

INSPECTION REPORT

St Mary's RC Primary School, Clare Rd, Levenshulme, Manchester, M19 2QW.

Inspection date 26th June 2015

Reporting Inspectors Mr Andrew Sowerby
Mrs Susan Gedzielewski

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

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| Type of School | Roman Catholic Primary |
| URN | 105534 |
| Age range of pupils | 3-11 years |
| Number on roll | 372 |
| Appropriate authority | The Governing Body |
| Chair of Governors | Mr P.A. Devlin |
| Headteacher | Mrs Mylene Maguire |
| Religious Education Subject Leader | Mrs Lisa Thorley |
| Date of previous inspection | April 2010 |

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

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

St Mary's R.C. Primary School is a larger than average sized primary school, with a nursery, in Levenshulme Manchester. There are currently 372 children on roll, including 45 in the nursery class. Currently 77% of pupils are baptised Catholics. The pupils, who are aged 3-11 years, are arranged in a mixture of single age and mixed age classes. Just over half are from white British backgrounds, with almost 40% from minority ethnic backgrounds and 15% of whom do not have English as their first language. Mobility is slightly higher than national average at 16%. Approximately 70% of children in the current Year 6 have been in school since Reception class. The total percentage of pupils identified with SEND is 15% which is above the national average, of these 6% have significant additional needs. The school has a strong commitment to a range of successful accreditations including: Forest School, Healthy Schools, School Games Silver Award, Active Mark, Eco School Award and SFVS. There are 15 full time and 5 part time members of the teaching staff of whom 15 are Catholic. Six staff hold the Catholic Teacher's Certificate or its equivalent.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St Mary's is an outstanding Catholic Primary school. Upon entry to the school one is struck by the wonderfully warm and friendly welcome given to all. All children are provided with a Catholic education in a caring and supportive environment where individual needs are exceptionally well catered for. All children take a great pride in the school, which is fully inclusive. The Word of God is central to the life of the school. This ensures the pastoral and spiritual needs of all families and children are very well met. The dedicated headteacher, assistant headteachers, RE subject leader and leadership team have high expectations of adults and children. The quality of distributive leadership is outstanding. Together with the hard working staff they have created an ethos where everyone recognises the need to work together as a 'family', showing love and concern for all its members. This work is further enhanced by the support of a very effective governing body.

THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE

- The Catholic leadership of the school including governors.
- The quality of welcome.
- Exceptional welfare of the children.
- The vibrant learning environment.
- The high quality acts of collective worship.

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

The quality of Catholic leadership is outstanding. There is excellent leadership at all levels of the school community which contributes significantly to the outstanding provision for Catholic education that the school currently provides. The dedicated headteacher, assistant headteachers and senior leadership team provide strong and decisive leadership by clearly living their vision for Catholic education. They ensure that the development of the Catholic life of the school is at the forefront of the school's work. They are supported by a knowledgeable and effective governing body. They, together with the other staff, ensure that the teaching of RE and the development of the Catholic life of the school have an extremely high priority in school. The school has a clear plan for developing RE across the school and this is reflected in the priority it is given. Evidence for this can be found in the school's clear self-evaluation plan, which is based on the 5Ws model. The school is aware of its next steps and has clear plans for implementing them. As a result the inspectors can verify that this evaluation is both accurate and reflective.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORD OF GOD IS OUTSTANDING

The school's new Mission Statement is clearly evident in all areas of the school. It is child centred and reflects the determination of all to ensure that the school provides the highest quality of Catholic education to all who attend the school. The staffing and resources devoted to RE are of the highest standard, reflecting its significance and importance in the school. The development of the school's 'learning power' booklet has had profound input on the quality of teaching so that it is outstanding with some examples of excellent practice across all key stages. The creative approach to teaching RE meets the needs of all children and caters for a variety of learning styles. Children clearly enjoy RE and were keen to express this to the inspection team during their stay in school. Pupils are challenged to engage with the 'big questions' of the purpose and meaning of life throughout the curriculum. This could be seen particularly in those lessons where children were challenged to implement the gospel message in their own lives. Examples of this were seen in the Forest School, the morning act of collective worship and in many of the RE lessons. There are also examples of this in the evidence files that the school presented to the team. Scripture is clearly known, understood and made relevant throughout the school. The staff and pupils demonstrate and can articulate the centrality and importance of the Word of God. There is evidence on the displays in the classrooms, corridors and halls of the importance of this. The home, school and parish links are inclusive, creative and effective. Pupils are actively trained in outreach to the local community. This can be seen in the vast number of charities that the school supports. These are not just the Catholic charities such as CAFOD and St Joseph's Penny but also the support the school gives to other local charities such as Cornerstones as well as the support they provide to Spiritians mission in Brazil.

THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING

St. Mary's provides an exceptionally warm welcome for all who attend the school. Parents were keen to express how all feel included and that any concerns they have are dealt with quickly and sensitively. The development of the school's Mission Statement included all members of the school community and demonstrates how well the school makes all its stakeholders feel welcome. There is a holistic approach to ensure that children's emotional, social and cultural needs are very well cared for. Children love coming to school. As one child put it "I love St. Mary's as everyone looks after each other and no one is left out" Parents also spoke very clearly about the high quality communication the school provides so that they all feel very well informed about the life of the school.

THE QUALITY OF WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING

The staff and pupils demonstrate a very high level of respect, care and service to others. This was witnessed in all classes where children feel confident and secure enough to tend to their personal needs without interrupting the learning or having their dignity abused. The structures and procedures ensure that all pupils and staff feel safe and are treated with respect and dignity. This was evidenced in the way that members of staff cared for children who were hurt or unwell. The outreach support provided by the school ensures that the needs of parents and young families are met in a structured and sensitive manner. All pupils and staff feel safe and free to express their opinions and know that these will be valued. This was seen during discussions with the children who expressed their opinions about the variety of opportunities provided for them and how they felt empowered to express their opinions. Importance and recognition is given equally to all. The quality of outreach support provided by the school is absolutely outstanding as senior leaders live out the gospel message to care for others in their service to the community. One example of this work, is support given to families in need well after they have left the school. Calm support is offered by sensitive adults when children have difficulty remaining on task. Such role models ensure learning and good relationships develop.

THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

The school provides a variety of worship opportunities for pupils throughout the school including small and large groups, which are appropriate to their backgrounds and faith experiences. All children are provided with the opportunity to pray and reflect in a variety of settings. This was experienced during an uplifting celebration of Holy Mass as well as a more reflective and contemplative act of worship in the school's recently developed peace garden as well as in the Foundation Stage RE lessons. Here the children were provided with the opportunity to experience a moment of quietness in the hustle and bustle of everyday school life. The inclusive

and reflective collective acts of worship help pupils to grow in confidence in prayer and develop a close relationship with God. The provision and development of a variety of places for personal prayer across the school showed the whole school's commitment to the development of the Catholic Life of the School. The school has strong links with the parish of St. Mary's where it participates in a variety of masses and other liturgical celebrations. There are close links between the parish and the school particularly with regard to the preparation of the children for the sacraments of initiation. Pupils are comfortable with their feelings and have a good and knowledgeable vocabulary. Each class has a special area of focus. The children know many school prayers and compose powerful prayers for themselves. In many classes there were examples of displays of the children's own prayers. Attractive displays which were seen around school are used to show and stimulate prayer opportunities. Hymns, music and singing enhanced the quality and enjoyment of prayer in school. The newly established Pupil Chaplaincy Team is beginning to have a real impact on the development of the prayer life of the school so that the children are becoming very effective at planning and leading prayer services.

THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS OUTSTANDING

All staff act as excellent role models for the children and help them in recognising that God is with them in every aspect of school life. Adults and pupils witness to the Mission Statement of the school, which informs everything and is explicit in policies and the lived experience of the whole community. Adults act as role models of the school's mission and values. They are key promoters of the ethos of the school for the pupils, the school community's and give witness to the wider community. The staff and pupils feel confident and secure in their witness to Christ, the Gospel and the teachings of the Church. Pupils are confident in witnessing to the beliefs and values of a Catholic community and are actively encouraged and supported in being pro-active citizens who participate in the decision-making processes at a local and national level. This is seen in the way the school promotes support for various charities so as to promote support for the Common Good. An explicit Catholic culture permeates the whole of school and is clearly identifiable through relationships, decision-making and actions. Relationships are outstanding at St Mary's and a strong sense of teamwork and belonging exist. The inspectors noted that behaviour was outstanding at all times. Children are respectful of each other. Adults working as a committed team have high expectations of the children and in this atmosphere the children thrive.

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- To further enhance the work of the Pupil Chaplaincy team so as to ensure that all children have regular opportunities to actively participate in the preparation and delivery of the prayer life of the school.
- To ensure that marking is consistent in RE and is having a positive impact on moving children's learning forward.
- To improve the quality of differentiation in RE lessons so that it enables all learners to make greater progress.

Department for Formation, Office for Education

Friday 26th June 2015

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making our visit to St Mary's so enjoyable when we came to inspect your school for the Bishop. We really enjoyed being with you. Thank you for looking after us so well and helping us to feel very welcome. St. Mary's is an outstanding Catholic school.

We enjoyed being part of your lessons and were sorry not to see everyone. Thank you for showing us so much of your work and activities. We could see that you are very proud of your school and all that you have achieved together. We were particularly impressed that you thought that the most important part of your learning and life together was that you *'felt connected to one another as all part of God's family'*. I know the Bishop will be delighted to hear this.

Your teachers are really helping you to learn very well and we were very impressed by your excellent relationships and behaviour. It was good to see so much of your Mission Statement coming through everything you are learning; your relationships and the special way you make everyone feel valued. It is wonderful to see a school made up of pupils and adults who get on so well together so that everyone is cared for as a member of God's family. This is a true reflection of being part of a Catholic community where everyone is welcome and has a place.

You have started using your new RE programme and are doing very well. You are a very creative school and we were most impressed by the way you work together, so co-operatively in your lessons. The prayer services we saw were very good and uplifting experiences. Your teachers have started to develop an excellent way of teaching RE and using the 'learning powers' document that you have developed. We have asked them to continue to develop this with you. We have especially asked them to continue to develop the work that School Chaplaincy Team are doing so as to help you all understand more about your faith and relationship with God.

God bless you all and have a really happy summer holiday.

Yours sincerely,

Mr A J Sowerby
Mrs S Gedzielewski
(Section 48 Inspectors)

Summary Report to Parents

On 26th June 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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