

**INSPECTION REPORT**

**St Gregory's RC Primary School, Presto Street, Farnworth, Bolton, BL4 8AJ.**

Inspection date Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2015

Reporting Inspector Mrs Susan Gedzielewski  
Mrs Fiona Robinson

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

Type of School Primary  
 URN 105244  
 Age range of pupils 4-11 years  
 Number on roll 209  
 Appropriate authority The Governing Body  
 Chair of Governors Mr Sean Greenhalgh  
 Executive Headteacher Mr Kevan Naughton  
 Acting Headteacher Miss Caroline Grundy  
 Religious Education Subject Leader Miss Caroline Grundy  
 Date of previous inspection January 2010

<b>The Inspection judgements are:</b>	<b>Grade</b>	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	2	
The quality of Welfare	2	
The quality of Worship	3	
The quality of Witness	2	

The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements

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

St Gregory's RC Primary school is a slightly smaller than average Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic primary school serving the needs of the parish community of Our Lady of Lourdes and St Gregory the Great, Farnworth. The school also serves the parish of St John Fisher, Kersley. Pupils come from a variety of social backgrounds, although a significant number of children live within the top 30% most deprived areas. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for support through pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding allocated to the school for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority. The proportion of pupils supported by school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The number of pupils of ethnic minority heritage is well below national average. The majority of pupils enter the school below or well below baseline. The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. 50% of pupils are baptized Catholics. Six of the eleven teachers are Catholic. At the time of the inspection, the school was led by an executive headteacher and acting headteacher.

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

St Gregory's is a good Catholic primary school with some outstanding features. Leadership of the school is rapidly improving and systems recently introduced are contributing to the school's capacity to sustain improvement over time. The senior leadership team clearly recognises that Christ is central to all aspects of school life and all staff are committed to creating a loving and nurturing learning environment for the children. Teachers are embracing practical and creative approaches to teaching and learning, although this requires further development. Scripture is recognised as being important in the school. Pupils have a good knowledge of scripture and they know how to use the Bible to extend their knowledge. The school's priority for those in the greatest need, raising achievement, inclusivity and personal development, ensures that all pupils receive a good education. Staff are developing in confidence to leading prayer and worship. The children's response to prayer has a significant impact upon their treatment of one another, their whole approach to school life and the overall ethos of our school. Father John is a regular visitor to the school and frequently supports teaching and learning with his expertise. Staff and pupils are confident and secure in their witness to Christ, the Gospel and the teachings of the Church. The school offers a warm welcome and all members of the school demonstrate a high level of belonging and ownership of the school. The newly appointed GIFT team is leading new initiatives to enhance the spiritual life of the school and they are keen to extend their role even further.

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

- The leadership of the school, including that of governors, has accurately identified weaknesses in the quality of teaching, achievement and the spiritual life of the school and has sought support to ensure that improvements are made quickly and can be sustained over time.
- Staff and pupils demonstrate a very high level of respect for, care of and service to others. There is a strong sense of teamwork and support.
- The quality of outreach to vulnerable families and pupils is good.
- The Religious Education subject leader is providing vision for the school mission and she is holding the staff to account over their performance and challenging underachievement in RE lessons.
- As a result of recent changes in teaching methods, pupils enjoy and are challenged by their learning in RE.
- Although in the early stages of development, the GIFT team are able to discuss their work and it is evident that they are having an impact on others pupils.

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

Leadership of the school is rapidly improving and systems recently introduced are contributing to the school's capacity to sustain improvement over time. Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas for improvement identified by the Ofsted inspection. The executive headteacher has a clear vision for the school and under his direction the staff are striving for excellence in all areas. The appointment of an assistant headteacher has increased the senior leadership team's capacity to monitor. Rigorous monitoring is in place to ensure all pupils make good progress. Witness to Gospel values clearly inform decisions made about supporting all groups within the school community appropriately. There has been a clear drive by the acting headteacher to ensure that the Catholic life of the school is at the core of all school improvement work, and this relentless pursuit ensures that Christ is at the centre of school life. This academic year she has taken on role of RE subject leader and was praised by parents for her Catholic leadership. Staff training is seen as a priority and several staff have attended the Diocesan Kerygma course, although more could be done to support teachers with their RE subject knowledge. The school works with the Bolton Catholic Schools Partnership in order to provide further joint training opportunities. Following an external review of governance, the governors' involvement in school strengthened considerably. Governors demonstrated that they had a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development brought about by regular joint monitoring, their involvement in performance management of staff and pupils progress meetings. They are confident in providing challenge and ensuring that religious education and the Catholic life of the school are secure.

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

The quality of teaching in Religious Education is improving and over time this will have a positive impact on levels of attainment, which are currently slightly below expected levels. Pupils are clearly enjoying creative approaches to learning and group activities in RE lessons. Pupils have a good knowledge of scripture and they know how to use the bible to extend their knowledge. They are confident when talking about God and their faith, and the impact this has on their relationship with others. The learning climate in the classroom is improving due to initiatives the school have put into place recently, although behaviour for learning continues to require improvement. In the best lessons, the children were fully engaged in their learning, activities were creative and the teacher asked challenging questions. Teaching and learning is matched to pupil's needs and overall they make good progress, but more could be done to develop their knowledge and understanding of religious vocabulary. Teaching Assistants had a positive impact on learning at each stage of the lesson. Marking of work is, for the most part, is good, but varied in consistency. The school prioritises Religious Education in its professional development programme. The mission statement is known and lived across the school community. Father John is a regular visitor to the school and frequently supports teaching and learning with his expertise. The requirements of the Religious Education curriculum are being fully met and the school uses 'The Way, the Truth and the Life', 'Caritas in Action' and 'Come and See' to support their teaching of RE. Children talked with enthusiasm of their learning about world religions. The 'Wednesday Word' is sent home on a weekly basis and is used to support collective worship in school.

### **THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS GOOD**

St Gregory's demonstrates a culture of welcome. The staff reaches out to vulnerable members of the school community and they work extremely hard to ensure all pupils are cared for. Parents are extremely appreciative of all the new systems that are in place to improve communication, although they would appreciate more information regarding their child's progress in religious education. They were extremely happy with the parent consultation evening where their views were valued. Parents agree that there are clear systems in place this academic year. The personal welcome they receive from the staff on the playground was singled out for particular praise. The children spoke with great warmth and affection about their teachers and with great enthusiasm about their school. Members of staff demonstrate a keen sense of community affiliation and the quality of relationships exemplifies respect for all members of the school community. Parental involvement is a high priority and there are many occasions where parents are invited into school. The quality of systems and information given for the induction of new pupils and staff are

improving. The school has good links with the parish and the parish priest is a very valued presence around school.

### **THE QUALITY OF WELFARE IS GOOD**

The quality of welfare is good. Staff and pupils demonstrate a high level of care and respect for one another. The school places a high priority on supporting vulnerable pupils. The school provides a variety of activities to ensure pupils are nurtured and cared for including 'the cube' and the Fort Alice's Healthy Relationship programme. The cube has been effective in reducing the number of disruptions in the classroom and exclusions. The behaviour policy has recently been reviewed and parents agreed that the changes are having a positive impact; ensuring a consistent approach to discipline. The school is aware that some pupils' attitude to learning requires improvement. The school's learning mentor is developing good relationships with families and ensures pupils receive the additional support they need to thrive in school. 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. Teachers are approachable and parents feel able to talk with them about issues that concern them and their concerns are dealt with effectively. Sex and relationship education requires improvement. The school must make a decision regarding SRE, following consultation with parents, and implement a holistic programme which is set within the context of the Church's teachings. The school promotes high attendance and punctuality. All safeguarding procedures are in place and staff receive regular training. Pupil voice is of priority. Pupils are represented by the school council, eco warriors, the GIFT team and they all have their own action plans. The school buddy system, where Y6 pupils are partnered with the youngest pupils, enables Reception children to settle into school quickly. There is a genuine concern from all staff, for the welfare of all pupils, and every individual is valued and nurtured.

### **THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT**

The leadership of the school take an active role in the provision and training of staff for prayer, worship and liturgy. As a result, staff are confident at leading prayer and worship, but more needs to be done to promote pupil involvement and leadership. The children's response to pray is having an impact upon their treatment of one another, their whole approach to school life and the overall ethos of our school. There are Liturgical celebrations during the school year. Father Dale is particularly gifted in his ability to engage pupils during the weekly masses and during his visits. The pupils have developed a good knowledge of traditional prayers and the mass. Families are actively encouraged to share in worship and are welcomed to share in the masses and assemblies, which are frequently animated through the use of dance, drama and modern hymns. Opportunities for silent prayer were not evident during the inspection. The newly appointed GIFT team is leading new initiatives to enhance the spiritual life of the school and support the faith journey of younger pupils. They have a special area where they meet. During classroom worship, pupils confidently read scripture readings that they had chosen, but their spiritual development could be enhanced with greater emphasis on "the still, small voice within" and meditative prayer. In each classroom there is a focal point for prayer and on which prayers written by pupils take pride of place. In order to develop worship further, the school needs to increase pupil involvement in class collective worship. Children need to be provided with the opportunity and skills to take on a leadership role for class collective prayer and worship. Governors, together with the headteacher and RE leader, regularly monitor collective worship, RE displays and class prayer areas.

### **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. Teachers promote an explicit values based Catholic culture across the school and the promotion of witness is clearly evident in RE lessons and worship. Staff and pupils clearly demonstrate witness to justice, compassion, reconciliation, love and forgiveness. Pupils spoke confidently about the importance of being a person of faith and how it impacts on their life. They enjoy learning about world religions in the context of their own faith and citizenship. Pupils are given a range of opportunities to lead including the School Council, Eco warriors, and the GIFT team. The school gives generously to those in need within school and beyond; and the support for families in difficulty is exceptional. The staff encourage pupils to reach out to those in need and the work of

charities such as CAFOD, CARITAS, shoe box appeal, British Heart Foundation, poppy appeal are fully supported. The GIFT team play an active role within the school. Parents spoke highly of the drive of the acting headteacher, senior leadership team and all staff in ensuring that the beliefs and values of the school as a Catholic community were at the centre of all of the school's work. The mission statement underpins the work of the school and helps all to reflect on how they can be true witnesses. A strong sense of belonging to the school community exists and staff are committed to building upon the strong partnership between school, parish and home.

**AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:**

- Continue to improve teachers' subject knowledge, so they are not over reliant on schemes of work.
- Raise levels of achievement even further and focusing on religious vocabulary.
- Ensure pupils are aware of the next steps in learning through target setting and effective marking.
- Improve the quality of prayer and worship. In particular, greater opportunities for pupils to lead worship and engage in silent prayer.
- To implement a holistic sex and relationship programme, which is set in the context of the Church's teaching.

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2015

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 Gregory's. You and your teachers are working so hard to always do your very best and as a result your work in Religious Education lessons is good.

We really enjoyed watching your lessons because your teachers planned such interesting activities for you. You have excellent teachers and teaching assistants who are helping you to achieve a good standard in everything you do. We were impressed with your knowledge of the Word of God and bible stories. We were also impressed by the way you look after each other, your behaviour and the way you help those in need.

We particularly enjoyed participating in your collective worship. The GIFT team are doing a wonderful job helping in assemblies, encouraging you to prayer and support charities. Through your charity work you show that you care for others in the wider community.

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 by extending your understanding of religious words.

God bless you all

Yours sincerely

Mrs Susan Gedzielewski and Mrs Fiona Robinson  
(Section 48 Inspectors)

On 11<sup>th</sup> November 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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