

INSPECTION REPORT

St Antony’s RC Primary School, Shadsworth Road, Blackburn BB1 2HP

Inspection date 1st February 2017
 Reporting Inspector Julie Frazer
 Andrew Sowerby

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

Type of School Primary
 URN 119516
 Age range of pupils 3-11 years
 Number on roll 230
 Appropriate authority The Governing Body
 Chair of Governors Fr G Barry
 Headteacher Mrs H McGowan
 RE Subject Leader Mrs J Malak
 Date of previous inspection February 2011

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

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

St Antony's is a Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic Primary School, admitting 70% baptised Roman Catholic pupils. It is similar in size to most other primary schools nationally; it includes nursery provision and serves the Roman Catholic Parish of Holy Family, Blackburn. Many of the children entering the school come from home backgrounds which experience some hardship and economic difficulties. The number of children who speak English as an additional language is 34%. The proportion of children who are in receipt of pupil premium is 34%, which is above the national average and there are 19% of the children on the special educational needs and disability (SEND) register, with 7 of the children having an Education Health Care (EHC) plan. The school operates a before and after school club for a nominal fee and it is offered free to vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils and to those with poor attendance and time keeping records. 7 of the 10 teaching staff are Catholic and 8 of the 19 teaching assistants and support staff are Catholic. The headteacher took up the post in January 2015 and since then there have been significant staff changes and the school is hoping to appoint a permanent deputy headteacher in the very near future. Over the last 2 years the school has improved significantly; high expectations and levels of attainment now permeate through all aspects of school life including the curriculum religious education (RE) and the Catholic life of the school.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS GOOD

St Antony's is a good Catholic school with some outstanding features. It is very successful in offering its learners a holistic Catholic education in an extremely warm, friendly and exceptionally supportive environment. The school community, very well supported by the governing body and driven by the headteacher, works very hard to ensure the pastoral and spiritual needs of all learners are met and often exceeded. This support is frequently extended to parents and family members. The school provides nurture groups and Family Wise support for pupils and their families, this is a service provided by Child Action North West. Safeguarding has a high priority within the school and all staff are extremely well trained in safeguarding and child protection and this is updated on an annual basis. Positive relationships are evident throughout the whole school community. The strong commitment of the headteacher and senior leadership team, together with the hard work and dedication of the staff, has created a culture in which gospel values are clearly evident and all are encouraged to be the best they can be. Pupils, staff and parents are happy to belong to St Antony's school community. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are friendly, polite and welcoming and the behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils feel that when issues arise they are encouraged to resolve them themselves, but if adult intervention is needed everyone's voice is listened to. The school offers its learners a wide variety of opportunities to develop their confidence. Its mission statement remains relevant to the whole school where Jesus Christ is their inspiration and the school strives to raise standards and aspirations for all their children.

KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- The headteacher has a clear vision for every pupil in St Antony's school; that they receive the highest quality of education so that they can make the best possible use of the gifts and talents that God has given them.
- The dedication and commitment by all staff to ensure that St Antony's provides a wholly inclusive and supportive environment for all learners and their families.

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS GOOD

The headteacher is clearly, deeply dedicated to the Catholic life of St Antony's School. There is explicit evidence that she places Catholic faith at the heart of the school and everything that she does in the school. She has a clear holistic vision for the school which is readily extended to families and the wider community. The senior leadership team, the RE subject leader and staff support her well in promoting her vision for this Roman Catholic School.

Since the appointment of the headteacher in 2015 there have been significant staff changes and along with this there have been clear improvements in all subject areas including RE curriculum and the Catholic life of the school. Parents and staff say that there have been rapid changes over the past two years and they

understand that the school continues on its faith and learning journey. There is a real sense of inclusion permeating throughout the whole school. The chair of governors is a regular visitor to school and clearly knows and understands how well the children are doing in their RE work and the impact that the Catholic life of the school has on them and their families. He knows this from regular meetings with the RE subject leader and the careful monitoring of pupils' work. Governors, as well as staff, share the vision of the headteacher and work hard to support her in ensuring the highest quality of provision for the children of St Antony's; they contribute effectively to the Catholic life of the school. There is a clear commitment by the parish priest and the headteacher to further develop the links between the school and parish. This will be achieved by the provision of class Masses and other services in church which will include members of the wider parish community.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORD IS GOOD

The school's mission statement is revisited annually during the school's ethos day, while it remains relevant and is understood by the whole school community there are plans for it to be rewritten in the next academic year. This process will involve the whole school community. The religious education of the pupils is at the heart of the curriculum. The school places great importance on RE and it is well resourced. Standards are at least as good as those in English. All books are marked consistently to a high standard and pupils are given sufficient time to respond to teachers' comments and 'next steps' marking where appropriate; this promotes improvements in children's learning. The RE subject leader fully supported by the headteacher, governing body, parish priest and senior leadership team, has enabled the school to develop a clear vision on how RE should be taught. In addition to this she is further developing the Catholic life of the school, along with teaching and learning. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and sometimes outstanding throughout the school. There is clearly the capacity for this to become outstanding in the future. In one upper Key Stage 2 class the pupils were discussing the concept of justice and the teacher skilfully led them to explore this challenging concept in a way which was relevant to their lives. There is clear evidence that all pupils are encouraged to engage in 'big questions' relating to their lives.

Pupils' attitude to learning is good. They show interest in and enthusiasm for their RE work and talk enthusiastically about topics they have covered. Children have a very good awareness of cultural differences and other world faith traditions. Links between the home, school and parish are developing and there are plans to strengthen these links further by class Masses being held in the parish church which will include the wider parish community. Throughout the school Sacred Scripture is known and lived. This was evidenced, and indeed parents said, that children bring their faith home and that they are eager to share what they have learned in school.

THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING

St Antony's places Christ at the centre of its community and of its welcoming ethos throughout the school. It provides a very warm, welcoming and inclusive environment where committed staff have high expectations of the pupils. The strong welcoming tradition of the school is maintained through deep faith commitment and a genuine supportive ethos from all staff, children, governors and parish priest. Staff demonstrate a very high level of confidence and outreach to all within the school community, recognising, valuing, respecting and celebrating diversity at all levels. The importance of the dignity of the individual is clearly evident at all levels. St Antony's is a respectful and reflective community where the inherent dignity of each person is celebrated. The caring ethos and the development of pupils' personal qualities are of paramount importance to the staff and governors. The children say that they feel their behaviour is managed fairly and that they have the confidence to step in and try to help one another if they feel that things are going wrong for other children in the playground. Children's behaviour is also managed effectively by them being withdrawn for a short time and to consider, reflectively, on their behaviour and how to improve it. They are also invited to think about their 'Prayers For Life'. The school constantly strives to find ways of engaging all members of the community. Staff engage with their parents and families in a caring, respectful and dignified manner. Parents who were interviewed during the inspection said that they were overwhelmed by the care that is afforded to them by the headteacher, particularly in challenging situations.

THE QUALITY OF WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING

Parents spoke very highly of the pastoral support their child receives in school. As well as the very effective induction programme, which includes home visits being made before the Reception children join the school, parents say that all the teachers and support staff know about their children and staff greet children and parents as they come to school every day. This enables the teachers to deal with any issues which may have arisen and helps to address any concerns that either children or their parents may have. This ensures that pupils are in the best possible position to engage in learning. Parental concerns are dealt with effectively by the class teachers and the headteacher who has a clear 'open door' policy. Within school there are a number of adults who are dedicated to the welfare of the children and their families. This includes 'Family Wise' who provide drop in services for parents and one to one support for children. They signpost parents and carers to relevant services and there is a box in school where children can put their worries in to and then they will be addressed. Children feel safe within the familial setting of the school. They know that they are loved and valued and they both show and are shown high levels of respect by other children as well as adults within school. Adults were observed being very patient with the children. Pupils within the school clearly have a voice and are listened to; they worked with a local company to design the play equipment in the playground. Every member of the school community knows and understands that they are here to do God's work; to learn and grow in a community of love. They make decisions in their roles as pupil chaplaincy team members, Mini Vinnies, Eco Monitors, Youth Ministers and charity groups. They have raised money for a number of charities including CAFOD, Operation Orphan, The Brain Trust, NSPCC, Alder Hey Hospital and Cheryl's Wish.

THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS GOOD

Worship is an integral part of the whole school community and pupils are respectful and reverent when taking part in or listening to acts of worship. The children, and in particular the chaplaincy team, are becoming increasingly involved in planning for assemblies and acts of worship, which are holistic, pupil centred and entirely relevant to their lives. Pupils have gained and are continuing to gain confidence in leading meaningful prayer services in order to further develop their relationship with God. The whole school assembly which was observed by one inspector was led by a whole class of children, who spoke clearly and everyone was given the opportunity to reflect carefully and to link what they had seen and heard to their lives in school. In the EYFS other acts of worship were responded to warmly and respectfully by the children. The standard of singing was noted as being a strength of the school and especially the choir. An increasingly high level of creativity is evident in worship and assemblies, engaging all pupils and staff. Children respond well to collective worship opportunities in school. They are aware of its importance and are reverent in their behaviour. Parents are invited in to school to attend liturgies, acts of worship and other celebrations. During Advent 'travelling cribs' are sent home to help families to prepare for Christmas. The school now has a focus on further preparing pupils to take a leadership role in preparing for and taking part in meaningful acts of worship.

THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS GOOD

Staff and pupils are confident and secure in their witness to Christ, the Gospel and the teachings of the Church. Staff were particularly keen to say that there is a strong culture of support for them and this is provided by the RE subject leader along with the headteacher. There is a culture permeating throughout the school which enables them to seek help and advice relating to any aspects of the RE curriculum or the Catholic faith, if needed, regardless of whether they are of the Catholic or of other faiths. Throughout the inspection, observations showed that all adults treated children with respect, care, patience, concern and with dignity and there is an emphasis on creating a pleasant working environment for everyone in school.

An explicit Catholic culture permeates the whole school and is clearly identifiable through relationships, decision making and actions. The headteacher and senior leadership team is very effective in undertaking its role of leading the school and developing it as a Catholic community. Staff and children clearly demonstrate and witness to justice, compassion, reconciliation, respect and dignity in their relationships and are able to see the relationship between their own behaviour and Christian values.

AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- To further develop the links between the school and parish by the provision of regular class Masses and other services within church and including members of the wider parish community.
- To further enhance assessment in RE curriculum by developing moderation within school and across other local schools.

1st February 2017

Dear Children,

Thank you for making our visit to St Antony's so enjoyable when we came to inspect your school for the Bishop. Thank you for making us feel so welcome. We really enjoyed our time with you. Your school is a good Catholic school.

We really enjoyed seeing your lessons and we were sorry we didn't see all the classes. It was lovely to see your activities: your work, your prayer and worship sessions and your very polite manners. Thank you. You clearly enjoy coming to school, and we could see that you are proud of your school and your smart school uniform. We could see that you all believe that every child is special and is valued as part of your school community.

We were made to feel very welcome by all the children that we met. You treat each other with dignity and respect and every child has a part to play at St Antony's.

Your headteacher and teachers work very hard and they make sure that you all enjoy coming to school and are eager to learn. They have a high opinion of you and your families and they care a great deal for every child in the school. It was a privilege for us to come into your school.

Jesus Christ is at the centre of your school community and this is seen throughout the school every day. Your teachers are going to help you to develop even greater levels of understanding about Jesus and the Catholic faith by monitoring your work and the progress that you make even more carefully. You have already begun to improve your links with your parish community and these are going to develop even more. Many of you have a very good knowledge and understanding about your faith, so this should help you to do even better.

God bless all in your school,

Mrs J Frazer and Mr A Sowerby

(Section 48 Inspectors)

Summary Report to Parents

On 1st February 2017 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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