

INSPECTION REPORT

St Theresa's RC Primary, Derker, Oldham, OL1 4NA

Inspection date Wednesday 3rd December 2014

Reporting Inspector Mrs Susan Gedzielewski
Mr Brendan Hennessy
Mrs Marie Kwiatkowski

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

Type of School Primary
 URN 136825
 Age range of pupils 3-11 years
 Number on roll 181
 Appropriate authority The Governing Body
 Chair of Governors Mrs Bridget Meehan
 Headteacher Mrs Maureen Taylor
 Religious Education Co-ordinator Mrs Maureen Taylor
 Date of previous inspection First S48 inspection

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	2	
The quality of the Word of God	2	
The quality of Welcome	1	
The quality of Welfare	1	
The quality of Worship	2	
The quality of Witness	1	
The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements		

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

St Theresa's RC Primary is a Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic primary school serving the needs of the parish community of Sacred Heart and Our Lady's in the Derker area of Oldham. The school is an amalgamation of two primary schools which came together in September 2011. The school lies within a socio-economically disadvantaged area. Pupils come from a variety of social backgrounds with the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups significantly increased to 34% of the school population. This results in 19% of children having English as a second language and a high percentage of children transferring into the school. The school has expanded rapidly since the amalgamation and there are currently 181 children on roll including the nursery. 45% of the children are entitled to Free School Meals; although children entitled to Pupil Premium funding is over 50%. Attainment of children on entry to school is significantly below the national average. Standards in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 are in line or above those of other children nationally. The school currently has 3% of children on the Special Needs Register which is lower than the national average. 60% of pupils are baptized Catholics.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS GOOD

St Theresa's is a good Catholic primary school with many outstanding features and a deep commitment to the Church's mission in education. The school is well led by a very committed headteacher, a strong senior leadership team and staff, and an effective governing body. The senior leadership create an ethos which is inclusive, welcoming and prayerful. The governors are supportive, challenging and committed to their leadership role. Teaching of Religious Education is good and some is outstanding, so progress and achievement are at least good. Scripture is recognised as being important in the school and is clearly evident in the beautiful displays and prayer corners around school. There is clear evidence that the Word of God is informing teaching and learning. The school's priority for those in the greatest need, raising achievement, inclusivity and personal development, ensures that all pupils receive a good education. Monitoring and assessment of the Religious Education curriculum has ensured that there has been significant development. Parents feel welcome and at ease in school. Opportunities for the school and parish communities to celebrate together have been strengthened. The whole community clearly demonstrates outstanding witness to the church's mission in education. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is outstanding.

KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- The spiritual leadership of the Headteacher demonstrates a deep commitment to the Church's mission and ensuring the school is authentically and distinctively Catholic.
- The commitment of staff to provide a nurturing place of learning that impacts positively on the children's sense of wellbeing.
- The welcome for all members of the community is outstanding and the outreach to vulnerable families is exemplary.
- Polite and well behaved pupils show respect for themselves, each other and the wider community.

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS GOOD

The Headteacher has provided vision for the school mission and strong spiritual leadership. She has been energised by the task of bringing the two primary schools together to form a distinctive Catholic school that is dedicated to serving this community. There is unequivocal and explicit evidence that the Senior Leadership team clearly prioritises those on the margins of society and resources are targeted to those in greatest need within the school. The Headteacher is supported by an effective senior and middle leadership team who, with the governors, continue to strive for further improvement. The governing body makes a highly significant contribution to the work and the Catholic life of the school. The Chair of Governors works closely with the Headteacher to ensure all the governors are aware of current strengths and areas for development. Religious Education and the spiritual life of the school are prioritised in the School Improvement Plan and teacher appraisal. Self-evaluation of the school's work at all levels is a coherent and accurate reflection of rigorous monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge. The school has a leader with responsibility for the religious life of the school. Alongside the Headteacher, she has been responsible for introducing several new initiatives including the 'Come and See' scheme of work, guided meditation, the

chaplaincy team, prayer through painting, to name just a few. Together they have supported and developed all staff and pupils, including those from other denominations and faiths, in their understanding of Christianity within the Catholic tradition. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is fully embedded across all areas of the curriculum.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORD OF GOD IS GOOD

Overall, the quality of teaching in Religious Education is good, with some outstanding features, leading to good achievement. The Religious Education scheme, The Way, The Truth and The Life is fully embedded and the school is currently introducing the 'Come and See' scheme to enhance the curriculum. Pupils have a good knowledge of scripture and they know how to use the bible to extend their knowledge. Pupils are confident when talking about God and their faith, and the impact this has on their relationship with others. Teaching and learning is characterised by good expectations and is well matched to the needs of all pupils. In the best lessons, children were fully engaged in learning and the teacher asked challenging questions. Pupils are encouraged to lead their own learning, ask questions and reflect upon their own feeling or the opinions of others. Marking is having a positive impact on progress, but this could be further improved by ensuring consistency of approach. The use of 'I can' statements enables pupils to be involved in their own assessment and target setting. Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural education was found to be outstanding and throughout all aspects of the school. Learning about other faiths and cultures is taught throughout the curriculum. The school prioritises Religious Education in its professional development programme. Religious Education is not just a subject, but a lived experience in this school.

THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING

Jesus Christ is at the heart of this welcoming and caring school. The school reaches out to vulnerable members of the school community and they work extremely hard to ensure all pupils are cared for. The Senior Leadership Team, with the support of the Pastoral Support Worker, lead the inclusion agenda with outstanding determination so every child is heard, valued and included fully in all aspects of school life. Staff and pupils demonstrated their understanding of welcome in a variety of contexts. Parents were extremely complimentary about the friendliness of staff. Systems for the induction of new pupils and staff are fully embedded. Parental involvement is a high priority and there are many occasions where parents are invited into school, including parent conferences, coffee and read, 'come dine with us', sports and fund raising. Parents were extremely appreciative of all the things the school does to support families. The personal welcome they receive from the Headteacher, who knows everybody's name, was singled out for particular praise. Members of the parish and local community share in the life of the school. The parish and school share responsibility for supporting pupils through the Sacramental Programme and the number of children receiving the sacraments is increasing. All members of staff demonstrate a keen sense of community affiliation and the quality of relationships exemplifies respect for all members of the school community. The school continues to develop its links with the local community by, for example, facilitating the social housing association workshop in school, so parents could access Universal Credits information.

THE QUALITY OF WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING

The staff and pupils demonstrate a very high level of respect for, care of and service to others, as people made in the image and likeness of God. Parents were extremely complimentary about the support they receive from all members of staff. The school provides a variety of activities to ensure pupils are nurtured and cared for including a Nurture Group and counselling for those children who require this type of support. The newly appointed School Pastoral Support Worker is developing good relationships with families and ensures pupils receive the additional support they need to thrive in school. The PSHE curriculum incorporates sex and relationship education, drugs awareness and how to stay safe. Pupils are confident that if they have any problems they can speak to a member of staff and that any problems will be dealt with sympathetically. Pupils know what to do if they have worries and all felt bullying was not an issue. The playground buddies help the staff ensure playtimes are peaceful and the children have equipment to play with during their breaks. Teachers are approachable and parents feel able to talk with them about issues that concern them and their concerns are dealt with effectively. The quality of transition and induction are such that all pupils quickly feel part of the school community, particularly those children who transfer from other schools. The school has a before and after school care club to cater for the need of families. The

school promotes high attendance and punctuality. Pupil voice is of high priority. Pupils are represented by the School Council, Eco Council, RRS Steering Group, the Chaplaincy team and they all have their own action plans.

THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS GOOD

There are regular Liturgical celebrations throughout the school year including May Procession, Harvest, Carol Service and Reconciliation. 'Little Way Week' is an important celebration for the school as the community remember St Theresa and her example. The school attend parish masses and they support the parish with preparing children for the sacraments. The Staff are confident at planning and leading prayer. Through meditation, pupils are led to reflect and pray in a way that nurtures their spirituality and personal relationship with God. During the inspection children took part in a guided meditation; a form of imaginative prayer and reflection. The organisation and implementation of this activity was excellent and resulted in a deeply spiritual experience for all those present. The pupils have developed a good knowledge of traditional prayers and they are encouraged to participate in prayer groups at special times of year i.e. Advent prayer group and the Rosary group; they are also encouraged to write in the 'Remembering' book in November. During the Reconciliation service, children read confidently from scripture and they participated fully in the 'child friendly' hymns. The School Chaplaincy Team is leading new initiatives to enhance the spiritual life of the school. They are currently planning a peace garden which will provide opportunities for children to worship outdoors. Prayer tables in classrooms, display materials and artefacts are outstanding. Parents are invited to worship at home with their child during Lent and Advent using the Purple Prayer Bags sent home from school. Classroom worship activities could be enhanced further by providing greater opportunities for child initiated prayer and worship.

THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS OUTSTANDING

Pupils are actively supported to engage as pro-active citizens who participate in the decision-making processes through a variety of leadership roles including: the School Council, Eco Council, Prefects, Buddies, House Captains, Chaplaincy Team and the Right Respecting School Awards Steering Group. The school has achieved UNICEF Level 2 Rights Respecting Schools Award for the work they have done in this regard. Pupils have a very good understanding of their rights and responsibilities in all aspects of school life and the rights of other children around the world. The school gives generously to those in need within school and beyond; and the support for families in difficulty is exceptional. The staff place pupils at the centre of the school's Mission and encourage them to reach out to those in need. The work of charities such as Oldham food bank, CAFOD, Macmillan coffee morning, CARITAS, the Missions in Africa and Adopt an animal are fully supported. Staff and pupils clearly demonstrate witness to justice, compassion, reconciliation, love and forgiveness. Chaplains give their own rewards in assembly, 'Chaplaincy Champs', to pupils who have used their hands well to help other children. Observations showed that children treated each other with respect, care, patience, concern and with dignity and there is an emphasis on creating a pleasant working environment for everyone in school. Relationships are excellent between all members of the community and pupils are not afraid to talk about their faith. A strong sense of belonging to the school community exists and all members of the school feel valued and cared for. Last year the school achieved silver Eco Award and all children engage in Forest School activities which enables the children to appreciate God's wonderful world.

AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - a) raising expectations of what pupils can achieve;
 - b) using a variety of teaching methods to ensure pupils make exceptional progress in lessons;
 - c) ensuring the marking policy is consistently applied across the school.
- To provide pupils with opportunities to become confident and skilled in planning and delivering prayer and worship.

Wednesday 3rd December 2014

Dear Pupils

Thank you so much for the wonderful welcome you gave us when we came to visit you. We really enjoyed learning about all the wonderful things you do at St Theresa's; the breakfast club, school council, buddies, chaplaincy team, Eco council and forest school activities. You and your teachers are working so hard to always do your very best and as a result your RE work is good. We were extremely impressed with the religious displays and prayer corners, but more than anything we were delighted with your beautiful and tidy classrooms. We were especially impressed by the way you look after each other, your behaviour and the way you help those in need. You have a very good understanding of your rights and responsibilities in all aspects of school life and the rights of other children around the world. Congratulations on achieving the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award.

It was wonderful to see how you participated in the Reconciliation service. Your behaviour was exemplary during the service and the video showed how children at St Theresa's follow the example of Christ and forgive others. We also thought meditation in Year 3 was also very special and it will help you to develop another way of praying.

We would like to ask your teachers to continue working with you on prayer in the future with more opportunities for you to lead prayer activities. Your teachers are keen to help you develop your learning further by making changes in your Religious Education lessons.

God bless you all and enjoy Christmas.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Susan Gedzielewski, Mr Brendan Hennessy and Mrs Marie Kwiatkowski
(Section 48 Inspectors)

Summary Report to Parents

On 3rd December 2014 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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