

**INSPECTION REPORT**

**St Marie’s RC Primary School, Edward Street, Bury, Lancashire BL9 0RZ**

Inspection date 5<sup>th</sup> April 2017

Reporting Inspector Mrs J Frazer  
Mr B Hennessey

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

Type of School Roman Catholic Primary

URN 105335

Age range of pupils 3 – 11 Years

Number on roll 251

Appropriate authority The Governing Body

Chair of Governors Mr D Fish

Headteacher Mrs F Robinson

Religious Education Subject Leader Mrs F Robinson

Mr G McRae

Date of previous inspection March 2012

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

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

St Marie's is a Roman Catholic School supported by the Diocese of Salford, serving the parish of St Marie's Bury. The school serves pupils and families that come from a wide range of socio economic backgrounds; living in a mixture of rented, council and owner occupied private housing. Overall deprivation is higher than the national average. 65% of the children are baptised Catholics, 23% are of the Muslim faith and the remaining 12% are of other Christian faiths or no faith. 70% of pupils come from minority ethnic groups; the largest ethnic groups being Eastern European (Polish) and children from an Asian heritage background. 63% of pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) this number has increased from 46% in 2015. 12% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, however, this number does not reflect the number of children who come from low income families due to a number of Key Stage 1 parents who do not claim because of the infant free school meals. 18% of the children are on the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) register and 19% of the children are in receipt of Pupil Premium Grant. One pupil has an Education Health Care Plan (EHC) and two others are pending a decision. There is only one looked after child in school. The headteacher has been in post for 14 years and 60% of the teaching staff are Roman Catholics and the remaining teaching staff who are not of the Catholic faith are practising Church of England. Appropriate training and support is provided for these members of staff. St Marie's is a very popular school which has been oversubscribed for a number of years.

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

St Marie's is an outstanding Catholic Primary School. Upon entry to the school one is struck by the wonderfully warm and friendly welcome given to all and by the exceptionally calm atmosphere that has been created throughout. All children are provided with an outstanding Catholic education in an extremely caring and supportive environment where individual needs are exceptionally well catered for. The behaviour of the pupils is exemplary. The pupils take a great pride in their school, which is fully inclusive. The Word of God is central to the life of the school and the children know and understand scripture very well are able to relate this to their daily lives. This ensures that the pastoral and spiritual needs of all families and children are very well met. The children who are not of the Catholic faith are embraced within the school and there is a high level of respect for them. The dedicated and passionate headteacher, supported by a very strong leadership team has very high expectations of all adults and children. Together, with the hard working staff, they have created an ethos where everyone recognises the need to work together in order to ensure that the needs of everyone are catered for. This work is further enhanced by the support of the parish priest and a very effective governing body.

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

- The headteacher supported by a dedicated staff has extremely high aspirations for every child within St Marie's which is a fully inclusive school. Every child is encouraged to be the best they can be and achieve to the best of their ability.
- The behaviour of the children is exemplary. They are helpful, well-mannered and extremely polite to all members of the school community as well as visitors to the school.
- The Word of God permeates throughout all aspects of school life. The children bear witness to the gospel values in their everyday lives.
- The welfare that the school provides for the children and their families is exceptional. Staff readily give of their time on a regular basis to provide a caring and nurturing environment.

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

The quality of leadership is outstanding. The dedicated and passionate headteacher and the deputy headteacher along with a knowledgeable and supportive governing body, provides strong and decisive leadership by clearly living their vision for Catholic Education. There is excellent leadership at all levels of the community, which contributes significantly to the outstanding provision for Catholic Education that the school currently provides. This ensures that the development of the Catholic life of the school is at the forefront of its work. Together with all other staff, they ensure that the teaching of RE and the development of the Catholic life of the school have an extremely high priority. The self-evaluation of curriculum RE and the Catholic life of the school is an accurate reflection of the rigorous monitoring which has been undertaken on a regular basis. School leaders have been energised by the celebration of achievement and the challenge that the self-evaluation has provided. The school has a clear plan for developing RE across the school and this is reflected in the priority that it is given. Evidence for this can be found in the school development plan, which is based on the 5Ws model. The school is aware of its next steps and has comprehensive plans for implementing them.

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

The school's mission statement was reviewed in 2015. A working party of parents, teachers, teaching assistants and governors was chaired by the deputy headteacher; the new mission statement was developed through a series of meetings. Once the mission statement had been developed it was presented to the children and the school council came up with their own word cloud on the school's website. The children know and have ownership of its clear and effective message. The staffing and resources that are devoted to teaching and learning in RE are of the highest standard, reflecting its significance and importance in the school. Children clearly enjoy RE and were very enthusiastic about the inspection; they wanted the inspectors to see how well they were doing and the high quality of their work, which is of the highest standard. The written work in the children's RE books is consistently of at least the same or of a higher standard than other areas of the curriculum. Governors say that it is given at least the same priority as English and Mathematics at curriculum committee meetings. There are bright and attractive displays around the school. During the inspection the children brought in Easter gardens that they had made and these were formed in to a display in the school hall. Scripture is exceptionally well known, understood and made relevant throughout the school. The children's behaviour for learning is exemplary and there is a culture of calmness in every classroom where teachers and children speak quietly and respectfully towards one another. This provides a secure learning environment where everyone can safely express their views and ask questions to develop their understanding. The strong links between the school, home and parish are inclusive and effective and together this ensures that the children receive the highest possible quality of education.

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

St Marie's provides an exceptionally warm welcome for all who attend the school. Inspectors were warmly greeted by staff and the children when they entered individual classrooms. Parents were keen to express how all the children including those from minority backgrounds feel fully included. They were overwhelmingly positive about the school and they know that their children are loved and supported by all staff. There is a holistic approach by everyone within school and this ensures that children's emotional, social and cultural needs are very well cared for. Respect for the dignity of the individual is clearly evident across the school. The calm and caring ethos created within the school ensures that the children's personal qualities are valued by everyone. Parents are invited in to school for assemblies, Masses and plays as well as being encouraged to accompany their children on school trips. There is a high level of attendance at parents' evenings as well as coffee mornings, cake sales and charity events. Parents say that the transition to secondary school is handled brilliantly and this provides a natural progression for the children. Governors say that they are always welcome in to school and that they make regular formal and informal visits. They say that they are appreciative of the truly 'open door' culture that exists within St Marie's. They also say that the Catholic nature of the school permeates throughout its diverse community. The parish priest is a regular visitor in to school, where he talks to the children about their work in RE and other subjects.

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

The staff and pupils demonstrate a very high level of care and respect for others. This was witnessed throughout the day in the manner that the staff supported the children and their colleagues. The structures and procedures in school ensure that everyone feels safe and that they are treated with respect and dignity. The outreach support provided by the school ensures that the needs of parents and families are met in a structured and sensitive manner. The school has a family support worker who works with other agencies including Police, Mental Health Team, Housing Association and CARITAS as well as Children's Social Care to ensure that there is very effective pastoral care offered to children and families during their time at St Marie's. This level of support continues throughout the transition in to secondary school. Children's behaviour is exceptionally calm throughout the school and both parents and children were keen to say that any problems were dealt with immediately and effectively. These constituted only very minor incidents which were 'nipped in the bud'. The calm and overwhelmingly positive atmosphere that permeates throughout the school supports the children's exemplary behaviour. The school stresses the importance of reaching out beyond its community, so that children feel part of God's world. The charity work is a living example of this as children support Caritas (St Joseph's Penny) during Lent, Macmillan Cancer, Save the Children as well as providing boxes of new toys for disadvantaged children through The Salvation Army at Christmas.

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

The school provides a variety of worship opportunities for children throughout the day and these are appropriate for their backgrounds and faith experiences. RE lessons have an element of high quality worship in them and the children readily respond to their learning by composing and saying prayers confidently; reflecting on the focus of the lesson. The inclusive and reflective collective acts of worship help pupils to grow in confidence, in prayer and to develop a close relationship with God. The Key Stage 2 worship was led by the children and parents were in attendance. The focus of this worship was The Last Supper and children acted out the significant events surrounding Maundy Thursday. The children were extremely confident in asking questions and opportunity for reflection and quiet prayer were provided throughout the worship. The parish priest regularly celebrates Mass in school. Each class has a special prayer focus along with quality displays about RE. The children know many school prayers and compose powerful prayers for themselves. The school's prayer leaders have a real impact on the development of the prayer life of the school, and they are now effective at planning and leading prayer services. Prayer leaders regularly visit all the classes in school, especially Key Stage 1, to gently and supportively guide and develop the children in their worship and prayer life. The school provides outstanding support in guiding their children through the Sacramental Programme each year.

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

All staff act as excellent role models for the children and help them in recognising that God is with them in every aspect of school life. Adults and pupils bear witness to the mission statement of the school, which informs the lived experience of the whole community. Adults act as key promoters of the ethos of the school and its values for the pupils and the whole school community's witness to the wider community. The staff and pupils feel confident and secure to their witness to Christ, the Gospel, and the teachings of the Church. Pupils are confident in witnessing to the beliefs and values of a Catholic community and are actively encouraged and supported in being proactive citizens who participate in decision making processes. This is seen in the way the school promotes support for various charities for the common good. Examples of fund raising activities include raising money for Macmillan Cancer and Save The Children as well as providing toys for disadvantaged children at Christmas.

An explicit Catholic culture permeates the whole school and is clearly identifiable through relationships, decision making and actions. Relationships are outstanding at St Marie's and a strong sense of teamwork and belonging exists. The inspectors noted a sense of calmness and at all times behaviour was outstanding. Children are respectful of each other and of adults in school who work together as a committed team having high expectations of the children and in this atmosphere the children thrive.

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

- To work with other schools to further develop the role of prayer leaders in school.
- To further develop the role of governors who are new to the school to ensure that governors have sufficient capacity for succession planning in the future.

Date 5<sup>th</sup> April 2017

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making our visit to St Marie's School 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 an outstanding 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 have a very sensible attitude to life and to school and we could see very strongly that you are proud of your school. 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 – you treat each other the way you wish to be treated, and it was great to see. Every child has a part to play at St Marie's.

Your teachers and headteacher 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 they care a great deal for every child in the school. It was a privilege for us to come into your school.

It is good to see that you hear Mass in school with Fr Wadsworth. Your teachers help you to be the best you can be. From class to class, the teachers try to help you to learn about and learn from the Catholic faith so that you can grow in the love of Jesus Christ. You are super children who made us smile with the love you show for all in your school. Your teachers go far beyond what they are asked to do, because they believe in you so much.

God bless all in your school,

Yours sincerely

Mrs J Frazer and Mr B Hennessey

(Section 48 Inspectors)

## Summary Report to Parents

On 5<sup>th</sup> April 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.

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

St Marie's is an outstanding Catholic Primary School. Upon entry to the school one is struck by the wonderfully warm and friendly welcome given to all and by the exceptionally calm atmosphere that has been created throughout. All children are provided with an outstanding Catholic education in an extremely caring and supportive environment where individual needs are exceptionally well catered for. The behaviour of the pupils is exemplary. The pupils take a great pride in their school, which is fully inclusive. The Word of God is central to the life of the school and the children know and understand scripture very well are able to relate this to their daily lives. This ensures that the pastoral and spiritual needs of all families and children are very well met. The children who are not of the Catholic faith are embraced within the school and there is a high level of respect for them. The dedicated and passionate headteacher, supported by a very strong leadership team has very high expectations of all adults and children. Together, with the hard working staff, they have created an ethos where everyone recognises the need to work together in order to ensure that the needs of everyone are catered for. This work is further enhanced by the support of the parish priest and a very effective governing body.

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

- The headteacher supported by a dedicated staff has extremely high aspirations for every child within St Marie's which is a fully inclusive school. Every child is encouraged to be the best they can be and achieve to the best of their ability.
- The behaviour of the children is exemplary. They are helpful, well-mannered and extremely polite to all members of the school community as well as visitors to the school.
- The Word of God permeates throughout all aspects of school life. The children bear witness to the gospel values in their everyday lives.
- The welfare that the school provides for the children and their families is exceptional. Staff readily give of their time on a regular basis to provide a caring and nurturing environment.

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

- To work with other schools to further develop the role of prayer leaders in school.
- To further develop the role of governors who are new to the school to ensure that governors have sufficient capacity for succession planning in the future.