



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

St Mary's RC Primary is a smaller than average Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic primary school serving the needs of the parish community of St Mary's, Clayton-le-Moors, Accrington. The school is slowly expanding and there are currently 125 pupils on roll. Pupils come from a variety of social backgrounds and there are some areas of deprivation in the locality. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average at 40%. The number of pupils of ethnic minority heritage is well below national at approximately 8%. Attainment of children on entry to school is slightly below the national average. Standards in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 are in line with those of other children nationally. The school currently has 15% of children on the Special Needs Register. 60% of pupils are baptised Catholics. Six of the eight teachers are Catholic.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS GOOD**

St Mary's is a good Catholic primary school with many outstanding features and a deep commitment to the Church's mission in education. The school is well led by a very committed headteacher, a strong senior leadership team and staff, and an effective governing body. 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 the children. Teachers are embracing practical and creative approaches to teaching and learning, although this requires further development. Scripture is recognised as being important in the school and is clearly evident in the beautiful displays and prayer corners around school. Pupils have an outstanding knowledge of scripture and they know how to use the bible to extend their knowledge. The school's priority for those in the greatest need, raising achievement, inclusivity and personal development, ensures that all pupils receive a good education. The quality of welcome is a great strength of St Mary's and a warm, welcoming and inclusive atmosphere permeates the whole community. Staff are confident at leading prayer and worship. The children's response to prayer has a significant impact upon their treatment of one another, their whole approach to school life and the overall ethos of our school. The parish priest is particularly gifted in his ability to engage pupils during the weekly masses and during his visits. Staff and pupils are confident and secure in their witness to Christ, the Gospel and the teachings of the Church. Pupils spoke confidently about the importance of being a person of faith and how it impacts on their life.

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

- The spiritual leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. Alongside senior leaders and governors, she has led the school well and with an outstanding determination that has resulted in significant improvements.
- Staff and pupils demonstrate a very high level of respect for, care of and service to others. There is a strong sense of teamwork and support.
- Pupils' knowledge of scripture is outstanding.
- The quality of outreach to vulnerable families and pupils is outstanding.
- The pivotal role of the parish priest in fostering strong links between school, home and the parish.

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

The school's leadership, including that of the governors, demonstrates deep commitment to the Church's mission in education. The headteacher leads the school with an outstanding determination to improve standards and develop strong relationships. 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 the children. There is explicit evidence that the senior leadership team clearly prioritises pupils and families with the greatest needs. The governing body makes a highly significant contribution to the work and the Catholic life of the school. The chair of governors works closely with the headteacher. Together, they have highly rigorous systems for prioritising and evaluating the effectiveness of their work. Self-evaluation of the school's work at all levels is a coherent and an accurate reflection of monitoring and

self-challenge. With the support of the senior leadership team, the Religious Education subject leader has been involved in some monitoring activities, but this is an area that could be developed even further to ensure greater impact on outcomes. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is fully embedded across all areas of the curriculum. Leadership is not outstanding yet because the quality of teaching, subject leadership and worship are good, rather than outstanding.

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

Overall, the quality of teaching in Religious Education is good, with some outstanding features, leading to good achievement. The Religious Education scheme, The Way, The Truth and The Life is fully embedded and the school is currently introducing the 'Come and See' scheme in Y4 to enhance the curriculum. Teachers are embracing practical and creative approaches to teaching and learning, although this requires further development. Pupils have an outstanding knowledge of scripture and they know how to use the bible to extend their knowledge. They are confident when talking about God and their faith, and the impact this has on their relationship with others. Teaching and learning is characterised by good expectations and is well matched to the needs of all pupils. In the best lessons, the children were fully engaged in learning and the teacher asked challenging questions. Teaching Assistants had a positive impact on learning at each stage of the lesson. Evidence from observations and pupils' work books, show that children make at least good progress and in some classes progress is outstanding. Marking is having a positive impact on progress, but this could be further improved by ensuring consistency of approach. The school uses the diocesan guidelines 'World Religions and People of other Faiths' and celebrates the diversity of faiths and cultural backgrounds throughout the curriculum. Pupils' behaviour, sense of belonging to and ownership of the school is exemplary. The school prioritises Religious Education in its professional development programme. Links between home and school are strong and the parents, governors and children are proud to be part of St Mary's family.

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

The quality of welcome is a great strength of St Mary's and a warm, welcoming and inclusive atmosphere permeates the whole community. The school has dedicated loyal members of staff, some of whom have spent a large proportion of their career at St Mary's because they feel their contribution is valued. The staff reaches out to vulnerable members of the school community and they work extremely hard to ensure all pupils are cared for. The senior leadership team, with the support of the pastoral outreach worker, lead the inclusion agenda with outstanding determination so every child is heard, valued and included fully in all aspects of school life. Parents were extremely complimentary about the friendliness of staff and their sense of belonging to St Mary's. Systems for the induction of new pupils and staff are fully embedded. Parental involvement is a high priority and there are many occasions where parents are invited into school. The PTFA is a vibrant, well organised body that has raised a considerable amount of funds for school projects. Parents are extremely appreciative of all the things the school does to seek parental views and foster a family atmosphere. The personal welcome they receive from the headteacher on the playground, who knows every pupil's name, was singled out for particular praise. Parents also stated that since the current priest came to the parish, the home, school, parish partnership has been strengthened considerably. The parish and school share responsibility for supporting pupils through the Sacramental Programme. All members of staff demonstrate a keen sense of community affiliation and the quality of relationships exemplifies respect for all members of the school community.

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

Staff and pupils demonstrate a very high level of care and respect for others. The school places a high priority on supporting vulnerable pupils and parents spoke highly of the quality of the support they receive from the whole school staff. The school provides a variety of activities to ensure pupils are nurtured and cared for including a before school nurture club and additional support for vulnerable pupils. The school's pastoral welfare worker is developing good relationships with families and ensures pupils receive the additional support they need to thrive in school. The PSHE curriculum incorporates sex and relationship

education, drugs awareness and how to stay safe. Pupils are confident that if they have any problems they can speak to a member of staff and that any problems will be dealt with sympathetically. Pupils resolve conflicts intelligently and seek consensus whilst accepting the rights of others to hold different opinions and beliefs. Teachers are approachable and parents feel able to talk with them about issues that concern them and their concerns are dealt with effectively. The quality of transition and induction are such that all pupils quickly feel part of the school community, particularly those children who transfer from other schools. The school promotes high attendance and punctuality. All safeguarding procedures are in place and staff receive regular training. Pupil voice is of high priority. Pupils are represented by the school council, eco team, prefects, the chaplaincy team and they all have their own action plans. There is a genuine concern from all staff for the welfare of all pupils and every individual is valued and nurtured.

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

The leadership of the school take an active role in the provision and training of staff for prayer, worship and liturgy. Staff are confident at leading prayer and worship. The children's response to it has a significant impact upon their treatment of one another, their whole approach to school life and the overall ethos of our school. There are regular Liturgical celebrations throughout the school year including a May Procession, Christingle service, Easter reflections, school masses and other special services. The pupils have developed a good knowledge of traditional prayers and the mass. The Parish Priest is particularly gifted in his ability to engage pupils during the weekly masses and during his visits. Families are actively encouraged to share in worship and are welcomed to share in the masses and assemblies, which are frequently animated through the use of dance, drama and modern hymns. Opportunities for silent prayer are offered during whole school and classroom worship. The school chaplaincy team is leading new initiatives to enhance the spiritual life of the school and support the faith journey of younger pupils. They have a special area at the entrance of the school where they provide opportunities for children to write prayers. In the future, they are planning to convert the nurture room into a prayer room. During classroom worship, pupils confidently and spontaneously prayed for their own intentions. Classroom worship activities could be enhanced even further by providing more opportunities for pupils to plan and lead prayer activities in school. This has been started with the lunchtime rosary group and the work of the chaplaincy team.

### **THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS GOOD**

Staff and pupils are confident and secure in their witness to Christ, the Gospel and the teachings of the Church. Pupils are given a range of opportunities to lead including the School Council, Eco group, prefects and the chaplaincy team. The eco group is beginning to look at new initiatives such as involvement in CAFOD's 'Live Simply' pledge aimed at promoting a fairer world. All children engage in Forest School activities which enables the children to appreciate God's wonderful world. The school gives generously to those in need within school and beyond; and the support for families in difficulty is exceptional. The staff place pupils at the centre of the school's Mission and encourage them to reach out to those in need. The work of charities such as CAFOD, CARITAS, Children in Need, 'Action Cambodia', Mary's Meals Backpacks and the poppy appeal are fully supported. The chaplaincy team play an active role within the school and alongside Father Derek, they plan masses and contribute to assemblies. The Parish Priest fosters strong links between school, home and the parish. Staff and pupils clearly demonstrate witness to justice, compassion, reconciliation, love and forgiveness. The behaviour of pupils is exemplary. A strong sense of belonging to the school community exists and staff are committed to building upon the strong partnership between school, parish and home. Pupils spoke confidently about the importance of being a person of faith and how it impacts on their life.

### **AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:**

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning in RE lessons by:
  - A) enabling pupils to be creative, independent and reflective learners;

- B) ensuring pupils are aware of the next steps in learning through target setting and effective marking.
- Greater opportunities for pupils to lead prayer and worship with all members of the community, including home and parish.

Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2015

Dear Pupils

Thank you so much for the wonderful welcome you gave us when we came to visit you. We really enjoyed learning about all the wonderful things you do at St Mary's; the breakfast club, school council, prefects, chaplaincy team, Eco group and forest school activities. You and your teachers are working so hard to always do your very best and as a result your work in Religious Education lessons is good.

We really enjoyed watching your lessons because your teachers planned such interesting activities for you. You have excellent teachers and teaching assistants who are helping you to achieve a good standard in everything you do. We were extremely impressed with your knowledge of the Word of God and bible stories. We were also impressed by the way you look after each other, your behaviour and the way you help those in need.

We particularly enjoyed participating in your collective worship and watching you recreate the story of Pentecost. The chaplaincy team are doing a wonderful job helping in assemblies, encouraging you to prayer and support charities. Through your charity work you show that you care for others in the wider community.

We would like to ask your teachers to continue working with you on prayer in the future with more opportunities for you to lead prayer activities. Your teachers are keen to help you develop your learning further by making changes in your Religious Education lessons.

God bless you all

Yours sincerely

Mrs Susan Gedzielewski and Mrs Pam Macro  
(Section 48 Inspectors)

## Summary Report to Parents

On 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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