

INSPECTION REPORT

St. John's R.C. Primary School,
Chepstow Rd
Chorlton
Manchester

Inspection date 2nd May 2013
 Reporting Inspectors Mr. A.J. Sowerby Lead Inspector
 Mr D. Burns Additional Inspector
 Mr J McHugh Additional Inspector

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

Type of School Roman Catholic Primary
 URN 105546
 Age range of pupils 3-11 years
 Number on roll 495
 Appropriate authority The Governing Body
 Chair of Governors Fr. Patrick McMahon
 Headteacher Mrs C Coyle
 Religious Education Co-ordinator Mrs Y Joyce
 Date of previous inspection May 2006

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades
Overall effectiveness of the school	1	1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3=Requires Improvement 4 = Inadequate
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 John's Primary School is a larger than average sized primary school with a nursery in Chorlton-cum-Hardy Manchester. It is situated in an area of mixed social and privately owned housing. There are currently 495 children on roll, including 60 full time children in the nursery class, 262 boys and 233 girls. 100% of pupils are baptised Catholics. The indicative admission number is 60. The pupils who are aged 3-11 years are arranged in single age classes.

Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, with a smaller than average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. Currently the school has no non Catholic children. The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is well below average and currently stands at 4.4%. 8.9% of children are entitled to Free School Meals which is well below national expectations. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is 5.7% which is below average. The needs of these learners range from severe learning difficulties, to emotional and behavioural difficulties. Currently there are 7 children with a Statement of Special Educational Need who receive individual one to one support. The school context has changed little in recent years.

There are strong links with the local high school and the church. The parish priest is a frequent and regular visitor to the school and provides support to all groups within the school. There are 26 members of the teaching staff and all of the teachers are Catholic, as indeed are all the staff working in the school. With 4 teachers holding the Catholic Teachers' Certificate qualification or equivalent though a significant number are now studying for it. Level of attendance is high at 96.3% in 2012 and has been consistently high for many years. No pupils have been excluded in the last five years.

The school holds a number of awards, including the High Quality P.E. with distinction, School Sports Gold Award International Schools Award Spanish School Award and the AS Mark.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St John's is an outstanding Catholic Primary school. There is a genuinely warm and caring welcome given to all. All children are offered a Catholic education in a friendly and supportive environment. The word of God is central to the life of the school. There are outstanding parish links. St. John's works collaboratively with the parish priest and the school is firmly at the heart of the parish. This ensures the pastoral and spiritual needs of the learners and their families are well met. The newly appointed head teacher and her staff have high expectations of adults and children. Together the whole staff have created an ethos where everyone recognises the need to work together as a "family", showing love and concern for all its members. The children enjoy coming to school and the school council expressed how very proud they are of all the opportunities given to them. Pupils are friendly, polite and welcoming and their behaviour at all times is exemplary. They work hard to achieve the high expectations of the adults who work with them. They enjoyed every opportunity to share with the inspectors their work. The staff and pupils demonstrate a very high level of respect, care and service to others. The quality of teaching is a notable strength of the school.

THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE

- The high quality of teaching and learning
- The quality of relationships between all members of the school community
- The support given to the school by parents and the parish priest
- The quality of care and guidance provided to the children
- The exemplary behaviour of the children.

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP

The quality of Catholic leadership is outstanding. There is excellent leadership at all levels of the school community which contributes significantly to the outstanding provision for Catholic Education that the school currently provides. The newly appointed and dedicated head teacher provides strong and decisive leadership by clearly living her vision for Catholic Education. She is an outstanding role model for the whole school community. She ensures that along with her senior staff that the development of the Catholic life of the school is at the forefront of the school's work. They are supported by a knowledgeable Governing Body, an outstanding R.E. Co-ordinator and a parish

priest who is a regular visitor to the school. They together with the other senior leadership of the school ensure that the teaching of R.E and the development of the Catholic Life of the School have an extremely high priority in school. The school has a clear plan for developing R.E across the school and this is reflected in the priority it is given

Evidence for this can be found in the school's clear self-evaluation plan, which is based on the 5Ws model. The school is aware of its next steps and has clear plans for implementing them. As a result the inspector can verify that this evaluation is both accurate and reflective.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORD OF GOD COMMUNITY is outstanding because

The school's recently revised Mission Statement is clearly displayed throughout the school. It is known, lived and witnessed to and is evident at every level of the school. The children have recently been involved in illustrating it and a copy of this is displayed clearly in the front entrance of the school. All school policies and procedures have a significant impact on learning and the life of the school and develop in the children a great sense of pride and belonging in the whole Catholic family of St John's.

The Religious Education of the pupils is at the centre of the Core Curriculum. The staffing and resources devoted to RE are of the highest standard, reflecting its significance and importance in the school.

Teaching is consistently outstanding across the school with many examples of excellent practice. Pupils are challenged to engage with the Big Questions of the purpose and meaning of life throughout the curriculum. This could be seen particularly in those lessons where children were challenged to implement the gospel message in their own lives. Examples of this were seen in Year 6 where children were asked to reflect upon the qualities required to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, in Year 2 where the children were inspired to follow the example of Mary in living their lives and in the nursery where children were provided with the opportunity to try and understand how the disciples would have felt at the death of Jesus. Further examples of this work included children in Year 4 learning to appreciate the need to make the most of the Earth's natural resources when looking at the problems by those living in the rain forests of Brazil whilst others were taught about the importance of the gospel message of "Not seeing but still believing". Scripture is clearly known, understood and made relevant throughout the school. The staff and pupils demonstrate and can articulate the centrality and importance of the Word of God. There is evidence on the displays in the classroom and halls of the importance of this.

The home, school and parish links are inclusive, creative and effective. Pupils are actively trained in outreach to the local community. This can be seen in the vast number of charities that the school supports. These are not just the Catholic charities such as CAFOD and St Joseph's Penny but also the support the school gives to other local charities such as Cornerstones and the Wood Street Mission. The school has a clear vision for developing children's knowledge of different charities in this "The Year of Faith" by asking them to focus on a different charity each month.

The Inspectors cite the following evidence to confirm their judgements:

- Overall the standards of attainment, progress and hence achievement are outstanding. As the curriculum is based on the mission it is challenging, interesting and fulfilling. The children are developing the age appropriate knowledge and skills. The school has incorporated "The Way, The Truth and the Life" scheme. This is well supplemented by other R.E. resources so that as a result standards of teaching are outstanding.
- Work in R.E is clearly as excellent as work in other subjects due to the high priority given to it in school. This was seen by inspector in during the scrutiny of both the R.E and Literacy books and in the observation of other teaching. Marking was consistently good in R.E. The school has begun to develop a clear and coherent system for tracking the children's attainment in R.E. but it is not yet fully embedded in the school something which the school recognises.
- Standards in RE are excellent. The children are encouraged to take the initiative and lead their own learning thereby developing their independence. This is evident in all classes. There are

regular visits into and out of school to enrich the RE curriculum such as participating in joint Diocesan and parish masses.

- The school has worked collaboratively to gather evidence so that the school has a clear strategy that includes all members of the school community in implementing the 5Ws across the school.

THE QUALITY OF THE WELCOME COMMUNITY is outstanding because:

There is a culture of welcome and all the pupils and staff demonstrate a very high level of confidence and outreach to all within the school community. Parents were keen to express their views by saying “You get a real welcome with a staff member on the gate every morning” whilst another commented on how the newly appointed Head Teacher had helped to create and maintain the lovely caring atmosphere that was evident throughout the school day. The importance of the dignity of the individual is clearly evident at all levels. This could be seen in the way that all pupils and staff treated children with Down’s syndrome and other special educational needs.

All members of the school community demonstrate a very high level of belonging and ownership of the school. Pupils are given a high level of responsibility in creating and sustaining the schools sense of welcome.

Parents are very welcome into school and are encouraged to engage in their child’s learning. This could clearly be seen in the way that staff from the nursery and reception classes met parents at the start of the school day and discussed with them any concerns that they had. The school have a very active P.T.A. who make very welcome members of the wider local community. This could be seen by the attendance at the Coffee Morning of the “Nutty Knitters” a local knitting group who donate the profit they make from selling their goods to local charities. Further evidence of this sense of welcome could be seen in the links that the school makes through its link with children in Spain. Here the wider school family support the work of the school by offering accommodation to students involved in the exchange visits the school engages in. As one parent commented “This link provided our child with unique opportunity to experience life with children from a different culture and so gain a greater understanding of the world”

The inspectors cite the following evidence to confirm their judgements:

- New families are welcomed into the school with warmth by the opportunities which are created to visit the school and meet the whole team. Parents voiced to the inspector how the staff went out of their way to make them feel part of the community of St. John’s through the organisation of a variety of different social and fund raising activities.
- In the first few weeks of the school year parents and carers of children in the nursery and reception classes are invited to bring their child into school in the morning and stay until the children settle down.
- Parents are kept informed and up to date about the curriculum and events in school through the use of the school newsletter and school website. The school also ensures that the voice of the children is heard and respected. The School Council were keen to express their opinion about the changes they had brought about in school such as the provision of improved play facilities.
- Within school relationships are of the highest quality. Older children care for the younger ones, play leaders and buddies work to ensure playtimes are fun and peaceful.

THE QUALITY OF THE WELFARE COMMUNITY is outstanding because.

The staff and pupils demonstrate a very high level of respect, care and service to others. This was witnessed in all classes where children feel confident and secure enough to tend to their personal needs without interrupting the learning or having their dignity abused.

The structures and procedures ensure that all pupils and staff feel safe and are treated with respect and dignity. This was evidenced in the way that members of staff cared for children who were hurt or

unwell. The Christ-centred ethos is loving, creative, highly positive and fosters understanding, empathy and forgiveness.

All pupils and staff feel safe and free to express their opinions and know that these will be valued. Importance and recognition is given equally to all.

The budget, staffing and resourcing decisions demonstrate a consistent commitment to Catholic stewardship throughout the school.

The parents and friends play a highly significant part in school life and their contributions are valued throughout the school.

The Inspectors cite the following evidence to confirm their judgements:

- The physical, spiritual and mental well-being of each person is central to the school's mission. The school council discussed with the inspectors the need to reach out with kindness to others for example those less fortunate in the world. Children are caring and have a true sense of right and wrong.
- The school is a very caring community where everyone is valued! Children during lessons listened respectfully to other pupils' ideas. Play partners and buddies look after and care for younger children. Children told the inspector that they have to look after the younger children because they must follow Jesus' command to treat others as you want to be treated.
- Calm support is offered by sensitive adults when children have difficulty remaining on task. Such role models ensure learning and good relationships develop. This could be seen in the way that children with special educational needs were managed within the classroom so that a purposeful learning environment was encountered.
- Maturity and self-responsibility are strongly encouraged. This is evident in the work of the School Council
- The school stresses the importance of reaching out beyond its own community so that children feel part of God's world. The charity work is a living example of this as children support CAFOD, St Joseph's Penny and many other charities in special circumstances chosen by the children.
- The children of the school council confirmed they feel very safe! The school goes to great lengths to ensure as far as possible children are free from worry and a happy, calm atmosphere is the norm. The school provides a wide variety of activities in order to ensure that this occurs. The mission is continued after school with a host of excellent clubs that are extremely varied hence meeting the needs and interests of all the children.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORSHIP COMMUNITY is outstanding because.

The school provides a variety of worship opportunities for pupils throughout the school (prayer, reflection, liturgies) including small and large groups – which are appropriate to their backgrounds and faith experiences. All children are encouraged to participate in voluntary acts of worship which are appropriate to the Liturgical Year for example the children in both Key Stage 1 and 2 pray the rosary together during the month of May.

The development of opportunities for pupils to worship according to their intellectual and life experience needs and stages of faith development is clearly evident.

Worshipping opportunities promote a strong community sense of service for each other.

Inclusive worship helps pupils to grow in confidence in prayer and develop a relationship with God. This could be seen in the both the assemblies and hymn singing where all the children were engaged in the signing of one of the hymns as well as being provided with the opportunity to reflect quietly upon the meaning of the gospel message. Further evidence was provided in a Year 4 prayer service where the children were provided with the opportunity to reflect upon the gifts that God had given them and how they should use these for the benefit of all.

The school has strong links with the parish of St. John's Chorlton where they participate in a variety of masses and other liturgical celebrations. One example of this is the early morning mass provided during Lent which is attended by up to a one hundred staff and pupils.

The inspectors cite the following evidence to confirm their judgements:

- The parish priest regularly celebrates Mass which the children attend in church. The school shares the celebration of mass with the parish. Key events are celebrated with special masses: the beginning of each school year, the parish and school feast day, Holy Days and at the end of the year.

- There are strong links between the parish and the school particular with regard to the preparation of the children for the Sacraments of Initiation.
- During Advent, Lent and the Easter season the school holds assemblies, liturgies and times of reflection/ reconciliation that are all shared by the whole school community. The children are encouraged to voluntarily say the rosary during the month of October and May and the Stations of the Cross during Lent.
- There is a daily act of collective worship. These take place in a variety of formats but also are linked clearly to the Liturgical Year. Children pray in classes, small groups and individually with great reverence, respect and thought.
- Pupils are comfortable with their feelings and have a good and knowledgeable vocabulary. Each class has a special area of focus. The children know many school prayers and compose powerful prayers for themselves. In many classes there were examples of displays of the children's own prayers.
- Attractive displays which were seen around school are used to show and stimulate prayer opportunities. Hymns, music and singing enhanced the quality and enjoyment of prayer in school
- The Gospel values are clearly evidenced throughout all the policies and procedures and have a significant impact on learning and the life of the school.

THE QUALITY OF THE WITNESS COMMUNITY is outstanding because.

All staff act as excellent role models for the children and help them in recognising that God is with them in every aspect of school life.

Adults and pupils witness to the Mission Statement of the school, which informs everything and is explicit in policies and the lived experience of the whole community.

Adults act as role models of the school's mission and values and as key promoters of the ethos of the school for the pupils and the school community's witness to the wider community.

The staff and pupils feel confident and secure in their witness to Christ, the Gospel and the teachings of the Church.

Pupils are confident in witnessing to the beliefs and values of a Catholic community and are actively encouraged and supported in being pro-active citizens who participate in the decision-making processes at a local and national level. This is seen in the way the school promotes support for various charities so as to promote support for the Common Good.

An explicit Catholic culture permeates the whole of school and is clearly identifiable through relationships, decision-making and actions.

The Inspectors cite the following evidence to confirm his judgement:

- The entire school community recognises that God is at the heart of the school in their actions and their relationships. All live the word of God. The mission statement is the powerful tool which is used to demonstrate how the school bears witness to a loving God. All members of the school family meet God each day and strive to meet all the challenges involved in this witness.
- The school mission is known and understood by all at appropriate levels. Relationships are outstanding at St John's and a strong sense of teamwork and belonging exist. The school and parish were described by parents as "a big family", where relationships are built on love and trust.
- The children have a highly defined sense of fairness and justice. They know their responsibilities in terms of equal opportunities, stewardship and reconciliation.
- The inspectors noted at all times behaviour was outstanding. Children are respectful of each other. Adults working as a committed team have high expectations of the children and in this atmosphere the children thrive.

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

To continue to develop and embed the school assessment and tracking system for R.E in order to demonstrate that levels of attainment in R.E. are in line with other core subjects.

To continue with the building development programme so that all areas of the school environment meet the high standard created in those areas already improved so as to maximise teaching and learning opportunities for all children.

7th May 2013

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making our visit to St John's so enjoyable when we came to inspect your school for the Bishop. We really enjoyed being with you. Thank you for looking after us so well and helping us to feel very welcome. St John's is an outstanding school.

We enjoyed being part of your lessons and were sorry not to see everyone. Thank you for showing us so much of your work and activities. We could see that you are very proud of your school and all that you have achieved together. We were particularly impressed that you thought that the most important part of your learning and life together was that you *'felt connected to one another as all part of God's family'*. I know the Bishop will be delighted to hear this.

Your teachers are really helping you to learn very well and we were very impressed by your excellent relationships and behaviour. It was good to see so much of your Mission Statement coming through everything you are learning; your relationships and the special way you make everyone feel valued. It is wonderful to see a school made up of pupils and adults who get on so well together so that everyone is cared for as a member of God's family. This is a true reflection of being part of a Catholic community where everyone is welcome and has a place.

You have started using your new RE programme and are doing well. You are a very creative school and we were most impressed by the way you work together so co-operatively in your lessons. The prayer services we saw were very good and uplifting experiences. Your teachers have started to develop an excellent way of assessing your knowledge of R.E. and we have asked them to continue to develop this with you. Many of you have a very good knowledge and understanding of your faith so you should be able to help the staff in moving your school forward by developing assessment systems which highlight the higher levels of skills and attitudes you show as outstanding students.

God bless you all and have a really happy term.

Yours sincerely

Mr A.J Sowerby
Mr D. Burns
Mr J McHugh

(Section 48 Inspectors,)

Summary Report to Parents

On 2nd May 2013 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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AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- To continue to develop and embed the school assessment and tracking system for R.E in order to demonstrate that levels of attainment in R.E. are in line with other core subjects.
- To continue with the building development programme so that all areas of the school environment meet the high standard created in those areas already improved so as to maximise teaching and learning opportunities for all children.