

DIOCESE OF LANCASTER EDUCATION SERVICE

INSPECTION REPORT ON THE PROVISION OF DENOMINATIONAL EDUCATION

School name:	St. Bernard's Catholic Primary School
Address:	Victoria Park Avenue, Lea, Preston PR2 1RP
Name of Headteacher:	Mr G McKevitt
Date of Inspection:	12 June 2007
Name of Inspector:	Mrs Frances Wygladala
Type of school:	Catholic Primary
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Number on roll:	157
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors:	Rev Fr Simon Hawksworth
Religious Education Co-ordinator:	Mrs C Monaghan
Date of previous inspection:	May 2001

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	
Religious Education - Achievement and standards	3	
Religious Education - Quality of provision	2	
Religious Education - Pupils' needs and interest	2	
Religious Education – Curriculum leadership and management	2	
<i>The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements</i>		

Information about the school:

St. Bernard's is a Catholic primary school with 157 pupils currently on roll of whom approximately 64% are baptised Catholic. The school mainly serves the parishes of Our Lady & St. Bernard's and SS Peter and Paul in the Lea area of Preston. Pupils are drawn from a wide socio-economic mix of families. Most pupils transfer at the end of year six to Our Lady's Catholic High School.

Overall Effectiveness of the school

The overall effectiveness of St. Bernard's as a Catholic school is **good**. The school's Mission Statement reflects the mission of the church and is reviewed annually, it is owned by staff and understood by pupils. The school is very welcoming and staff and governors are proud of and committed to the Catholic life of the school. They work hard to promote an inclusive ethos that limits barriers to learning and produces a safe, stimulating learning environment. Teaching is effective and the Religious Education (RE) curriculum meets the needs and interests of pupils well. The quality of care and guidance is good. Every effort is made publicly to forgive misdemeanours and to reconcile challenging behaviour. The school has the confidence of parents and good strong links with the parish. Staff are well supported through a knowledgeable and effective subject leader and the RE curriculum is being developed to continue to raise standards.

Improvement since the last inspection

The school has made **good** progress since the last inspection.

Inservice training has been delivered to further understanding of level descriptors for assessing pupils' work. Staff are informed of recent developments in RE and all staff are involved regularly in the moderation and levelling of pupils' work.

The subject leader has developed an extensive portfolio of evidence of moderated work.

Capacity to improve

The school demonstrates a **good** capacity to improve further through the good leadership of the subject leader and the clear focus on raising standards through the commitment of all staff and governors.

What the school should do to improve further:

- Review evidence to support oral assessments as part of the whole school assessment process.
- Further develop the good practice of pupil led worship in Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 1.
- Consider how schemes of work may best fit the needs of the children in allowing them to attain the standards of which they are capable.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school is **good**, confirming the judgement made by the school. Leaders have a clear and strategic view for the Catholic dimension of St. Bernard's which is understood and supported by the school community. There is a strong desire to raise standards in RE and the school places a high priority on promoting personal, spiritual, social and emotional development of pupils. The inclusion of all is a central goal that is very effectively promoted and the uniqueness of each individual is valued. The governing body has a good grasp of the school's strengths and areas to improve, it has a significant positive influence on the school's Catholicity working closely with the headteacher. The school has good, strong links with parents, parish and the wider community. They support the work of the school and regular visits are made by parish clergy.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The quality of collective worship is **good** with some outstanding features. Prayer is central to the life of the school and to the whole school community. Pupils prepare and lead acts of worship with confidence, skill and enthusiasm in Key Stage 2, often giving up playtimes to prepare and organise them with friends. In Foundation and Key Stage 1 teachers mostly lead the acts of worship. The good practice in Key Stage 2 needs to be further developed in Key Stage 1. Staff and pupils have access to up to date, quality resources that are regularly used, well organized and stored centrally e.g. worship box, world faith boxes etc. The provision for collective worship is reviewed annually to seek improvements and ensure it is appropriate to the age and spiritual understanding of all pupils. The contribution of collective worship to pupils' spiritual and moral development is significant.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

Standards in RE are **satisfactory**, confirming the judgement made by the school. Children in Foundation and Key Stage 1 make good progress from a very low baseline in RE and they achieve standards broadly in line with expectations. The school's moderated portfolio of work shows that, although there is some variation in performance through years 3 to 6, most pupils achieve satisfactory standards by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils are able to articulate their understanding of Religious Education at a greater depth than their written assessments would indicate. This was verified by oral assessments and interviewing pupils e.g. a Y2 child was able to speak about the Bible and how it was split into two parts, the Old Testament and the New Testament. She went on to say Jesus was only mentioned in the New Testament and it started with his birth. Evidencing oral assessments is a future development for the portfolio. Pupils care for and respect religious traditions and artefacts in school, they understand that religious belief and spiritual values are important for many people.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - QUALITY OF PROVISION

The quality of provision for RE is good, changing the school's judgement from satisfactory. Teaching is creative, imaginative and focused on raising standards and promoting the personal development of all pupils. The good teaching in RE results in the good progress achieved throughout the seven years at St. Bernard's. There is a common sense of purpose amongst staff. Consistent and effective practices are in place for assessing and moderating work. Assessment is used by all staff to focus on how well all pupils are learning and planning for the next steps. Good links exist with parents, carers and external agencies to provide support for pupils. A tracking system is in place to monitor and evaluate pupils progress. Individuals are well catered for and teaching assistants make a good contribution to RE provision. Teachers timetable RE within the guidelines of the Bishops' Conference. The use of a variety of strategies and assessment for learning opportunities have broadened the range of teaching and learning styles offered in classes e.g. hot seating in Y2 to maximize the potential of each child.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - PUPILS' NEEDS AND INTEREST

Pupils enjoy their Religious Education and this is demonstrated by their positive attitudes and enthusiasm for learning. They take care of their work, involve themselves well in lessons and are eager to take part in the activities the school offers. They report that they like RE a lot and speak warmly of it. Pupils appreciate questionnaires that canvas their opinion and as a result more role play has been incorporated in RE to 'bring the bible stories to life and make them meaningful to us' (Y6). The curriculum is adapted and differentiated to meet the needs and interests of the pupils and includes a variety of teaching and learning styles and ICT. The RE curriculum is socially inclusive and includes and respects the faith backgrounds of pupils of other denominations and other faiths. The presentation of work is good with some effective written comments for teachers to challenge and deepen understanding of a topic. RE displays in classrooms, corridors and around school are of a high standard and create a stimulating environment for learning.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION – CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of curriculum RE are good with some outstanding features. The subject leader has a clear sense of direction and understands how to bring about improvements. It is strongly focused on raising standards. The subject is organised efficiently and managed effectively. All staff are clear about the purpose of Religious Education and have access to guidance, support and relevant training. Strengths and areas for improvement are identified by the subject leader after analysis of assessments, work sampling, talking to children, monitoring lessons and feeding back to staff. An action plan follows with resources allocated accordingly. The subject leader informs governors of developments in RE. The school has planned to pilot a new scheme for RE in three classes next term to study the impact on standards throughout the autumn term.