

**INSPECTION REPORT**

**St Hugh of Lincoln RC Primary School, Stretford, M32 9PD**

Inspection date 29<sup>th</sup> April 2015

Reporting Inspectors Brendan Hennessy, Fiona Robinson

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

Type of School Primary

URN 106353

Age range of pupils 3 - 11

Number on roll 315

Appropriate authority The Governing Body

Chair of Governors Fr Michael Cleary

Headteacher Mark Mountcastle

Religious Education Co-ordinator Jane Evans

Date of previous inspection March 2009

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

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

St Hugh of Lincoln is a Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School in the Diocese of Salford, situated in Stretford, serving the parish of St Hugh of Lincoln. This is a larger than average sized primary school with 315 pupils on roll including 33 children, both full and part-time, in the nursery; 95% are baptized Roman Catholic. The school is situated in an area of mixed housing, 14% of pupils are currently entitled to Free School Meals and this number is rising. On entry to nursery the attainment of the majority of pupils is broadly in line with the national average. The majority of pupils have made good or better progress in their learning by the time they leave at the end of KS2. The school currently has 21% of the pupils with Special Educational Needs. The school's attendance rate is in line with the national average, 95.7%. There are 15 teachers in school, 14 of whom are Catholic and 5 have the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. School provides extended provision for those children who need it both before and after school. The school holds the Healthy Schools Award, Basic Skills Award and the Active Mark.

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

St Hugh of Lincoln is an outstanding Catholic school. This calm and friendly school offers all children a true Catholic education, with Christ at its centre, in a caring and supportive environment where all are welcomed and valued. The inspirational headteacher leads the hard working and dedicated staff in their efforts to ensure that the spiritual and pastoral needs of all in the school community are met and that Gospel values are lived out. The Governing Body are committed to ensuring that Catholic education of the highest standard is provided for all in this inclusive and happy school. The quality of teaching in Religious Education is always good and more often better, which ensures high standards are achieved across the whole school, as evidenced in the children's books and work around school. The friendly, polite and well-mannered children are very proud of their school and have high expectations of themselves and others. Their behaviour and attitude to learning is exemplary. They enjoyed sharing with the inspectors their thoughts about their Catholic school, "we believe in God, we are into Him, He is our role model". Parents spoke of the warm welcome they always receive, they feel that they can talk to the staff freely and that they are always listened to, commenting that school "is a nurturing, family school, you can feel the warmth and love". The quality of the prayer life and opportunities for worship support the individual faith journeys of all members of the school community. The school clearly demonstrates outstanding witness to the church's mission in education. Monitoring, assessment and effective self-evaluation of Religious Education has ensured that the school has continued to develop since the last inspection and has a clear and cohesive plan for future development.

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

- The quality of the relationships and partnership between, school, parish and home greatly enhances the Catholic life of the school.
- Prayer is at the heart of the school community and children demonstrate a high level of skill and confidence in planning and leading prayer and worship.
- The relationships, behaviour and care for each other within all groups across the school is outstanding.
- The dedication and commitment of all staff to providing a caring and nurturing school that has a positive impact on the lives of the children.
- The inspirational leadership of the head teacher, supported by an enthusiastic and committed RE subject leader and governing body.

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

St Hugh of Lincoln is extremely well led by an inspirational and dedicated headteacher who has a clear vision for the education of the whole child and values the individual worth of every member of the school community. The headteacher is aided by a very effective and experienced leadership team, an imaginative and

enthusiastic RE subject leader and a dedicated and creative staff. All the staff share and live their vision for Catholic education, ensuring that the development of the Catholic life of the school is at the forefront of their thinking and practice. The governors are very committed and proactive in providing support and challenge. They see RE as the centre of the school curriculum and have worked with staff to help shape the vision for the school. In addition to his role as Chair of Governors the very supportive Parish Priest is a regular visitor to school and is fully involved in the religious life of the school; the children look forward to his visits. All of the school leaders set the example as role models for others in the school to follow. Through a relevant professional development programme, coupled with effective monitoring, assessment and evaluation, the leadership team is fully aware of the strengths of the school and what needs to be done to develop even further. Pupil leadership has been established through the School Council and the very effective introduction of pupil Prayer Leaders. The quality of leadership at all levels of the school community, where all are invited to lead in their own way, makes a significant contribution to the outstanding provision for Catholic education at St Hugh of Lincoln.

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

The centrality and importance of the Word of God can be seen all around the school in the wonderful and enriching displays. Teachers place high priority on the teaching of RE as demonstrated in their knowledge and understanding; and this is evident in the high standard of the children's work and their contributions to lessons. The recently reviewed Mission Statement is known, lived and witnessed throughout the school. The children were pleased to be involved in the review and stated that they are "aspire to live the Mission Statement". Teaching and learning was found to be outstanding overall with inspirational teaching and engaging learning observed throughout the school. In the EYFS the children were actively engaged in learning about the Risen Christ through a variety of stimulating learning opportunities. In KS1 the children were challenged to think about the Holy Spirit and how bad news can become good news. They were engaged in some wonderful discussion with each other, encouraged by effective questioning. In KS2, an imaginative and creative lesson on the trial of the crown of thorns, water, silver and the Cross really challenged the children's thinking, especially when hearing Mary's evidence that Jesus is alive. In another KS2 lesson about how to pray, the learning experience was enhanced by quality discussion and questions, for the children to reflect on and refine their responses. Pupils show a real interest and enthusiasm in RE, they have an excellent attitude to learning and were happy and confident to share their understanding of their faith. They knew how to improve their work and where constructive marking was used, it enabled them to reflect on and improve their learning. Detailed planning, the effective use of challenging questioning, appropriate opportunities for talk partner discussion and continual assessment ensured that lessons were engaging, well-pitched and moved along at a good pace. Parents were very positive about the importance of RE "as a core area" and commented on how much the children enjoy RE lessons and how well they are taught. Teaching Assistants have a good understanding of the teaching of RE, they effectively interacted with pupils to support their learning and they contribute significantly to the high standard achieved in RE. Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural education was found to be outstanding and permeates all aspects of school life. Pupils learn about other faiths through religious education and assemblies, and this helps them to understand and respect the beliefs and cultures of others.

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

A warm welcome is extended to all visitors, pupils and staff who enter St Hugh of Lincoln school. This warmth and welcome is evident in all relationships within the school, where staff, pupils and parents show great respect, care and love for each other; thus ensuring a great sense of belonging and an affirming ethos throughout the school. Staff and children from other schools within the diocese are welcomed into St Hugh's e.g. the special links they have with Chatsworth Special School in Salford as well as children from around the world as part of their Comenius project. All members of staff set the example for children to follow. They are indeed role models of the love of Christ, respecting the dignity of all. The behaviour of the polite and very well-mannered children is outstanding. They have a cheerful outlook and smiling faces and are always kind, respectful and gentle with each other. Parents spoke of the warm welcome and support they receive from the staff. Parents are welcomed into the school for regular formal and informal meetings. They are rightly proud of the excellent relationship between the school,

parish and community. There is a loving family feel that permeates the school and beyond as demonstrated by the outstanding attendance at the Year 3 class Mass by both parents and parishioners. Children and staff who are new to the school are quickly made to feel welcome and valued members of the school community. The parish priest is a very valued presence around the school and staff spoke warmly of his support for them and the families of the parish. All members of the school community demonstrate a high level of belonging and pride in this happy, caring Catholic school.

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

St Hugh of Lincoln is a very inclusive school, where parents recognise the caring atmosphere created by all in the school community. Respect for the dignity of all is clearly evident across the school. Nurturing this caring ethos and the development of pupils' personal qualities are a very high priority for staff and Governors. The excellent caring relationship between staff and children is very evident in school and it is apparent that every child is loved and valued. From the Early Years through to upper Key Stage 2, lessons were conducted in a calm, patient and gentle manner. The staff are great role models for the children, who followed their example in the way they worked together and responded to each other. Pupils spoke of how their opinions and ideas were listened to through the School Council. The older children look after and care for the younger children through their roles as prayer leaders and prefects. Children with special and specific needs are given the highest level of support and care. This is a great strength of the school. The SEN provision map details the high level of support and interventions given to all children with a variety of needs. SEN coffee mornings are held regularly for parents. The school's procedures for keeping pupils safe are excellent. Children were adamant that incidences of bullying are extremely rare and if they occur they are dealt with immediately. They speak about their teachers with fondness and appreciate all the help they are given to understand their faith. The children spoke of their involvement and support for charities and vulnerable groups around the world including the Cornerstone Centre, CAFOD and Caritas and how they enjoyed raising money for others. A recent fundraising event raised £2,000 for three defibrillators for the school. A variety of after school clubs take place which meet the interest and needs of all the children. This Christ-centred community does all it can to make sure that each person has 'life to the full'.

### **THE QUALITY OF THE WORSHIP COMMUNITY IS OUTSTANDING**

Worship is undoubtedly a strength of the school and is at the heart this community. There were wonderful examples of the opportunities for worship throughout the year, displayed around school. The importance of prayer and worship is expressed and witnessed through classroom acts of reflection and meditation, assemblies, Mass and liturgies. Each classroom has an age appropriate and relevant focal point for prayer and these are clearly valued by the children. Additional focal points for prayer, display and reflection are situated at key areas in the school, not least Tim's garden that can be accessed by all. The children are happy and confident to write their own prayers and to share these with others. The introduction of pupil Prayer Leaders has had a significant impact across the school giving even greater opportunities for children to take a leading role in prayer and worship throughout the school. The acts of prayer and worship observed were uplifting, creative, inclusive, thoughtful and relevant. These special moments of prayer and reflection were beautifully respected by the children, enhancing their personal relationship with God and one another. The EYFS lesson skilfully incorporated prayer opportunities into the lesson enhanced by joyful singing and the playing of instruments. The pupil prayer leaders led wonderful acts of prayer and worship about the Good Shepherd in KS1 and KS2; they engaged the children who were, respectful and thoughtful. At the class Mass to celebrate the children's First Communion at the weekend the children were reverent, their behaviour and responses to the Mass were excellent, and over 50 parents and parishioners were in attendance. At the engaging, uplifting and reflective KS2 liturgy on the impact of the lives of inspirational people, prayer leaders led the class in this act of worship, which included drama, music and spontaneous prayer. All the class showed reverence and respect, were encouraged to speak to God and share their thoughts. Scripture is clearly known, understood and made relevant throughout the school. Parents were extremely positive about the range of opportunities the school offers for prayer and worship and really appreciated the input from the pupil prayer leaders and the impact this has on the prayer lives of the children.

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

All staff and children give witness to the beliefs and values of the Catholic faith, and they clearly accept responsibility to bear witness to Christ's teaching in their daily lives. The Mission Statement is at the heart of the school. Children and staff make every effort to live it, so that it "will nurture, guide, educate and develop all our children on their journey with Jesus". Pupils demonstrate quite clearly that compassion, love, justice, truth, reconciliation and respect for all, are promoted and were evidenced throughout the entire school community. Children are encouraged to reach out to those in need, not just by their wonderful support for so many local, national and world charities; but also in how they show respect, care, compassion and consideration of others. Relationships are excellent between all members of the school community. There is a tangible atmosphere of calm and gentleness that permeates the whole school. Staff are positive role models for the children, promoting the ethos and values of the school and helping them to recognise that Jesus is with them in all aspects of school life. The school fosters a spirit of awe and wonder through religious education and the broader curriculum, where children are encouraged to be good stewards of creation. The home, school and parish links are inclusive and effective, there over 30 altar servers from the school. The very close links with the parish are enhanced with the regular visits of the Parish Priest and the work of the catechists for the Sacramental Programme. A strong sense of belonging to the school community exists and all members of this community feel valued and cared for. Many staff attend weekly mass. They have or had their children attend the school, which increases the family feeling in school. It is clear that all members of this school family meet God each day and do all they can to meet the challenges involved in this witness.

### **AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:**

- Continue to develop best practice in marking by ensuring improvement comments for children's work impact on learning and are consistently applied with opportunities for children to respond.
- To review the school's policy on SRE.
- To continue to embed engagement with the Big Questions in all year groups.

## Summary Report to Parents

On 29<sup>th</sup> April 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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5<sup>th</sup> May 2015

Dear Children,

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us and for making our visit to St Hugh of Lincoln RC Primary School such a joyful occasion, we really enjoyed our time with you. You and all the adults in school work very hard to always do your best and because of this your school is an outstanding Catholic school.

We really enjoyed seeing your lessons and learning about all the wonderful things you do at St Hugh of Lincoln. We saw as many of you as we could, and we were sorry if we didn't see you in your class. Thank you for sharing your work with us. We were very impressed with the standard of work in your RE books and in your wonderful displays around school. It was clear to us that you have an excellent knowledge and understanding of our Catholic faith and that you all really try your best in all of your lessons.

It was lovely to see so many happy, smiling faces: you are clearly very proud of your school. You were wonderful, your behaviour was excellent, and your politeness and manners were simply superb. It was a privilege for us to come into your school.

It was so pleasing to see how thoughtful you were in the prayer and worship sessions we saw and how well you said the prayers. Everyone showed great respect, your behaviour was exemplary and your prayers were uplifting. A special well done and thank you to the prayer leaders.

Mr Mountcastle, all of the staff, Fr Michael, the school Governors and your parents are extremely proud of all of you and of what you have achieved over the years, well done and keep it up!

Your teachers are keen to help you develop the Catholic life of your school even further and to do this they are going to ask you to write a short reply to their comments when they mark your books to help you think a little more about what you have written.

God bless you all and enjoy the rest of the school year.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Brendan Hennessy  
Mrs Fiona Robinson  
(Section 48 Inspectors)