

**INSPECTION REPORT**

**Thorneyholme Roman Catholic Primary School, Trough Road, Dunsop Bridge, Clitheroe, Lancashire. BB7 3BG**

Inspection date                      8<sup>th</sup> June 2017  
 Reporting Inspector                  Dennis Harrison  
    Pam Macro

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

Type of School                          Primary School  
 URN    119689  
 Age range of pupils                    3-11  
 Number on roll                          29  
 Appropriate authority                 The Governing Body  
 Chair of Governors                    Amanda Parker  
 Headteacher                             Judith Metcalfe  
 Religious Education Subject Leader   Judith Metcalfe  
 Date of previous inspection            October 2012

<b>The Inspection judgements are:</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Explanation of the Grades</b>  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	2	
The quality of the Welcome	1	
The quality of Welfare	1	
The quality of Worship	1	
The quality of Witness	1	

The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements

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

Thorneyholme R.C. Primary School, Dunsop Bridge, is a very small rural primary school with 29 pupils on roll, of whom 8 are baptised Roman Catholic. It serves the parish of Our Lady of the Valley with close links to St Hubert's, the local Catholic Church. The school serves the local village and surrounding farms and most pupils rely on transport to get to the school. The area has few signs of social and economic disadvantage and only one pupil is currently eligible for the Pupil Premium Grant. The school generally has a stable population. Almost all pupils are of white British heritage but two children have a first language other than English. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities is above the national average. Pupils are taught in two mixed age classes with an additional class for the morning. There are also 5 pre-school children on roll who are taught in the Early Years/Key Stage 1 class. The school works in collaborative partnership with St Mary's Osbaldeston R.C. Primary School and the executive headteacher leads both schools.

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

Thorneyholme R.C. Primary School is a good school with many outstanding elements. The executive headteacher, with excellent support of the school team, has created a warm, welcoming family atmosphere where all children, irrespective of their own faith background, are given a very positive experience of Catholic education. Governors give willingly of their time to help in any way they can and the parish priest visits school regularly. Careful planning and organisation, supported by good teaching for all ages, ensures the children make good progress especially in Religious Education. With four different age groups in each class the opportunities for the most able children to model exceptional outcomes in their work and to set themselves even more ambitious targets is increasingly important. Inspectors agree that this is a natural next step for the school, as it will further enhance the quality, quantity and the celebration of the children's work. A particular strength of the school is the deep knowledge and understanding the children have acquired of the world in which they live and how they can protect God's creation. This excellent global perspective is commendable. It is enhanced by the outstanding opportunities for worship where the children are so comfortable placing themselves into the presence of God, and praying mindfully for their needs and the needs of others, both near and far. The school utilises its beautiful setting very well and the outdoors and forest areas are used to enhance the children's spiritual development. Hence the care and welfare of the children is outstanding. The older children offer wonderful support to the younger children. Their 'Miles of Smiles' team exemplifies their special way of reaching out. The behaviour and attitudes of the children are outstanding. They love coming to Thorneyholme. Their voices are heard and they know a listening person is always on hand. Hence witness is of the highest order. As one child commented, 'I love our school, it is 10 out of 10 and there is nothing I would change!'

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

- The warm family atmosphere that has been created by this close-knit, caring school community.
- The wonderful behaviour and attitudes of the children.
- Outstanding prayer and worship that enhances the spirituality of all.
- The global outlook of the school that affirms Christian stewardship.

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

Catholic Leadership at Thorneyholme is good overall. The Headteacher has taken on the responsibility of two small Catholic schools about 22 miles apart. She provides purposeful leadership and has nurtured leadership at all levels so that the school is in safe hands when she is not at the school. At the time of the inspection the school did not have a self-evaluation of Catholic leadership and it is important that this work takes place very soon as it will give a clear indication of the school's strengths and areas for development, to celebrate its

successes and to forge a clear way forward. Other aspects of the school's self-evaluation now needs to build on its strengths, become smarter and to focus on the impact of how the school nurtures its Catholic life. There has been a lovely family atmosphere created, especially recently, and children are responding to the high status given to RE, prayer and global sensitivities. Governors are effective and reflective. They are committed to the school and offer valued support to the senior leadership team. They say they particularly notice how much the school has moved forward in recent times in terms of its Catholic mission and how the new deputy headteacher has enhanced leadership at all levels. The school is on a clear path towards outstanding provision and the energy and determination by all leaders is to be commended. As school leaders further embrace the 5Ws framework it will be able to deepen its understanding of how outstanding provision is portrayed and this will help to focus the very positive path of improvement that the school is determined to follow.

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

The Word of God sits at the heart of this school's Catholic provision. The school's mission statement is presented all around the school, is known by the children and inspires the overall direction of the school in its mission in Catholic education. The RE curriculum forms the basis of the school's themes and topics. The outcomes of teaching and learning in religious education are good. The children make good progress in all Key Stages. It is not outstanding because expectations are not always high enough, especially for the more able, and learning can be even further enriched by activities that really spark the imagination. This will open the door for outstanding outcomes to be modelled in each class, so that children have greater access to exceptional work in religious education and inspire them to reach the highest of standards. Inspectors fully agree, due to the undeniable impressive skills in teaching, that this is more than achievable. Children enjoy discussing and posing questions about the Word of God and how it impacts on their lives and the world in which they live. Lessons often begin with prayerful meditation that nicely sets the tone for what is to follow. This was evident in Key Stage 2 when children were reflecting on the 'Act of Contrition' and creating their own or writing a homily. The impressive prayerful atmosphere, enhanced by excellent attitudes, meant the children had the time and space to create original meaningful work. In EYFS resources available were well used so that the younger children could focus on 'The Selfish Crocodile' at their level whilst Key Stage 1 learnt about the tax collector and how to understand what it means to be sorry. Hence all children were fully engaged.

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

The quality of welcome extended to all at Thorneyholme Roman Catholic Primary School is outstanding and the school is rightly proud of its local reputation as 'The small school with the big welcome!' This warm and welcoming environment fosters a strong sense of belonging and it is very evident that both staff and children are proud to be part of the Thorneyholme family. Relationships in school are of the highest quality and the Catholic ethos is clearly evident. Adults present as excellent role models for children, who, in return show respect for one other and the importance of the dignity of the individual is clearly evident. Genuine love and care was witnessed across school on the day of the inspection. Parents and grandparents spoke very warmly about the school. They stated that children love going to school and that they themselves always feel informed and welcome. Parents particularly enjoy attending school masses, celebration assemblies, themed afternoons and parent's meetings. They have every confidence that if any concern or issue arose in school it would be dealt with efficiently and effectively. They appreciate that staff are always very visible and approachable. Very effective induction procedures ensure new children and families are welcomed into school. Older children continually support younger ones – the gardeners and seedlings buddy system established in school is one very good example of this. Local clergy are regular visitors to school and will often spend time in discussion with the children or even acting with them! Thorneyholme also reaches out to welcome parishioners and local residents. School newsletters are distributed in church and within the local community and invitations to school events are extended to include them. Parishioners often visit school to share their ministries with the children and many local residents recently joined with staff for a very successful training session.

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

Central to the school's work and mission is the physical, spiritual and emotional well-being of each person. The school provides excellent support, in good times and bad, to all who need someone to listen. This is evidenced by the children who love coming to school, care for each other across all ages and know their teachers and helpers always have time to listen. Parents have full confidence in the school saying, 'This is such a happy little school!' they know that matters will be dealt with effectively and efficiently. Children's voice is heard, not only on a day to day basis, but in the way that the school gathers the views of all groups. The children feel a part of God's world with numerous outreach activities that include CAFOD, the local foodbank, Water Aid, Francis House to name but a few. There are numerous clubs and a thriving after school club. People are respected as individuals, are compassionate in their relationships and all are fully included. The uniqueness of each person is celebrated strongly and hence the school is known to be a place of nurture and care. High status is given to the well-being and safety of all and the children gladly express how safe and secure they feel! These sentiments are re-enforced by the exemplary behaviour of the children in and around school. They say that bullying is unheard of and that day to day friendship issues are easily sorted because everyone values the harmonious environment that defines Thorneyholme RC Primary School.

### **THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS OUTSTANDING**

The quality of worship at Thorneyholme is outstanding with prayer and worship being at the very heart of the school community. This was witnessed on the day of the inspection during a moving whole school assembly in which a prayerful reverence existed and, after watching a child centred version of the story of creation, children were challenged to reflect upon both their rights and responsibilities in God's beautiful world. There is a systematic and developmental prayer programme in place across the school and children are relaxed and confident in prayer – even in a foreign language! Children know and say many traditional prayers, but high priority is placed upon the composition of individual prayers with many examples of these displayed around school. Children's individual reflection/prayer books in which they are encouraged to jot down their thoughts and feelings enhance this development of personal prayer and reflection. Children are provided with the opportunity to pray and reflect in different ways and in a variety of settings. Each classroom has a special focus prayer area and there are additional focal points for prayer around school including a beautiful 'forest cross' in the entrance which has been created from branches given by every child. The 'prayer pathway' used by the younger children is a further example of a stimulus for prayer, and the beautiful outside prayer garden can be used daily for quiet reflection. On the day of the inspection inspectors were privileged to take part in an uplifting act of worship in the forest in which Early Years and Key Stage 1 children were very creatively brought to an understanding of the Trinity. School has strong links with the parish of Saint Hubert's and in order to celebrate key school and liturgical year events staff and children will often join the parishioners for Mass. School also plays a significant part in supporting children through the Sacramental Programme.

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

Every person at Thorneyholme confidently bears witness to Christ in the way they conduct themselves every day. It is a most positive feature of the school that children from many faiths and backgrounds settle into the school and fully embrace all it has to offer as a Catholic community. Moreover the children are nurtured into caring for their locality and the wider world in an exemplary manner. The beautiful local environment is used to superb effect to enhance spirituality, yet the community is far from insular as it reaches out to work closely with other schools on a variety of projects. The children have a clear understanding of gospel values and how these can be applied into the way a democracy operates. This compliments the impressive knowledge and understanding the children have of rights and responsibilities. There is a profoundly caring culture within the school with a helping hand and a warm smile around every corner. The 'Miles of Smiles' team lead the way on pastoral and spiritual support for the children, and their efforts are warmly received. Relationships are of the highest order. Christian stewardship and a deep care for God's creation epitomises the special culture at Thorneyholme. Hence the school's mission in working under 'The umbrella of God' is a practical reality and gives the school its special atmosphere.

**AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:**

- To develop the school's self-evaluation processes so that it becomes more personalised, shows clear impact of decisions and is more evaluative.
- To even further enhance the quality, quantity and creativity of the children's work in religious education.
- To give greater opportunities for the most able children to model outstanding outcomes so that all children can witness work of the highest standards.

Date 13<sup>th</sup> June 2017

Dear Children,

We had a great day with you when we came to visit recently! We loved how well you all get along together and the special place in your hearts for God. Your assembly and the little prayer services were lovely and we really feel your work in looking after the planet and your celebration of your beautiful surroundings was amazing! We could tell that many of you are very clever and so we think it would be a good idea to share your gifts with everyone in your school so that your best work is seen by all. This is a great opportunity of leading the way forward! You should be very proud of your behaviour and how, as a team, you look after one another. We think your teachers are really caring and special. Therefore Thorneyholme has a bright future – a school where Jesus is known and loved! We saw ‘miles of smiles’ all day long so keep up the good work!

God Bless

Mr Harrison  
Mrs Macro  
Section 48 inspectors

## **Summary Report to Parents**

On Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2017 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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