority of pupils are of white British heritage with few speaking English as an additional language. The age range of the pupils is from 3 to 11 years. The standard admission number is 35. There are currently 256 pupils on roll of whom 252 are baptised Catholics. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is 5.5%. The school has identified 31 pupils who have special educational needs with 2 pupils having a statutory statement of special educational need. 10 of the 11 teaching staff (91%) are Catholics.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

St. Edward's is a good school with some outstanding features. It has a strong Catholic ethos. Guidance is given to staff and pupils by good leadership. All staff promote a warm and welcoming environment in which all aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. Staff are positive role models for pupils and are dedicated, committed and hard working. They are supported by a strong leadership. Links between home, school and parish are very well supported by the parish priest who is also the chair of governors. The Religious Education curriculum is well planned and the quality of teaching is good overall. The children put their faith into action through their support of local and national charities e.g. the Pakistan flood appeal, Francis House, St Joseph's Penny and CAFOD.

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

The school was asked to establish a system of marking to enable pupils to raise the standard of their work still further. Agreed systems of marking have been established and this is evident in the children's work books. There have been changes to the leadership team in the last year with the retirement of the previous headteacher in December 2009. At the same time, the deputy headteacher/ Religious Education co-ordinator had taken leave for one year. From January 2010 there was a temporary headteacher for two terms. The deputy headteacher returned and is now acting headteacher.

### **Capacity to improve**

The school's evaluation is mainly accurate. It is objective in its assessment of strengths and areas for development. Capacity to improve is therefore good.

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

- Ensure that pupils take an active part in prayer and worship with reverence and respect at all times.
- Ensure that class Collective Worship does not take the form of a lesson.
- To complete all strands of the Assessment Tasks.
- Ensure consistency in lesson planning and challenge for all pupils.

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

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are outstanding. The acting headteacher is the Religious Education co-ordinator and she has a clear vision of the Catholic nature of the school and leads and manages the school with verve and enthusiasm. Governors are active in their support for the school. The parish priest is the chair of governors and the link governor for Religious Education and is a very frequent visitor to the school. His commitment and support for the staff, the children and their families underpins the religious life of the school. He meets with the acting headteacher and celebrates class and whole school Masses. He liaises with staff with regard to the Sacramental Programme and the many other aspects of the religious life of the school and supports the school with the induction of new children. The Sacramental Programme is well attended by parishioners and staff alike. The quality of care for the pupils is strengthened by the provision of the Rainbows group. There is good liaison between outside agencies and the school. The school has a strong commitment to community cohesion both locally and nationally and this is evident in its involvement with the Justice and Peace Youth Group and with its support for many charitable causes. Religious Education is given priority in the School Development Plan. All full time teaching staff are Catholics and seven members of staff have the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies.

## **THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

Provision for collective worship is good. Throughout the school year opportunities for liturgical celebrations are provided for pupils. Children in Key Stage 2 welcome parishioners into church on a Sunday and take part in the readings, the bidding prayers and the offertory. Mass is celebrated in school for the whole school and for individual classes. There are opportunities for pupils to withdraw to a separate prayer area for quiet prayer and reflection. This has been arranged with care and attention and is well used and enjoyed by the pupils. No children are withdrawn from collective worship. During the collective worship observed during inspection the children in Year 4 provided an excellent drama to depict the gospel message. However, the attention of some children was inconsistent and they did not always pray with reverence and respect. In the class worship observed the format would have been more appropriate had it not taken the form of a lesson. The school is encouraged to address these issues. The parish priest works hard with the school to meet the needs of the children involved in the Sacramental Programme each year. Catechists and the staff support the school in the teaching of the Sacramental Programme. Prayer and worship are seen as opportunities to support gospel teaching using the "Statements to Live By". Both the displays in class and around the school indicate the pupils' abilities to express their spirituality in prayer. In every classroom there is a focus for prayer. The school promotes community cohesion through the contents of its own prayer book for pupils and parents on entry and also by belonging to the World Peace Prayer Society.

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

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are good. They are in line with expectations. The recording and monitoring of assessment is still under development and the school is aware of this. Pupils with special needs are supported by teaching assistants. A particularly very good example of this was seen during inspection in Year 6. Overall pupils demonstrated some good factual knowledge of their faith when discussing issues with the inspector. They are aware of their responsibilities both to the people close to them and to the wider community. Learners enjoy their Religious Education lessons and are developing an awareness and interest in other faiths and cultures. All the teachers' marking praises good work and special effort. It also provides constructive comments to encourage learners to reflect on their responses to lessons and to improve their work. In the lesson observed in Year 6 pupils also reflected on what they had learnt during the lesson and as individuals wrote this down on post-its for the teacher to read afterwards. Religious Education contributes positively to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the learners.

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

Overall the quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education throughout the school is good. The teaching observed during inspection ranged from satisfactory to outstanding. Where lessons were challenging and had a good pace the pupils were well behaved and their attitude to learning was good. There was an excellent example of this in Year 6. The school is encouraged to continue with its work on ensuring that there is consistency in the approach to short-term lesson planning. All teachers demonstrate a sound knowledge of the subject. Pupils take part in their lessons with enthusiasm. Lesson observations are carried out by the subject leader. Teachers use a variety of teaching styles to engage their pupils. As an example of the school's effective use of Information Communication Technology there was a live link to the internet to experience the Sikh temple. Teaching assistants support both the pupils and the staff well. The recording of assessment is developing. Displays of pupils' work both within the classroom and around the school highlight the importance of the teaching and learning within the Religious Education. Resources are good and are well utilised.

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

The quality of the Religious Education curriculum is good. Religious Education has a very high profile in the school. School policies are regularly reviewed and support the Religious Education curriculum. In accordance with the requirements of the Bishops of England and Wales 10% of the teaching time is allocated to the subject. The diocesan guidelines are followed throughout. The school uses a range of resources and materials. These are supplemented by activities relating to the liturgical year and by a range of learning experiences. Community cohesion is embraced through the use of the diocesan World Faith scheme. No children are withdrawn from the teaching of Religious Education. The teachers' planning is good overall, though not all staff indicated the differentiation for Special Educational Needs. In-service training and staff meetings ensure that provision for Religious Education is under constant review and development. The acting headteacher/Religious Education co-ordinator discusses issues relating to Religious Education with the parish priest, who is also the chair of governors, on a regular basis. The curriculum committee reviews developments in the school. The headteacher reports each term to the governing body about the developments in Religious Education. Finance for Religious Education is given the same priority as other core subjects in the School Development Plan.

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

The leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education are good. The governors fully support the acting headteacher/Religious Education co-ordinator in her work. She has an excellent knowledge of her subject. She has a clear understanding of her role and is effective in providing educational direction for the teaching and development of curriculum Religious Education. She leads through the provision of in-service training and staff meetings. Her thoroughness of provision ensured that the school continued with in-service from the diocese during her period of absence. The parish priest and acting headteacher have a shared vision for the Religious Education in the school. Reports are given each term to the governing body and governors are involved in discussions about the curriculum. Priority is given to Religious Education in the School Development Plan and Religious Education is included in the performance management objectives of teachers. Through its fundraising the school also promotes respect and practical support for local, national and global issues. It is clear that the school's Mission Statement, reflects the commitment to supporting the staff and the learners in their journey in faith.