

**INSPECTION REPORT**

**St Winifred's RC Primary School, Heaton Mersey, Stockport, SK4 3JH.**

Inspection date 10<sup>th</sup> July 2015  
 Reporting Inspectors Brendan Hennessy  
 Mark Mountcastle

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

Type of School Primary  
 URN 106129  
 Age range of pupils 5 - 11  
 Number on roll 411  
 Appropriate authority The Governing Body  
 Chair of Governors Anthony O'Neill  
 Headteacher John Nish  
 Religious Education Subject Leader Elizabeth Sowerby  
 Date of previous inspection January 2011

<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 Winifred's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School serves the parish of St Winifred, Stockport. This is a larger than average sized primary school with 411 pupils on roll, 81% are baptised Roman Catholic. The school is situated in an area designated as above the average socio-economic indicators, 5% of pupils are currently entitled to Free School Meals. On entry to the Reception class the attainment of the majority of pupils is in line with the national average. Most pupils have made good or better progress in their learning by the time they leave at the end of KS2. The school currently has 18% of the pupils with Special Educational Needs and 3.6% of the pupils with English as an additional language. There are 16 teachers in school, 15 of whom are Catholic; all post holders have the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. School provides extended provision for children both before and after school. The school holds national quality awards for: Inclusion, Basic Skills, Primary Science, Healthy Schools and Eco Schools.

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

St Winifred's is an outstanding Catholic primary school that offers a deep faith experience, with Jesus clearly at the centre of all aspects of school life. The mission statement is visible, understood and lived by all in the school family. All staff and children clearly demonstrate "Caritas – God's love in action" in a caring environment that welcomes all. The gospel values of love, peace, truth and justice are very evident across the school and underpin all that happens in this warm and friendly school. Prayer is very much at the heart of this school enriching everyone's experience of God's presence and enhancing their individual faith journeys. The parish priest and governors are very supportive and absolutely committed to ensuring that Catholic education of the highest standard is provided for all. The inspirational headteacher, supported by the dedicated and talented RE subject leader, leadership team and staff, do all they can to ensure that the spiritual and pastoral needs of all are met. The quality of teaching in Religious Education is always good and more often better, which ensures high standards are achieved across the school, as evidenced in the children's books and work around school. The friendly and very well behaved children have an excellent attitude to learning and are very proud of their school. School takes every opportunity to build on the excellent links with the parish and home. Parents state that they "feel lucky to be part of the school and so welcomed" and are very clear that RE "underpins all that the children do". Effective monitoring, assessment and evaluation of Religious Education has ensured that the school has continued to develop since the last inspection.

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

- Prayer is at the heart of this school family and the children demonstrate a high level of confidence and skill in leading prayer and worship.
- The positive links with the parish and the involvement of the parish priest in the spiritual life of the school.
- The quality of the relationships across the school, the care for all demonstrated by the dedicated staff and the children's excellent behaviour, good manners and respect for others.
- The affirming atmosphere of teamwork and a shared common approach among all the staff that impacts positively on the children's learning and sense of well-being.
- The spiritual leadership of the headteacher, who has a clear vision for Catholic Education based on Gospel values, is outstanding. He is very well supported by a dedicated and committed RE leader, senior leadership team and governors.

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

St Winifred's school is very well led by a headteacher who has a strong, spiritual commitment, with a clear vision and sense of purpose for the education of the whole child. He is committed to providing as many opportunities as possible in school for reflection and consideration, so that all at St Winifred's have a deeper awareness of this vision for Catholic education. The headteacher is supported by a dedicated RE leader, a talented leadership team and a committed staff team. The governors have a clear, strategic vision for the school, they are deeply committed to the success of the school and are effective in providing support and challenge. It is evident that all staff and governors value the individual worth of every member of the school family and do all they can to ensure that RE and the development of the Catholic life of the school is at the core of the school's thinking and practice. Pupil leadership is well established through the school council and strengthened by the commissioning of the school chaplains. Staff, children and governors all have a voice in planning for future development. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education was found to be outstanding and permeates all aspects of school life. The very supportive parish priest is a regular visitor and all at school really value his positive contribution to and impact on the spiritual life of the school. Continuing professional development for staff, linked to accurate self-evaluation based on effective monitoring and assessment has had a positive impact on the quality of provision in RE. This has also ensured that the leadership team is clear about the strengths of the school and what needs to be done to develop even further. The quality of leadership at all levels of the school makes a significant contribution to the provision for Catholic education at St Winifred's.

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

The importance of the Word of God is clearly demonstrated all around the school in the many thoughtful and enriching displays. The school's mission statement is clearly displayed throughout the school. It is known, lived and witnessed by all in the school, "Caritas – God's love in action" was very clearly demonstrated throughout the school. The Religious Education of the children is at the core of the curriculum and all staff place a high priority on the teaching of RE as demonstrated by their knowledge and understanding and evident in the high standard of the children's work and in their contributions to lessons. Children 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. Scripture is clearly known, understood and made relevant throughout the school. Teaching and learning was found to be outstanding overall, with examples of inspirational teaching and engaging learning observed throughout the school. In an EYFS lesson, consistent high expectations and very child centred learning were clearly evident in a very purposeful learning environment, where the children talked about "identity" and "community" and what makes them special. In KS1, the children demonstrated a high level of RE knowledge, especially Bible stories, and were engaged in wonderful discussion and challenged by thoughtful questioning which ensured that the learning was productive and well balanced. In KS2, the children were engaged in discussion and reflection on the 'Big Questions'; "Who are we as God's children?" and to think about aspiration and affirmation and how they can serve God when they leave St Winifred's. In both KS2 lessons, challenge was provided by the activities and discussion supported by good questioning; the children were confident and secure in expressing their thoughts and their spirituality. Teaching Assistants have a good understanding of the teaching of RE and they effectively interacted with pupils to support their learning in RE. The children 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 IS OUTSTANDING**

A very warm welcome to all is evident as soon as you enter St Winifred's. A real family atmosphere permeates through the whole school and the head boy and girl who led the tour of the school, are

rightly proud of their school and all it offers everyone in their community. This is shared by all and meetings with parents, governors, other children and staff show a shared commitment to offer all a safe, warm and welcoming environment. St Winifred's is rightly proud of being highly inclusive and it is clear that every child is highly valued and their contribution to school celebrated. One boy from another faith was gushing in his praise for the school and how he felt so highly valued. He enjoys joining in prayer and joining the whole school for collective worship and masses; he has a real sense of belonging and ownership of the Catholic ethos. A further example was given by the school council when they spoke warmly about school procedures that are embedded to help them when they arrive. Children and staff who are new to the school are quickly made to feel welcome and valued members of the school community. There is a system of 'special friendship' between children in Year 6 and Reception; a special bond that Year 6 in particular are rightly proud of as well as the Welcome Arch for all new arrivals, children and staff. As one child said, "It is a school full of friends". Parents clearly feel supported in their mission to bring up their children, in being the primary educators and having a faith commitment. Children and staff are happy in school and it is evident that they place a sense of dignity for all at the heart of everything they do. The parish priest and governors are a regular and positive presence in school and reinforce the welcoming and caring ethos that has been so positively created.

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

The school's mission statement permeates every aspect of school life and is positively lived by all. The school motto of 'Caritas - God's Love in Action' is clearly evident throughout school, on display, in the work and in the interactions between all, in and beyond the school. The Christ-centred ethos provides a very caring and supportive atmosphere for everyone associated with the school. The relationships and care extended to everyone in the school community is very apparent and it is clear from all that every child is valued and seen as unique. This was particularly evident in discussions with children and a lesson in KS2 where the children were positively encouraged to recognise their own talents and how they could be used for the benefit of others. The lessons observed throughout the school from Foundation Stage to Year 6 were delivered in a calm, child centred manner and the behaviour in all sessions and around the school was excellent. Strong friendships are evident throughout the school and the older children take great pride in their caring for the younger children through the special friends and chaplain roles. The overriding atmosphere within the school is one of calm, safety and dignity for all. The children are also rightly proud of their fundraising efforts and support for good causes in their locality and beyond. This, and every year, they raise a substantial amount for Caritas (St Joseph's Penny) and Mission Together as well as supporting CAFOD. All the staff are great role models for the children and their team work, relationships and ethic are a real strength of the school. Children are safe and secure; appropriate policies and procedures are in place to ensure care and protection of each individual. All pupils and staff know that they are valued members of the school family and as such understand that they each have a voice and they are always listened and responded to.

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

Prayer is at the heart of this school and the combined efforts of all in school has made sure that "prayer and worship is a shared spiritual experience integral to the life of the school". The school has been successful in its efforts to ensure that "Worship prevails throughout all aspects of St Winifred's and contributes significantly to the ethos of the school". The many and varied opportunities offered for prayer and worship in school have enhanced the individual faith journeys of all. The importance of prayer and worship is expressed and witnessed through classroom acts of reflection and meditation,

spontaneous prayer, assemblies, mass and liturgies. Each classroom has an age appropriate and relevant prayer corner with prayer boxes for the children's own prayers, which is clearly valued by the children. Additional focal points for prayer, display and reflection are situated at key areas in the school that can be accessed by all. The children pray together as a school, in classes, small groups and individually, with great reverence and respect. They are comfortable with their feelings and confident to write and share their own prayers. The chaplaincy team support prayer and worship in all classes, lead the weekly prayer group and support the children on the sacramental programme. The introduction of pupil chaplains has had a significant, positive impact on prayer and worship across the school. The prayer group gathering, whole school assembly, two classroom acts of worship and prayer within lessons observed during the inspection, provided opportunities for listening, participation and reflection. They were without exception uplifting, inclusive, creative and thoughtful spiritual experiences for all present. Children took a leading role in all the acts of prayer and worship observed, these special moments of prayer and reflection were beautifully respected by the children and enhanced their relationship with God and one another. The parish priest regularly visits the school to celebrate Holy Mass and help the staff and children deepen their own faith and understanding. Parents were extremely positive about the range of opportunities the school offers for prayer and worship and really appreciate the input from the pupil chaplains.

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

The school clearly demonstrates outstanding witness to the church's mission in education. There is a great sense of teamwork, enthusiasm and celebration of success at all levels among the staff, children and parents. This gives the school a true family feel and helps the children to become well rounded individuals. The mission statement is at the heart of the school. It is a powerful declaration of how all in the school give witness to the beliefs and values of the Catholic faith in their daily lives. All staff and children make every effort to live it and everyone in this school family tries their best to live out "Caritas – God's love in action". The school's creative curriculum, where RE is at the core, is the foundation block that allows the children to develop their sense of identity and understand how they can impact on the local, national, global community for the common good. Observations and discussions confirmed that children treat each other with care, respect, compassion and dignity. Relationships are excellent between all members of the school community and all are able to talk openly and confidently about their faith. There are strong home, school and parish links which are comprehensive and enriched by the regular visits of the parish priest. This has been enhanced by the introduction of "parent voice" and a regular RE newsletter to inform and improve communication. An atmosphere of calm and a sense of belonging permeates the whole school and this helps to create a pleasant working environment for everyone in school. All 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 the children are encouraged to be good guardians of God's world. They know that they have a vital role to play in looking after God's world. The children are encouraged to reach out to those in need by their wonderful support for local, national and world charities, including CAFOD, Stockport Food Bank, St Joseph's Penny, MacMillan, CARITAS and Missionaries of the Poor amongst others. It is clear that all members of St Winifred's school family look for God in their own lives and the lives of others and do all they can to meet the challenges involved in this witness.

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

- Continue to develop creative assessment in RE.
- Further develop the pupil leadership role of the chaplaincy team within the parish and community.
- Further develop the whole school approach to curriculum RE so that outstanding practice can continue to thrive throughout the school.

### **Summary Report to Parents**

On 10<sup>th</sup> July 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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10<sup>th</sup> July 2015

Dear Children,

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us and for making our visit to St Winifred's RC Primary School such a joyful occasion. We really enjoyed our time with you. You and all the adults in school are indeed living your mission statement "Caritas – God's love in action" 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 in the St Winifred's. We saw as many of you as we could and we are 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 a very good 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 and all that you have achieved together. We were also very impressed by the way you all really want to succeed in school and how well you look out for each other. You were so well behaved, and your politeness and manners were simply superb.

It was so pleasing to see how attentive and confident you were in the acts of worship and the school assembly we saw. Everyone showed great respect and reverence, your behaviour was excellent and your prayers were uplifting. To see the whole school celebrating the end of the final block of your creative curriculum was a delight and a privilege - we were very impressed with your tee shirts, all 411 of them!

Mr Nish, all the staff, Monsignor Quinlan, 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 work with you to build the Catholic life of your school even further and to do this they are going to continue to develop your creative approach to assessment in RE.

God bless you all and enjoy the summer holiday.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Brendan Hennessy  
Mr Mark Mountcastle  
(Section 48 Inspectors)