

INSPECTION REPORT

St. Michael & St. John R.C. Primary School, Lowergate, Clitheroe. BB7 1AG

Inspection date 9th March 2016

Reporting Inspectors Mr Andrew Sowerby
Mrs Pam Macro

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

Type of School Roman Catholic Primary
 URN 119644
 Age range of pupils 4-11 years
 Number on roll 188
 Appropriate authority The Governing Body
 Chair of Governors Mr Martin Nolan
 Headteacher Mrs Zoe Mabbott
 Religious Education Subject Leader Miss Anita Britnell
 Date of previous inspection October 2010

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 Michael & St John's Roman Catholic Primary School is a smaller than average-sized school which is one of the three schools that currently serve the parish of Our Lady of the Valley, Clitheroe. The number on roll is 188 of whom 176 are baptised Catholics. Children come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds; with 90% of them coming from white British heritage families whilst the remaining are predominantly from Eastern European countries. There are currently 15 pupils from differing ethnic groups and for whom English is a second language. 8.7% of children are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average and 13% of pupils have SEND which is also below the national average. 22 children are also eligible for the Pupil Premium. There are 10 teachers (including the headteacher) plus 8 teaching learning support staff and a temporary apprentice. 8 of the 10 teachers (80%) are Catholic as well as 5 of the 8 learning support staff.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St Michael and St John's is an outstanding Catholic Primary school. One is immediately struck by the incredible warmth of welcome that the school provides. All children are provided with a Catholic education in a caring and supportive environment where individual needs are exceptionally well catered for. The pupils take great pride in the school which is fully inclusive. The Word of God is exceptionally central to the life of the school. This ensures the pastoral and spiritual needs of all families and children are very well met. The passionate headteacher, enthusiastic R.E. Co-ordinator and Senior Leadership Team have very high expectations of adults and children. Together with the hard working staff they have created an ethos where everyone recognises the need to work together in order to ensure that the needs of everyone are catered for. Evidence of this was seen in the outstanding support provided to both local and national charities as well as the wonderful acts of collective worship that the school's pupil chaplains help to plan and deliver. 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 governors.
- The strong and inclusive links with the parish of Our Lady of the Valley.
- The role of the pupil chaplains which helps to ensure that there are high quality acts of collective worship.
- 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 QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

Determined and dedicated leadership from the headteacher, supported by the Senior Leadership Team and R.E. subject leader along with a knowledgeable and supportive Governing Body ensures that the Catholic Leadership of the school is outstanding. 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 R.E. subject leader work alongside the priests of the parish in order to ensure that the children are provided with wonderful reflective and engaging acts of collective worship. The Senior Leadership Team supports the headteacher in ensuring that all agreed policies are implemented across the school so that there is a great sense of teamwork. Along with the other staff they 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. This could be seen particularly in those lessons where children were either challenged to implement the Gospel message in their own lives or to compare and contrast our Catholic beliefs with those of other faiths and civilisations. Examples of this were seen in the quality of discussion focused on the beliefs of the Viking invaders and as to whether Jesus actually walked on water. 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 further embed this and develop appropriate assessment activities that relate more closely to the work covered. Standards in R.E. are high as in other subjects. The school's structured programme of R.E. assessments are due to be enhanced so that they accurately match the changes in the school's R.E. curriculum.

THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING

St. Michael & St John'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. This, they said, was due to the very approachable headteacher and staff. The development of the school's new Mission Statement included all members of the school community and demonstrates how well the school makes all its stakeholders feel welcome. There is a holistic approach to ensure that children's emotional, social and cultural needs are very well cared for. Children love coming to school. As one child put it, "I love school and hate to stay off." Parents also spoke very clearly about the high quality communication the school provides as well as the varied programme of curriculum workshops and social events so that everyone is well informed and included.

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. Michael and St John'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 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. Relationships at St Michael and St John's are of the highest quality. 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. The quality of outreach support provided by the school is absolutely outstanding as not only senior leaders but all members of the community of St. Michael and St John's live out the gospel message to care for others in their service to the community. 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 foodbank and the Heartstart group in Clitheroe.

THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

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 of the Holy Mass on the theme of forgiveness which included the performance of a memorable mime by the Pupil Chaplains. The school also provides opportunities for voluntary prayer such

as the Stations of the Cross during Lent. These opportunities allow the children to experience a moment of quietness in the hustle and bustle of everyday school life. The school has strong links with the parish of Our Lady of the Valley 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. High quality acts of worship are planned by the pupil chaplains. The home, school and parish links are inclusive, creative and effective. This is in many ways due to the commitment of the two priests of the parish 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. Hymns, music and singing enhance the quality and enjoyment of prayer in school. The Pupil Chaplains have had a real impact on the development of the prayer life of the school so that the children are now very 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 promotes 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 but also the local foodbank, Mary's Meals, HCPT, The Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child and the Sally Hickling Trust. An explicit Catholic culture permeates the whole school and is clearly identifiable through relationships, decision-making and actions. Relationships are outstanding at St Michael and St John's and a strong sense of teamwork and belonging exist. 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 Michael's and St John's really thrive.

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- To embed the newly introduced 'Come and See' scheme across the school so as to further enhance the R.E. Curriculum.
- To review the school's structured programme of R.E. Assessments so that they accurately match the changes in the school's enhanced R.E. curriculum.

Department for Formation, Office for Education

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making our visit to St Michael & 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. Michael and St John'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 very 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.

God bless you all and have a really happy Easter holiday.

Yours sincerely,

Mr A J Sowerby
Mrs P. Macro
(Section 48 Inspectors)

Department for Formation, Office for Education

Summary Report to Parents

On 9th 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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