

INSPECTION REPORT

St Joseph's R.C. Primary School, Huttock Lane, Stacksteads, Bacup. OL13 8LD

Inspection date 22nd March 2016

Reporting Inspectors Mr Andrew Sowerby
Mrs Julie Frazer

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

Type of School Roman Catholic Primary
 URN 119661
 Age range of pupils 3-11 years
 Number on roll 140
 Appropriate authority The Governing Body
 Chair of Governors Mr A. Gallagher
 Headteacher Mrs Lynn Elder
 Religious Education Subject Leader Mrs Lynn Elder
 Date of previous inspection October 2010

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades
Overall effectiveness of the school	1	
The quality of the Word of God community	1	1 = Outstanding
The quality of the Welcome community	1	2 = Good
The quality of Welfare	1	3=Requires Improvement
The quality of Worship	2	4 = Inadequate
The quality of Witness	1	
The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements		

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's RC Primary School is a smaller than average sized Catholic Primary School serving the parish of St Joseph and St Peter's in Newchurch, Rossendale. Currently there are 140 pupils on roll of which only 23% of these are Roman Catholic. They are arranged in a number of mixed age classes. The school has recently opened a nursery. The school is situated in an area of social deprivation and has a high mobility rate. 34% of pupils are eligible for free school meals whilst a very high proportion of pupils, 68%, are in receipt of the pupil premium. There are two 'looked after' children currently on roll and 4 pupils with statements of special educational needs. 24% of children are on the SEND register. The majority of children are white British with no children having English as an additional language. Currently there are six members of staff, including the headteacher, of which three are Catholic and hold the Catholic teachers certificate.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's is an outstanding Catholic Primary school. All who enter the school are immediately struck by the wonderfully warm and friendly welcome given to all. Every child irrespective of their background or faith is provided with a Catholic education in a caring and supportive environment where individual needs are exceptionally well catered for. The Word of God is clearly central to the life of the school. This ensures that the pastoral and spiritual needs of all families and children are very well met. The inspirational headteacher and deputy headteacher have high expectations of adults and children. This can be seen in the way that all children are cared for in a calm and supportive atmosphere. Together, with the hard working staff, they have created an ethos where everyone recognises the need to work together as a "family", showing love and concern for all its members. One example of this work is the provision of additional support for the high number of vulnerable families that attend the school. This work is further enhanced by the support of a very effective and knowledgeable Governing Body.

THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE

- The Catholic leadership of the school including the governors.
- The care and attention provided by all staff which ensures that the welfare of the children is of paramount importance.
- The outstanding quality of witness to the faith that is evident across the school community and is evidenced through the immense amount of charity work that the school engages in.
- The great warmth of welcome that the school provides to children, parents, families and visitors.
- The quality of the R.E. Curriculum and the level of support provided for non-Catholic staff.

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

Driven by a great determination to ensure that the children of St Joseph's receive a high quality Catholic Education the inspirational headteacher, ably assisted by the deputy headteacher and staff ensure that there is outstanding Catholic leadership of the school. They are supported by a knowledgeable and well informed governing body. Together they ensure that the development of the Catholic life of the school is at the forefront of the school's work. Examples of this work include the way in which the headteacher and deputy headteacher ensure that in spite of the fact that only 23% of children who attend the school are Roman Catholic they ensure that a truly Catholic ethos exists throughout the school. The headteacher also provides very clear guidance and support to those members of staff who are not Catholic so as to ensure that the teaching of R.E and the development of the Catholic Life of the School have an extremely high priority. The leadership team 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 detailed 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.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORD OF GOD IS OUTSTANDING

Following the last inspection the school has reviewed its Mission Statement. This is clearly evident in all areas of the school. It is now very child centred and reflects the determination of all to ensure that the school provides the highest quality Catholic education to all its children. The staffing and resources devoted to R.E. are of the highest standard, reflecting its significance and importance in the school. Children clearly enjoy R.E. and were keen to express this to the inspection team during their visit to the school. Pupils are challenged to engage with the Big Questions of the purpose and meaning of life throughout the curriculum. There are also additional examples of this on the bright and attractive displays that are to be found throughout the school. Scripture is clearly known, understood and made relevant throughout the school. The recent introduction of the 'Come and See' scheme has further enhanced the R. E. Curriculum so that it is increasingly creative and vibrant. The school, however, is very aware of the need to ensure that non-Catholic staff are well supported through the provision of additional training so as to develop their knowledge of the faith. Standards in R.E. are generally as high as in other subjects but the school is aware of the need to further enhance this so that there is greater consistency across the school. The school's structured programme of R.E. assessments are currently being enhanced so that they accurately match the changes in the school's R.E. curriculum.

THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING

St. Joseph's provides an exceptionally warm welcome for all who attend the school. Parents were keen to express how all feel included and that any concerns they have are quickly and sensitively dealt with. They spoke with great passion about the lovely 'family atmosphere' and 'sense of community' that exists in the school. As one parent explained "The children are all happy and bubbly". This, they said, was due to the very approachable headteacher and staff. Evidence of this was observed by the inspection team at the start of the school day where the headteacher and staff greeted all children and parents warmly and individually. All parents spoke of the supportive manner in which the staff ensures that the children are made to feel welcome. Children love coming to school. As one child put it, "This school is great as it's like one big family" Parents also spoke very clearly about the high quality communication the school provides as well as the varied programme of curriculum workshops, extra tuition and after school clubs so that everyone is well informed and included. It is clearly a warm, inclusive and all-embracing establishment where everyone feels appreciated and cared for.

THE QUALITY OF WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING

The staff and pupils pay great attention to the pastoral and emotional needs of all the children in St Joseph's so that one can truly say that in this school every child does indeed matter. This was witnessed throughout the day in the manner that the staff supported children who were unwell or needed some emotional support. This care was provided in a very dignified and supportive manner. The structures and procedures ensure that all pupils and staff feel safe and are treated with respect and dignity. Calm support is offered by very sensitive adults when children have difficulty remaining on task. Such role models ensure learning and good relationships develop. The outreach support provided by the school ensures that the needs of parents and young families are met in a structured and sensitive manner. Examples of this are through the provision of a "Walking Bus" which enables children to transported safely to and from school at the start and the end of the school day and the provision of a Breakfast and After School Club which enables all children to feel cared for. Relationships at St Joseph's are very good. All pupils and staff are confident in expressing their opinions and knowing that these will be valued. This was seen during discussions with the children who stated how their views were listened to and how they were able to play an active part in the development of the school as a Catholic community. One example of this work was the way in which the children were included in the development of the outdoor play area. The quality of outreach support provided by the school is absolutely outstanding. The charity work is a living example of this as children support CAFOD, St Joseph's Penny as well as providing on- going support to the local Mediquip group and a school in Uganda.

THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS GOOD

The school provides a wide variety of worship opportunities for pupils throughout the school including small and large groups – which are appropriate to their backgrounds and faith experiences. All children are provided with the opportunity to pray and reflect in a variety of settings. This was experienced during an uplifting celebration reflection on the theme of "Jesus as Light of the World" led by the school's prayer leaders. The school has strong links with the lay chaplain at All Saints High School, Rawtenstall where the

school community participate in a variety of masses and other liturgical celebrations. There are strong links between the parish and the school particularly with regard to the preparation of the children for the Sacraments of Initiation and the current celebration of the Jubilee Year of Mercy. The home, school and parish links are good. This is due to the commitment of the parish priest and headteacher to work together in order to ensure that the children receive the highest possible quality of Catholic education. Pupils are comfortable with their feelings and have a good and knowledgeable vocabulary. Each class has a special prayer focus. The children know many school prayers and compose powerful prayers for themselves. Attractive displays, which were seen around school, are used to show and stimulate prayer opportunities. The school's prayer leaders are beginning to have a real impact on the development of the prayer life of the school so that they becoming more effective at planning and leading prayer services.

THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS OUTSTANDING

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. Pupils are actively trained in outreach to the local community. This is seen in the way the school provides support for various charities so as to promote support for the Common Good. Examples of this are the regular fund-raising activities organised by the children to support not only the Catholic charities such as CAFOD and St Joseph's Penny but also Macmillan Cancer, Rossendale Hospice, Mediquip and a school in Uganda. 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 at St Joseph's thrive

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- To continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning in R.E. across the school so that there are consistently high expectations in all classes.
- To continue to provide additional support for non-Catholic staff so as to improve the teaching staff's knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith.
- To further enhance acts of collective worship so that they always include an appropriate scriptural reference.

Department for Formation, Office for Education

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making our visit to St Joseph'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. Joseph's is an outstanding Catholic 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 new revised 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 R.E. programme and are doing very 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 good and uplifting experiences. Your teachers have started to develop an excellent way of teaching R.E. using the 'Come and See' scheme and we have asked them to continue to develop this with you so as to help you all understand more about your faith and relationship with God. We have also suggested that the school continues to support those teachers who work with you and are not Catholic so that they continue to develop their knowledge of the Catholic faith.

God bless you all

Yours sincerely,

Mr A J Sowerby
Mrs J Frazer
(Section 48 Inspectors)

Department for Formation, Office for Education

Summary Report to Parents

On 22nd March 2016 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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