

**INSPECTION REPORT**

**HOLY FAMILY RC PRIMARY SCHOOL,  
GREAT GATES ROAD, KIRKHOLT, ROCHDALE, OL11 2DA**

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Inspection date Monday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2013

Reporting Inspectors Dennis Harrison and Donna Kiernan

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

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| Type of School                   | Primary            |
| URN                              | 105830             |
| Age range of pupils              | 3-11               |
| Number on roll                   | 220                |
| Appropriate authority            | The Governing Body |
| Chair of Governors               | Doreen Boardman    |
| Headteacher                      | Helen Arnold       |
| Religious Education Co-ordinator | Gwyneth Walker     |
| Date of previous inspection      | June 2008          |

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| <b>The Inspection judgements are:</b>                           | <b>Grade</b> | Explanation of the Grades<br><br>1 = Outstanding<br>2 = Good<br>3=Requires Improvement<br>4 = Inadequate |
|---|--------------|--|
| Overall effectiveness of the school                             | <b>2</b>     |  |
| The quality of Catholic Leadership                              | 1            |  |
| The quality of the Word of God community                        | 2            |  |
| The quality of the Welcome community                            | 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**

Holy Family RC Primary School is a one form entry school in the Kirkholt area of Rochdale with 220 pupils on roll. The proportion of baptised Roman Catholics is 80%. 70% of the teaching staff are Roman Catholic and 5 possess the CCRS. The children come from an area of significant economic disadvantage. Kirkholt is 16 out of 135 most deprived areas in the borough of Rochdale and in the 3% most deprived in England. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is 50%. Pupil attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below average. The percentage of children with special educational needs is 18%. There are 6 pupils with Statements and 20% of pupils have English as an additional language. Pupil mobility is above the national average. The school has strong community links with neighbouring schools, the local RC Network, feeder high school and Rochdale Borough Housing. Since the last RE inspection a new Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher and RE Coordinator have been appointed.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

Holy Family RC Primary School is a good school with outstanding elements especially in Welcome, Welfare and Witness. The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The Headteacher sets a very positive direction for the school and provides strong and clear leadership. She is central to the strengths of the school and is highly regarded and respected by all. Her exceptional qualities ensure the school has very strong capacity to improve further. The RE Coordinator is very enthusiastic and ambitious for the development and growth of the Catholic life of the school. These qualities motivate others and set the course for the school to become outstanding.

The Mission Statement is a living testament to the success of the school and accurately depicts its special qualities. Holy Family has a wonderful welcoming atmosphere that permeates every corner of the school. This sets the foundation for the outstanding Welfare that epitomises the school. It is a haven of tranquillity providing the children with exceptional levels of care and nurture. The excellent team spirit that exists ensures all enjoy a shared sense of purpose and belonging. The children behave beautifully and rightly have considerable pride in their school. They speak highly of their teachers. They reflect honestly on their best memories and times when reconciliation has been needed. They are a credit to the school and inspectors found their company delightful.

The Word of God community is good and will be outstanding when RE is consistently placed at the core of the entire curriculum and when the examples of outstanding teaching increase. The children pray and worship God with calmness and reverence. The next steps are to introduce further times of quiet listening and prayerful meditation so that the prayer life of the school is ever deepened.

In summary Holy Family gives an outstanding witness to the love of God as it gives its children a chance to have 'life to the full' in a special way profoundly enhancing their chances to succeed. They are superbly prepared for high school and the challenges of the future.

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

**The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school**

**The exceptional quality of love and care bestowed on the children**

**The warm welcome afforded to everyone who enters the school**

**The impressive outcomes for learners in terms of progress and attainment**

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

The commitment and dedication of the Headteacher of this good Catholic primary school is pivotal to the school's successes. She knows every child and family well. Her calm approach and her ambition for the school set the course for the school's continual drive for improvement. Only the best is good enough and the children know that they are cared for profoundly well and that they have the chance to succeed. She is well supported by the Assistant Headteacher and the RE Coordinator and together they make an impressive team. They lead the school on its journey of constant improvement. The very able RE Co-ordinator has high expectations and has worked with and led a cluster of schools in Rochdale to develop supplementary materials for the delivery of 'The Way, the

Truth and the Life' scheme of work. She has, together with the senior leadership team and staff, developed the school's self evaluation, which is an honest and detailed reflection of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. She carries out regular monitoring of lessons and has held meetings for monitoring and scrutiny of work. RE assessments are entered into the school's tracking systems. Inset sessions have enabled staff to develop their teaching and enjoy celebrating Catholic education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Leadership of RE is also well distributed and all staff take a keen and active role. The many projects which are designed to enhance celebration of the Church's liturgical year are testament to the co-ordinator's dedication and commitment. These include Advent prayer projects, Marian Mondays in May, the introduction of liturgical dance and cross curricular 'Lenten Journeys' such as Eco week. Governor monitoring in RE demonstrates that governors have sound knowledge of where the school is and what it needs to do to further improve. Governors are passionate about the school and give clear support to the leadership team. They know the school well and are passionate about the school's strengths.

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

Lessons observed were at least good and on occasion outstanding. Overall, the school needs to increase the status of RE so that it reaches into all areas and sits at the core of the curriculum. This would increase the opportunities for thoughtful consideration of the teachings of the Church in real life situations. In the Foundation Stage the children are nurtured from a low starting point and quickly gain in confidence and security. They would benefit from opportunities to play and dramatise aspects of the RE curriculum. The RE curriculum needs to be constantly brought into the scope of the children's own life experiences. In a Key Stage 1 class, children reflected on feelings about times when they were frightened and compared this to the apostles' fears when they were caught in a storm. They were given time to reflect on turning to Jesus and offering Him their fears. The story of St Peter was very effectively brought to life in a Key Stage 2 class where role play, ICT, Kagan structures and the distribution of keys (so that children could unlock their hearts to God) all engaged and enthused learners. By the time the children reach the top end of Key Stage 2 they show impressive capacity to think and philosophise about aspects of their faith. They have a mature approach to their learning and behave and support one another in an outstanding manner. This was evident in a lesson when the children shared open and honest reflections on their gifts and talents. A scrutiny of RE books demonstrates that standards in RE are at least as high as those in Literacy. Marking is consistent across the school with a green and amber marking system used by all. Responses to the marking, however, vary with some children responding to and answering questions, whilst others do not.

The Mission Statement is lived and witnessed throughout the school and this ensures the conditions for learning are excellent. This element is not yet outstanding as the school needs to increase the amount of inspirational and outstanding teaching. However there is substantial evidence that Holy Family recognises, embraces and places a high priority on providing for its evangelising and catechetical mission in working alongside home, parish and other agencies.

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

Every person at Holy Family gives a special welcome to everyone they meet. On entering the school one feels immediately at home. There is a warm smile round every corner. This friendly and supportive tone creates an atmosphere of great calmness and joy. Parents are greeted each day and the Headteacher is a visible presence on the playground. This, along with the openness and availability of all staff, mean that all barriers to partnership are removed. The children are welcomed as children of God and they know that they are all considered special. The school reaches out to its community in an exceptionally positive way providing help and support to all its families. The sense of belonging is impressive and families feel proud to belong to this community. Children see their place in the wider world and reach out in their work to support charities. They understand that there are difficult issues not only in their locality but around the world. They have a mature attitude to this. This was evident in the response to an assembly about Fair Trade. The children confidently share their experiences and love meeting and welcoming new faces. They are engaging communicators and very proud of their school.

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

Every child is valued and considered precious at Holy Family. The children, many who lack material advantage, are carefully nurtured and by the time they leave the school are themselves fine examples of

caring young Christians. The entire staff team give their heart and soul to giving each child the best possible experience at school. Parents appreciate this and particularly the partnership that exists between school and home. The valuable work of the Learning Mentors ensure that barriers for learning are addressed and removed. Teaching assistants, led by the HLTA lead a 'Families and Schools Together' project which enables parents and the community to work together and support each other in both spiritual and practical ways. It also encourages community cohesion through its membership, for example, other faith leaders and Surestart involvement extend further support to parents. The welfare and well being of the children is a major strength of the school and extends into the family lives of the children. It is because of this that the children care for one another in a heart warming manner, with older children seeing the importance of their love and care being an influence on the younger ones. Children take seriously their role in making the world a better place and this is an important aspect of their developing faith.

### **THE QUALITY OF THE WORSHIP COMMUNITY IS GOOD**

During collective worship sessions witnessed, a calm and welcoming atmosphere was created. The behavior of pupils was outstanding. There were a large number of parents who attended the main act of collective worship. Year 2 presented an assembly about fairness and justice through a short drama about cocoa farmers. All children were involved in the assembly. Good use of technology linked to the theme of chocolate was used to engage the pupils and also celebrate the work of Year 2 through photographs. The Headteacher supported and extended the learning about Fairtrade by questioning pupils at the end. Children watching the assembly were respectful and participated well. Although reference was made to Jesus and justice and a prayer was included, the act of collective worship could have been enhanced by including some reflection time and possibly a prayer focus. Opportunities for the children to re-visit and deepen their Sacramental understanding are emerging but need more regular and planned learning so that the importance of the Sacraments remain close to the children's hearts.

The children are comfortable and confident in reflecting about their prayer life. They value the times they have to pray about important issues or about matters that trouble them. The next step is for the children to have greater opportunity to reflect and meditate silently so that their personal relationship with God is ever deepened. Adults across the school should share this journey with the children so that it becomes a constant part of the school's prayer life.

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

Holy Family is a thriving school providing a very special and distinctive Catholic education in this part of Rochdale. The school's mission is bravely and openly portrayed and provides a clear choice for families who choose a Christian education for their children. The leadership team constantly drive forward the Catholic nature of the school. The children are pro-active citizens believing they have the chance to make the world a better place and to provide for the Common good. The school rightly wishes to build on its considerable strengths and introduce a chaplaincy model to be led by the children.

Relationships are of the highest order and based on love, fairness, justice and empathy. Hence the school bears witness to the love of God in all its work and in its day to day life. Parents have a great respect for the values that the school instils, knowing it supports their work as the first educators of the children. The gospel values that underpin the nature of the school mean that Holy Family is a tranquil and happy place that gives hope and purpose to the lives of all who pass through its doors. As one parent said, 'I searched around for a school that I can trust to really love and care for my children – and I found it here at Holy Family!'

### **AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT**

- **Introduce a children's chaplaincy model**
- **Increase the amount of outstanding and inspirational teaching in RE**
- **Extend the possibilities for RE reflection across the entire curriculum**
- **Introduce opportunities for times of silent prayer and meditation.**

**Tuesday, 09 July 2013**

**Dear Children,**

**It was lovely to meet you all!**

**We think you have a wonderful school and lots of things you do are outstanding. Your behaviour is fantastic and there is no doubt that you are great company and have done your school proud. Your parents and the teachers are right to be very proud of you. You made us feel really welcome and we enjoyed looking at your work and seeing you in class. We love the way you care for one another and how you try to be kind and helpful, both at school and to children in other parts of the world. This is very much what Jesus asks you to do. It was lovely to see you enjoying your time at school and we were so impressed by the lovely smiles we were given all through our day with you.**

**You have a very special Headteacher who wants every one of you to be happy, to feel safe and to become closer to God. All the staff want this as well and we like the special way they care for you.**

**We think it would be good if there were lots of extra chances to thank God for everything in his wonderful world. And we agree with you – having the time for some silent prayer would be lovely as we all need to be close to God! Maybe some of you could train to be chaplains and help to lead this!**

**Thank you all so much – we will never forget our special day at Holy Family!**

**God bless**

**Mr Harrison and Mrs Kiernan**

## **Holy Family RC Primary School, Rochdale**

### **Summary Report to Parents**

On Monday 8<sup>th</sup> July, 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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