

**INSPECTION REPORT**

**St. James-the-Less RC Primary School**  
**Unity Way, Rawtenstall, Lancashire BB4 8SU**

Inspection date 18<sup>th</sup> November 2014

Reporting Inspectors Mrs Jackie McNally

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

Type of School Catholic Primary  
 URN 119665  
 Age range of pupils 4-11 years  
 Number on roll 209  
 Appropriate authority The Governing Body  
 Chair of Governors Mrs C. Atherton  
 Headteacher Mr G. Hall  
 Religious Education Co-ordinator Miss J. McIntyre  
 Date of previous inspection

<b>The Inspection judgements are:</b>	<b>Grade</b>	Explanation of the Grades  1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3=Requires Improvement 4 = Inadequate
Overall effectiveness of the school	<b>1</b>	
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 AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL**

St James-the-Less RC Primary School is a smaller than average primary school which serves the parish of St James-the-Less, Rawtenstall. There are 209 pupils on roll, the majority of whom are white British. The most significant faith group is Roman Catholic. The percentage of pupils entitled to pupil premium funding is below national average and the percentage of pupils with additional needs is below the national average.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

St. James-the-Less is an outstanding Catholic school where there is a commitment to developing each child academically, socially and spiritually. The governing body and Headteacher provide outstanding leadership and are well supported in their mission by a dedicated and committed staff. The governors, staff, parents and children all see themselves as belonging to a family and they are justifiably proud of their school. Children's behaviour throughout the inspection was outstanding and older children are excellent role models for younger children. Teachers work hard to deliver high quality lessons in Religious Education and the learning opportunities are enhanced by outstanding opportunities for collective worship. The children are confident and enthusiast learners who bear witness to the Gospel values.

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

- The leadership and vision of the school at all levels is outstanding.
- There is a strong community spirit and all members of the community bear witness to the Catholic faith through their relationships with each other.
- Opportunities for worship are outstanding with children showing reverence and respect.

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

The quality of Catholic Leadership at all levels is outstanding. The governing body have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school and demonstrate a commitment to working with the school to secure the best possible Catholic education for all children. The Headteacher rigorously monitors and evaluates all aspects of the school and his accurate and reflective self-evaluation has clearly helped to improve the school since his appointment. The Religious Education subject leader is passionate about her role and should be commended not only for the quality of evidence she produced during the inspection but for the pivotal role she plays in the religious life of the school. The leadership of the school clearly recognises that Christ is the central to all aspects of school life and all staff are committed to creating a loving and nurturing learning environment for the children. The school successfully fulfils its mission to develop the potential of every individual child and all the staff and Governors are justifiably proud of their school and the fact the children have a living faith. Teamwork is central to the school's success and this is a strength of the school. Pupil leadership has been developed through the pupil chaplains and school council and the children were confident and enthusiastic about their roles. Parents are supportive of the school and they feel that the Headteacher and staff care about the children and they value their hard work.

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

Teachers and teaching assistants are enthusiastic and committed to teaching Religious Education. Pupils were keen to learn and demonstrated good subject knowledge. They talked with enthusiasm about their lessons and what they had learnt. Children are regularly asked to consider the Big Questions and there is evidence of this throughout the school. In every class support staff are used effectively to support children and promote further learning. Behaviour for learning throughout the school is outstanding. Children were attentive, shared their views with confidence and listened with respect and interest. Various samples of children's work from across the school were looked at during the inspection. Evidence from children's books and the class evidence files show that children are provided with a variety of activities. The school agrees that a wider variety of creative activities would enhance the religious curriculum further. Work set was at an appropriate level of pupil development and standards were broadly similar to those of literacy. In order to cater for the needs of all ability groups, differentiation needs to be developed further. All books were marked but in order to further develop the quality of marking children need to be provided with comments which invite them to explore their faith further or provide them with next steps in their learning. Pupils'

work is regularly assessed and their progress is tracked as they move through the school. The RE co-ordinator fully supported by the Headteacher, governing body and Parish Priest demonstrates a commitment and passion for the ensuring a high quality of religious teaching in the school. Standards in Religious Education are carefully monitored and the senior leadership team observe lessons, provide constructive feedback and then ensure it is acted upon. The co-ordinator has compiled detailed evidence files for the 5Ws which reflect the work carried out in school. There are strong links between the parish, home and school and the religious life of the school is actively promoted in the school newsletter. The school places a high priority on its evangelising and catechetical mission and the children visit the local nursing home, take part in masses organised in partnership with other schools and write articles for the parish magazine.

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

St James-the-Less School provides a warm and welcoming culture which permeates the whole school and this is clearly demonstrated by the staff, governors and children. The school welcomes parents and grandparents into assemblies and weekly masses and it was clear during the inspection that parents welcomed this opportunity to share in their child's spiritual development. As a result of the strong Catholic ethos the children show respect and consideration for each other and the importance of the dignity of the individual is clearly evident. The children interviewed talked with enthusiasm about how they welcomed people to their school and they were very proud of how they nurtured and supported younger children until they felt confident. A calm, caring atmosphere pervades the school, yet children are excited about their learning and keen to share their knowledge with visitors. Children's behaviour is outstanding and relationships between children and staff are strong, bearing witness to Christ being at the heart of the community. The development of pupils' personal qualities is of paramount importance to the staff.

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

Staff and children demonstrate a very high level of care and respect for others. The school places a high priority on supporting vulnerable pupils and parents spoke very highly of the quality of the support they receive from the whole school staff. There is a genuine concern from all staff for the welfare of all pupils and every individual is valued and nurtured. Parents feel that their children are well looked after and that 'nothing is too much trouble'. One said, "This school is a blessing in disguise." Teaching Assistants are 'fantastic, nurturing – always there.' The school has an effective induction programme for new pupils and this helps them to feel welcomed into the school community. Throughout the inspection the children's behaviour was exemplary and they demonstrated care and respect for each other. The children act as excellent role models and this is demonstrated by the school council and chaplains. Pupils spoke about how much they enjoyed being at school and they described their school as, "God is at the centre and we reflect around God" and "We're proud of the teachers and how they treat us." The Christ-centred ethos of the school fosters a culture where children feel confident enough to express their views and share their experiences, knowing that others in the class will value and respect them. The school's involvement in charity work is a strength of the school and the children talked enthusiastically about their fund raising activities. They are currently collecting for Oxfam World Gifts, have taken part in Children in Need activities and a display of the pupils visit to Cornerstones illustrates real 'hands on' experiences.

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

Prayer and worship form a central part of school life and all members of the school community gather together to celebrate collective worship during assemblies and school masses. The Eucharistic Celebration led by Canon Lupton celebrated the Eucharist in a child friendly manner, engaging the interest of the children whilst also building upon their spiritual development. The children sang with enthusiasm during the mass and their faces clearly reflected the joy of the experience. Canon Lupton is a regular visitor to the school and prides himself on knowing the name of every child. His contribution to the spiritual development of the children is outstanding and clearly valued by the whole school community. In each classroom there is a focal point for worship and during the day there are a range of prayer opportunities for the children. The class based collective worship provided the children the opportunity to pray in a calm, reflective manner but good practise needs to be shared throughout the school so less experienced staff have the opportunity to further develop the worship within their classrooms. The pupil chaplains, who are skilfully led by the lay chaplain from All Saints Catholic High School, play an active role in the organisation and delivery of worship

in the school. The pupil chaplains take great pride in their role and talked enthusiastically about the activities they had organised including the prayer tree in the entrance, their fund raising activities and the prayer services they had prepared. They were looking forward to developing an interactive advent calendar containing a challenge each day.

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

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 citizens who contribute to the decision-making process; this was especially evident in discussion with the School Council members who were committed to ensuring their school was inclusive of all. The Lay Chaplain is an excellent addition to the team and is embedding the work of its enthusiastic young chaplains, who are having an impact on the life of the school. The Mission Statement was clearly evident across the whole school community; pupils know it well and say it with understanding. The Governing Body is very effective in undertaking its role of leading the school and developing it as a Catholic community. They are passionate about the school and are committed to the high expectations of all and supporting the school's work. An explicit Catholic culture permeates the whole school and is clearly identifiable through relationships, decision-making and actions. Staff and children demonstrate and witness to justice, compassion, reconciliation, love and forgiveness in their relationships and are able to see the relationship between their own behaviour and Christian values; this was reiterated many times by pupils, staff, parents and Governors. As one child said ' Jesus respected everyone and we do too.'

### **AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT**

- Further develop marking so that children are provided with opportunities to reflect upon their next steps in learning.
- To ensure that the planning and delivery of Religious Education follows the same creative approaches used in other areas of the new curriculum.

St. James-the-Less R.C. Primary School,  
Unity Way,  
Rawtenstall,  
Rossendale,  
Lancashire.  
BB4 8SU

Dear Children,

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school, we had a wonderful day and enjoyed meeting you all. The Governors, Headteacher and staff are working together to ensure that you have a high quality Catholic education and we are pleased to be able to tell you that you have an outstanding school.

Throughout the day your behaviour was excellent and you demonstrated how much you cared for each other. We particularly enjoyed talking to the school council members and the school chaplains who told us about your wonderful school and all the events you organise to help others, both in our country and around the world.

We really enjoyed watching your lessons and we were pleased to see you confidently sharing your ideas. In order to improve your knowledge and understanding further we have asked your teachers to provide you with more feedback when marking your work.

Prayer and worship obviously plays an important role in your school and we particularly enjoyed participating in your Eucharistic celebration and class collective worship. You show respect and reverence when you pray and your singing is beautiful.

Your school has a lovely Catholic atmosphere and the staff, governors, parents and children all show that they care for each other. You should be very proud of yourselves and your school.

God bless.

Mrs McNally

Mrs Bohan

## **SUMMARY REPORT TO PARENTS**

On Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> November 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.

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