



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

ST. CHRISTOPHER'S CATHOLIC INFANT SCHOOL

SPEKE

A Section 23 Report from the Department for Christian Education

ST. CHRISTOPHER'S CATHOLIC INFANT SCHOOL

SPEKE

Names of Inspectors:

Mrs. Marie Connolly Mrs. Rosemary Purcell

Date of Inspection:

22 January 2002

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Copies of this Report may be obtained from the Governors of the School.

INTRODUCTION

This inspection was carried out under Section 23 of The School Inspections Act 1996.

Its purpose was to report on:

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- Standards
- Teaching
- Pupils' response
- Curriculum and assessment
- Staffing and resources
- Leadership and management

WHOLE SCHOOL ASPECTS

- Mission Statement
- Collective Worship
- Spiritual and Moral Development

The report of the inspection is produced for the Archbishop of Liverpool (Code of Canon Law 804 and 806) and for the Governors of the School (The School Inspections Act 1996).

The inspectors are members of the Christian Education Department and their associates approved by the Archbishop of Liverpool for this purpose.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Name of School:	St. Christopher's Catholic Infant
Type of School:	Infant
School Category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 - 7
Headteacher:	Mrs. J. A. Ridpath
Address of School:	Stapleton Ave, Speke, Liverpool, L24 OSF.
Telephone:	0151 486 2502
Fax:	0151 448 1186
Chair of Governors:	Mr. C. J. Owen
Date of last inspection:	22 September 1998

SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

WHAT SORT OF SCHOOL IS IT?

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Christopher's Catholic Infant School, which serves the parish of St. Christopher's, Speke has an intake of 131 (excluding 50 Nursery) of whom 112 are baptised Catholics. 17 pupils are from other Christian denominations and there are currently no pupils from other faith traditions. The pupils are drawn from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The area has high levels of unemployment and a large number of single parent families. There are currently no pupils with a statement of special educational need. There are seven full-time members of staff of whom six are Catholic. The school is due to be amalgamated with the junior school in the autumn of this year.

The current targets set by the school in relation to Religious Education are to:

- implement the revised edition of *Here I Am*;
- introduce the new files;
- use the new medium term plans;
- develop lesson plans using the scheme;
- purchase supplementary resources and materials/artefacts as required;
- monitor the progress and implementation of the new scheme through observations to identify areas for development;
- draw up effective assessment procedures;
- establish the effectiveness and impact of the new scheme (staff and children);
- plan a part in-service day – autumn term.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- The coordination of Religious Education is good.
- A very good handbook has been developed to help teachers deliver Religious Education.
- All teaching is satisfactory or better with 34% good or very good.
- The monitoring of planning is good.
- Children show very good attitudes to learning and are keen, eager and attentive.
- Standards achieved by pupils are satisfactory or better.
- The marking of work is positive and thought provoking.
- The majority of pupils make satisfactory progress in Religious Education.
- The standard of children's behaviour and discipline is very good.
- Very good relationships exist particularly between staff and pupils.
- The school provides a secure and caring community where all are respected, valued and encouraged.
- The school's chair of governors is actively involved in a variety of aspects of school life e.g. in class support.
- The children have developed their own Mission Statement. This enables them live out the schools' mission in their everyday work and relationships.
- The *Other Faith* units of work have been undertaken with enthusiasm.

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- Ensure that 10% of total curriculum time is allocated to the delivery of *Here I Am* and that Religious Education lessons are positioned well on each timetable.
- Continue to develop the use of the planning sheets so that the day and date work is covered, the tasks chosen for every stage of the process and the groupings are all identified.
- Whole staff in-service should be provided to address the issues identified in this report.
- Produce guidelines to support the planning and delivery of Collective Worship wherever and whenever it takes place.

The areas for development will form the basis of the governors' action plan

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection the school has made limited progress in addressing the previous key issues. There are new planning procedures in place, which should continue to be developed. The positioning of Religious Education lessons has been altered on some timetables but these need further restructuring. The marking of work is positive and thought provoking. There is a new Collective Worship policy to support its delivery.

The school has completed the self-review document well and identified areas for further development.

STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The standard achieved in Religious Education is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF TEACHING

The quality of teaching in 100% of lessons is satisfactory or better. 17% of all teaching is very good 17% good.

PUPILS' RESPONSE

Pupils show positive attitudes to learning. They apply themselves to their work with enjoyment and enthusiasm, and respond well to challenge. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in Religious Education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of Religious Education are good. The Religious Education coordinator works hard to maintain the status of Religious Education throughout the school.

WHOLE SCHOOL ASPECTS

Aspect	Comment
Mission Statement	The Mission Statement is reviewed annually. On the amalgamation it would be important for the two schools to spend time reflecting on the nature and purpose of mission in order to formulate a new statement suited to the new school community
Collective Worship	Collective Worship is provided for each child daily in a variety of ways.
Spiritual and moral development	Both Religious Education lessons and the daily life of the school contribute to the children's spiritual and moral development.

PARENTS' VIEW OF THE SCHOOL

What parents like about the school

- They are happy with the values and attitudes the school teaches.
- They are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school.
- They are made to feel welcome in school.
- The school gives parents a clear understanding of what is taught in Religious Education.
- The school enables their children to achieve very good standards of work in Religious Education.
- The school keeps parents well informed about their children's progress in Religious Education.
- Their children are happy in school.

What some parents are not happy about

- One parent does not feel well informed about his/her child/(ren)'s progress in Religious Education.

There were 9 responses to the parents' questionnaire. This was a particularly low response.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Are standards high enough?

1. All the pupils are following the *Here I Am* programme and are working at the appropriate level. At present the *Community < > Local Church* theme is being explored throughout the school through the topic *Special People*. Classes were all at the *Relate* stage of the process. The children were learning about special people in church on Sunday and why Jesus is the special person for the parish family. Most pupils meet the expectations described in *Here I Am*. Standards achieved by pupils are satisfactory or better.

2. The school has improved standards and sets challenging targets for Religious Education and is on course to meet them. These are outlined in the Religious Education development plan and the self-review document.

3. Workbooks, discussions with children and previous evaluations provide evidence of satisfactory progress being made in Religious Education by most pupils. Pupils are learning about the teachings, beliefs, values, and way of life of Catholic Christianity and Year Two could make links between special people in their lives and how Jesus is special. They showed knowledge and understanding of the concepts that had been explored and could recall previous learning with confidence. They were able to make links between their own experiences and the Christian understanding of these. Pupils communicate their knowledge and understanding in a variety of appropriate forms.

4. Greater differentiation of tasks and by support would enable pupils, especially those with additional educational needs, make further progress in Religious Education.

How effective is teaching?

5. The quality of teaching in 100% of lessons observed is satisfactory or better with 34% having very good or good features. Most teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of Religious Education and the *Here I Am* programme.

6. All teachers use the planners provided by the Archdiocese. The ongoing development of the use of these planners needs to be addressed.

7. All teachers were seen teaching once. Teachers manage their children well and very good standards of discipline are achieved. Very good relationships exist between staff and pupils.

8. In some of the lessons observed teachers set high expectations so as to challenge pupils and deepen their knowledge, skills and understanding by skilful questioning and drawing on past learning. When teachers informed pupils of the learning objective the lesson had greater focus.

9. Teachers use a variety of teaching and learning strategies that match learning objectives. Lessons are well organised. Greater differentiation of tasks and support would enable teachers meet the learning needs of all pupils. Time and resources, including Information Computer Technology, are used efficiently and effectively.

10. During the lessons observed pupils acquired new knowledge and skills, they were encouraged to develop ideas and increase their understanding in Religious Education. Prior learning was consolidated. During all the lessons observed children showed interest in their work in Religious Education, were able to sustain concentration and think and learn for themselves. Children work at a good pace and most understand the tasks set. Some children experienced difficulty undertaking the tasks set for a variety of reasons. Some tasks were not clear; others were inappropriate either because the children were unable to read the text or couldn't undertake the task without support. Children should be encouraged to work collaboratively as well as independently.

11. Pupils' work is assessed, and teachers use assessments to inform teaching and show pupils how to further improve their work. The formal assessment of children's work once a term has been undertaken as part of the ongoing development of Religious Education. Teachers affirm children throughout lessons so that they know how well they have done and challenge them with ways in which they can improve.

How well do pupils respond?

12. Throughout the inspection pupils applied themselves productively to and with interest in what they were doing. They showed enjoyment of Religious Education and when interviewed spoke of the special people in their lives and about Jesus as the special person Christians follow. They join in discussion and gave examples of previous topics and their relevance in their lives.

13. Children respond well to challenges set by teachers, apply themselves and concentrate on the work set. The children's behaviour is very good. Pupils are affirmed when they show initiative or take responsibility.
14. Children showed tolerance and respect for others views and listened attentively to each other. This helps their work.
15. Children show pride in finished work and standards of presentation in workbooks is satisfactory. There is much imaginative display of children's work all around the school. Where possible this should also be reflected in classroom Religious Education display.

How good are the quality and range of the curriculum and assessment?

Curriculum:

16. The school is following the *Here I Am* programme recommended by the Archdiocese. A whole school approach is used ensuring complete Religious Education entitlement for each child. The children are currently following Cycle B.
17. The time allocated for Religious Education is two hours ten minutes per week. It is essential that 10% of total curriculum time is provided for Religious Education to fulfil the requirements of the Bishops of England and Wales. Teachers need to further restructure timetables to ensure Religious Education lessons are distributed well across the timetable. The timetabling of Religious Education is monitored by the headteacher.
18. All teachers use the planners produced by the Archdiocese. There are clear learning objectives and outcomes identified, and the teaching strategies, that will enable these to be achieved, are planned by class teachers. The quality of teachers' planning varies. This planning should indicate the day and date work is to be covered, the tasks chosen for every stage of the process and the groupings identified. Differentiated tasks set for mixed year group classes and for the varying needs within those groups should also be identified. Planning is well monitored by the Religious Education coordinator.
19. Religious Education lessons clearly help promote pupils' religious, spiritual and moral development. They provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on their experiences and to engage in a personal search for meaning and purpose. Effective use is being made of literacy strategies e.g. one class were taught how to empathise with the characters in the scripture extract of the Presentation, and Information Computer Technology.
20. Pupils are encouraged to make links with the community e.g. fundraising for the Nugent Care Appeal, Barnardo's and the Blind. Links are also made with the local community e.g. harvest festival. This enhances pupils' learning of what it means to be a Christian today.

Assessment:

21. The school has a common approach to assessment in Religious Education. Teachers evaluate pupils' learning using the expectations at the end of each topic. Information is used to inform pupils of the ways in which they can improve and informs teachers' future planning. Formal assessment of pupils' work once a term has been

undertaken as part of the ongoing development of Religious Education throughout the school.

22. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and formatively. Pupils are taught how to evaluate their own work and complete *Things I Know Now* at the *Remember* stage of each topic. This should be undertaken individually by pupils where possible. Portfolios of children's work and photographic evidence are a very valuable record of the quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education at St. Christopher's for teachers, parents, governors and inspectors.

23. The monitoring of teaching is to be undertaken by the Religious Education coordinator as part of a rolling programme of monitoring throughout the school. This will provide the school with a picture of practice and achievement and also identify areas for development.

24. Parents are provided with good annual reports that provide information about achievement and progress in Religious Education.

How good are the staffing, financial and material resources?

25. Six of the seven members of staff have an appropriate qualification in Religious Education.

26. The Religious Education coordinator is responsible for the induction and professional development of Religious Education teachers. Religious Education in-service is provided by the Religious Education coordinator during staff meetings. The coordinator identifies needs in Religious Education and provision is targeted on those needs. Whole staff in-service should be provided to address the issues identified in this report.

27. There is an adequate budget for Religious Education. This should be maintained. This represents an appropriate allocation of the school's financial resources and meets the needs of the pupils and the curriculum and is in line with other core subjects.

28. There is a good selection of resources which are stored either in class or centrally e.g. Madeleine Lindley books and artefacts of *Other Faiths*. These are maintained by the Religious Education coordinator who also ensures they are used efficiently.

29. The school manifests its religious character through its displays in classrooms and around the school. Each class has a display of children's work and the topics of *Here I Am* and a focus for worship. These should be changed regularly to reflect the topic being covered. The school environment is welcoming, bright and attractive. It provides a stimulating learning environment for the pupils.

How effective and efficient are leadership and management?

30. Leadership and management are good. The Religious Education coordinator works hard to ensure a clear direction for the subject within the mission of the school and promote high standards.

31. There is a very good handbook containing clear documentation that guides all staff teaching Religious Education.

32. The monitoring of planning and teacher evaluation helps the school identify strengths and areas for future staff development. There is a shared commitment between all of those teaching Religious Education to the subject's aims and values. Priorities for the development of Religious Education are clearly identified, targets have been set and appropriate resources are to be allocated.

33. Religious Education coordinators' meetings are attended and appropriate information disseminated at staff meetings. The staff should consider using the *Before You Begin* sessions prior to a topic. This enhances the work undertaken by teachers when they take the topic 'into the classroom'.

34. The chair of governors is also the governor with responsibility for Religious Education. He liaises with the headteacher before keeping governors informed on matters relating to Religious Education and Collective Worship. The chair of governors is a regular visitor to school and therefore has first hand experience of both these areas.

WHOLE SCHOOL ASPECTS

How effective is the Mission Statement in the life and work of the school?

35. There is an annual review of the Mission Statement. The current statement enables the school to be a community in which the Gospel spirit of love and respect permeates every aspect of its life and work. The statement is displayed around the school.

36. Since the last inspection a day was set aside to review and revise the previous statement. Staff and governors considered a draft statement presented by the headteacher. After due consideration the existing statement was agreed. This day, in which everyone had an input, enabled the Mission Statement to be known and owned by those who make up the school community, and helped their understanding of the purpose of the school.

37. A comprehensive set of aims and objectives flow from the Mission Statement that are clear, concise and achievable. These also help the school evaluate the effectiveness of the statement. The statement informs and directs school policies and plans.

38. The children have been encouraged to reflect on the meaning of the Mission Statement to them. They have produced their own impressive Mission Statement that enables them to live out the school's mission everyday.

39. On amalgamation it would be essential to repeat this worthwhile process so that all who form part of the new school have ownership of its Mission Statement.

40. A good partnership exists between home, school and parish. The parish priest celebrates mass at various times throughout the school year. Parents are invited to masses and celebrations. This helps promote the spirit of community evident in the school.

How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

41. Collective Worship is provided for each child every day in a variety of ways: class and whole school gatherings. This fulfils Archdiocesan guidance.
42. There is policy to support the provision of Collective Worship. This promotes a common ethos, shared values, positive attitudes and community spirit. Guidelines need to be produced to support the planning and delivery of Collective Worship wherever and whenever it takes place.
43. During the inspection one act of Collective Worship was observed. Reception and Key Stage One celebrated together in the school hall and were led by the headteacher. This was appropriate in length, organisation and leadership taking account of the age, ability and background of the pupils. There was a focus for worship. All children were able to participate in prayers and singing. The lighting of a candle and the playing of quiet music helped the children to gather and disperse quietly and encouraged them to be thoughtful.
44. Collective Worship should also include some of the following elements: individual reflection and silent prayer, the development of pupils' liturgical formation and skills, opportunities for pupils to reflect on spiritual and moral issues and on personal beliefs and shared values. The focus for worship should be changed regularly to reflect the topic or subject for consideration. Differentiation should be made between assembly and Collective Worship.
45. The presence and participation of staff in acts of Collective Worship is a powerful example to the children of the importance of prayer and worship in the life of the school.
46. The school supports the parish in its preparation for Eucharist and Reconciliation. Eucharist and Reconciliation topics are covered each year from Reception to Year Six in a developmental and progressive way. The school also helps children by the use of *My Eucharist Journey* and *My Reconciliation Journey* worksheets.
47. As stated in the last report the practice of celebrating Reconciliation during curriculum time needs to be revised so that the privilege and responsibility of parents and the freedom of the children is respected.
48. Mass is celebrated with Year 2 at various times throughout the year. Parents are invited.
49. Monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship should be undertaken using the observation sheet provided by the Archdiocese.

How effective is the school's provision for the spiritual and moral development of its pupils and how well do they respond to it?

Spiritual Development

50. Religious Education lessons and the daily life of the school make significant contributions to the spiritual development of pupils.

51. Through their exploration of the *Here I Am* topics pupils are given insights into the spiritual dimension of life. They are encouraged to search for meaning and purpose e.g. that people are special for different reasons.

52. The school provides a bright, welcoming and stimulating environment, both indoors and outside where the children are being encouraged to develop a sense of awe, wonder and reverence and imagination.

53. Opportunities provided for thought and personal reflection at the end of each day are helping the children to develop prayer skills and a sense of the presence of God in their lives. The lighting of candles and the playing of quiet music help them to respond to that presence.

54. In class lessons children are encouraged to reflect on their own attitudes and values in the light of the Gospels and the teachings of the Church. Pupils are encouraged to develop the range, depth and quality of their prayer life. Prayers are said at various times during the school day.

55. They are becoming familiar with the life, words and actions of Jesus and some saints and significant Christians.

56. During the work on *Other Faiths*, pupils become aware of how people of other faiths respond to the spiritual dimension in life e.g. celebrating Rosh Hashanah/ New Year.

57. A policy needs to be developed to support the planning and evaluation of spiritual development and included in the Religious Education handbook.

Moral Development

58. The daily life of the school and the good example and high standards set by the adults promote moral development.

59. The school provides a very secure and loving community in which the Gospel spirit of love and respect permeates every aspect of its life and work. This is encouraging them to be more confident, respectful and helpful. The quality of relationships in the school is very good.

60. Opportunities to reflect on moral issues are provided in lessons and assemblies. Through the discussion on these issues children are enabled to recognise their own self-worth and learn to value and respect others. This is very evident in the children's own Mission Statement.

61. A variety of systems are in place including class rules and weekly awards, acknowledging and rewarding positive behaviour and practice throughout the school. This helps pupils to distinguish right from wrong and provides opportunities for the pupils to explore questions of motives, attitudes and intentions in relation to action. It also provides opportunities for pupils to develop a personal sense of morality in relation to themselves, others in the school and the local community, and in relation to national and world issues.

62. The policies in place especially those for Behaviour, Personal Social and Health Education and Citizenship, Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Equal Opportunities express and address the school's concern for the moral growth of children based on the Gospels and the teachings of the Church and communicates these to pupils as the foundation of their moral judgements and actions.

63. A policy should be developed to support the planning and evaluation of moral development and be included in the Religious Education handbook.

What should the school do to improve further?

The following are the specific issues which the governors and staff should include in the post inspection action plan, entered in order of their importance:

- 10% of total curriculum time is allocated to the delivery of *Here I Am* and that Religious Education lessons are positioned well on each timetable.
- the development of the use of the planning sheets continues so that the day and date work is covered, the tasks chosen for every stage of the process and the groupings are all identified;
- guidelines are produced to support the planning and delivery of Collective Worship wherever and whenever it takes place;
- Whole staff in-service is provided to address the issues identified in this report.

These issues should be included in its post-inspection action plan.

Areas for development identified in the report which are not included in specific issues for action but which should be considered by the school:

- * Differentiation; 19
- * Individual pupil evaluation; 23
- * Monitoring of teaching; 24
- * Revise the practice of celebrating Reconciliation in curriculum time; 48
- * Develop a policy for spiritual development; 58
- * Develop a policy for moral development; 64

DATA AND INDICATORS

PUPILS

Number of pupils in each year group:

Nursery	50	
Reception	48	
Year 1	41	
Year 2	<u>42</u>	
Total	181	(131 excluding Nursery)

Number of Catholic pupils: 112

Percentage of pupils from each parish:

St. Christopher's, Speke %?????
Other

Number of pupils from other Christian denominations: 17

Number of pupils from other faith traditions: 0

Number of pupils having a statement of special educational needs: 0

Standard admission number of pupils: 30

TEACHERS AND CLASSES

Total number of teachers: 7

Number of teachers teaching Religious Education: 7

Number of Catholic teachers in the school: 6

Number of classes: 5 plus Nursery

Organisation of the school into classes:

Nursery x 2
Reception x 1
Reception/Year 1 x 1
Year 1 x 1
Year 2 x 2

Average class size:

Reception: 30
Key Stage 1: 24

TEACHING TIME

Total teaching time per week:

Reception: 22 hours 00mins
Key Stage 1: 22 hours 00mins

Total Religious Education teaching time per week:

Reception: 2 hours 10mins
Key Stage 1: 2 hours 10mins

Percentage of total teaching time per week spent on Religious Education:

3% (according to Headteacher's form)
10% (according to timetables)

FINANCIAL DATA

	Current Financial Year	Last Financial Year
	£	£
Religious Education	1,000	1,000
English	1,000	2,500
Maths	500	1,500
Science	100	1,000

PARENTAL SURVEY

There were 9 responses to the parents' questionnaire. All parents are happy with the values and attitudes the school teaches, they feel that the school gives them a clear understanding of what is taught in Religious Education and that the school enables their children to achieve good standards of work in Religious Education. All parents feel that their children are happy in school, feel welcome and are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school. One parent would like more information about their child/child(ren)'s progress in Religious Education.

SUMMARY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION INSPECTION REPORT

ST. CHRISTOPHER'S CATHOLIC INFANT SCHOOL

Headteacher: Mrs. J. A. Ridpath

Date of Inspection: 22 January 2002

Inspectors: Mrs. Marie Connolly Mrs. Rosemary Purcell

Previous Inspection: 22 September 1998

This is a summary of the Inspectors' full report which can be obtained from the school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Number of full-time pupils:	181
Number of Catholic pupils:	112
Number of pupils from other Christian denominations:	17
Number of pupils from other faiths:	0

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- The coordination of Religious Education is good.
- A very good handbook has been developed to help teachers deliver Religious Education.
- All teaching is satisfactory or better with 34% good or very good.
- The monitoring of planning is good.
- Children show very good attitudes to learning and are keen, eager and attentive.
- Standards achieved by pupils are satisfactory or better.
- The marking of work is positive and thought provoking.
- The majority of pupils make satisfactory progress in Religious Education.
- The standard of children's behaviour and discipline is very good.
- Very good relationships exist particularly between staff and pupils.
- The school provides a secure and caring community where all are respected, valued and encouraged.
- The school's chair of governors is actively involved in a variety of aspects of school life e.g. in class support.
- The children have developed their own Mission Statement. This enables them live out the schools' mission in their everyday work and relationships.
- The *Other Faith* units of work have been undertaken with enthusiasm.

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- Ensure that 10% of total curriculum time is allocated to the delivery of *Here I Am* and that Religious Education lessons are positioned well on each timetable.
- Continue to develop the use of the planning sheets so that the day and date work is covered, the tasks chosen for every stage of the process and the groupings are all identified.
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The school has completed the self-review document well and identified areas for further development.

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LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

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THE PARENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What parents like about the school

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- They are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school.
- They are made to feel welcome in school.
- The school gives parents a clear understanding of what is taught in Religious Education.
- The school enables their children to achieve very good standards of work in Religious Education.
- The school keeps parents well informed about their children's progress in Religious Education.
- Their children are happy in school.

What some parents are not happy about

- One parent does not feel well informed about his/her child/(ren)'s progress in Religious Education.

There were 9 responses to the parents' questionnaire. This was a particularly low response.

The Governing Body is responsible for drawing up an ACTION PLAN within 40 working days of receiving the report, showing what the school is going to do about the issues. This action plan will be circulated to all parents of pupils at the school.