

**INSPECTION REPORT**

**Holy Infant and St Anthony, Mitre Street, Astley Bridge, Bolton, BL1 6QJ.**

Inspection date: Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015

Reporting Inspectors: Mrs Donna Kiernan  
Mrs Fiona Robinson

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

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Type of School	Primary
URN	105219
Age range of pupils	4-11
Number on roll	205
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Mrs Marguerita Leyden
Headteacher	Mrs Helen McGrath
Religious Education Subject Leader	Mr John Pugh
Date of previous inspection	15 <sup>th</sup> April 2014

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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	2	
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	2	
The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements		

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

Holy Infants and St Anthony Primary School serves the Parish of Holy Infants and St Anthony in Astley Bridge, Bolton. Father Billy Molloy is parish priest and the school also benefits from the daily support of Fr John Ashton. There are 205 pupils on roll, the majority being of white British heritage with a small proportion from ethnic minorities and with English as an additional language. The school has undergone a period of significant change in leadership with 3 executive heads serving the school before the current substantive head took up post in September 2014. 34% of pupils are known to be eligible for Free School Meals and this has risen from 19% in 2011. 20% of pupils are on the SEND register. 68% of children are in the top 30% most deprived. The majority of pupils enter the school below or well below baseline. 70% of the staff and 60% of the pupils are baptised Catholics. The school provides extended provision both before and after school for those who need it.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

Holy Infants and St Anthony is a good Catholic school with some outstanding features. The drive, determination and focussed leadership of the headteacher has meant that the school has moved on significantly since its last inspection. The RE leader has been empowered to work alongside staff to develop RE planning, curriculum and assessment to ensure that standards have risen in all areas. The newly appointed pupil chaplaincy Leader has worked alongside the senior leadership team in order to develop pupil leadership in the Catholic life of the school. Children talk about the school with pride, respect and love for their teachers and put into practice the mission statement of 'walking in the footsteps of Jesus'. The quality of teaching in RE is good. Children enjoy and are challenged by their learning in RE. Correct allocation is given to the RE curriculum, which ensures that skills and knowledge of their faith are developed. Pupils engage in the big questions and this is evident in every classroom. Self-evaluation is accurate. The school offers a warm welcome and all members of the school demonstrate a high level of belonging and ownership of the school. They are proud to belong to Holy Infants and St Anthony. The children are very well cared for and demonstrate a high level of respect, care and service to each other. Children have a significant role in the life and decision making in the school through the school council, ethos and pupil chaplaincy groups. Visits to school by Fr Billy and daily visits by Fr John Ashton are appreciated by the school community and the school offers many other opportunities for all of its members to grow in faith. There are plenty of opportunities for prayer and worship across the school. Children attend weekly Masses which strengthens the links between parish and school. Worship within school is good and is being developed further. Children have an excellent knowledge of scripture and significant resourcing has been dedicated to this. School is developing as a real witnessing community. Pupil chaplains know their roles and are poised for the next stage for having a high impact on the life of the school. Children talk confidently about Gospel values and how these affect their life and learning across the school.

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

- The commitment, drive and enthusiasm by leaders at all levels to be true witnesses to Gospel values and the Catholic faith.
- The determination, energy and drive of the headteacher, RE leader and governors to ensure that RE is at the heart of school life and core of the curriculum.
- The welcome by all for all is a great strength of the school and is commented on by stakeholders.
- The school's commitment to provide the very best for all within the community.

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

At all levels governors, headteacher, RE leader, senior leadership team and staff are striving for excellence. Witness to Gospel values clearly inform decisions made about supporting all groups within the school community appropriately. For example, the school has employed a part-time teacher to support any vulnerable groups. As an experienced Catholic teacher, she is also employed to support the development of theology for all staff. There has been a clear drive by all leaders to ensure that the Catholic life of the school is at the core of all school improvement work, and this relentless pursuit to ensure that Christ is at the centre has led to rapid progress. Staff training is seen as a priority and several staff have attended the Diocesan Kerygma course. The school works with the Bolton Catholic Schools Partnership in order to provide further joint training opportunities and the assistance of the Diocese, through an RE review and training from another local parish priest, has ensured that staff are fully supported in their professional development. As a result, all staff are clear about and fully supportive of the Catholic life of the school. Governors are fully supportive of the school and there are three link RE governors as was explained, 'RE has been given the highest priority in the school development plan'. Governors demonstrated that they had a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and that this was through their regular joint monitoring of all aspects of RE and termly reporting by the RE leader. As they stated, 'It is important for all to stand shoulder to shoulder to ensure that all are walking the walk, so that our faith is alive'. The newly appointed pupil chaplains are working alongside the already established ethos group in order to move pupil leadership of the Catholic life of the school forward.

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

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. The mission statement is known and lived across the school community. Children talked about the importance of Gospel values and the difference that having them at the centre made; 'We are all God's children and we look after each other, Gospel values remind us how to do this'. The RE leader talked about the 'British Values Week' that the school had held and how children had compared British values with Gospel values. Children were able to talk about walking 'in the footsteps of Jesus' by caring about and helping others and gave a range of examples where they had done so including fundraising for Cafod and St Joseph's Penny. In all lessons pupils displayed a very positive attitude to learning. Pupils made excellent progress in lessons where teachers gave pupils responsibility for their own learning and constantly challenged their thinking with higher level questions. Good progress was made in lessons when teachers had high expectations and used a variety of teaching techniques in order to engage learners. Assessment of pupils' learning is thorough and used to inform future planning. 'Big Question' books in each classroom encourage children and adults to extend their learning and both teachers and pupils are encouraged to respond. RE is very well resourced. The Word of God clearly informs teaching and learning and this is something which will become a strength of the school in the future. Marking of work was, for the most part, good, but varied in consistency. In the best instances, it was diagnostic and responded to consistently by the children. The school is working hard to develop links in its evangelising and catechetical mission in working alongside home and parish. Children talked with enthusiasm of their learning about other world religions and work on Islam was well planned into a collective worship session. The 'Wednesday Word' is sent home on a weekly basis and is used to support class collective worship in school.

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

A warm welcome is extended to all who enter Holy Infants and St Anthony's school. Parents, staff, governors and children talk about the welcome that everyone receives and the support that is given to each other. The parents spoke about "the open door policy" and how they always felt welcomed in school. They enjoy attending class Masses, assemblies and spoke with great affection of the recent event to mark the feast day of St Anthony, which the whole community celebrated. The teachers with Fr John Ashton, spend every morning at the school gates welcoming the children and parents into school. All members of the school community show great respect, care and love for each other. The children spoke with great warmth and affection about their teachers and with great enthusiasm about their school. The school has excellent links with the parish and the parish priest is a very valued presence around school. The school works in partnership

with other Bolton Catholic schools and has strong links with a Bolton C of E school whose children they welcome into Holy Infants to work with their ethos group.

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

It was very evident from talking with the children that they felt loved and valued at Holy Infants. The excellent, caring relationships between children and staff was evident in all lessons and throughout the school. The children could talk about Gospel values but it was witnessed in their relationships with each other, with their teachers and all members of the school community. The children felt they could approach any teacher with concerns and any issues or worries would always be sorted out. They felt they were listened to and their ideas and opinions valued. The children could talk of their charity work and how they had helped other children through Caritas and local charities. Safeguarding is a high priority at Holy Infants and staff work closely with local services to ensure that all families receive the support and care they need. The NSPCC had recently visited the school and the children were able to give an excellent definition of what bullying was, though they said they did not know of any bullying in their school. If it was to occur, they knew they would always get help from their teachers. Before and after school care is given to all those families who need it. The school has recently piloted a new SRE scheme which has been shared with and welcomed by parents. The active SVP in the parish support vulnerable families at key times during the year.

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

It is clear that the school has invested significant time and resources in developing as a worshipping community. All members of the school community have the opportunity to regularly celebrate Mass with Fr Billy and the parish community. Fr John is now beginning to celebrate class Masses in school with the children. Children are involved in the setting up of their sacred space and scripture is used as the basis for each class worship session. Throughout the school and in each classroom there are focal points for worship and these are valued by the children. Teachers plan creative, prayerful opportunities which include time for quiet reflection and it is clear that there is a prayer core at the heart of the school community. Each class has their own 'Class Liturgy Book' which includes examples of the children's own prayers. Assemblies have a religious focus and are very much planned and led by the children. Governors, together with the headteacher and RE leader, regularly monitor collective worship and class worship books. Because of the close relationship between church and school and the links created, Fr Billy reported that more parents are now attending Sunday Mass. 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 in developing opportunities for class collective prayer and worship.

### **THE QUALITY OF THE WITNESS IS GOOD**

All members of the school community at Holy Infants and St Anthony clearly demonstrate and witness to justice compassion, reconciliation, love and forgiveness in their relationships. All within the community are very clear about their role as missionary disciples and stewards of creation entrusted with the mysteries of God. Pupils readily talk about the importance of helping others and were happy to discuss the various charities that the school supports. Children relate Gospel values to all situations and have a good understanding of the 5Ws. They were able to articulate how they could 'follow in the footsteps of Jesus' by loving each other and God. The mission statement underpins the work of the school and helps all to reflect on how they can be true witnesses. The recently appointed pupil chaplains are working with the ethos group and are poised to take pupil leadership forward in the school. They recently led a 'Dignity of the Human Spirit' day during 'Caritas in Action' week and now plan to lead a morning prayer time in each class. Relationships in school are very positive and children state that they feel happy and safe in school. Children, parents, staff and governors are very proud of their school community. Parents said that the school provided, 'everything I could possibly want for my child' and that the Catholic ethos of the school 'permeated everything'. Governors spoke highly of the drive and ambition of the 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. There is a strong sense that all within the school community are working together towards the shared vision that the mission statement sets out in order that all can 'have life to the full'.

**AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:**

- To develop further the focus of collective worship to move it to a more reflective pupil led prayer experience.
- To ensure that the quality of marking and presentation is consistent across all year groups.
- To further develop the role of the enthusiastic pupil chaplains in taking a lead role in class collective worship.

## **HOLY INFANTS AND ST ANTHONY**

1<sup>st</sup> July 2015

Dear Children,

Thank you so much for making our visit to Holy Infants and St Anthony so enjoyable when we came to inspect your school for the Bishop. We really enjoyed being with you. Thank you for all you shared about your school. Holy Infants and St Anthony is a good school and some areas of what you do are outstanding.

We enjoyed being a part of your lessons, assembly and collective worship sessions and meeting and talking to your Pupil Chaplains and Ethos Group. It was lovely to see how very proud you are of your school and all that you have achieved. We know that the Pupil Chaplains and Ethos Group have plans for taking a lead in worship – we know that you will do a great job!

Your teachers are helping you to learn and we were very impressed by your excellent behaviour and relationships. It was good to hear about how important Gospel values are to you all in everything you do and how you all try to ‘walk in the footsteps of Jesus’ as your mission statement reminds you to do. This means that you are really trying hard to be missionary disciples like Pope Francis reminds us that we need to be.

You told us about how much you enjoy your RE lessons and that, for many of you, it is your favourite subject. Your teachers are going to help you do even better by looking at the way they mark your work.

God Bless

Mrs Donna Kiernan  
Mrs Fiona Robinson  
(Section 48 Inspectors)

## **Summary Report to Parents**

On 1<sup>st</sup> July 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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