

INSPECTION REPORT

St Joseph’s RC Primary School, Pot Hall, Wilton Grove, Heywood, Rochdale, OL10 2AA.

Inspection date Wednesday 9th November 2016

Reporting Inspectors Mrs Anne Heard
 Mrs Fiona Robinson

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

Type of School Primary

URN 105833

Age range of pupils 4-11

Number on roll 340

Appropriate authority The Governing Body

Chair of Governors Mr A Nacca

Headteacher Mrs Caroline Dunne

Religious Education Subject Leaders Margaret Green, Rebecca Mitchell & Rachael Green

Date of previous inspection May 2010

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	1	
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	1	
The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements		

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's is a larger than average Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic Primary School serving the needs of the Parish of Our Lady & St Joseph's in Heywood. The school has increased its numbers over the last few years and hopes to increase these further to meet the demand for additional primary school places in this area. There are currently 12 classes within the school, some of which are mixed age classes. There are 15 teachers at the school, of whom 80% are Catholic. They are supported by 18 teaching assistants, 72% of whom are Catholic. There are 340 pupils on roll, 61% of these are baptised Catholic children. 27% of children attending the school are eligible for pupil premium. The number of children joining the school with English as an additional language is increasing.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS GOOD

St Joseph's is a good Catholic Primary School with many outstanding features. The children are offered a strong faith experience alongside rapidly improving standards in all curriculum areas. The school community, the governing body and the parish priest work closely together to ensure that the needs of all learners are addressed spiritually, pastorally and academically. The headteacher and senior leadership team express a passion and determination for rapid and continuous improvement. The governing body is well informed and governors have an accurate understanding of the school. They offer challenge and support to ensure continuous improvement with a shared goal. The mission statement is clearly known and lived by the whole school community. The hard work and dedication of all the staff to aspire to be outstanding in all aspects of school life is to be acknowledged. The school has been on a challenging journey in the past and is now reaping the rewards for the way that shared goals and strong positive relationships have allowed the Gospel values to shine through. Pupils, parents and staff express their pride in the school. The behaviour of the children, both in learning situations and outside is excellent; they show respect for each other and for themselves. Children show confidence in their learning and are proud of their achievements. The care, guidance and support for all of the school community is outstanding.

KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- Relationships in all aspects of school life: staff, children, parents and governors.
- The tenacity and drive of staff and governors to aspire to provide an outstanding Catholic education.
- The provision for all groups within the school.
- The strong and dedicated leadership of the school, driven by an inspirational headteacher and supported by the deputy headteacher in providing a clear vision for the Catholic life of the school.
- Strong governance.
- The outstanding behaviour of all pupils.

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

The exceptional leadership of the school by the headteacher and the senior leadership team has ensured that rapid improvement in all areas of the school has been achieved. The leadership team demonstrate a deep commitment to the church's mission in education. Their aspirations have been rewarded with significant and ongoing improvement in all aspects of school life. The governing body have fully supported this rapid improvement. They are well informed, proactive and fully aware of their roles in supporting the mission of the school to provide the best for all in this Catholic community. The enthusiastic and dedicated religious education subject leaders share a common goal in raising standards and developing the spiritual and prayer life of all. The past few years have seen a focused drive to implement improvements into the religious life of the school. The implementation of 'My Faith Journey' to record effectively the children's growing aspects of their faith, is a creative and holistic approach to assessment in religious education. SMSC

is fully embedded across all areas of the curriculum. The detailed and comprehensive school self-evaluation schedule linked to the school improvement plan is used effectively to ensure all aspects of religious education are analysed and addressed. It provides a detailed and accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school against the 5 W's and gives further credence to the outstanding leadership of the school.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORD IS GOOD

The quality of word is good. The quality of RE lessons are good with some outstanding elements. The enthusiasm of teachers to engage the children is clearly evident in the teaching of religious education. There are high expectations made of the children and challenges are set for them to make good progress. In the light of the rapid improvements made to the religious education, new strategies need to be fully embedded into the life of the school in order to be outstanding. These include opportunities for children to engage in practical, creative and collaborative activities to further challenge children's thinking and to reflect on their previous knowledge. All staff are given the opportunity to develop their own religious knowledge by attending relevant courses provided by the Diocese of Salford. On the day of the Inspection two members of staff were attending the Kerygma course. The introduction of 'big questions' allows children to explore more deeply different concepts of their faith. The Word of God is clearly evidenced in the children's work, both written and verbal, displays, and prayer tables. Focal areas around the school, including the prayer garden, are used effectively to encourage the prayer life of the whole school community. 'Statements to Live By' guide the children into making moral decisions based on Gospel values and these are clearly lived and understood at St Joseph's. Prayer bags are sent home to enrich the experiences of children and their families on their faith journey. The priority for assessment in RE to encompass all aspects of a pupil's knowledge, understanding and faith development, has resulted in the adoption and recent implementation of "Our Faith Journey", which when fully embedded, will provide a holistic approach to each individual child's journey to know Jesus as they progress through the school.

THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING

A warm welcome is extended to all who enter St Joseph's Primary School. The school mission statement is displayed, known and understood by all and especially by the children. Parents and visitors are welcomed into the school at every opportunity. They support the school through the PTFA, the 'reading army' and at the parent and toddler group. The welcoming entrance to the school displays a family tree with photographs of every child emphasising their special and unique place within the school family. All members of staff demonstrate a keen sense of loyalty and affiliation to the school and show great respect and care for each other. The school has excellent links with the parish and the parish priest is a valued presence around the school. The school works in close partnership with other Rochdale Catholic schools.

THE QUALITY OF WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING

The care, guidance and welfare of the children at St Joseph's is outstanding. Staff and pupils demonstrate a high level of care and respect for each other and for others beyond the school community. The Rainbows programme provides support for children who experience challenging circumstances and children talked about their involvement in this programme. The school engages in extensive fundraising activities such as the Operation Christmas Child, the food bank of Heywood, Caritas and CAFOD. Staff spoke of the support they have given to each other during some difficult times. The school employs a pastoral officer who gives support to the most vulnerable pupils and families. Her outstanding work has impacted on attendance and punctuality, and contributed to the safeguarding of many children. Places are provided free of charge for needy families in the breakfast and after school clubs. Pupil voice is valued and children are represented by the school council, eco group and the GIFT chaplaincy team. Every individual is valued and nurtured at St Joseph's.

THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS GOOD

Prayer and worship are central to the life of the school. The whole school community gather together to celebrate acts of collective worship during assemblies and school Masses. Acts of worship also take place within the classrooms and in prayer areas around the school. Staff are confident in planning and leading prayer and worship. Each classroom has a dedicated prayer table, which is changed and adapted to reflect changes in the liturgical year. The GIFT chaplaincy team are commissioned to spread the good news of the gospels. They are enthusiastic in this mission and are developing their roles to have a greater impact on the faith life of the school. On the day of the Inspection, the GIFT chaplaincy team was keen to share with the inspectors the prayer to St Martin de Tours that they had written. The parish priest is a regular visitor to the school and strong links between the parish, school and parents are evident. Masses are celebrated both in school and at the church. The school tries hard to involve families and parishioners in school prayer and worship. Parents are often asked to be involved in assemblies and Masses by undertaking a reading or a bidding prayer. The sacramental programme provides strong links between the parish and school. Further opportunities to develop links with the church community have been set up. Members of the GIFT chaplaincy team send cards to older members of the parish who have been recently ill. The parish priest and headteacher are dedicated to developing these links further. The acts of collective worship and assembly observed during the inspection were good examples of how the school encourages the school community to engage in prayer and reflection. The teachers led by example.

THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS OUTSTANDING

The quality of witness is outstanding; the staff and pupils are confident in their witness to Christ and the gospel values. The children are encouraged to think of others and to support those less fortunate than themselves. There are numerous examples of how the school has come together to support families and individuals on local, national and international levels e.g. CAFOD, CARITAS and the local food bank. Senior leaders are good examples of how they live out their witness to gospel values and are good role models to others. Pupil voice through the GIFT chaplaincy team, school council and eco warrior groups are clear examples of how children are encouraged to be pro-active citizens, to take responsibility and decision making roles in order to fully embrace gospel values. The children's care and respect for each individual is mirrored by the staff as they show care and support for each other in times of need. The 'word of the week' and 'witness of the week' initiated by the GIFT chaplaincy team emphasises the pupil-based challenge to give witness. The mission statement is known and witnessed by all. Policies and procedures are in place to ensure that the respect and dignity of all individuals is addressed. The diversity of children's backgrounds, experiences and cultures are celebrated through an explicit recognition of individuality and uniqueness in the eyes of God. The pupils are given opportunities to learn about other faiths and religions at dedicated times throughout the year, with some of the children's work beautifully displayed around the school. A week dedicated to 'the plight of refugees' in our society, further developed the children's knowledge of how they can bear witness to the gospels. The role of the pastoral officer has a significant impact on how the school plays a practical role in bearing witness. Families experiencing difficulties are supported in finding solutions in a caring and confidential way.

AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- To enhance the work of the GIFT chaplaincy team by creating more opportunities for 'child-led' worship.
- To develop opportunities for different forms of worship to enhance the spirituality and spontaneity of children's prayer.
- To embed the RE assessment; 'Our Faith Journey'.
- To continue to ensure that pupils respond to marking and feedback in order to improve their work.

16th November 2016

Dear Pupils

Thank you so much for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school for the Bishop. You made us feel very welcome with your happy smiling faces. Mrs Heard and Mrs Robinson really enjoyed learning about all the great things that you do at St Joseph's. Your new mission statement is clearly lived by everyone at your school.

We know from talking to you and watching you that you are very proud of your school and take great care of it and each other. We enjoyed listening to you talk about all the things that make your school so special. Continue to look after each other and help those in need, just like Pope Francis asked us to do.

You will be happy to know that we think your school is a good school. You work very hard to be the best you can. We enjoyed being part of your lessons and were sorry that we could not get to see more of them. Your teachers work very hard to give you lots of different learning experiences and we would like to say thank you to them and all who help them to make your school so special.

Your headteacher, with the support of the governors, has worked very hard to improve your school. Mrs. Dunne is a very dedicated headteacher, along with all the teachers and support staff they have made your school a very special place. You are very lucky to have so many people who care about you and keep you safe.

We have asked your teachers to continue to gather evidence for your 'Faith Journey' booklets. We also want them to continue to develop the roles of the GIFT chaplaincy team. To give you opportunities to develop your own prayerfulness and spirituality.

God bless you all.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Anne Heard and Mrs Fiona Robinson

(Section 48 Inspectors)

Summary Report to Parents

On 9th of November 2016 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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