



## **INSPECTION REPORT**

School St John Southworth R.C. Primary School  
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Head teacher: Mrs. Margaret Borman  
Chair of Governors: Mrs. Pauline Firman

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Diocese of Salford  
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education  
Act 2005

Date of inspection: September 2011  
**Date of previous inspection:** June 2004  
Reporting Inspector: Mr. A. J . Sowerby

## **Information about the school**

St. John Southworth's is a Roman Catholic Primary School in the Diocese of Salford. It serves the parish of St John Southworth Nelson. The school is situated on the edge of the town centre in an area of social deprivation. The majority of children who attend the school live in the parish. They come from a range of socio economically deprived backgrounds. Many live in rented terraced properties. The age range of learners is 4 to 11. The indicative admission number is 30 and there are currently 210 on roll of which 32% are baptised Catholics. Learners from the Islamic faith now account for 68% of the school community. The school currently has 10 members of the teaching staff of which 6 are full time and 13 members of support staff. The current Head Teacher works only part time and shares the leadership of the school with the Deputy Head Teacher. 38 children have been identified as having special educational needs or which 4 have a statement of need. The school continues to admit a large number of children who are migrants from Eastern Europe.

## **1. PROVISION**

### **How effective the provision is for Catholic Education**

### **Grade 2**

St John Southworth's is a warm, welcoming school in which everyone is included. The prayer life of the school plays a key role in developing the spiritual lives of the pupils and staff. The themes chosen by the staff and the children reflect an understanding of the church's mission and the liturgical life of the church. The collective worship embraces governors, parents and the local community on a regular basis. It is clear that the children are used to leading prayers throughout the school day and are confident to share aloud spontaneous prayers with everyone present. All children pray with reverence and respect. Children also take an active part in Mass in school, at church and other liturgical acts of worship in the wider community. Optimum use is made of the school setting; an outdoor area being very well used to promote prayer. The staff themselves pray together regularly and use staff retreats to further enhance their own spiritual formation as Catholic teachers. The school is acutely aware of the needs of its non Catholic children and provides outstanding opportunities for them to be included in all aspects of Collective Worship. Therefore there is very good provision made for their spiritual development.

The requirements of the Bishops' Conference in respect of 10% of the teaching time being devoted to Religious Education are fully met. The curriculum contributes to the pupils' excellent spiritual and moral development. Curriculum provision and other activities are relevant to the pupils' needs. The school has introduced the new curriculum required by the local diocese and is working hard to ensure they make the most of all learning opportunities. The school learning environment is attractive and stimulating for the children. It is clear from the standard of the displays that Catholicism is pivotal to the children's learning and that their work is valued. Pupils are encouraged to share their ideas and concerns and are confident that they will be heard.

In the lessons observed, the teachers provided a rich and stimulating range of experiences and activities with which to engage the pupils. Other adults are used very

effectively and they support the children very well. Technology is also used to optimize learning. The level of self organisation from an early age is a joy to see. The pupils are highly motivated, sustain their concentration and enjoy their work. The ability to maintain a focus when working independently or in groups is of a very high standard. The quality of teaching overall is good but with several examples of outstanding practice particularly in reception and Year 6 where the children were inspired to produce some outstanding work in an imaginative and creative way.

The Head Teacher and Senior Leadership monitor the quality of teaching and learning and carry out regular scrutinies of work. The lesson plans are evaluated and these inform areas for further development. There are plans to develop assessment in line with the new curriculum and to continue with the rigorous tracking of pupils' progress. This will continue to enable the school to monitor the achievements of all children in R.E.

## **2. PUPILS**

### **How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups**

#### **Grade 2**

Pupils are able to articulate the ethos of the school. They lead activities with a religious character in the school and in the wider community. They value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with both the parish and the community. The school's commitment to secure relationships is excellent. Pupils treat others with high levels of respect and know acutely that their behaviour always has consequences. The behaviour in school is exemplary. Pupils are very responsive to the needs of others both within the school, the local community and the wider world. They are able to articulate their beliefs with confidence and link references to the teachings of Jesus to the manner in which they conduct their own lives. They are very aware of the needs of each others communities and can articulate clearly the difference and similarities between their separate cultures. This has provided the school with an inclusive culture which should be celebrated by all.

Pupils regularly prepare and lead acts of prayer and worship with confidence from their earliest years. They are skilled at using a variety of ways and means to support the prayer life of the school. They know and use key elements of worship in a range of settings and use different approaches to prayer such as spontaneous prayer and reflection with ease and sincerity. They regularly lead the prayers at church. As a result, pupils engage in prayer and worship with reverence and respect. They show a developing understanding of the liturgy as they progress through the school. They are able to make connections between the prayer life of the school and the church as a whole.

The children enjoy their lessons in religious education and are motivated and overall stimulated well to succeed. They are provided with a variety of activities in which to record their work in R.E. The quality of children's written work is good. The school's assessment procedures are to undergo further development which should enable the school to maintain this aspect of its work. The school is aware that further

development is required of the new R.E. Scheme and for assessing children's progress in this.

## **LEADERS AND MANAGERS**

### **How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the School**

**Grade 1**

Leadership and management are outstanding at promoting the provision for the Catholic life of the school. It is clear that the staff's own development is valued; the leadership team work hard to ensure that all staff grow in awareness and understanding of the Catholic life of the school whilst the co-ordinator for Religious Education is very well supported by all the staff. The school's Catholic mission is central to the spiritual and moral development of the children. It is highly visible as you enter the school and children are very aware of what it means. There are strong links between the school and the parish. The Chair of Governors and the governor for Religious Education visit the school regularly. They are aware of the work of the school and provide challenge and support for the Head Teacher and Leadership Team.

The level of monitoring for the provision of Religious Education is good. The school is mostly accurate in identifying areas for development. There is a plan for Religious Education and this would be enhanced if it included a specific time scale for the areas of development and clear indications of what the resource implications are. The Head Teacher and staff monitor and evaluate provision and outcomes in order to plan future improvements. The governing body works well with the school. Governors liaise very effectively with parents, pupils and staff and are well informed about users' views of the school. This is via informal discussions and through the committee procedures. The relationship between the governors and the school is both strong and supportive.

Leaders and managers work with others beyond the school to ensure that pupils are given opportunities to enter into dialogue and collaborate with people from different backgrounds. Children regularly have the opportunity to engage in learning about the beliefs and cultures of people from different faiths. This is a real strength of the school. This has enabled the pupils to build an understanding of people of other faiths and to develop an attitude of total respect. The school is at the heart of the local community and there are strong links with all aspects of local life. There are also close links with other local community groups. The pupils are also involved in planning activities and devising means of fund raising for national and global charities. Thus, there is an active commitment to the care and compassion for others.

## **3. CAPACITY FOR SUSTAINED IMPROVEMENT**

**Grade 1**

St. John Southworth's is a good school with several outstanding features. The mission of the school is clearly understood by everyone involved in the school. The Head Teacher, staff and governors work very well together and share the school's vision for the future. There are systems in place for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. The issue raised at the last inspection has been fully addressed. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are positive about their learning. They benefit from and

contribute to the varied range of opportunities provided by the school to develop its Catholic character. They are independent in preparing prayer and worship and engage well in the prayer and liturgical life of the school and the parish. Overall the school has identified accurately the areas for development. The school's development is likely to be sustained by the current leadership.

#### **4. OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**

#### **Grade 2**

The provision in promoting Catholic education is good with outstanding features. There are excellent relationships throughout the school. The religious education contributes to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. The Leadership Team has successfully achieved its outcomes from the last inspection.

The outcomes for the pupils are good overall. Staff and pupils enjoy coming to school and are positive about their teaching and learning. The pupils enjoy their learning and are well motivated in their lessons. There are excellent cross-curricular links and a variety of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum. Pupils benefit from and contribute to a range of opportunities provided by the school to develop its Catholic character. Pupils understand the importance of prayer and are able to participate confidently in the various opportunities for collective worship.

The whole staff work as a team to ensure that the school's vision is achieved. The links with the local, national and global community are good. This contributes to the excellent spiritual, moral and cultural development of all the children. They are willing to take on the responsibilities of planning the fund raising and are also generous in their response.

#### **What the school needs to do to improve further**

#### **In order to improve the governors and staff need to:**

- **Continue to provide training for all staff in the new scheme for Religious Education and review the assessment of children's work in line with the new scheme of work.**
- **To ensure that the School's R. E. Development Plan contains a clear timescale and framework for completion.**