

**INSPECTION REPORT**

Sacred Heart RC Primary School  
 Bradshaw Row, Church, Accrington, Lancashire BB5 4HG

Inspection date 20<sup>th</sup> May 2015  
 Reporting Inspectors Mrs Jackie McNally  
 Mrs Diane Bohan

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

Type of School Catholic Primary  
 URN 119658  
 Age range of pupils 4-11 years  
 Number on roll 230  
 Appropriate authority The Governing Body  
 Chair of Governors Miss D Kenyon  
 Headteacher Mrs Rachel Dickinson  
 Religious Subject Leader Mrs Harling  
 Date of previous inspection May 2010

| <b>The Inspection judgements are:</b>                           | <b>Grade</b> | <b>Explanation of the Grades</b><br><br>1 = Outstanding<br>2 = Good<br>3=Requires Improvement<br>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  | 1            |   |
| The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements |              |   |

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

Sacred Heart RC Primary School is an average size primary school which serves the parishes of St Joseph's, St Mary's and St Anne's. The school welcomes children from a variety of faith backgrounds; 37% of whom are Catholic and 32% are Muslim. The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is well above the national average but the percentage of children supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

Sacred Heart is a good Catholic school where there is a commitment to developing each child academically, socially and spiritually. The headteacher, staff and governors have high aspirations for the school and have worked as a cohesive team to bring about positive changes in recent times. The whole school community is justifiably proud of their school where the uniqueness of every child is valued and nurtured. A positive and energetic atmosphere permeates every aspect of the school and this creates a secure and happy learning environment in which all members of the community feel welcomed. The children are confident learners who are polite and welcoming and their behaviour throughout the inspection was outstanding. The teaching of Religious Education is good and the children demonstrate a secure religious knowledge and faith commitment. The children are confident and enthusiast learners who bear witness to the Gospel values.

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

- The ethos, relationships, behaviour and care for all within the school is outstanding.
- The headteacher, staff and governors have high aspirations for this Catholic school; they genuinely want the best for all the children and are prepared to work wholeheartedly to achieve this aim.
- There is a strong sense of community in the school and every individual member of the community is valued and respected.

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

The quality of Catholic leadership is good. The leadership of the school clearly recognises that Christ is central to all aspects of school life and all staff are committed to creating a loving and nurturing learning environment for all children; this is a significant strength of the school. The headteacher provides strong but supportive leadership and it is clear that she has the support of the whole staff. Teamwork is central to the school's success and this is a strength of the school. Governors are well informed about the Catholic life of the school through the headteacher's reports and they are committed to deepening the children's faith. The school chaplain is passionate about supporting the spiritual development of the children and should be commended for the pivotal role she plays in the religious life of the school. The leadership team are beginning to evaluate the religious life of the school more rigorously and it is clear to see that since January there have been many positive changes. In order to improve further, the newly appointed RE subject leader needs to be supported so that she is rigorously monitoring work and RE lessons to secure improvement.

Pupils have many opportunities to develop their leadership skills and they talk enthusiastically about charity events they have organised and how recently they have been involved in the planning and delivery of class collective worship. Pupils were found to be confident and enthusiastic about taking on responsibilities and they are excellent ambassadors for their school.

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

The quality of the Word of God is good overall. The quality of lessons taught is good with some outstanding teaching observed during the inspection. The teachers have high expectations and children are challenged during the lessons which is helping them to make good progress. The Word of God is clearly evidenced in the lessons; however, some teachers are a little over reliant on the published scheme of work which is in place in the school. They need to develop the confidence to use the scheme as a starting point for more creative

activities and learning. Pupils' learning could be further enhanced by providing more opportunities for differentiation in their work in RE. The school has worked hard to improve standards in all subjects, including religious education and the staff should be proud of the improvements they have made; but they must now aim to help children improve the quality of presentation in their books. The quality of marking is particularly good, with children in all classes being provided with positive feedback as well as opportunities to answer more challenging questions. A scrutiny of pupil work during the inspection showed that the work set was at an appropriate level of pupil development and standards were broadly similar to those of literacy. The school has recently introduced class record books to record additional activities that are carried out as part of the RE curriculum; this is an excellent idea but staff need to work together to decide what types of evidence they are going to include in the books. In the Foundation Stage, it might be more helpful to create a whole class evidence book rather than individual books for each child. This would allow the teacher to have greater freedom to focus on pupils' learning through practical experiences without children having to record their individual work. The quality of religious displays in the school is outstanding and truly reflects the school's commitment to Catholic teaching and the spiritual development of the child.

The headteacher, staff, governing body and parish priests have worked together to enable the school to develop a vision about how Religious Education should be taught in the school and there is a strong commitment to Catholic education. The school carries out regular assessments in Religious Education and current tracking indicates that the children are working at a similar level to their levels in English.

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

There is a positive, welcoming culture which permeates the whole school and this is clearly demonstrated by the staff, Governors and children. All members of the school community are proud of their school and it is clear from discussions with staff, parents and children that they feel they are valued members of the school family. The staff are a strong cohesive team and their support for each other is exemplified through their commitment to improving the school and ensuring that the children are provided with the best possible Catholic education. The development of pupils' personal qualities is of paramount importance to the staff.

A positive and energetic atmosphere pervades the school, and children are excited about learning and enjoy being at school; one child was keen to tell us that he was in the best school. Children's behaviour is outstanding and relationships between children and staff are strong, bearing witness to Christ being at the heart of the community. Children of all faith backgrounds are welcomed into the school and their individual beliefs and values are respected. Children share the love of Christ readily with visitors, communicate very confidently and show a desire to involve everyone in the life of the school.

The outstanding displays throughout the school assist in contributing to the warm and welcoming atmosphere, whilst at the same time celebrating children's work in the religious curriculum. Parents are regularly invited to school assemblies and as such they feel that they play an integral role in the spiritual and academic life of their child.

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

The school has developed an environment which allows pupils to feel safe and well cared for. Parents hold the school in high esteem and appreciate the support they are given and the way the whole school community, regardless of faith, is involved in the life of the school. They see school as a 'safe, nurturing place' and one parent stated, "The school's my family." There is genuine concern from all staff for the welfare of all children and the school has developed a Rainbow Room which provides a trusted and safe environment for pupils in need to 'talk about things that are worrying us'. Children are encouraged to discuss how they are feeling and, during a shared meal, are given encouragement and support. As one child stated, "This is the best room ever."

The work of the GIFT team also enriches the quality of welfare throughout the school and the team are currently concerned with the effectiveness of the Reward System and whether it is a fair system that rewards all children equitably. The team know that they are free to offer their opinions and that these will be valued.

The school organises support for local, national and worldwide charities e.g. Mary's Meals, St. Joseph's Penny, CAFOD and the Churches Together food bank. This illustrates the strong sense of responsibility towards others and the children's knowledge that it is important to help others and to have compassion for those less fortunate.

Governors, staff and children demonstrate a very high level of respect for each other and show real care of and service to others. Governors and senior leaders ensure that careful consideration is given to supporting the needs of all when making budget, staffing and resource decisions. As a result the welfare of its community is a real strength of the school.

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

Prayer and worship form an integral part of school life and all members of the school community gather together to celebrate worship during assemblies, class collective worship and school masses. During the whole school 'Service of the Word' the children were respectful and reverent; they shared the word of God and praised God with beautiful singing. The Year 6 children confidently prepared a collective worship which consisted of sharing the word of God, praising God through song and opportunities for prayer. The older children have recently taken on the role of organising the class collective worship and assisted by a highly skilled school chaplain they demonstrated enthusiasm for this role. In the future the school needs to provide opportunities for younger children to develop the skills required to prepare class worship. Currently the collective worship provides opportunities for praise and petition but in order to improve worship further the children also need to be provided with opportunities for meditation and contemplation. The school needs to consider how it can establish a calm and peaceful atmosphere during collective worship so that children can quietly share ideas or talk to God in the stillness of their hearts.

In each classroom there is a focal point for worship and during the day there are a range of prayer opportunities for children. The religious displays throughout the school are outstanding and as children move through the school these displays help them to reflect upon their faith and celebrate their work in religious education. The mission statement is a living statement and is prominently displayed in all classrooms and is known and understood by all children.

Families are actively encouraged to share in worship and are welcomed into the school to share in the masses and assemblies. The school encourages the children to develop their faith outside of school and provides activities for them to complete at home such as making a Lenten cross which is then displayed in the school entrance.

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

The governors, staff and pupils are confident and secure in their witness to Christ, the Gospel and the teachings of the Church. The school encourages and supports its pupils to be proactive members of its community and to contribute to the decision making process.

An explicit Catholic culture permeates the school which is clearly identifiable through relationships, decision making and actions. The governing body and headteacher are very effective in undertaking their role of leading the school and developing it as a Catholic community. The school's chaplaincy is well resourced, relevant and inclusive and has a high impact on the life of the school.

The strong spiritual commitment of the headteacher and senior leaders, together with the hard work and dedication of the staff, has created a culture which demonstrates and witnesses to justice, compassion, reconciliation, love and forgiveness.

**AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:**

- Further develop collective worship so that there are opportunities for contemplation and meditation.
- Continue to develop the role of the subject leader so that Religious Education is rigorously monitored and evaluated in order to secure improvement.
- To move towards being more creative in the delivery of RE lessons and ensure that planned activities are differentiated.

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Dear Children,

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school. We really enjoyed spending the day with you and I am pleased to be able to tell you that you have a good school.

We were very impressed by the care and respect you show for each other and the special way you make everyone feel welcomed and valued. The positive and caring way you treat each other is a true reflection of being part of a Catholic community because you are following in Jesus' footsteps. Throughout the day you continually told us how much you enjoyed being in school and this makes your school a very special place to be.

We really enjoyed watching your lessons and we were pleased to see you confidently sharing your ideas. You told us that you really enjoy your RE lessons but your teachers are now going to introduce more exciting activities so that you can achieve the highest standards in all your RE lessons. You and your teachers have worked hard to create beautiful RE displays throughout the school and we really enjoyed looking at these. It was lovely to see you preparing the collective worship and we hope that in the future you can build up the good work you have already started by including opportunities for silent prayer and meditation. We were really impressed by the reverence you showed in the Service of the Word and we particularly enjoyed listening to your beautiful singing.

Your Headteacher, staff and Governors are working hard to make your school the very best it can be and we hope that you continue to help them achieve this by trying your best at all times. You should be very proud of yourselves and your school.

God bless.

Mrs McNally

Mrs Bohan

## **SUMMARY REPORT TO PARENTS**

On Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 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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### **THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:**

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