

INSPECTION REPORT

St Joseph's RC Primary School

Email: education@dioceseofsalford.org.uk

Inspection date Thursday 8th November 2012

Reporting Inspectors Sr Judith Russi
Mr Peter Eavers

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

Type of School	Catholic Primary
URN	105965
Age range of pupils	3-11 years
Number on roll	187
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of Governors	Mrs Paula Howe
Headteacher	Miss Margaret Ambrose
Religious Education Co-ordinator	Miss Teresa Hayes
Date of previous inspection	June 2007

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

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's is an average size Roman Catholic primary school situated in one of the most deprived Wards in Salford and serves the parish of St Joseph and Our lady of Mount Carmel in Ordsall, Salford. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. 48% of children are from ethnic minorities. Other relatively large groups include pupils from White European and Black African backgrounds. An above average number of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is much lower than the national average. Free School Meals eligibility figure is well above average at 36% . The school has developed very successful Breakfast and After School Clubs which are oversubscribed. The school has Healthy School status. Every pupil plays a musical instrument in the school and the school has gained the Hall Orchestra Performance Award.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS REQUIRING IMPROVEMENT

St Joseph's has many good and some outstanding features. However some areas are requiring further improvement which is impacting on the progress and development of the school. The governing body are fully aware of the areas requiring further development and recognise that a review of leadership at all levels is needed to ensure that staff and pupils are encouraged and enabled to develop their potential. The school community works hard to ensure that pupils, their families, especially those in the greatest need, are well supported. The school has recently appointed a team to lead Religious Education at all Key Stages and is now well placed to focus on raising standards to outstanding.

THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- The commitment to Catholic education, relationships, behaviour and care for all within the school is outstanding.
- The enrichment of the life of the school through music.
- The outreach and support for those in the greatest need.

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS REQUIRING IMPROVEMENT

At all levels governors, the senior leadership team, teachers and classroom assistants are striving for excellence. The senior leadership team would benefit from an urgent review of roles and responsibilities and further training and support in distributive leadership to better facilitate a greater impact on teaching and learning. The Headteacher and the leadership team have identified the need to further support both the development of 'Witness', 'Word' and 'Worship' across the school. In order to strengthen these areas the school would benefit from further training and support. The recently formed RE team consisting of the RE Coordinator and two Key Stage Coordinators, are well placed to raise standards and ensure all pupils are sufficiently challenged. Further support in monitoring of teaching and learning through classroom observations, and CPD for all staff, will enable the RE curriculum to better meet the needs of pupils and develop the leadership skills of classroom teachers and their assistants. The Headteacher's knowledge and understanding of the complex needs and challenges facing many families is outstanding. Parents expressed their affection for the headteacher and the school with one parent stating, "my heart is at peace knowing that my child comes to St Joseph's" whilst another said the St Joseph's is "the only (primary) school I'd send my child to"

THE QUALITY OF WORD IS GOOD

The school does have a Mission Statement but it was not found to be well known. However, evidence of *'I came so that they may have life and have it to the full'* was evident. A review of the present Mission Statement involving all within the school community would unify and enable all to better understand their common endeavour. The RE coordinator and her team are fully aware of the challenges of the new scheme *'The Way, The Truth and The Life'*. Progress would be accelerated by the raising of confidence and a greater level of independence and leadership of the development of RE across the school.

Teachers and teaching assistants are enthusiastic and committed to teaching RE and demonstrated some creative and interesting teaching and learning strategies. There was evidence of good questioning skills by teachers which challenged pupils to think more deeply. Pupils were keen to learn throughout and demonstrated good subject knowledge. In some instances, activities were often pitched too low, lacking challenge and depth. Books were clearly marked. However an over dependence on work sheets and heavily scaffolded activities did not always allow pupils the opportunity to excel. A more consistent use of higher order questioning skills, independent learning activities with the use of pupil targets; assessment and diagnostic marking indicating what pupils need to do to improve, would greatly enhance pupil learning. Behaviour for learning was outstanding. Pupils were clearly keen to learn and enthusiastic.

THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING

There is a positive welcoming culture which permeates the whole school and is clearly demonstrated by both the staff and children. The enthusiastic and dedicated staff work hard to create a school where children can thrive both spiritually and academically. All members of the school community are proud of their school and it is clear from discussions with staff, parents and children that everyone feels they are a valued member of the school family. One Governor described the school as an "oasis and haven" and a parent described it as "rich in spirit". Pupils were keen to greet and welcome visitors and share their work, projects and improvements to the school premises. Pupils were clearly delighted with their gardening area, crops grown and the success of selling their vegetables and fruit. The recent creation of the 'Mary Garden' serves as a focal point in the grounds and the pupils were clearly excited about planting the flowers and shrubs which would flower in the spring making it *'a beautiful place where we can go in peace and quiet'*.

As a result of the strong Catholic ethos children show respect and consideration for each other and the importance of the dignity of the individual is clearly evident. A calm and caring ethos pervades the school, children's behaviour is outstanding and relationships are strong, bearing witness to Christ being at the heart of the community.

THE QUALITY OF WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING

The whole school community strives to enable pupils to grow in their learning whilst nurturing their spirituality, addressing social barriers to successful learning and creating a positive climate which supports the development of the whole person. The use of early intervention, the employment of a full time speech and language therapist and other professionals meets the complex needs of all children. The excellent breakfast and after school clubs are oversubscribed and open to all children. The much needed after school activities further enhance the welfare of the children and provide a safe and loving environment.

Developing pupil responsibility and service to the community is celebrated through fundraising for St Joseph's Penny, learning about the work of CAFOD and Aid to the Church in Need. Year 6 pupils act

as prefects and positive role models for the school undertaking a wide range of activities and responsibilities when required.

The policy for sex and relationship education is regularly reviewed by governors and set within the beliefs and values of the Church. The dignity and sacredness of life is paramount in the pupils learning.

Behaviour is consistently outstanding. Pupils expressed their happiness at being in a school which is well run and happy. When asked, they described the school as “a safe, caring family”. There was a clear understanding of procedures for addressing any bullying or unkind behaviour. Pupils clearly understood the need to be responsible and care for each other and demonstrated a very mature attitude towards those in any kind of special need.

THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS REQUIRING IMPROVEMENT

Prayer and worship form a central part of school life and all members of the school community. Throughout the school and in each classroom there are focal points for worship and these are clearly valued by the children. Children are invited to write their own prayers and these are shared in the class collective worship. Opportunities for prayer exist throughout the day. A very good act of worship was seen in Year 3 where pupils brought their learning into prayer focusing on holding one another in their love and care as Mary does for each one. St Joseph’s is very well support by the local priests who frequently visit the school. However the practice of taking Years 2-6 to Mass each week in school time needs urgent review in order to ensure that all pupils are receiving their full curriculum entitlement. Governors and clergy were keen for pupils to have a greater level of responsibility for planning school celebrations of Mass and where appropriate, taking greater responsibility. Increased pupil involvement in planning, writing and delivering acts of collective worship, would further develop pupil skill levels. For Worship to be judged to be good, children need to be provided with the opportunity and the skills to take on a leadership role in developing opportunities for celebrating their faith in appropriate age related experiences and the policy for the weekly celebration of the Eucharist needs to reviewed in order to safeguard curriculum time for all areas of learning.

THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS GOOD

The staff and children clearly demonstrate and witness to mercy, compassion, reconciliation, love and forgiveness in their relationships. Throughout the inspection the children were observed to treat each other with respect and consideration. The relationships between staff and children are positive and children frequently referred to St Joseph’s being a happy place where ‘*we have fun*’ and referred to the fact that the new fencing meant that their special places like the allotments and the Mary Garden would be safe from vandals. Children spoke confidently about their faith, their love of taking part in celebrations and excitement about being in Year 3 as the children who were preparing for the Sacraments. It was clear from pupils that they were able to make the links between their learning about their faith and how it needs to be expressed in their daily lives. Pupils in Year 6 were able to articulate the clear links between the ‘Big Sing’ CAFOD celebration that they had participated in and their daily lives. The high level of commitment by the staff to the beliefs and values of the Catholic community acts as a major reinforcement to the children’s learning. Witness is well placed to now move towards being outstanding through the introduction of further opportunities for pupils to take more leadership roles in the Catholic life of the school. Opportunities such as allowing the older pupils to act as catechists, pupil chaplains and lead times of worship in other classes would greatly enhance already good practice.

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

1. Review and redefine the roles of the senior leadership team in order to facilitate the raising of standards of teaching and learning at all Key Stages.
2. Review and develop further leadership roles and opportunities for all staff and pupils so that the school community is enriched by a wider contribution of new ideas.
3. Review and support the role of the RE coordinator to ensure a wider responsibility for the development of the RE curriculum, its development, assessment, monitoring and evaluation.
4. Undertake a review of Worship and the celebration of the Eucharist across the school to ensure all pupils are receiving their proper entitlement to the full curriculum.

The inspection Team are confident that the school will be able to take these key areas forward very quickly and would therefore like to revisit the school before the end of the academic year to be able to report further on the progress which the school has made.

16th November 2012

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making my visit to St Joseph's so enjoyable when I came to inspect your school for the Bishop. I really enjoyed being with you. St Joseph's is a very happy school and some areas of what you do individually and together are good and some are outstanding. In order for your school to improve further your teachers are going to develop new ways of helping everyone to develop their leadership skills.

I enjoyed being part of your lessons and was sorry not to see everyone. Thank you for showing me so much of your work and activities. I could see that you are very proud of your school and all that you have achieved together. I was particularly impressed by your excellent Music, your Achievement Wall, Allotments and the beautiful Mary Garden. Your teachers are helping you to do well and I was very impressed by your excellent relationships and behaviour which helps everyone to learn in a happy environment.

You have started using your new RE programme and as your teachers continue to develop each topic they will be working with you on your personal targets and religious literacy. Many of you have a very good knowledge and understanding of your faith so this should help you to do even better.

God bless you all and have a really happy term.

Yours sincerely

Sr Judith Russi

(Section 48 Inspector)

SUMMARY REPORT TO PARENTS

On Thursday 8th November 2012 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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