

INSPECTION REPORT

School: St. John the Baptist R.C. Primary School
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Headteacher: Mr. K. Heakin
Chair of Governors: Mr. D. Hartley

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Diocese of Salford
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Date of inspection: 3rd July 2012
Date of previous inspection: February 2008
Reporting Inspector: Mrs. Pauline Leatherbarrow

Information about the school

St. John the Baptist is an oversubscribed school which was formed by the amalgamation of the infants and junior schools in 2006. Major building works have been undertaken and completed in 2010 with the infant and junior schools not being fully amalgamated until that time.

The school serves the parish of St. John the Baptist, Burnley. There are 225 pupils on roll aged 4-11 with an admission number of 30. There are 181 Catholic pupils (82%).

Attainment on entry is below average. The school serves a mixed catchment area with some areas of high deprivation alongside more affluent areas on the edges of the parish. 24.7% of children claim free school meals. There are 25 children on the SEN register with 3 statemented pupils.

There are 8 Catholic teachers in the school and 2 teachers who are members of Churches Together. All Catholic teachers hold CCRS or equivalent

Overall Effectiveness

Grade 2

The overall effectiveness of the school is good.

The school works hard to ensure that the religious education and spiritual life of the school is very good. Behaviour in class and around school is generally good with an effective 'Restorative' approach adopted. Staff provide excellent role models and form very good relationships with pupils.

The committed head teacher is well supported by the RE co-ordinator, Governors and staff. Regular meetings are held between the RE Governor, SMT and RE co-ordinator to evaluate and monitor RE within the school.

Provision in promoting Catholic Education is good. Key seasons of the liturgical year are celebrated with other religious festivals acknowledged. Teachers' subject knowledge ensures that pupils make good progress. RE is monitored well through assessment opportunities, observations and book scrutinies. Technology is used to enhance the RE provision through interactive whiteboards.

The school has addressed all the areas highlighted in their previous Section 48 report in 2008 effectively. The stable staff, SMT and dedicated Governors will ensure that standards in Religious Education continue to be monitored effectively and work together to bring about future improvements.

Capacity for sustained improvement

Grade 2

The mission of the school is clearly understood and articulated by the leadership team. The school's success in improving outcomes for pupils has been shown by the implementation of additional monitoring systems put in place since the last inspection. Pupil assessment is recorded for individual pupils and groups of pupils to identify any low attainment and raise standards for all pupils.

Accurate self evaluation enables the school to identify appropriate priorities to consolidate their success and to secure further improvement. Actions taken to overcome areas for development have been effective in identification and subsequent actions taken.

The senior leadership team is motivated and consistently communicates high expectations to Governors, parents and staff. The school's performance is likely to be sustained by the current leadership and management's proven effectiveness in using resources to address areas needing development and to overcome barriers to improvement.

Systems are therefore sufficiently embedded to enable the school to continue to improve.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- 1. To ensure pupils are skilled and equipped in leading prayer and worship with confidence and enthusiasm from their earliest years in a variety of gatherings**
- 2. To include in the regular assessment process, pupil self assessment, to ensure that pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.**

PUPILS

How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups

Grade 2

Children at St. John's understand that religious beliefs and spiritual values are important for many people including other faiths. A key stage 2 class used thought provoking role play to reflect on how we should treat others with different beliefs producing an enthusiastic response. Children were secure and eager to express their own views and beliefs,

Pupils have been active in responding to the needs of people beyond the school. The 'Building Bridges' initiative involves upper key stage 2 pupils in joint visits to other schools and on World Faith visits with three other linked schools of different faith and backgrounds. Children reach out beyond the school so that they feel part of God's world by supporting local, national and international communities such as CAFOD, Catholic Children's Rescue Society, Muslim Global Relief , Francis House, Burnley Women's Refuge and many other charities chosen by the children.

During the inspection, children were observed in both whole school and class collective worship to act with reverence and were keen and active participants. They sang joyfully during assembly and in class acts of worship in both key stages. Children reflected in silence and joined in with prayers appropriately and with confidence. A key stage 1 child commented that; 'When you pray to Jesus, you can feel him in your heart'. Children show an increasing understanding of the liturgical life of the church in a way that increases their knowledge and enables them to participate. They have a good understanding of the religious seasons and feasts and have knowledge of the use of scripture, religious artefacts, hymns and different forms of prayer.

Pupils make good progress in Religious Education. Work is topic based and includes a variety of written tasks given to children which become more complex across the key stages. An analysis of overall progress and level is undertaken annually for each class

and includes the progress made by individual pupils by the RE Co-ordinator. During lesson observations, children were generally keen to do well and apply themselves diligently in lessons and work at a good pace. Behaviour was good in most lessons observed.

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

Grade 2

Whole school and year group gatherings provide a variety of forms of prayer. There is a daily act of collective worship and they take place in a variety of formats and are thought provoking, uplifting experiences. Staff accept responsibility for leading prayer and involve pupils in its delivery. Key seasons of the Church's year, feast days and Sacramental programme are celebrated and acknowledged. Children enjoy taking part and respond well with prayer and actions. Attendance by parents and others associated with the school is facilitated and encouraged. Parents' attendance at class assemblies is excellent and they give very positive feedback. The school would benefit from more time spent on innovation and encouraging pupils to become skilled and equipped in leading prayer.

Leaders and managers conduct a range of systematic monitoring activities relating to provision and outcomes. This analysis provides a firm base for accurate diagnosis of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

Teaching observed was satisfactory or good. Pupils show interest in their work and make good progress that is broadly in line with their capabilities. Regular and accurate assessment informs planning which generally meets the needs of all groups of pupils including those with special needs. Teachers have good subject knowledge in religious education to enable pupils to make adequate to good progress. Resources are good, including technology to support learning. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support children / groups with special needs. Other targeted support includes the 'Beehive' initiative where children with behavioural difficulties have access alongside inclusion to mainstream education. A 'Restorative Approach' to behaviour, formally adopted by the whole school has had a very positive impact in providing a range of strategies to ensure that pupils are generally engaged by their work and reduce time wasted. Pupils are informed about their progress and how to improve, individually and as a class through marking and dialogue with adults.

Senior leaders and managers monitor the progress of all pupils and the quality of teaching and learning. This includes lesson observations, teacher / pupil interviews, and book scrutinies. The findings are recorded by the RE co-ordinator. The school has an accurate picture of pupils' achievements and appropriate actions have been taken in the past to tackle areas of underachievement which have been identified. The school's assessment and marking procedures enables pupils to understand how well they are doing and how they can improve. Pupils now need to be more involved in self assessment to evaluate how well they achieve.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the School

Grade 2

Leaders and managers at St. John's demonstrate commitment to the mission of the Church by providing a broad and balanced RE curriculum with spiritual and moral development a priority. For example the introduction of the 'Restorative' approach based on love and forgiveness. They conduct a range of monitoring activities relating to provision and outcomes and their analysis provides a firm basis for an accurate diagnosis of the school's strengths and areas for development. The head teacher has a clear vision evidenced in different forms of communication including documentation that gives great importance to a positive culture for learning. EG Termly Curriculum newsletters to parents which gives RE a place of priority. The RE co-ordinator reports each term to the Governing Body on any developments and future plans.

The Chairman of Governors and Governing Body ensure that RE is at the centre of the Mission Statement. The Governing Body has the expertise to meet the school's needs and is influential in determining the direction of the Catholic life of the school. Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties effectively. They are fully involved in evaluating the school through informal visits to the school, lesson observations and meeting with the senior management team to identify and agree areas for improvement. Governors have a constructive relationship with staff yet are willing to challenge the school in order to bring about necessary improvements. For example, Governors are invited to come into school during Governor Week each year and are able to observe lessons and spend time with staff and pupils. There are close ties between the school and the parish and children attend Mass and other services supported by Governors. The parish priest fully supports the school through frequent and informal visits into school. Children visit St. John's church for curriculum purposes and as a rich source of information and have access to loaning artefacts in school.

There is a common sense of belonging and pride within St. John's school and parish. Pupils are equipped with the skills which enable them to take a full and active part in their neighbourhood and develop relationships with people from different backgrounds. Building Bridges has been highly effective in this respect.