

INSPECTION REPORT

St Alphonsus's Roman Catholic Primary School

Hamilton Street

Old Trafford

Manchester

M16 7PT

Inspection date 23rd June 2014

Reporting Inspector Mr J Graves, Ms P Jones

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

Type of School	Primary School
URN	106360
Age range of pupils	4 -11
Number on roll	229
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Mrs Sara Rocca
Headteacher	Mrs Tina Birds
Religious Education Co-ordinator	Miss Sarah Regan
Date of previous inspection	May 2009

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades 1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3=Requires Improvement 4 = Inadequate
Overall effectiveness of the school	1	
The 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 OF THE SCHOOL

- St Alphonsus's is a Voluntary Aided RC Primary school in the Diocese of Salford.
- It serves the parish of St Alphonsus in Old Trafford, Manchester.
- Pupils are arranged in single aged classes.
- The admissions number is 30.
- The school is situated close to the parish church.
- The socio-economic make up of the pupils is made from a diverse, inner-city community
- 61.4% of learners are baptised Catholics.
- Standards on entry to Reception are below average
- 56.6% of pupils are eligible for Free School Meals.
- 21.4% of pupils have been identified as having Special Educational Needs.
- 28.6% of children have English as an Additional Language
- Attendance is good at over 95% for September 2013 – June 2014.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St Alphonsus' is an OUTSTANDING Catholic School. It is very inclusive and very loving. One parent said that St Alphonsus' RC Primary School "is a very caring school, a school that works well with consistent home – school support." The school is an inclusive community with a deep, strong sense of belonging which is clearly evident. The school is well led by the headteacher who has been well supported by her deputies and staff. The governors are effective and the impact of their leadership ensures the deep commitment of the school to the Church's mission in education. Gospel values are abundant throughout the school, and these can be seen in classes, assemblies, playtimes and lunchtimes. Knowledge of Scripture has a very high profile among the children and staff, and the school is completely inclusive to all the members of its community. Children are very proud of the school. They are very firm about the fact that they feel teachers always deal with things in a "nice and calm" manner, and that when children are naughty, it is always "sorted out." One child said that, "Our school couldn't be any better. Children are well behaved, this is a safe school." Another said, "We get better at everything."

Areas to develop arising from the previous inspection have been met in full.

KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE

- Leadership – the head is rightly held in high regard by children, parents, staff and governors.
- Inclusion – there is a strong sense of belonging shared by all in the school.
- Scripture – it is well known and understood.
- Teaching – Teaching and learning is strong.

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP

The quality of Catholic Leadership is OUTSTANDING. The headteacher is rightly held in esteem by her loyal staff, and her leadership is one that inspires a powerful ethos across the school. The Chair of Governors, who has been in position since September 2013, is one who is keen to continue to improve the school. The information that she has is quality assured by her own visits (and those of other governors) to the school. For example, she is able to explain why the school is safe. All decisions made by governors and the SLT and RE Co-ordinator permeate from the School Mission Statement. For example, the new Mission Statement has had the input from all children, and this was summed up by a pupil from Year 5. The statement started and ended the assembly observed. The RE Co-ordinator works hard and leads the subject very effectively. The SLT believe all people should live life to the full, therefore, their monitoring of the curriculum endeavours to make this the case for all the children and adults in the school. This is evident as the school has made links to other Catholic schools in sharing good practice in target setting and assessment. Recent Reports to Governors give a flavour of the impact of the Catholicity of the school by detailing events that provide spiritual growth and personal development for the children, such as Nativities, "Crucial Crew", fundraising activities, Leavers' Mass and Gold Award treats. There is a clear understanding of the children regarding the Mission of the Church and this can be seen on display in the hall, with work that is presented during assembly and mounted in any of the 5Ws that the children think successfully apply. Self-evaluation is accurate and honest, and is consistent with the judgements of the inspectors. The school is well aware of the next steps it needs to take, for example, consideration of the introduction of the Wednesday Word. The school assists the Parish in the Sacramental Programme, and is considering how to emphasise the importance of parental support in the parish.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORD OF GOD

The quality of Word in the school is OUTSTANDING. The RE Policy aims to “provide a systematic presentation of the Christian event, message and way of life.” This is shown in the KS2 exercise books, which contain a “Scripture Journal” where children are able to reflect on the meaning of a passage they have come across. Understanding of Scripture is very strong across the school. Teaching results in the children making progress comparable to that in Literacy for all children. Staff have a very good subject knowledge. A variety of teaching and learning styles were observed such as video, talking partners, questions and answers, scribes for the class, etc. Children are assessed each half term. Teaching staff use the scheme, “The Way, The Truth and The Life,” and work in all books shows strong progress and compares to work in Literacy books. In one lesson each year, it was clear that the children understood that “God lives in me.” In another about the conversion of Saul, children successfully explained the emotions that Saul went through. Parents are informed of RE topics each year. The RE Co-ordinator disseminates information to the school staff from training provided by Salford Diocese. All classrooms have a dedicated RE area. One prayer table held quotes from children about how “God lives in me.” Scripture could be seen throughout the school, for example, each class has chosen a quote from scripture that they felt was most appropriate to them, and these are displayed in the school for all the other classes to see. Another class recapped on the events of Pentecost. Differentiation is strong. Children have a secure knowledge of scripture, such as in one class, a story from the Acts of the Apostles was acted out in a previous lesson, and the video of this was shown as a learning aid to reinforce the knowledge of the story. Children have a good grasp of religious literacy. The RE Policy aims to “provide children with the language of religious experience.” In a lesson observed, children were challenged to define the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The RE Development Plan, which is part of the School Improvement Plan, has driven the recent review of the school’s Mission Statement which has included consultation with children, staff, parents and governors. The result is now a concise Mission Statement that is alive throughout the school. It is clearly known by all, and can be observed in all the interactions between members of the community of the school.

THE QUALITY OF THE WELCOME COMMUNITY

The quality of Welcome in the school is OUTSTANDING. Visitors are warmly welcomed to the school, including Salford Diocese inspectors! In one observation, the inspector was greeted with a handshake and a warm welcome to the room. In that same class was a pupil who had started at St Alphonsu’, that day – she was given a lovely welcome which the inspector saw made her smile. There is a strong sense of community and belonging within the school, and this was observed at the start of day with children entering school and using their lockers calmly, chatting to each other and to staff, as well as parents and staff chatting on the yard to welcome each other. Children have various roles and responsibilities, such as head/deputy boy and girl and a member of the “Service Squad” reading out their reflections to the whole school in assembly. A buddy system is a vehicle for Year 6 children to guide Reception children, and Year 5 children partner up with Year 1 for reading activities. In Summer 2013 a Pastoral Support Officer was employed to support a range of issues in children’s lives, such as punctuality and attendance, as well as successfully dealing with any issues with the children on the playground before they can become a larger problem. Parents are welcome in the school, for example, all parents are invited to a Welcome Mass each September. The impact of the welcome include a group of them organising the Summer Fair, and their attendance at Phonics parents’ meetings, assemblies, services and Masses in school. On the day of the inspection, parents had morning coffee in the school hall. The children in the school have a sense of outreach to the community, leading to fundraising activities including Red Nose Day, CAFOD, Francis House and St Joseph’s Penny, as well children singing Christmas Carols for the community at the local parish centre.

THE QUALITY OF THE WELFARE COMMUNITY

The quality of Welfare in the school is OUTSTANDING. The school has a calm atmosphere throughout the school, and the gospel value of love is promoted throughout. The School Mission Statement says that, “In our loving school everyone is unique.” This could be clearly seen during assembly when the children were asked to reflect on the different ways that God show them he loves them – and that this may be different for someone else. Children say that they feel safe in the school. One child said, “Our school is safe. Everyone takes care of the children.” The children have opportunities to raise money for charities, for example, children have raised money for the Meningitis Fund, St Joseph’s Penny and Francis’ House. The school’s behaviour policy is consistently reinforced by staff. In it is says that the schools aims “to help to develop within the child a positive self-image, self-control and consideration for others.” This was observed during a lesson where children shared with the class things that someone else in their class were good at. The policy also aims to catch children “being good” and this was observed across all

observations. It was also observed that this assertive policy allows learning to develop without disruption. There is a respect for diversity throughout the school community, work was differentiated. Children have been taught that God loves us all equally, and one child said, "Everyone is treated the same." This was seen on the playground at playtimes and lunchtimes where children played together, and could clearly explain the procedure if someone gets hurt on the yard to ensure that they are safe. Another told the inspectors that, "I know that when I'm in a time of need, I can go to the teachers and my friends. In our school we are a family." There is an active School Council that represents the opinion of the children which has had various impacts such as the raising of funds with a pyjama day. Staff provide pastoral support for the children. Responsibilities include the Head Boy and Head Girl, the Deputy Head Boy and Girl and the "Service Squad" who help other children with games.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORSHIP COMMUNITY

The quality of Worship in the school is OUTSTANDING. The RE Policy aims to "provide opportunities for celebration, prayer, daily worship and reflection in implicit and explicit ways." Parents are invited to class led assemblies and children take roles and responsibilities in the celebration of School Mass. Staff have attended training on Prayer and Worship. Prayer in the school develops as children become older, giving children the chance to grow closer to God. One child said, "When you pray, you take a step close to God." There are many opportunities for prayer provided by the school, and many allow pupils and staff to pray alongside each other. This was shown during assembly when children and adults reflected on how God loves them – this was done in a way that made it relevant to all the children through their role models and through family life. Assemblies have different stimulus and foci, and to reflect this, the seating positions of the children will also change. The Prayer and Worship Policy states that the school aims "to guide and encourage children to explore the mystery of God and His wonderful creation." This is evident as children's input in the provision for Prayer and Worship with the idea of the Prayer Garden, to allow the school community to reflect outside the building. In one lesson, children were given the opportunity to select on the ideas that the Holy Spirit gave them to help them to make others happy. The school is well resourced for worship, for example, each classroom has a prayer table which was very inviting. In one classroom, the children sat in a "prayer circle" and other children had the responsibility of selecting resources and setting up the prayer focus in the middle of the circle.

THE QUALITY OF THE WITNESS COMMUNITY

The quality of Witness in the school is OUTSTANDING. The Mission Statement of St Alphonsus, which was observed to be at the heart of all that went on in the school, states that, "God lives in me. I am His witness. I respect everybody and everybody respects me." This is seen in action during Advent when children and parents help to make family hampers for others. The children and staff play a large role in shaping the Catholic life of the school, such as preparing liturgies by choosing scripture and writing prayers that explain their message. The impact of this is the feeling of joint ownership of the school's Mission and ethos. Children are responsible for their own behaviour through the rewards and consequences on offer alongside the School Rules. The Gospel Values at the heart of the school's ethos impacts on the children adopting a caring attitude towards others. Children who are "Prayer Leaders" are confident in upholding the Gospel Values of the school, by assisting in pupils in other classes. Children have role models that they are able to identify with, and these are celebrated on a school display. One child said it helped them remember to do things they can be proud of.

AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- To audit the provision of Sex and Relationship Education within the school.
- To continue to develop the governing body with a skills audit and explore how their roles link with the Review, Evaluation and Celebration Framework..

23rd June 2014

Dear Pupils,

Thank you for making our visit to St Alphonsus' school so enjoyable when we came to inspect your school for the Bishop. Thank you for giving us a huge, warm welcome! We really enjoyed our time with you. Your school is an outstanding Catholic school.

We really enjoyed coming to see your lessons, your classroom worship, your assembly and spending time with you at lunchtime and playtime. It was lovely to see how you enjoy school so much, and how you are part of a big family.

Your staff and governors work really hard, and your headteacher has done a super job in leading your school to the place that it is today.

There are some very good things about you and your school, and you are right to feel proud of St Alphonsus' School. We thought you were fantastic children. We think that your teachers work really hard, and that lessons are strong. We feel that you are safe in your school, and that everyone is included. We think that you know lots of Bible stories really well, and that you pray well together.

Your new Chair of Governors, along with the rest of the governors, make a sound impact on the school, and they have plans for what they will do next. They, along with the teachers, will look at how any gaps can be filled in the next few years.

Your new Mission Statement is lovely, and well done to everyone for being a part of it. It is clear to anyone who visits that it is alive in your school.

Your teachers help you to be the best you can be. From class to class, the teachers try to move you forward. They will try a few things in their lessons in a more similar way from class to class. You are super children who made us smile with the love you show for all in your school. Your teachers go far beyond what they are asked to do, because they believe in you so much.

God bless all in your school,

Mr J Graves and Ms P Jones

(Section 48 Inspectors)

St Alphonsus' RC Primary School, Manchester

Summary Report to Parents

On 23rd June 2014 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.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St Alphonsus' is an OUTSTANDING Catholic School. It is very inclusive and very loving. One parent said that St Alphonsus' RC Primary School "is a very caring school, a school that works well with consistent home – school support." The school is an inclusive community with a strong sense of belonging. The school is led by the headteacher who has been well supported by her deputies and staff. The governors are effective and the impact of their leadership ensures the deep commitment of the school to the Church's mission in education. Gospel values are abundant throughout the school, and these can be seen in classes, assemblies, playtimes and lunchtimes. Knowledge of Scripture has a very high profile among the children and staff, and the school is completely inclusive to all the members of its community. There is a deep sense of belonging and ownership which is evident. Children are very proud of the school. They are very firm about the fact that they feel teachers always deal with things in a "nice and calm" manner, and that when children are naughty, it is always "sorted out." One child said that, "Our school couldn't be any better. Children are well behaved, this is a safe school." Another said, "We get better at everything."

Areas to develop arising from the previous inspection have been met in full.

KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE

- Leadership – the head is rightly held in high regard by children, parents, staff and governors.
- Inclusion – there is a strong sense of belonging shared by all in the school.
- Scripture – it is well known and understood.
- Teaching – Teaching and learning is strong.

AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- To audit the provision of Sex and Relationship Education within the school.
- To continue to develop the governing body with a skills audit and explore how their roles link with the 5Ws.