

INSPECTION REPORT

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**Inspection carried out Under Canon 806
and in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005**

Name of School **St. Aidan and St. Oswald RC Primary School, Roman Road, Royton, Oldham OL2 5PQ**

Inspection date 20th March 2018

Reporting Inspectors Anne Heard, Pam Macro, Peter Eavers

Type of school	Voluntary Aided
URN	105721
Age range of pupils	3-11
Number on roll	426
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Jason Kinsella
Headteacher	Damian Harrison
Religious Education Co-ordinator	Catherine Brogan
Date of previous inspection	14 th November 2012

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades
Overall effectiveness of the school	1	1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3=Requires Improvement 4 = Inadequate
The quality of Catholic Leadership	1	
The Catholic Life of the school (incorporating Welcome, Welfare and Witness)	1	
The quality of Religious Education (incorporating Word)	1	
The quality of Worship	1	
The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements		

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

St. Aidan and St. Oswald's school is a larger than average Catholic primary school with 426 pupils on roll. It serves the parish of St. Aidan and St. Oswald's, Royton, Oldham. A growing number of pupils travel some distance to attend the school. The Pupil Admission Number has remained at 60 in the past few years, in an agreement between the local authority and the diocese, in response to pressure on school admission numbers within Oldham. From 2019 it will reduce to 45. 3 years ago the school opened a 30-place maintained nursery. 56% of the children are baptised Catholic. The number of children eligible for free school meals is showing an increase to 14%, and the percentage of children with entitlement for pupil premium grant is at 28%. The school's deprivation indicator places it within the second quintile nationally. Mobility within the school is an issue with an average of 60 children joining or leaving the school during each academic year. 27.5% of children are from minority ethnic backgrounds. There are 12 Catholic and 7 non-Catholic teachers. The headteacher is a diocesan leader of education and three members of staff are specialist leaders of education. There has been significant changeover of staff in the past few years. There are two newly qualified teachers and seven members of staff who have recently been appointed to the school.

THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- **The dedication, hard work and commitment of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and all leaders, including governors and children.**
- **A living Catholic faith is at the heart of this community, ensuring that it is an authentically and distinctively Catholic school where all are welcomed and valued.**
- **The outstanding teamwork which has created a caring, supportive and loving environment in which all can thrive.**
- **The outstanding behaviour of the pupils and their respect and tolerance for each other.**
- **The school's continuing desire to enhance and improve the wide range of opportunities it offers, some of which are unique to this school, providing children with exceptional experiences in preparation for their future life.**

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS OUTSTANDING

Since the previous inspection, when the school received an outstanding grade in all areas, senior leaders under the direction and drive of the headteacher have continued to move the school forward. They are committed to providing the very best education for all children in their care. Religious Education is the key priority and is the core of daily life at St. Aidan and St. Oswald's school. The staff have created a nurturing environment where all within the school community feel respected and valued. The Catholic mission of the school is evident in all areas. Staff, including newly appointed members, show commitment and belief in helping to develop this truly unique Catholic School. Children and parents from other faiths or no faith at all are valued and respected; they talk warmly about how their children enjoy being pupils at this welcoming school. Children are given the skills and confidence to take on numerous leadership roles, e.g. the GIFT chaplaincy team, school council and green ambassadors, etc. They are confident to discuss their knowledge of the Catholic faith and to be ambassadors for change. The whole school community is committed to serving others in whichever way they can. From an early age, children are gently guided and supported in developing their relationship with God. They know Jesus and follow his teachings. Prayer in all its forms including meditation, mindfulness and Lectio Divina are introduced to the children to help them grow in God's love. Religious Education is taught developmentally across the school through the adoption of the "Come and See" curriculum programme and in line with the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. Governors play a pivotal role in monitoring and challenging leaders. This outward looking, outstanding school continues to shine and to achieve beyond outstanding in providing the best of the best in a happy, caring Catholic community.

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

All aspects of leadership are outstanding at St. Aidan and St. Oswald's school which is a truly Catholic school. The dedicated headteacher is committed to his mission to provide the best Catholic education for all pupils. He shows drive, ambition and enthusiasm for the challenges the school meets each day. The quality of his leadership and commitment are evidenced in the effective and embedded systems in place. The hard-working senior leadership team, including the Religious Education subject leader, has a shared vision for the school, they drive forward new initiatives and are prepared to challenge and support others to provide the best they can. The leadership team are respected by all members of staff, governors and the wider school community. Governors are very knowledgeable and focused on supporting the headteacher in continuing to develop and enhance the unique nature of St. Aidan and St. Oswald's School. The parish priest is always available for the celebration of school Masses and to support the children on their faith journey. Pupil leaders including GIFT pupil chaplains, green ambassadors, school councillors and digital leaders have a vital role to play in developing and enriching the ethos of the school. Pupils are encouraged to have a voice, and this is nowhere more evident than the pupil Ofsted report undertaken by children in the school. Children are listened to and feel their contribution to the life of the school has an importance which is acted upon. The school has achieved many awards in a number of disciplines, further evidencing the drive of leaders at all levels to strive for the best.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL (incorporating Welcome, Welfare and Witness) IS OUTSTANDING

The welcome extended to all who enter St. Aidan and St. Oswald's school is outstanding. The school reaches out to all, in particular to those who are vulnerable and marginalised. The community feels valued and respected by all within the school. Open arms are a feature of this welcoming school. Parents talk enthusiastically about the strong relationships formed between parents, pupils and staff. The school is always willing to listen to and support families in as many ways as they possibly can. Staff are recognised as going the extra mile to help and nurture children and their families and the wider community. The welfare of all within the school community is treated with paramount importance and is a particular strength that was witnessed by the inspectors. A Caritas social worker is employed to support vulnerable families offering additional support to that already provided by the pastoral and family support coordinator. A Rainbows counselling group is provided to any children suffering from any form of bereavement. The school recently achieved an Investors in People (Platinum) award in recognition of its outstanding support and investment in training of staff and pupils. The care, guidance, love and support offered to all is a prime example of how the school witnesses to Christ's example of The Servant King ("not to be served, but to serve"). This is seen in every area of the school; pupils are taught by example to care and respect each other and to follow Christ's teaching in all they do. Staff act as outstanding role models, and this is then reflected in how older pupils act as good examples for their peers and for younger pupils. The inspectors were impressed by how eloquently children express their beliefs in adopting gospel values and how they were charged with being guardians of their world. Children and their families regularly donate food items and clothing to support others including the work of CAFOD, CFOS and St. Joseph's Penny. There is a natural expectation that this is what Christ would have us do. The school community lives out the true mission of a Catholic School in recognising their role in continuing Christ's work on earth. The school works closely with the parish in developing links through support of the Welcome centre, invitations to prayer station days and the parish celebrations for the Sacramental programme.

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (incorporating Word) IS OUTSTANDING

The Mission statement of the school is underpinned by the Gospel Words "I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full" (John 10:10) and is truly lived at St. Aidan and St. Oswald's School. It is referred to weekly, when one of its 36 statements are used as a focal point for the week. Sacred Scripture and Bible stories following the life of Jesus are known from an early age. Children are confidently able to recall previous learning in their Religious Education and relate this to their current learning. Quotes from Sacred Scripture are used appropriately to enhance the children's familiarity with the teachings of Jesus. Outstanding teaching and exceptionally high quality philosophical thinking and discussion were witnessed by the inspectors. Children are taught through creative and stimulating lessons where Big Questions are regularly discussed, and children are encouraged to explore the Catholic faith which truly is at the core of the curriculum at St. Aidan and St. Oswald's School. Pupils are spiritually, morally, socially and culturally educated through Scripture-based experiences which are interrelated to all areas of the curriculum. Staffing at the school has seen

significant changes in the past few years, and this has created training needs for new staff members in order for them to achieve the highest standards in all aspects of the delivery of Religious Education. The headteacher and the senior leadership team are very aware of these needs and have been very proactive in addressing any issues related to subject knowledge and expectations. New staff are given a comprehensive induction programme where CPD issues are identified and the appropriate training provided. Many of these training needs are met by Diocesan-based training courses. The school is outward looking in its mission of evangelisation in working alongside parents and the wider parish community to spread the Word of God in whatever opportunities are available.

THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

The belief of the headteacher and the Religious Education subject leader in helping children to develop a strong relationship with God can be found as the core premise on which all acts of worship and prayer are focused (both formal and informal). Meditation, mindfulness, prayer stations, the four pillars of prayer and Lectio Divina provide children and staff with a variety of creative, contemplative and developmental ways to praise and worship God. All staff are committed to exploring new and unique forms of prayer, which brings relevance and a living faith to all pupils. Members of staff are offered the opportunity to enrich their own spiritual development and many have been encouraged to attend courses provided by the Diocese. The school is a Lead Peace School and holds an annual peace week focusing on Prayer for Peace. Holy Mass and assemblies are celebrated on a regular basis and these are both teacher and pupil-led, as witnessed on the day of the inspection. They provide a rich and varied experience for the children. The GIFT chaplaincy team plays an important role in the delivery of many aspects of worship in the school and parish. Celebrations of Saints days and events that occur throughout the liturgical year provide the pupils and staff with a deeper knowledge of the Catholic faith. The school recognises and values other faiths. Multi-faith month is held each year celebrating the similarities and respecting the difference in its multi-ethnic society. Outstanding opportunities for worship were seen by the inspectors.

AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- **To continue to share outstanding practice of teaching across the school.**
- **To continue to enhance and develop the role of pupil leaders in the school e.g. mini Vinnie's, helping to strengthen links with the parish and community.**
- **To develop further across the school the opportunities which are given to the children to move them on in their learning by using increasingly creative and ambitious approaches to challenge and support them.**