

Inspection date March 29 -30th 2012

Reporting Inspector Sister Judith Russi SSMN

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

Type of School Catholic Primary
 URN 105826
 Age range of pupils 3-11 years
 Number on roll 276
 Appropriate authority The Governing Body
 Chair of Governors Mrs Elizabeth Skilling
 Headteacher Mr Jeremy Morgan
 Date of previous inspection 200.....

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades
Overall effectiveness of the school	2	
Spirituality	Statement	
The quality of the Word of God community	2	1 = Outstanding
The quality of the Welcome community	1	2 = Good
The quality of Welfare	1	3 = Satisfactory
The quality of Worship	2	
The quality of Witness	1	
<i>The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements</i>		

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St John's is an average sized Catholic primary school which welcomes all children from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. 58.3% of pupils are Catholic. The social, cultural and religious diversity of the school calls for a high level of support for families and pupils, many of whom are in the early stages of learning English. Whilst the proportion of pupils with special needs is in line with the national average the number of pupils eligible for free school meals is significantly higher.

The school enjoys very close links with the local Parish Priest, playing an important role in the daily life of the school. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to be actively involved and always welcome in the school.

The Governing Body are active, exercising their role as critical friend in a supportive way. They clearly know their school well and demonstrate their desire to be fully engaged with the leadership of the school.

The new school hall provides a much needed extra space and allows for the development of the EYFS provision which is now accommodated in the previous hall space.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a good Catholic school with many outstanding or excellent features. The Headteacher, supported by the senior leadership team and governors, leads the school with a clear vision and sense of purpose recognising the dignity and value of every member of the community. The school's inclusivity, passion for learning and personal development ensures that all pupils receive an integrated Gospel based formation and education.

Parents expressed a high level of commitment to the school because it is a Catholic school recognising that their children were respected and valued for their unique gifts and qualities.

Improvement since the last inspection.

St John's has made significant progress in many areas since the last inspection and is well on the way to be outstanding in all areas. Relationships and pupil behaviour have achieved an exceptionally high level. The Rights Respecting Schools initiative has contributed positively to this.

What the school has agreed to do to improve further:

1. Further develop the areas of Word and Worship so that they achieve the outstanding grade.
2. Continue to develop the 5Ws as a tool for whole school improvement by delegating one of the 5Ws for development to each of the Senior Leadership Team.
3. Continue to develop Chaplaincy across the school to include a greater level of pupil leadership.
4. Continue to develop assessment for learning in RE across all key stages.

SPIRITUALITY

St John's is exceptional in the way in which it has developed a distinctive, inclusive and inspirational spirituality which permeates all areas of the school community. It is as a parent described 'The reason why I moved my four children to St John's'. Whilst remaining truly a Catholic learning community the school is united by a spirituality which remains true to its founding purpose, whilst at the same time recognises all are made in the image and likeness of God. Its spirituality unites around what its members have in common and at the same time celebrates and recognises that different religions can and do live together respecting each other's religious differences. Parents, staff and pupils were able to give concrete expression to the unifying spirituality of the school.

The importance of developing spirituality across the school was further evidenced in the resources and time given to this area with the introduction of a 3D room devoted to developing the Body, Mind and Spirit.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORD OF GOD COMMUNITY is good because:

The school is in the first year of the new RE scheme The Way, The Truth and The Life. Whilst pupils clearly struggle with language issues across the school impacting on their literacy levels, their background knowledge was found to be of a higher than normal level due to significant prior knowledge. Religious education is a high priority for parents and pupils take their learning very seriously.

Where learning was of a high level pupils were taking responsibility for their learning, being challenged by higher order questioning and allowed to reflect before responding. Religious language was promoted in the best lessons and pupils were confident in their use of technical terms. In Year 2 pupils were found to have an outstanding ability to recall scripture stories from each Sunday in Lent and explain their relevance. In Year 6 pupils presented a very good and moving 'Way of the Cross' clearly drawing on their personal life experiences.

Assessment for learning is in place but needs to be linked to personal learning targets with clear indicators for 'next steps'. Marking and assessment were found to be inconsistent across the school.

Where teaching was good a variety of teaching strategies were employed, the pitch and pace of the lesson was good or better and pupils clearly achieved the learning objective. Teaching and learning were less effective where the learning objective was pitched below the pupil's levels of learning. In some instances teaching was dominated by too much teacher talk resulting in the pupils becoming passive.

Pupils Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural education was found to be good and in some instances outstanding. Evidence of outstanding teaching and learning was seen in a Year 1 drama lesson where pupils were exploring the life and mission of Alice Ingham and across Key Stage 2 poetry 'Let the Light Shine Through' and creative writing.

The Religious Education budget exceeds that of other core subjects clearly indicating its importance. All classes receive a minimum of 10% RE curriculum time. 9 out of 12 teaching staff are Catholic. 11 teachers have or are in the process of completing the CCRS certificate.

THE QUALITY OF THE WELCOME COMMUNITY is outstanding because:

The school community reaches out to all. It is a community characterised by love, joy, fun, compassion, respect and forgiveness in the recognition that everyone is a gift. Pupils and staff have a strong sense of belonging and identity. Inclusivity is immediate. Pupils and staff are warm, compassionate and highly attentive to any particular needs. The exceptional progress that has been achieved in behaviour and relationships makes St John's a 'Good News' community. Parents and families feel at home and spoke of their desire to contribute further through reviewing their contributions to the life of the school so that their outreach to each other and the local community might go further. St John's is very active in the local community and its charity work is extensive.

THE QUALITY OF THE WELFARE COMMUNITY is outstanding because:

The welfare of pupils is exceptional. Every aspect of the children's development and learning is carefully monitored, reviewed and adjusted to meet their needs. The ethnic diversity of the school calls for a complex and multi disciplinary response for each pupil. The development of the 3D (Body, Mind and Spirit) and the early intervention rooms ensures that all pupils who require specialised support receive a high level of care and attention. The activities in the 3D room showed a high level of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development which ranged from developing Spirituality through the use of the spiritual wall, Rainbows, prayer times and activities to build up pupil confidence and self esteem. The recent development of a cross-curricular creativity room further enhances the holistic development of pupils. St John's is a very safe and happy learning community.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORSHIP COMMUNITY is good because:

Prayer and worship are central to the school and are clearly seen as such by pupils, staff and parents. Parents praised the school for the regularity of prayer times throughout the day and the fact that prayer was understood by all to be an essential part of their life together. Staff and pupils of all faiths joined in prayer times and as far as they could, took an active part in the whole school Mass. The Parish Priest, Headteacher and staff have developed meaningful and inclusive times of worship which enable each pupil and member of staff to join in without compromising their particular beliefs. Issues of prayer, belief, rites and rituals are openly discussed so that a deeper understanding of the diversity of the faith community may be reached.

The school is keen to develop further the pupil leadership role in both prayer and worship and is reviewing ways forward in both chaplaincy and pupil led liturgies. Very good examples of pupil led worship and prayer were seen in the 3D room and Year 6.

THE QUALITY OF THE WITNESS COMMUNITY is outstanding because:

Issues of witness, justice and peace and care for the poor and marginalised are central to the life of St John's. Pupils, staff and parents are actively working together for the good of the local community, driven by their commitment to building a world where justice and peace reign. The school is a living witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Assisi declaration (1986) which calls on all peoples to work together to build a world fit for humankind.

The schools mission statement is well known and lived throughout and encapsulates the mission of the school to witness to the person of Jesus Christ at all times. Pupils speak confidently of their faith and are proud to be a person of faith. The Catholic pupils are confident and enjoy exploring different traditions and beliefs. Pupils are encouraged to think about the quality of their witness to their beliefs and look for the common mission of the school to respect, love and include all people. The school clearly learns from and through its diversity.

Chaplaincy is very active and under review so that pupils develop leadership skills in this area. The parish priest and leadership team are actively looking at ways of developing chaplaincy to include the specific needs of children and staff of other faiths. As a parent and Muslim member of staff pointed out 'Our spirituality unites us and as a Muslim parent I want my children in a school where they can be confident and proud about their faith, understanding that although we are from different faiths, we all serve the one God'.

The schools outreach work to those in great need both nationally and abroad is extensive.