

**INSPECTION REPORT**

**St. Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School Langho**

---

Inspection date 1<sup>st</sup> July 2014

Reporting Inspectors Julie Frazer - Lead Inspector  
 Jackie McNally -Additional Inspector

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

---

Type of School Primary  
 URN 119642  
 Age range of pupils 4 -11years  
 Number on roll 260  
 Appropriate authority The Governing Body  
 Chair of Governors Mrs. A. Corban  
 Headteacher Mrs. J. Malone  
 Religious Education Co-ordinator Mrs. J. Beaghan  
 Date of previous inspection January 2009

---

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades  1 = Outstanding  2 = Good  3=Requires Improvement  4 = Inadequate
Overall effectiveness of the school	2	
The quality of Catholic Leadership	1	
The quality of the Word of God community	2	
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. Mary's is a larger than average Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic Primary School, admitting 90% baptised Roman Catholic pupils. There are currently 260 pupils on roll and the admission number is 40; the great majority of pupils are White British (93%) and there are very few pupils whose first language is not English. The proportion of pupils supported by Pupil Premium is below the national average (3%). The percentage of pupils supported at School Action, School Action Plus or with a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN), including those with disabilities is below the national average; with no children having a Statement of SEN. The school population is generally stable with little movement in or out of school once the children have entered in the Foundation Stage.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS GOOD WITH MANY OUTSTANDING FEATURES**

St. Mary's is a good Catholic school with many outstanding features. It is very successful in offering its learners a holistic education in a warm and supportive environment. The school community, very well supported by the governing body and the Parish Priest, works very hard to ensure the pastoral and spiritual needs of all learners are met. Very positive relationships are evident throughout the whole school community and this is a particular strength of the school. The strong spiritual commitment of the Head Teacher, together with the hard work and dedication of the staff, has created a culture in which Gospel values are clearly evident. Pupils and staff are proud to belong to St. Mary's School Community and the children clearly enjoy coming to school. They are confident learners who are friendly, polite and welcoming; their behaviour both in and out of lessons is very good and they were particularly respectful when going into and out of the whole school assembly. The school works extremely hard to fulfil its Mission Statement; everyone is encouraged "To be the best that we can be".

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

**The strong relationships between all members of the school community, including the Parish Priest.**

**Governance is a particular strength of the school, providing outstanding levels of challenge and support.**

**The Head Teacher shows a clear commitment to high aspirations for this Catholic school; she genuinely wants only the best for the children and is prepared to work wholeheartedly to make the school as good as it can be.**

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

Governors have an outstanding commitment to the church's mission in education and this is a clear priority for them in this school. They know where the strengths of the school are and they know what needs to be done to further improve provision for the children and they work with the senior leadership team to secure these improvements. They place the children at the heart of all their decision making and vision for the school. Leadership shows clear witness to the Gospel values and the commitment to meet the needs of all the children, regardless of disability or other perceived barriers to learning within the school. The Head Teacher demonstrates a clear vision, supported by the Chair of Governors, which is that the school will strive to meet the needs of the whole child so that each one has a positive experience of life in a Catholic school. St. Mary's will provide the firm foundations that the children will need in their next stages of learning and for the rest of their lives beyond education.

In order to improve further, the role of the newly appointed RE subject leader needs to be supported so that she is rigorously monitoring work and RE lesson to secure improvement.

### **THE QUALITY OF THE WORD OF GOD COMMUNITY is GOOD**

The quality of the word of God community is good overall. Quality of lessons taught is good with some teachers having good subject knowledge and all teachers are able to engage in meaningful discussions with the children in their class. The children are very confident in asking the 'big' questions and on occasion they are asked to try and find the answers for themselves either through research or debating with other children. The children clearly enjoy their lessons and are engaged in their learning. There are high expectations made of the children and they are challenged during the lessons and therefore they are able to make good progress. The Word of God is clearly evidenced in the lessons; however, some teachers are a little over reliant on the published scheme of work which is in place in the school. They need to develop the confidence to use the scheme as a starting point for more creative activities and learning; this could possibly be achieved by undertaking whole school CPD with this as its focus. 'Next steps' marking has been introduced and is being effective in enhancing pupils' learning. Classrooms have appropriate foci for worship, however this could be further supported by dedicated RE displays within classes. Pupils' learning could be further enhanced by providing more opportunities for differentiation in their work in RE. Within the Foundation Stage, it might be more helpful to create whole class evidence books rather than individual work books for each child. This would allow the teacher to have greater freedom to focus on pupils' learning through planned experiences without children having to record their individual work.

### **THE QUALITY OF THE WELCOME COMMUNITY is OUTSTANDING**

St Mary's School provides a very warm, welcoming and inclusive environment where committed staff have high expectations of the pupils. The strong welcoming tradition of the school is maintained through deep faith commitment and a genuine supporting ethos from all staff, children, governors and members of the clergy. A shared knowledge and understanding of Christian beliefs and gospel values support the school's distinctive ethos. The school welcomes parents and grandparents into assemblies on a weekly basis and the Head Teacher is a visible presence in and around the school. The Parish Priest celebrates Mass with the children of different classes on a very regular basis, after which he frequently invites the children into the presbytery for refreshments and the opportunity to share a light-hearted conversation with him. His hope is that this experience will encourage the children to return to the presbytery, confidently in their future lives. Staff and children are happy in the school. They share the love of Christ readily with visitors, communicate very confidently and show a very real desire to involve everyone in the life of the school.

Respect for the dignity of the individual is clearly evident across the school. The caring ethos and the development of pupils' personal qualities are of paramount importance to the staff and Governors. The introduction of 'Seeds and Gardeners' - a 'buddying' system for year six and Reception class children has been particularly successful.

The school constantly strives to find ways of engaging all members of the community. Staff, children, parents and Governors identify strongly with the school. Those interviewed stated that they were proud to belong to St. Mary's community. Children interviewed said that their opinions were asked for and subsequently valued and acted upon.

### **THE QUALITY OF THE WELFARE COMMUNITY is OUTSTANDING**

Staff and children demonstrate a very high level of care and respect for others and there are excellent relationships between staff and pupils. 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. There is a genuine concern from all staff for the welfare of all pupils and every individual is valued and nurtured; this was recognised and praised by the parents. The children said they rarely have any worries but if they did have minor friendship issues they felt they could talk to any member of staff. The children particularly valued the support provided by the learning mentor.

The school has an effective induction programme for new pupils and this helps them to feel welcomed into the school community. In the 'Seeds and Gardeners' initiative the Year 6 children take responsibility for a

Reception child, helping them to grow and develop in confidence during their first year in school. The children were extremely enthusiastic about this initiative and many of the KS2 children said they were looking forward to undertaking this responsibility in Year 6. The older children undertake a range of responsibilities and are excellent role models for younger children. The pupils spoke about how much they enjoyed being at school and how they valued their friends.

Children learn that it is important to help others, particularly those less fortunate than themselves and they take an active role in the organisation of fund raising events. The school supports local, national and international causes and has a link with a school in Kenya. Members of the school council are enthusiastic about their responsibilities and feel that their opinions and suggestions are valued by the school. The children were able to talk about how they had made a positive contribution to the stewardship of creation through their responsibility for garden areas and recycling projects.

#### **THE QUALITY OF THE WORSHIP COMMUNITY 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. During the day there are a range of opportunities for worship through prayers, hymns and times for reflection. The staff, parents and children all commented upon the excellent support provided by the Parish Priest who is a regular visitor to the school and it is clear that they value the contribution he makes to the school. The children particularly enjoy sharing refreshments in the presbytery with Fr Leo after mass as this makes them feel welcomed into the church. In each classroom there is a focal point for worship but the school now needs to ensure that there is also a display of the children's work in Religious Education in each classroom.

The collective worship and school assembly observed were excellent examples of the quality of worship within the school. The class based collective worship was of a high quality and provided the children with the opportunity to pray in a calm, reflective environment. The children were able to talk about how they were involved in the planning and organisation of collective worship and they clearly enjoy this responsibility. Music is a particular strength of the school and throughout the day the children used their beautiful voices to praise God through song. The school Mission Statement is shared and understood by the whole school community.

#### **THE QUALITY OF THE WITNESS COMMUNITY is OUTSTANDING**

As evidenced in the paragraphs above, 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 members to be pro-active citizens who contribute to the decision-making processes at a local and national level. The school has become linked to a school in Kenya (Our Lady Queen of Peace) and have been involved in fund raising for that community. The children were keen to speak about the money they have raised being used to provide fishing boats which are essential for them.

An explicit Catholic culture permeates the whole school and is clearly identifiable through relationships, decision-making and actions. The impact of the Mission Statement is evident and tangible across the school community, through the implementation of policies and procedures and the high expectations of all. The Governing Body is very effective in undertaking its role of leading the school and developing it as a Catholic Community.

Staff and children clearly 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. There was a particular emphasis placed on forgiveness as the children said a lovely prayer which clearly had ready forgiveness as part of their daily lives.

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

- To move towards being more creative in the delivery of RE lessons and avoid over reliance on the scheme of work; possibly by undertaking whole school CPD with this focus.
- To ensure that the 5Ws are known and understood throughout the school population.
- To ensure that the newly appointed subject leader for RE undertakes regular monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching in order to bring about continuous improvements. Continuing with initiatives already introduced within and across the whole school.

1<sup>st</sup> September 2014

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making my visit to St Mary's so enjoyable when I came to inspect your school for the Bishop. I really enjoyed being with you. Thank you for looking after me so well and helping me to feel very welcome. St Mary's is a good school and many areas of what you do individually and together are outstanding.

I enjoyed being part of your lessons and was sorry not to see everyone. Thank you for showing me so much of your work and activities. I could see that you are very proud of your school and all that you have achieved together. I was particularly impressed that you thought that the most important part of your learning and life together was that you know and strive to attain your Mission Statement 'To be the best the best that we can be'. I know the Bishop will be delighted to hear this.

Your teachers are really helping you to learn well and I was very impressed by your excellent relationships and good behaviour. It was good to see your positive relationships with each other and with your teachers throughout the school and the special way you make everyone feel valued. This is a true reflection of being part of a Catholic community where everyone is welcome and has a place.

You are using your RE programme and are doing well with this and your teachers are going to help you to enjoy your lessons even more, by introducing role play and similar exciting activities into your lessons. I was most impressed by the way you all participated so beautifully in your whole school worship at the start of the day and I particularly enjoyed listening to you singing your special hymn 'We Come to Your Feast'. You have a very good knowledge and understanding of your faith and you enjoy coming to school and learning in your lessons.

God bless you all and have a really happy start to the new school year.

Yours sincerely

Mrs. Julie Frazer  
(Section 48 Inspector)

## Summary Report to Parents

On 1<sup>st</sup> July 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 Mary's is a good Catholic school with many outstanding features. It is very successful in offering its learners a holistic Catholic education in a warm, friendly and supportive environment. The school community, very well supported by the governing body and the Parish Priest, works very hard to ensure the pastoral and spiritual needs of all learners are met. The school is firmly at the heart of the parish it serves. Very positive relationships are evident throughout the whole school community.

The strong spiritual commitment of the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team, together with the hard work and dedication of the staff, has created a culture in which Gospel values are clearly evident and all are encouraged to "have life and have it to the full" (John 10:10). Pupils and staff are proud to belong to St Mary's school community. They enjoy coming to school and have high expectations of themselves and others. They are friendly, polite and welcoming and the behaviour of pupils at all times is good.

The prayer life of the school is a particular strength. The school offers its learners a wide variety of opportunities to develop their talents. As affirmed in its Mission Statement, the school helps all members of its community 'To be the best that we can be'.

### THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- The strong relationships between all members of the school community, including the Parish Priest.
- Governance is a particular strength of the school, providing outstanding levels of challenge and support.
- The Head Teacher shows a clear commitment to high aspirations for this Catholic school; she genuinely wants only the best for the children and is prepared to work wholeheartedly to make the school as good as it can be.

### AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- To move towards being more creative in the delivery of RE lessons possibly by undertaking whole school development with this focus.
- To ensure that the 5Ws are known and understood throughout the school population.
- To ensure that the newly appointed subject leader for RE undertakes regular monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching in order to bring about continuous improvements. And to continue with initiatives already introduced within and across the whole school.