

Inspection date 14th November 2012

Reporting Inspector Sister Judith Russi
Mrs Margaret Dolan

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

Type of School Catholic Primary
 URN 105721
 Age range of pupils 3-11 years
 Number on roll 394
 Appropriate authority The Governing Body
 Chair of Governors Fr Stephen Doyle
 Headteacher Mr Damian Harrison
 Date of previous inspection June 2008

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades 1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3 = Satisfactory
Overall effectiveness of the school	1	
Quality of Catholic Leadership	1	
The quality of the Word of God community	1	
The quality of the Welcome community	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

The school has a large mixed catchment, including private, council and rural housing areas. The majority of pupils are from a White British background. More recently, the school has welcomed a small minority of pupils from the adjacent areas of Coldhurst, St Mary's and Chadderton, due to pressure on school places. The result of this has been a significant change in the school's intake profile. The free school meals ratio has quadrupled, the number of children identified with SEN has risen to over 25%, the children coming from ethnic backgrounds has risen. The largest group being pupils of Bangladeshi heritage. 15% of the children have English as an additional language. The school has the highest primary mobility levels in Oldham. There has been a degree of staffing disruption due to the death of two serving teachers as a result of long term illness.

The school has recently been awarded the prestigious Investors In People Gold Award, the Achievement for All Quality Mark, The Enhanced Healthy Schools Award (GOLD), FMSIS, Artsmark, Eco Schools, International Schools Award (FULL), ECC Quality Mark amongst many other areas of recognition.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St Aidan and St Oswald's is an outstanding Catholic school offering children a rich faith experience which permeates all aspects of school life. The many challenges which have faced the school since its last inspection have been met with strong leadership at all levels. The cohesive team of governors and staff have dedicated themselves to the building up of a Catholic learning community which is a source of inspiration. The children receive a Catholic education which enables them to understand their place in the world as future stewards who can influence, change and contribute to the common good for all people. The headteacher leads the school with a clear vision and sense of purpose recognising the dignity and value of every member of the community. The school's priority for those in the greatest need, inclusivity, passion for learning and personal development ensures that all pupils receive an integrated Gospel based formation and education. Parents expressed a high level of commitment to the school because it is a Catholic school recognising that their children were respected and valued for their unique gifts and qualities.

KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- Leadership and empowerment across the school community is outstanding.
- The Catholic life, relationships, behaviour and care for all within the school is outstanding.
- The quality of religious education and spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is outstanding.
- The outreach to parents and families in the local community is a strength of the school and the welcome for all is outstanding.

THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

The school thrives on a distributed leadership model, where all members of the school community have an impact on the success of the school. There is a strong sense of ownership and vision across the community, governors, staff team and pupils and their families who are unified and guided by a living and interactive Mission Statement. The school has shown resilience and determination to quickly adapt and has achieved great success in providing for the children in the context of quite challenging circumstances. The wide ranging and numerous tributes and awards which the school has received are all testimony to the outstanding leadership. These include the prestigious IIP Gold Award, *'world class'* practice in investing in the skills, talent and potential of its staff. The leadership of the school actively seek innovative and exciting initiatives to enrich the learning experience of all its pupils through activities such as developing international links and is accredited with the full International Schools Award. Activities include Connecting Classrooms (with 5 schools from Pakistan and other Oldham schools), links with schools in Japan, Ecuador, Spain, and the World Peace Prayer Organisation. The challenges of the upheaval of staff change, the changing profile of the pupil intake and the high levels of mobility have not impeded the schools determination to successfully ensure that the children continue to succeed in their learning. Leadership skills for the children are developed through the varied organisations within the school including the school council. The children were also given the opportunity to lead their own 'OfSTED' style inspection, gathering together comments from pupils, parents and staff, observing lessons and play sessions and presenting their findings to the Head teacher.

THE QUALITY OF WORD IS OUTSTANDING

The school is continually developing the RE scheme, The Way, The Truth and The Life through the specialised Peace Curriculum and the introduction of the Philosophy for Children and the creative curriculum. Teaching and learning across the school was found to be outstanding. Pupil background knowledge was found to be of a higher than normal level due to significant prior knowledge and where the Philosophical approach is used the higher order thinking and questioning is resulting in exceptional learning and skills levels. Religious education is given a high priority and pupils take their learning very seriously. Children were actively encouraged to reflect before speaking.

Religious language was promoted in the best lessons and pupils were confident in their use of theological terms. Creative, interactive teaching strategies were employed across all lessons. Lessons moved forward quickly and pupils clearly achieved the learning objective. Teaching Assistances were appropriately assertive in their highly effective interaction with pupils. Assessment for learning is matched with literacy. Marking was clear and in some cases extensive. This would be further improved through a more rigorous insistence on pupil responses to teacher comments. Pupils Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural education was found to be outstanding and throughout all aspects of the school. The Peace Garden at the centre of the school acts as a reminder to of the universality of the human family made in the image and likeness of God. The Religious Education budget is set according to the needs of the curriculum and the Catholic life of the school and is adjusted on a yearly basis in line with other core subjects. All classes receive a minimum of 10% RE curriculum time.

THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING

The welcome extended to all visitors is underpinned by a common vision built on Gospel Values and the Mission Statement. The creation and refurbishment of the Welcome area for those arriving in the school is excellent. St Aidan and St Oswald's actively seek to engage with and support members of the school community and this is particularly appreciated by the parents. New parents meet the pastoral care leader who works with the children's previous schools to ensure consistency of

provision and support if necessary. After a week in school, the parents are contacted again to ensure that the child has settled well and that there are no problems. The vast majority chose to send their child to the school because they know from other parents that as well as high academic standards, their children will be cared in an atmosphere of love based on the mission statement of the school. There is a clear outreach system in place which facilitates early engagement with families and follow up. The children are happy and secure within the school community. They show clear understanding of the mission statement and refer to it often. Children know what to do if they have worries and all felt bullying was not an issue because of the clear procedures in place. The pupils' sense of ownership and responsibility for what happens in their school was remarkable. The pupil 5Ws inspection team had completed a full review of the life of the school including teaching and learning and presented their findings to the leadership team. They felt that they were heard and their views welcomed. All members of staff demonstrate a keen sense of community affiliation and the strength and quality of relationships exemplifies respect for the dignity of all members of the school community. Children and parents are proud of their school.

THE QUALITY OF WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING

Staff and children demonstrate respect and care for each other and for the fabric of their school building of which they are justifiably proud. Children are confident that teachers will treat their concerns seriously. Good relationships between pupils is encouraged. The friendship stop on the playground ensures that all are invited to play with a friend. The school's provision for safe-guarding and keeping children safe is outstanding. The provision for SRE is through the programme '*In The Beginning*'. The weekly focus on *Statements to Live By*, provides a unified approach for reflection on the quality of the schools relationships and was clearly impacting on the life of the school. Provision for developing the children's emotional intelligence is of the highest quality. The school buys into a bespoke counselling service which offers support for various issues. The range of extra-curricular activities is outstanding. Pupils and parents spoke highly of the pastoral support for all. Coaching is offered to staff and the school has a formal relationship with the British school of Coaching. All resource decisions are made to ensure the school's consistency to Christian stewardship. A particular priority is given to those with special needs through allocation of extra care and resourcing.

Behaviour and movement of pupils around the building is outstanding. Those children needing extra support in behaviour are well supported by the 'Mindfulness' project which promotes the use of meditation and reflection as a medium for encouraging self control. Those children arriving early for school enjoy a breakfast and those staying after school have a variety of clubs and activities to choose from. The level of support provided by Teaching Assistants at lunchtime play was outstanding.

THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

Children are provided with a range of opportunities to develop and enrich their prayer life including monthly Masses, class assemblies, and collective worship during RE lessons. There is a focal point for prayer in each classroom and the Mission Statement is a prominent feature for reflection and prayer. Staff are well trained through appropriate inset and hands on experience modelled by their peers to demonstrate good practice. The pupils have developed highly reflective practices, which mean they are well placed to enjoy prayer as a significant feature of their present and future lives. The Year 6 pupils are proud of their personal Prayer Journals. Prayer and worship is designed to be child centred and involving all. The parish church provides the only space big enough to accommodate the regular large gatherings of the whole school community and parish friends and families. They are well attended by friends and family. A special feature of the school is the opening of the school year Mass where the parish Priest celebrates with the school and the parish as one

family engaged on a common mission within the wider mission of the Church. Prayer and reflection is part of all staff meetings.

THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS OUTSTANDING

Staff and pupils are confident in actively shaping St Aidan and St Oswald's as a Catholic learning community. There were frequent references to the Mission Statement in daily life and in the pupil's learning. Witnessing to Christ and the values of the Gospel are evident in displays and children's work throughout the school. Children were found to be very confident and willing to speak about their faith and why it is important to them. They were able to relate the values of the Gospel to their daily lives and expressed their concern that world leaders seemed to find this so difficult. The values of the school have a very definite impact which extends beyond the school into the community. This was clearly seen in the numerous activities which engaged the pupils in issues of justice and peace and care for the environment actively encouraging an earth care ethic. It is clear that the school stands as a witness to Christ's love, forgiveness and compassion when all around them is often challenging. The support for families in difficulty or any trouble is exceptional. The work of charities such as CAFOD and CARITAS are fully supported and outside speakers visit the school to raise awareness of social justice issues.

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- Further develop the already active Chaplaincy work through the introduction of pupil chaplains in order to further develop pupil leadership in the worship and celebrations linking home school and parish.
- Continue to share best practice in diagnostic marking in all classes.

November 20th 2012

Dear Pupils

Thank you so much for the wonderful welcome you gave us when we came to visit you. Your school is an outstanding school in every way. This is because you and your teachers are working so hard to always do your very best.

You have a beautiful school. Your work is of a very high standard and we could clearly see that you take your learning very seriously and you are proud of what you are achieving. Your RE is especially good. Your creative ideas are very good and we could see that you can make connections between what you are learning in RE with other areas of the curriculum. Thank you for showing us so much of what you have been doing. I was very impressed with your use of your P4C work, and the Peace Garden. These are two of many special features of your school. It would be very helpful if you could send us pictures or even a video of what you are doing so that your wonderful ideas could be shared with other schools.

Your teachers are keen to help you develop the Catholic life of your school even further and to do this they are going to invite you to consider how you can develop Chaplaincy in your school through training pupil Chaplains to work in the school.

God bless you all and have a really happy term.

Yours sincerely

Sr Judith Russi

(Section 48 Inspector)

Summary Report to Parents

On 25th October 2012 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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