

INSPECTION REPORT

St Mary's RCPS, Belgrave Street, Radcliffe, Manchester. M26 4DG

Inspection date 17th January 2017
 Reporting Inspector Mr J Thorpe and Miss S Molloy
 Inspection carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School Catholic Primary
 URN 105353
 Age range of pupils 3 to 11 yrs
 Number on roll 453
 Appropriate authority The Governing Body
 Chair of Governors Mr D Simpson
 Headteacher Mr P Heaton
 Religious Education Subject Leader Mrs A Garrity
 Ethos Co-ordinator Mrs R Gerrard
 Date of previous inspection January 2012

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

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

St Mary's is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school in the Diocese of Salford serving the parish of St Mary and St Philip Neri, Radcliffe. Pupils come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds, many of the pupils live in the area surrounding the school. This is a large school with 453 pupils on roll, 93% are baptised Roman Catholics. The Admission Number is 60. Pupils are taught in traditional age groups with 2 classes in each year group. 10% of pupils are eligible for free school meals (FSM) and Pupil Premium grant which is below the national average. 13% of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs or disability (SEND) of some kind, none of these pupils have Education, Health Care Plans. 1 pupil is in the care of the local authority (CLA). The majority of pupils are of white British heritage (88%). The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups (6.3%) is below the national average (20.1%), as is the proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language (6%). There are 18 teachers including the headteacher, 8 of these teachers are Roman Catholics, all hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies. There are 10 teachers who are not of the Catholic faith.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS GOOD

St Mary's is a good school with several outstanding features. In recent times the school has faced significant challenges which are now being successfully addressed. The school is now benefiting from a period of stability. The many good features of the school clearly indicate that there is much to celebrate whilst recognising the key areas for development. The school has to be applauded for its efforts this academic year; the school has appointed new members of staff, internally re-deployed staff, introduced a new religious education (RE) scheme and a new literacy scheme. The school has a strong Catholic ethos and successfully offers its pupils a traditional Catholic education, in which diversity is welcomed and celebrated. It is a happy school, pupils enjoy their learning. Throughout the day pupil behaviour was exceptional. Parents are supportive of what the school is doing for their children. Teaching observed ranged from good to outstanding, most groups of pupils, including those with SEND, were seen to be making good progress. In some classes accelerated progress was evident, but this is not typical of all classes. The school has recognised the variation in standards of teaching and the need for raising achievement of pupils throughout the school and in particular the most able pupils. Staff demonstrate a clear sense of purpose, all have worked hard to create an ethos where everyone recognises the need to work together. Teaching is supported by teaching assistants and efficient administrative staff. Ongoing formation and training of the governing body is planned that will enable governors to continue to offer appropriate support to school improvement.

KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- Children's behaviour and politeness are excellent.
- The relationships and care for all within the school are outstanding.
- Sacred Scripture across all year groups is recognised as being important in St Mary's.
- The welcome offered to all and the respect, dignity and care shown to every individual within the community is clearly evident and articulated.
- Parents value the commitment of the school to support and develop their children's and their own faith.

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS GOOD

The quality of the leadership of the Catholic life of the school is good. The headteacher, deputy head teacher, RE subject leader and ethos leader are committed to providing Catholic leadership for the whole school. Priority has been given to the delivery of the 'Come and See' scheme, staff training for its delivery has taken place, future training features as a priority in the school improvement plan(SIP). This involves Kerygma training provided by the Diocese for teachers who are not of the Catholic faith. The SIP shows the governing body makes finance available for the purchase of resources. Lesson observations, book scrutinies, learning walks, moderations and assessments

are all making contributions to improvements. Progress could be more closely monitored and evaluated if the plans were costed, timescales made specific and impact measured. The governing body fulfils its role well in respect of its Catholic foundation, it has a good and developing knowledge of its school, it receives regular reports from the leadership team. It plans to further develop the knowledge, skills and understanding of new governors. The governing body ensures the school places the pupils at the very heart of its decision making and its vision for the school. Pupils across the school are eager to further develop their leadership roles as school councillors, members of the GIFT team, prefects etc. Many are ready to take advantage of greater opportunities to develop their responsibility to plan, prepare and present acts of prayer and worship. The parish priest is a regular and valued visitor to the school who is committed to supporting the religious welfare of all pupils.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORD OF GOD IS GOOD

The school mission statement has been reviewed recently and is to be reviewed in spring 2017. Inspectors feel that consideration could be given to reducing the length of the pupil version by focusing on key words/phrases that can be used to encourage everyone to do their best. A mission statement book in each class could be used in which staff and pupils record how they are meeting the challenges of the statement. This is of course a school decision. Teachers plan their RE lessons well, as a result the quality of teaching across the school is good, in some cases outstanding. In the best lessons; speaking and listening were encouraged, discussion was promoted, the classroom environment reflected high standards of religious literacy and differentiation was evident in planning, delivery and outcome. Good subject knowledge enabled teachers to deliver imaginative lessons that maximised pupil interest. In one class ICT was used to support learning, teacher's questions probed pupil knowledge, skills and understanding. Misconceptions and errors were skilfully turned into learning opportunities. Pupils were clearly achieving at a high level. The use of Big Question books in each class should serve to encourage the development of higher order questioning. In some classes insufficient differentiation meant that the needs of some pupils was not being met and there were limited opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. The standard of work in RE books is in line with standards in literacy books. Marking is consistent across the school with teachers providing clear feedback and the next steps in learning; firm evidence that RE is of paramount importance. Attention to spiritual, moral, cultural and social (SMSC) shows pupils are being taught to challenge injustice and respond to those in need. Monitoring, tracking and assessment of RE is an area of continuing development. RE is well funded and resourced and receives the required 10% of curriculum time.

THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING

St Mary's provides a warm, welcoming and inclusive environment. Pupils and staff foster a strong sense of belonging and clearly understand the importance of welcoming others into their community. Parents, pupils, staff and governors spoke positively about the welcome all visitors receive. Pupils receive a warm welcome from staff each day as they enter school. The parents spoken with said they always feel welcome coming into school and that their children are happy in school. They very much appreciate the 'open door' policy that enables them to communicate with the teachers almost daily. Parent workshops, transition meetings and parent's evenings take place throughout the year and are always well attended. Throughout the year parents are invited to school to share all celebrations. New families benefit from home visits, visits to school before entry and if requested, individual tours of the school. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Pupils and staff were friendly, polite and well-mannered towards the inspectors throughout the day. Families with other faiths are welcomed into the school community, their faith traditions are respected; it is clear that diversity and difference are valued and celebrated. As a result of the strong Catholic ethos the pupils show respect and consideration for all, the importance of the dignity of the individual is clearly evident. Upper Key Stage 2 pupils were observed discussing with considerable maturity and empathy 'big questions' such as homelessness and refugees. The school adopts a holistic approach to ensure the pupils social, emotional and cultural needs are catered for. The school has strong links with the parish, welcoming parishioners and members of the wider community to its celebrations thus establishing solid relationships and lasting partnerships. Newsletters, information about the curriculum, class targets and school activities are all published on the school website.

THE QUALITY OF WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING

Staff and pupils demonstrate a high level of respect for the care and service of others. Teachers speak calmly to pupils, no raised voices were heard during the day of inspection. This contributes significantly to the welfare and well-being of pupils and staff. The school commitment to child protection and safeguarding keeps the whole community safe. Throughout the school good practice is observed which allows pupils to feel safe, well cared for and encourages pupils to adopt safe practices themselves. Pupils interviewed were able to say why they feel safe in school. When asked about bullying pupils stated that it was not an issue as they know exactly what to do should there be any incidents about which they feel concerned. Pupils are confident that any concerns they might have will be dealt with promptly by any of the adults in school. Pupils are encouraged to make the correct choices, they are confident to express their opinions and know these will be valued. This is producing pupils that are caring with a keen sense of right and wrong. This was particularly noticeable in some Key Stage 2 classes when pupils questioned their teachers on matters relating to 'sharing the good news,' and the characteristics of an apostle (How did Judas get into the group?). Teachers answered these questions sensitively and in an age appropriate manner. The Christ centred ethos is loving and positive thus fostering understanding, empathy and forgiveness which was a regular feature of upper Key Stage 2 classes. Nurture and intervention groups offer a range of support to those pupils identified as having additional and differentiated needs. The school is about to review its current sex and relationship education (SRE) provision. The school employs a teaching assistant at lunchtime to support the emotional well-being of vulnerable pupils and to encourage positive interaction.

THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS GOOD

Examples of quality prayer and worship are to be found around the school, clearly it is an important aspect of school life. In all classrooms there is a prayer focus area that provides pupils with opportunities for spontaneous prayer and reflection. The opportunities to worship promote a strong community and a sense of service to each other. The planning and provision for prayer in the school is being enhanced by the use of 'prayer partners' in Year 4 to support Year 3 pupils on the Sacramental Programme. The added dimension of the use of Year 6 Pupil Prayer and Ethos Leaders (PPELs) in the school is further enhancing the provision. The RE subject leader and ethos leader have plans to replace this group with a GIFT team by Easter 2017. Prayer and worship would be further enhanced by giving the GIFT team more responsibility to plan, compose and present their own worship in classes across the school, as part of whole school services, liturgies led by the parish priest and para liturgies throughout the year. The prayer and worship observed by the inspectors had a tendency to be over reliant on the teachers. In a Key Stage 1 class pupils listened to an account of the presentation of Jesus and re-counted the story accurately and reflected upon 'This baby will bring light and joy to the world.' Appropriate vocabulary was used, pupils were developing a prayerful relationship with God. EYFS pupils respectfully prayed, sang, identified items to be found in church and reflected on celebrations and peace. Pupils in a Key Stage 2 assembly sat attentively and respectfully, some read clearly and all sang enthusiastically. In all classrooms pupils recited traditional prayers. Older pupils showed a developing religious literacy and an impressive maturity that suggests they are ready for greater, more demanding challenges.

THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS GOOD

Displays on corridors and classrooms reflect the commitment of staff and pupils to their Catholic faith. They show prayers, celebrate pupil's achievement whilst following the liturgical year. Adults act as role models of the school's mission and values. Gospel values are explicit around the school, staff and pupils share the Wednesday Word each week, the Gospels are known, understood and witnessed by all. Pupils and staff were confident and willing to speak about their faith. Relationships are very strong, a sense of teamwork is evident. The school community knows its responsibilities in terms of equal opportunities, reconciliation and Christian stewardship. Pupils display a consistent approach to judging actions as fair or unfair, right or wrong, older pupils were able to recognise and talk about injustice. In an upper Key Stage 2 class pupils showed considerable maturity when discussing current issues such as the crisis in Syria, homelessness, on-line bullying, the Bible message of bringing light to darkness, joy to sadness. Pupils understand it is possible for us to act as agents of change. These pupils were enjoying articulating their faith in action whilst being encouraged to do so by their teacher. In some classes pupils were not so enthusiastically engaged, teachers retained total control, pupils had very little responsibility for their learning and work was not sufficiently differentiated. The current provision for chaplaincy is developing through the PPEL's, in

the immediate future pupils will undergo appropriate training and a GIFT team will be established. This could be an ideal opportunity for the school to embrace the full range of chaplaincy provision starting with the submission of pupil applications, interviews, presentations etc. thus facilitating the pupil's confidence in witnessing to their faith. Parents appreciate that school continues to celebrate many of the church traditions and that the pupils are encouraged to learn traditional prayers. There are many charitable activities undertaken each year where the school witnesses to a commitment to the Gospel.

AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- Continue to develop pupils' leadership skills in prayer and worship through the work of the Pupil Prayer and Ethos Leaders (PPELs) who will soon be commissioned as members of the GIFT Pupil Chaplaincy Team.
- To more firmly embed and develop still further the Religious Education curriculum using the recently introduced 'Come and See' scheme so that good and outstanding practice is always evident across all classes.
- To challenge pupils in all age groups to adopt a more thorough engagement with the 'Big Questions' relating to the purpose and meaning of life.

Date: 17th January 2017

Dear Pupils,

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us and for making our visit to St Mary's such a memorable occasion, we really enjoyed our time with you. Everybody in your school is inspired by the teachings of Jesus Christ and work very hard to always do their best; because of this your school is a good Catholic school.

We enjoyed sharing your lessons with you and listening to you telling us about all the wonderful things you do in St Mary's. We saw as many of you as possible and we are sorry if we missed any of you. We learned lots by reading your RE books, we were impressed with your work on the walls in your classrooms and on the corridors. It was clear to us that you have a good knowledge and understanding of your Catholic faith.

You are obviously very proud of your school. We felt very comfortable to be with so many polite and well-mannered pupils wanting to succeed, looking out for each other and behaving so outstandingly well all day.

All the adults at St Mary's are extremely proud of what you have achieved and are determined that you and your school will continue to get better and better. To continue the improvement a new GIFT team is to be established quite soon (your teachers will give you the details) that should enable you to develop your roles as leaders of your faith across the school. In addition, the 'Come and See' RE scheme will be used to further develop the already very good knowledge and understanding of you and your teachers.

Enjoy the rest of the school year!

Yours sincerely,

Mr John Thorpe and Miss Sue Molloy
(Section 48 Inspectors)

Summary Report to Parents

On 17th January 2017 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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