

INSPECTION REPORT

St Mary and St Joseph’s RC Primary School, Bennington Street Blackburn BB2 3HP

Inspection date 21st June 2017
 Reporting Inspector Julie Frazer
 Andrew Sowerby

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

Type of School Primary
 URN 119513
 Age range of pupils 4-11 years
 Number on roll 209
 Appropriate authority The Governing Body
 Chair of Governors Mr M Ashcroft
 Headteacher Mrs A Thomson
 RE Subject Leader Mrs L Baldwin
 Mrs A M Parker
 Date of previous inspection June 2012

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

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

St Mary and St Joseph's is a Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic Primary School, admitting 16% baptised Roman Catholic pupils. It is similar in size to most other primary schools nationally; it serves the Roman Catholic Parish of Holy Family, Blackburn. Many of the children entering the school come from home backgrounds which experience some hardship and economic difficulties. 88% of pupils are from a range of ethnic groups and the number of children who speak English as an additional language is 71%. The proportion of children who are in receipt of pupil premium is 22%, and there are 19% of the children on the special educational needs and disability (SEND) register, with 2% of the children having an Education Health Care (EHC) plan. 8 of the 10 teaching staff are Catholic.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS GOOD

St Mary and St Joseph's is a good Catholic school with some outstanding features. It is very successful in offering its learners a holistic Catholic education in an extremely warm, friendly and exceptionally supportive environment. The school community, very well supported by the governing body and driven by the headteacher, works very hard to ensure the pastoral and spiritual needs of all learners are met and often exceeded. This support is frequently extended to parents and family members. Positive relationships are evident throughout the whole school community. The strong commitment of the headteacher and senior leadership team, together with the hard work and dedication of the staff, has created a culture in which gospel values are clearly evident and all are encouraged to be the best they can be. All pupils are very enthusiastic about their learning in Religious Education (RE). Pupils, staff and parents are happy to belong to St Mary and St Joseph's school community. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are friendly, polite and welcoming and the behaviour of pupils is very good. Pupils feel that when issues arise they are encouraged to resolve them themselves, but if adult intervention is needed everyone's voice is listened to. The school offers its learners a wide variety of opportunities to develop their confidence. Its mission statement remains relevant to the whole school where children are encouraged to journey together along the learning path of life. The school provides an effective space for SEND children in the form of a 'Sky Room' which was designed by The Arts Council.

KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- The welfare of the children is paramount. All children are very well cared for especially those with SEND, such as autism and physical disabilities. These are provided with impressive levels of support.
- The quality of welcome is outstanding; all who come in to the school are made to feel at ease and part of the family of St Mary and St Joseph's Roman Catholic School.
- St Mary and St Joseph's is a school where all who attend clearly experience the tenancy of the Catholic faith.

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

The quality of leadership is outstanding. The dedicated and passionate headteacher, enthusiastic RE subject leaders along with a knowledgeable and supportive governing body, provides strong and decisive leadership by clearly living their vision for Catholic Education. The headteacher's clear vision for the school is that the children are taken on a journey of faith throughout their time at St Mary and St Joseph's. She has high aspirations for every child to be the best that they can be whilst enjoying all aspects of this Catholic school's life. There is very good leadership at all levels of the community, which contributes significantly to the good provision for Catholic Education that the school currently provides. This ensures that the development of the Catholic life of the school is at the forefront of its work. Together with all other staff, they ensure that the teaching of RE and the development of the Catholic life of the school have a high priority. The school has a clear plan for developing RE across the school and this is reflected in the priority that it is given. The evidence for this can be found in the RE action plan. The school is aware of its next steps and has comprehensive plans for implementing them. Governors are fully supportive of the school as a Catholic learning community; they

have a high level of commitment to their role in taking the school forward in its mission. The parish priest has a clear determination to ensure that the school promotes the vision and mission of the Catholic Church amongst pupils and families of all faiths.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORD IS GOOD

The school's mission statement is current and reflects the school ethos. Staff and pupils live out the mission statement and it underpins all aspects of school life. The religious education of the pupils is at the heart of the curriculum. The school places great importance on RE and it is well resourced. The work in the children's books and the lessons observed clearly demonstrate that the children are learning through a highly creative curriculum RE. Levels of attainment are at least as good as they are in English. The RE subject leaders fully supported by the headteacher, governing body, parish priest and senior leadership team, have enabled the school to develop a clear vision on how RE should be taught. In addition to this they are further developing the Catholic life of the school, along with teaching and learning. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. There is clearly the capacity for this to become outstanding in the future and this can be achieved by providing CPD for teachers to further develop their subject knowledge and by ensuring that there is a greater consistency in the marking of children's work. The provision afforded to the children in EYFS is a particular strength of the school. Pupils' attitude to learning is very good. They show interest in and enthusiasm for their RE work and talk enthusiastically about topics they have covered. Children have a very good awareness of cultural differences and other world faith traditions; this is enhanced by their regular multi-faith days. Throughout the school Sacred Scripture is known and lived. There is clear evidence that the school embraces its mission to reach out to those children and families who are of the Catholic faith as well as those who are of other faiths. Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) education is clearly evidenced across the curriculum and during the inspection; the children were very enthusiastic about the Catholic life of St Mary and St Joseph's and they say that they have a growing understanding of different religions

THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING

St Mary and St Joseph's places Christ at the centre of its community and through its welcoming ethos throughout the school. It provides a very warm, welcoming and inclusive environment where committed staff have high expectations of the pupils. The children were welcomed in to school by their teachers and headteacher. They were spoken to personally and were clearly happy to be coming in to school. The strong welcoming tradition of the school is maintained through a faith commitment and a genuine supportive ethos from all staff, children, governors and parish priest. Staff demonstrate a high level of confidence and outreach to all within the school community, especially those with additional needs, recognising, valuing, respecting and celebrating diversity at all levels. The importance of the dignity of the individual is clearly evident at all levels. St Mary and St Joseph's is a respectful and reflective community where the inherent dignity of each person is celebrated. The caring ethos and the development of pupils' personal qualities are of paramount importance to the staff and governors. The children say that they feel their behaviour is managed fairly and that they have the confidence to step in and try to help one another if they feel that things are going wrong for other children in the playground. Children say that there is no bullying in school and this is due to very effective anti-bullying strategies. The school constantly strives to find ways of engaging all members of the community. Staff engage with parents and families in a caring, respectful and dignified manner. Parents who were interviewed during the inspection said that the school has a warmly welcoming nature and that there is a very effective pre-school induction process which ensures that the children are ready to come to school each September.

THE QUALITY OF WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING

Parents spoke very highly of the pastoral support their child receives in school. As well as the very effective induction programme, that includes children visiting the school before they start in the Reception class. Parents say that all the teachers and support staff know about their children and staff greet children and parents as they come to school every day. This enables the teachers to deal with any issues which may have arisen and helps to address any concerns that either children or their parents may have. This ensures that pupils are in the best possible position to engage in learning. Parental concerns are dealt with effectively by

the class teachers and the headteacher who has a clear 'open door' policy. The recently introduced texting service is proving to be effective and parents are very pleased with it. Children feel safe within the familial setting of the school. They know that they are loved and valued and they both show and are shown high levels of respect by other children as well as adults within school. Adults were observed being very patient with the children. Pupils within the school clearly have a voice and are listened to. During the inspection it was particularly evident that the needs of SEND children were met very well and staff went to great lengths to ensure that those children were fully included in all aspects of school life. Every member of the school community knows and understands that they are here to do God's work; to learn and grow in a community of love. They make decisions in their roles as GIFT chaplaincy team and school council members. They raise money for charities including East Lancashire Hospice, The British Heart Foundation, the local food bank, St Joseph's Penny, The Poppy Appeal, Jeans for Genes as well as the Church.

THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS GOOD

Worship is an integral part of the whole school community and pupils are respectful and reverent when taking part in or listening to acts of worship. The children, and in particular the GIFT chaplaincy team, are becoming increasingly involved in planning for assemblies and acts of worship, which are holistic, pupil centred and relevant to their lives. The GIFT chaplaincy team regularly read Bible stories for the Key Stage 1 children during break time. They say that they enjoy doing this and the younger children also enjoy coming to these sessions. Pupils have gained and are continuing to gain confidence in leading meaningful prayer in order to further develop their relationship with God. The whole school assembly which was observed by both inspectors was led by a whole class of children, who spoke clearly and everyone was fully involved in the worship. In other class acts of worship children responded warmly and respectfully. An increasingly high level of creativity is evident in worship and assemblies, engaging all pupils and staff. Children respond well to collective worship opportunities in school. They are aware of its importance and are reverent in their behaviour. Parents are invited in to school to attend acts of worship and other celebrations. The school now has a focus on further preparing pupils to take a leadership role in preparing for and taking part in meaningful acts of worship.

THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS GOOD

Staff and pupils are confident and secure in their witness to Christ, the Gospel and the teachings of the Church. Throughout the inspection, observations showed that all adults treated children with respect, care, patience, concern and with dignity and there is an emphasis on creating a pleasant working environment for everyone in school. An explicit Catholic culture permeates the whole school and is clearly identifiable through relationships, decision making and actions. The headteacher and senior leadership team are very effective in undertaking its role of leading the school and developing it as a Catholic community. Staff and children clearly demonstrate and witness to justice, compassion, reconciliation, respect and dignity in their relationships and are able to see the relationship between their own behaviour and gospel values. There is clear evidence of gospel values in school policies, strategies, procedures and learning across the whole school. Children are encouraged to both generate and discuss 'big questions' in their RE lessons. Faith leaders have been welcomed in to school during multi-faith days and as a result of this children have inherent respect and understanding of faiths other than their own. The school bears witness of its stewardship of God's world through its eco council, gardening club, forest school and its commitment to recycling. Care for God's creation is a high priority within the learning of all pupils.

AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- To further enhance the quality of teaching and learning in RE through the provision of greater opportunities for all members of staff to develop their knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith.
- To ensure that there is greater consistency in the marking of the children's work in their RE books.
- To fully embed the recently introduced policy of child initiated and planned acts of worship.
- To ensure that the Caritas in Action scheme is thoroughly embedded across the whole school.

21st June 2017

Dear Children,

Thank you for making our visit to St Mary and St Joseph's so enjoyable when we came to inspect your school for the Bishop. Thank you for making us feel so welcome. We really enjoyed our time with you. Your school is a good Catholic school.

We really enjoyed seeing your lessons and we were sorry we didn't see all the classes. It was lovely to see your activities: your work, your prayer and worship sessions and your very polite manners. Thank you. You clearly enjoy coming to school, and we could see that you are proud of your school. We could see that you all believe that every child is special and is valued as part of your school community.

We were made to feel very welcome by all the children that we met. You treat each other with dignity and respect and every child has a part to play at St Mary and St Joseph's.

Your headteacher and teachers work very hard and they make sure that you all enjoy coming to school and are eager to learn. They have a high opinion of you and your families and they care a great deal for every child in the school. It was a privilege for us to come into your school.

Jesus Christ is at the centre of your school community and this is seen throughout the school every day. Your teachers are going to help you to develop even greater levels of understanding about Jesus and the Catholic faith. Your GIFT chaplaincy team have begun to develop acts of worship and this is going to develop even more in the future.

God bless all in your school,

Mrs J Frazer
Mr A Sowerby

(Section 48 Inspectors)

Summary Report to Parents

On 21st June 2017 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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