

INSPECTION REPORT St Mary's RC Primary School

Inspection date 19th November 2014

Reporting Inspector Sister Judith Russi
Mr John Thorpe
Assisted by Mrs Suzanne Molloy

Inspection carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School Catholic Primary School

URN 105953

Age range of pupils 3-11 years

Number on roll 239

Appropriate authority The Governing Body

Chair of Governors Mrs Deborah Henley

Head teacher Mrs Julie Forshaw

Date of previous inspection October 2009

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades 1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3 = Requires Improvement
Overall effectiveness of the school	2	
The quality of Catholic Leadership	2	
The quality of the Word of God community	2	
The quality of the Welcome community	1	
The quality of Welfare	1	
The quality of Worship	1	
The quality of Witness	1	
<i>The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements</i>		

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

St Mary's is an average-sized primary school serving the parish of St Mary's in Eccles and Ss. Peter and Paul in Pendleton. The school is over subscribed. Almost 100% of the pupils are Catholic. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average. The proportion of those who speak English as an additional language is broadly average. The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs supported through school action is below the national average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below the national average. A below average proportion of disadvantaged pupils is eligible for support through pupil premium funding. In 2013, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS GOOD

St Mary's RC Primary School is a good school with many outstanding features, striving to ensure that all pupils are aiming high as they endeavour to be the very best they can be. The beliefs and values of the Catholic community permeate all aspects of their education and formation. The pupils experience a learning environment which continually challenges them to be living witnesses to their mission statement. The inspirational leadership of the Head teacher inspires and unifies the governors and staff. Since the last inspection they have dedicated themselves to the building up of a Catholic learning community which will inspire, challenge and fulfil the mission of the Church in education. The impact of the school's commitment to excellence is continuing to raise standards as they strive to be consistently outstanding in all areas. All pupils receive the same equality of opportunity and make good progress in every key stage.

KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- The leadership of the Head teacher and senior leadership team is a source of inspiration throughout the school.
- The quality of the welcome, prayer, worship and witness to the beliefs and values of the Gospel are all outstanding.
- Behaviour for learning, respect for all and the prioritising of exceptional care for those in the greatest need was inspirational.

THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP IS GOOD

The Headteacher and her leadership team have been uncompromising in their endeavour to raise standards for all pupils throughout the school. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and pupil progress have significantly contributed to the raising of standards. Parents spoke of the ways in which their children were challenged academically, personally and spiritually. One parent commented, *"This school has turned my son around"*. Parents were keen to point out how the leadership of the school has undergone a *"massive change"* for the better so that they now feel valued and respected as partners in their children's education. Very good comprehensive procedures are in place to check on the performance of all staff. Teachers and support staff spoke of the ways in which they had been helped to grow and develop to their potential. Rewards are given to teachers only where pupils' progress is good or better and underperformance is challenged. Members of staff are clearly deeply committed to ensuring that all pupils know and understand the centrality of Christ in their lives as they live and learn together. The governing body, whilst being highly supportive of the school, would benefit from an urgent review of their roles and responsibilities for governance in a Catholic school, to ensure that there is a comprehensive and consistent understanding of their mission and ability to fulfil it.

THE QUALITY OF WORD IS GOOD

Religious education is very well led and managed. The school has implemented the programme *The Way The Truth and The Life*, whilst at the same time ensured that a wide range of supportive materials are available to all so that the curriculum continues to be innovative and contemporary. The curriculum directory is well mapped and the recent introduction of the *Caritas in Action* resources is serving to further support the delivery of the Directory. Teaching and learning was found to be mostly good with some lessons being outstanding. Where the teaching and learning was outstanding, pupils were highly motivated by challenging learning objectives which were fun, engaging and open ended. In the very best instances pupils were allowed to take responsibility for their learning, were highly organised and moved from one activity to another in a seamless and effortless manner. Relationships for learning were found to be outstanding in all lessons. It was clear that pupils and staff had a very high respect for one another. The continuing development of higher order questioning skills, a greater emphasis on independent learning and use of more challenging religious language would move teaching and learning to a consistently outstanding level across all key stages. RE is well resourced and the budget ensures good resourcing throughout. 10% of taught curriculum time is in place for all classes.

THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING

The warmth of welcome extended to all visitors is underpinned by a common vision built on Gospel Values and the Mission Statement *"We value, we respect, we share"*. Parents spoke at length about the inclusivity of all and the priority shown to those in the greatest need. *"The staff have a real understanding of our issues and are always ready to support"*. The school actively seeks to engage with and support members of the community, especially those who are often marginalised or discriminated against. Parents and staff paid tribute to the unique character of the school as being a Catholic learning community which was uniquely different. They expressed their joy at being able to attend assemblies and a wide range of activities throughout the year. As one parent said *"When the Head tells the children to turn and give their parents a hug to say thank you, you know you are in the right school"*. All members of staff demonstrate a keen sense of community affiliation and the strength and quality of relationships exemplifies respect for the dignity of every member of the school community. Children, parents and staff are rightly proud of their school.

THE QUALITY OF WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING

Relationships through the school are of the highest quality and standard. There is a strong sense of responsibility for justice and a clear ethos of service. Pupils with the greatest needs are achieving well due to the level of additional support and resourcing to ensure that every child is able to achieve their best. Further support is also provided through Caritas social workers actively engaging with the school. Children are confident that teachers will treat their concerns seriously. The school was taking part in an "Anti-bullying week" which explored all the many facets of bullying today. Pupils clearly knew and felt confident in taking action against any bullying should it occur. Staff, parents and pupils spoke about the ease with which they could raise issues at all levels and it was clear that pupils never hesitated in "popping in" to share their ideas with the Head teacher. The school's provision for safeguarding and keeping children safe is outstanding. The provision for Sex and Relationships Education is through the Diocesan Guidelines for Education for Personal Relationships. Before and after school care, of a high quality, is provided for those families needing extra support. Commitment to healthy lifestyles for all is a priority. The school offers a wide range of

clubs and activities to develop the whole person. The school actively reaches out to those in need at home and abroad through a wide variety of charity work. Behaviour of pupils around the school is outstanding.

THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

The whole school policy for prayer and worship ensures a wide range of opportunities to develop and enrich the prayer life of the school community. This includes Masses, assemblies and collective worship during RE lessons. The school is actively seeking ways of helping the children to continue to develop the art of meditation and reflection through the lunch time pupil led prayer group, the pupil chaplain's innovative idea of developing prayer partners across the school and leading prayer sessions with parents before school. The design and creation of the new Spiritual Garden is set to provide an additional resource for the prayer life of the school. Parents spoke of the help they received through the "Wednesday Word" resource and enjoyed sharing it with their children. The active involvement of Fr. Robert Livesey as Chaplain to the school is much appreciated. Children are trained to lead prayer and worship wherever possible and the school has recognised the importance of taking this further by giving greater responsibility and independence to the pupils as they learn to create their own para liturgies and prayer experience. Parents and friends are frequently invited to celebrations in the school and the Church adjacent to the school.

THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS OUTSTANDING

Witnessing to Christ and the values of the Gospel permeate every aspect of St Mary's School. The staff and pupils' recognition, understanding and celebration of the value and importance of each person were seen to be outstanding. The identity of the school community is explicit in both the environment and the relationships within the school community. Displays celebrating the life of the school as it inter acts with the world today echo and give witness to a Christ centred universe. The Peace project, which encouraged all pupils to look closely at the Nobel Peace Prize awards provided a valuable opportunity for pupils to reflect on how the values of the school extend beyond the school into the community. This was clearly seen in the activities which engaged the pupils in issues of justice and peace and the Eco Councils work in raising issues about care for the environment thereby actively encouraging an earth care ethic. It is clear that the school stands as a witness to Christ's love, justice, forgiveness and compassion. An outstanding feature of the school is the ease with which the children speak about their life in relation to scripture and how their knowledge and understanding of scripture and gives meaning to their lives.

November 22nd 2014

Dear Pupils

Thank you so much for the wonderful welcome you gave us when we came to visit you. Much of what is happening in your school is good and in some areas it is outstanding. This is because you are really striving to live up to your challenging mission statement "*We value, We respect, We share*".

Your work is of a good standard and in some cases it is outstanding. We could clearly see that you take your learning very seriously and are proud of your achievements. To help you develop even further your teachers are going to help you with developing your independent learning and religious literacy so that you can explore the big questions in RE at an even higher level.

We could see that you can make connections between what you are learning in RE with other areas of the curriculum and your daily lives. Your governors and Mrs Forshaw would like you to have more responsibility in leading in the Catholic life of the school. So they are going to encourage the pupil Chaplains to continue to develop as young leaders in the Church.

We were very impressed by many aspects of your school, by the wall displays in classrooms and on the corridors but most of all it was the way in which you cared for and supported each other as a family learning together to value, respect and share.
God bless you all.

Yours sincerely

Sr. Judith Russi

(Section 48 Inspector)

Summary Report to Parents

On the 19th November 2014 the school was inspected in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The full report has been made available to the school and can also be accessed via both the school website and the Education section on the website of the Diocese of Salford.

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KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

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AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- In order to take the leadership from good to outstanding further develop the understanding of roles and responsibilities for all governors so that they are able to engage at a deeper strategic level in line with the mission of the Church in education.
- Continue the development of assessment in the RE programme, through a more accurate understanding of levels, the setting of personalised pupil targets for each topic, success criteria and greater challenge for all pupils.
- Continue to develop a model of Chaplaincy provision which recognises the diversity of the school and fosters pupil leadership in school, parish and the local community.