

**INSPECTION REPORT**

St Mary's RC Primary School, Oswaldtwistle, Lancashire, BB5 3AA

Inspection date Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2015

Reporting Inspector Mrs Susan Gedzielewski  
Mr Brendan Hennessy

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

Type of School	Primary
URN	119660
Age range of pupils	4-11 years
Number on roll	251
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Mr David Joyce
Headteacher	Mrs Lesley Pemberton
Religious Education Co-ordinator	Miss Laura Westwell
Date of previous inspection	March 2010

<b>The Inspection judgements are:</b>	<b>Grade</b>	Explanation of the Grades  1 = Outstanding  2 = Good  3=Requires Improvement  4 = Inadequate
Overall effectiveness of the school	1	
The quality of Catholic Leadership	1	
The quality of the Word of God community	1	
The quality of the Welcome community	1	
The quality of Welfare	1	
The quality of Worship	2	
The quality of Witness	1	
The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements		

## **CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL**

St Mary's is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school serving the parish of St. Mary in Oswaldtwistle. There are 251 children on roll. The indicative admission number is currently 38, although this has been reviewed and this will be increased to 40 in September 2016. Pupils come from a variety of social backgrounds and there are some areas of deprivation in the locality. 18% of the children are entitled to Free School Meals which is significant below national average. The school is predominantly White British with only 14% of children coming from an ethnic minority background. Attainment of children on entry to the Reception class is below national average. Children make good progress during their time at the school and leave the school with good levels of attainment. The school currently has 9% of children with special Educational needs and Disabilities. 65% of children are baptised Catholic.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS OUTSTANDING**

St Mary's is an outstanding Catholic school offering children a rich faith experience which permeate all aspects of school life. The School Mission Statement is lived and visible across all aspects of the community. The Headteacher has shown resilience, determination and compassion in her leadership of the school, and as a result, the quality of teaching and pupil progress has improved significantly since the previous inspection. The governors are fully supportive of and promote the school as a Catholic learning community. They have a high level of commitment and they are effective in their approach. High quality teaching is challenging and empowering pupils to be creative and reflective learners. Sacred Scripture is clearly known, understood and made relevant throughout the school. Enthusiastic leadership from a dedicated RE subject leader has led to important improvements in Religious Education and the spiritual life of the school. The development of the chaplaincy team has also enhanced the spiritual life of the school. Parents feel welcome and at ease in school and able to talk to staff about their child's progress. Prayer is at the heart of the school community and pupils are provided with a range of opportunities to pray. Standards are good, because teachers are confident in planning and leading prayer and worship. The school embraces every opportunity to strengthen links with the parish and engagement with families in prayer and worship.

## **KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:**

- High quality teaching is challenging and empowering pupils to be creative and reflective learners.
- Enthusiastic leadership from a dedicated RE subject leader has led to important improvements in Religious Education and the spiritual life of the school.
- Behaviour, relationships and care for all within the school are outstanding.
- The Mission is lived and visible across all aspects of the school community.

## **THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS OUTSTANDING**

The school's leadership, including that of the governors, demonstrates deep commitment to the Church's mission in education. The School Mission Statement is lived and visible across all aspects of the community. The Headteacher has shown resilience, determination and compassion in her leadership of the school, and as a result, the quality of teaching and pupil progress has improved significantly since the previous inspection. A justice imperative informs both the school's internal leadership and its external outreach. Parents are extremely complimentary about the leadership of the school and the support given to vulnerable families. In particular, the work undertaken by the Nurture group and Sure Start staff are highlighted for praise. The governors are fully supportive of and promote the school as a Catholic learning community. They have a high level of commitment and they are effective in their approach. The Chair of Governors works closely with the Headteacher to ensure governors are aware of current strengths and areas for development. Rigorous monitoring procedures are having a positive impact on pupil progress and standards of teaching. However, self-evaluation of the school's work is not sufficiently evidence based,

succinct and analytical. The enthusiastic leadership from a dedicated RE subject leader has led to important in Religious Education and the spiritual life of the school. Appraisal of teachers is thorough, effective and Religious Education is given priority when setting objectives. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is fully embedded across all areas of the curriculum.

### **THE QUALITY OF THE WORD OF GOD IS OUTSTANDING**

The School Mission Statement is known, lived and witnessed to throughout the school and is clearly having an impact on learning and the life of the school. Overall, teaching and learning is outstanding due to inspirational and creative teaching. In the best lessons, pupils are encouraged to think deeply about scripture, work collaboratively with others to extend their learning and standards are high in the pupils' exercise books. Sacred Scripture is clearly known, understood and made relevant throughout the school. Lessons moved forward quickly, and in the majority of lessons, pupils are active throughout and engrossed in the learning. World religions are taught as part of the Religious Education curriculum and this helps children to understand and respect the beliefs and culture of others. Teaching Assistants are used effectively to support learning. Marking of pupils' work is having a positive impact on learning and pupils respond to the teacher's comments, but this would be further improved through a more rigorous insistence that best practice was adopted by all teachers. Pupils are given target for Religious Education based upon the assessment guidelines. Assessment is highly developed and having a positive impact on pupil progress. A significant number children achieved above expected level of attainment and progress. Pupils Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural education was found to be outstanding and throughout all aspects of the school. The Religious Education budget is set according to the needs of the curriculum and the Catholic life of the school and is adjusted on a yearly basis in line with other core subjects. The school prioritises Religious Education on their professional development programme and teachers are given a Religious Education objectives in their annual appraisal.

### **THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING**

Jesus Christ is at the heart of this inclusive and caring school. They strive to make all who walk into this community, welcome and valued. The school reaches out to vulnerable members of the school community and they work extremely hard to ensure all pupils achieve their full potential. They demonstrated their understanding in a variety of contexts and they are living examples of the school's Mission Statement. The pupils' sense of ownership and responsibility for what happens in their school is outstanding. The school actively seeks to engage with and support all members of the wider community. Parents were extremely appreciative of all the things the school does to support families. They are particularly appreciative of the way their concerns are dealt with and support given to charities. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in school life and there is a thriving PTA. Members of the parish and local community share in the life of the school. The parish and school share responsibility for supporting pupils through the Sacramental Programme. All members of staff demonstrate a keen sense of community affiliation and the quality of relationships exemplifies respect for all members of the school community. Effective systems are in place for inducting pupils into school and supporting them during their first year. The 'Seeds and Gardeners' scheme exemplifies what the school does to welcome new pupils. Links with partner schools, including the Catholic High, are having a positive impact on standards and continuity of Catholic Education within the locality.

### **THE QUALITY OF WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING**

The staff and pupils demonstrate a very high level of respect for, care of and service to others. Behaviour in the classrooms and around the school is outstanding. Parents were extremely complimentary about the support they receive from all members of staff. The school provides a variety of activities to ensure pupils are nurtured and cared for, including: nurture group, support for families through Sure Start, gardening activities and a wide range of extra-curriculum activities. Pupils with more extreme need for support can access counselling. The school promotes high attendance and punctuality, which is effectively promoted by the 'Sure Start' professional. The provision for SRE is through the 'In the Beginning' scheme. Pupils are

confident that if they have any problems they can speak to a member of staff and that any problems will be dealt with sympathetically. Children know what to do if they have worries and all felt bullying was not an issue because of the clear procedures in place. Safeguarding procedures and support for SEND pupils are exemplary. Teachers are approachable and parents feel able to talk with them about issues that concern them and their concerns are dealt with effectively. The quality of transition and induction are such that all children quickly feel part of the school community and loved by those around them.

### **THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS GOOD**

Prayer is at the heart of the school community and pupils are provided with a range of opportunities to pray. Standards are good, because teachers are confident in planning and leading prayer and worship. Children understand the importance of prayer and when writing their own prayers they are able to express their feelings well and use religious vocabulary. During the whole school collect worship, opportunity for silent prayer was given so pupils could think about loved ones and develop their relationship with God. The pupils have developed highly reflective practices which means they are well placed to enjoy prayer and hymn singing. There are frequent celebrations of the mass to which parents and parishioners are invited. Services of the Word take place in school led by the school Chaplain and pupil chaplaincy team. The School Chaplaincy Team is leading new initiatives to enhance the spiritual life of the school. On special feast days the school celebrates the mass with other schools in the parish. Collect worship in the classroom is reflective and there is clear evidence of impact on spiritual development. The organisation and implementation of these activities is good and pupils make a significant contribution to the planning and delivery. Prayer tables in classrooms, display materials and artefacts demonstrate creativity and relevance to the children. The school embraces every opportunity to strengthen links with the parish and engagement with families in prayer and worship.

### **THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS OUTSTANDING**

The school nurtures, supports and challenges the pupils to live out and to give witness to the Mission Statement in their everyday experiences. They place pupils at the centre of the school's Mission and encourage them to reach out to those in need. An extensive list of charities are fully supported by the school and the school frequently welcomes speakers from various charities to assemblies. Pupils clearly demonstrate witness to justice, compassion, reconciliation, love and forgiveness. Observations showed that children treated each other with respect, care, patience, concern and with dignity and there is an emphasis on creating a pleasant working environment for everyone in school. Staff and pupils are confident and secure in their witness to Christ, the gospels and the teaching of the church. Relationships are excellent between all members of the community and pupils. They show respect for God's world and the school environment having been awarded Eco School status on numerous occasions. The Eco committee are pro-active and work with other schools and agencies to enhance the work they do as 'builders of the Kingdom'. A strong sense of belonging to the school community exists and pupils are given leadership responsibilities and their opinions are valued. The school choir sings in the local community. The leadership team fully recognises their education endeavour as being integral to the redemptive activity of Christ.

### **AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT**

- Continue to develop prayer and worship in the school, including the work of the pupil chaplaincy team, in order to embed the recently introduced initiatives and pupil involvement.
- To ensure self-evaluation at all levels is coherent, accurate and rigorous in order to provide the necessary challenge and accountability.

Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2015

Dear Pupils

Thank you so much for the wonderful welcome you gave us when we came to visit you. We really enjoyed learning about all the wonderful things you do at St Mary's. You and your teachers are working so hard to always do your very best and as a result your school is outstanding.

We know that you are very proud of your caring school and your new uniform. Continue to look after each other and help those in need around you through all the charities you support.

We enjoyed being part of your lessons and were sorry not to see everyone. Your work is of a very high standard and we could clearly see that you have outstanding knowledge of the bible and the Church. Thank you for showing us so much of what you have been doing. We were extremely impressed with the standard of work in your RE books and your work on display. Your behaviour in the classroom and around school is outstanding.

It was wonderful to see how you participated in Collective Worship and prayer. The Chaplaincy Team are doing a wonderful job helping you in school. We have asked them to continue working with you on prayer and worship. We have asked your teachers to continue improving prayer and worship in school.

God bless you all.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Susan Gedzielewski and Mr Brendan Hennessy  
(Section 48 Inspectors)

## Summary Report to Parents

On 12<sup>th</sup> February 2015 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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