



Department for Formation, Office for Education

INSPECTION REPORT St Philip's RC Primary School

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Inspection date 26th April 2013

Reporting Inspectors Sister Judith Russi  
Mr Gerard Keane

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

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Type of School	Catholic Primary
URN	105968
Age range of pupils	3-11 years
Number on roll	386
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Mr Stephen Kaye
Head teacher	Mr John Barrett
Date of previous inspection	January 2008

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The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades 1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3 = Requires Improvement
Overall effectiveness of the school	1	
The quality of Catholic Leadership	1	
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	
<i>The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements</i>		

## **CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL**

St. Philip's is an above average sized primary school, serving the Servite parish of Our Lady of Dolours. The school is situated on the borders of three education authorities, Salford, Bury and Manchester. A large majority of pupils are White British. Intake over the last few years has changed significantly, with an increasingly large cohort of pupils who have English as an additional language. In the current Reception cohort, the percentage of pupils with EAL is now at 40%. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average, as is data relating to deprivation indicators. However, the past 18 months has seen this percentage steadily increase. The percentage of pupils from ethnic minority groups is in line with national averages and deprivation indicators are in-line with national figures. Mobility within the school remains very low and attendance figures high. The majority of pupils enter Reception with skills in-line with national trends. Both the Headteacher and deputy have been appointed in the past two years. There have been significant staffing changes since the last inspection. 100% of pupils are Catholic. 17 of 19 teaching staff are Catholic of which 5 have the CCRS qualification.

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## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS OUTSTANDING**

St Philip's RC Primary School is an outstanding Catholic school offering the children a rich faith experience which permeates all aspects of school life. The strength and vision of the leadership team of governors and staff have dedicated themselves to the building up of a Catholic learning community which is a source of inspiration. All staff across the school contribute to the mission of the Church in Catholic education. The children receive a holistic Catholic education which places Christ at the centre helping all to understand their place in the world as future stewards who can influence, change and contribute to the common good for all people. The school reaches out to the newly arrived in the country and is meeting the significant challenges that this entails in order to build a united community.

Parents expressed a high level of commitment. Parents recognised that staff went the extra mile and more. School, home and parish are clearly in close harmony in developing the mission of the school.

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

- The leadership and vision of the school at all levels is outstanding.
- The Catholic life, prayer, relationships, behaviour and care for all within the school are outstanding.
- The integration and celebration of learning, which was clearly reflected in the creative displays and extracurricular faith based activities, was found to be outstanding.

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

The past two years have seen considerable changes across the leadership team. The governors and Headteacher have embraced the changes as opportunities for creating a development plan which has clearly focused on deep levels of change at a rapid pace and focuses on the impact of these initiatives. Governors clearly know their school and spoke passionately about the need for support for those in the greatest need. They are aware of the challenges facing them with the significant increase in EAL pupils and are actively part of developing the curriculum to meet these needs. Regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning at all levels is resulting in the sharing of good practice and a united staff. Leadership is encouraged at many levels. The roles and contribution of the support staff both in the classroom and outside were evidence of particularly outstanding practice. The mission statement has been reviewed and is clearly used as a reference point for the

daily life of the school. The leadership team has expanded to include a wider range of expertise and skills base to support the planned developments across the school. Staff are clearly being inspired to share their faith and do so. The entire learning enterprise has the values of the Gospel and teaching of the Church at its core. The leadership of religious is shared between members of the senior leadership team to ensure the highest possible standards. The wide ranging and numerous tributes and awards which the school has received are all testimony to the outstanding leadership.

### **THE QUALITY OF WORD IS OUTSTANDING**

The school is developing the RE scheme, The Way, The Truth and The Life to meet their needs. Teaching and learning was found over time to be outstanding. In the EYFS teaching and learning was fully supported by the engagement of the teaching assistants who assisted in an effective and very creative way. Learning was found to be exceptionally high. Some pupils were able to explain the connections between their study of the new born chicks with the role of Pope Francis and St Francis. Reception children could clearly link their science with their RE. In Year 1 the higher ability group were able to discuss why it was necessary for Jesus to rise from the dead as proof that he was God. Key Stage 1 lessons demonstrated a high level of creativity and independent learning. This was evident in a year 2 lesson where the importance of the Offertory during Mass, was taught through a cross-curricular Geography lesson linked to a school in Nepal. Assessment is being developed in line with diocesan initiatives. Pupil progress is tracked and monitored closely. Key Stage 2 pupils were challenged to think across a range of subjects as they engaged with the topics of racism and persecution in years 3 and 4. References to scripture and pupil knowledge of scripture were high. Pupil religious literacy levels were found to be high as they were encouraged to use new language and explore their feelings about these topics. The use of dance to explore prayer in years 5 and 6 enabled pupils to recognise that they can pray in many different ways. Pupils Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural education was found to be outstanding. Pupils were readily able to talk about the beliefs and values of the Catholic community and were proud to talk about their faith and being Catholic. All classes receive a minimum of 10% RE curriculum time.

### **THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING**

The culture of welcome extended to all visitors is underpinned by a common vision built on Gospel Values and the Mission Statement. The school actively seeks to engage with and support members of the community and this is particularly appreciated by the parents. Those interviewed spoke of feeling valued, involved and as parents said '*I came here and loved it, I want the same for my children*', and '*I feel proud to send my children to this school*'. Parents raised the issues of the very high expectations that they had of the school and wanted the head and staff to feel appreciated. '*Tell Mr Barrett, thank you*'. The leadership of the school is working hard to meet the challenges of the increasing numbers of new to the country families being welcomed into the school. Both governors and staff spoke of the need to be ever mindful of ensuring that St Philip's provides a learning community which is one family made up of many nations. Children know what to do if they have any worries and spoke confidently about procedures in cases of any inappropriate behaviour. The pupil's sense of ownership and responsibility for what happens in their school was remarkable. Relationships in the school are very strong and calm. Pupils love their school and said '*we learn a lot, but we also have fun*'.

### **THE QUALITY OF WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING**

St Philip's is a joyful community where members of staff demonstrate a keen sense of community affiliation and the strength and quality of relationships exemplifies respect for the dignity for all as people made in the image and likeness of God. The high level of care for the learning environment is

clearly reflected throughout. Beautiful displays and extensive art work celebrate learning in all rooms and corridors. The gardening club has contributed significantly to beauty of the outside areas. Pupils work hard to plant and grow flowers and plants in many raised flower beds. Children are confident that teachers will treat their concerns seriously and the welfare provision and early intervention strategies are firmly embedded and followed throughout. Support staff are vigilant in taking swift action when needed. When asked about bullying, pupils stated that it was not an issue as everyone knew exactly what to do if there were any problems. Pupil voice is a high priority and frequently reviewed to ensure that everyone feels heard. The school's provision for safe-guarding and keeping children safe is outstanding. The provision for SRE is through RE, Science, Literacy, PSHE, circle time activities and topic work. Pupils and parents spoke highly of the pastoral support for all and the open attitude of the school to listening to one another's needs. A wide range of before and after school clubs provide a rich variety of activities for all pupils. The school actively reaches out to those in need, at home and abroad through a variety of charitable projects. Behaviour and movement of pupils around the building and in lessons was found to be outstanding.

### **THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS OUTSTANDING**

The recent development of chaplaincy and the creation of the Attic as a beautiful prayer room/chapel is having a significant impact on the life of the school. Twice weekly prayer sessions are held for pupils and staff. A wide range of opportunities to develop and enrich pupil understanding of prayer and worship have been developed and are used to excellent effect. These include Masses, assemblies and collective worship during RE lessons. There is a focal point for prayer in each classroom. Staff and pupils are confident in leading prayer and worship. All year groups lead times of prayer and worship and have a clear understanding of the liturgical life of the school. The active involvement of the parish priest and Servite community is a significant asset for the school. The whole school time of prayer and worship was creative and well balanced with periods of silent reflection allowing for private devotion. The use of sign language for prayer was both sensitively carried out and clearly meaningful. Pupils and staff were highly competent in signing. An outstanding feature of the school is the collective appreciation of the centrality of prayer. At the start of the year each member of staff receives a prayer sponsor for the year. Pupils actively lead in prayer and worship times. An outstanding example of this was a year 5 pupil who gave a spontaneous exposition of the meaning and relevance of a gospel passage during the prayer group session. Year 6 pupils in particular spoke of their need and appreciation of the Attic and the opportunities this facility provides.

### **THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS OUTSTANDING**

Witnessing to Christ and the values of the Gospel are central to the life of St Philip's. On entering the school the words '*May love dwell here amongst us every day*' greet the visitor. Scripture verses are displayed on corridors as small focal points and reminders to all who pass by. Displays and children's work throughout the school embrace the centrality of Christ in the school. Children were found to be very confident and willing to speak about their faith. Pupils are clearly proud of their school as a Catholic school and showed a genuine delight in explaining why their school is unique. A high level of confidence and ability to engage with differing points of view was exceptional. Pupils in years 4-6 were very secure in why it is important to them to be Catholic. Activities are planned into the curriculum which engage the pupils in issues of justice and peace and care for the environment actively encouraging an earth care ethic. The 'Peace Pole' symbolising the schools commitment to being people of peace has served to encourage the school to move to developing a peace prayer garden for all. It is clear that the school stands as a witness to Christ's love, justice, forgiveness and compassion. The work in supporting CAFOD, St Joseph's Penny, Loaves and Fishes, are just a few of

the many projects the school have undertaken in response to the their understanding of the individuals responsibility for caring for those in need.

**AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:**

- Continue to develop assessment in the RE programme, through the setting of personalised pupil targets for each topic and the on-going development of creative assessment challenges.
- Further develop marking in RE to ensure it is as rigorous as literacy.
- Continue to develop Chaplaincy so that pupils are able to be trained as a team to further develop the already high level of pupil engagement in the Catholic life of the school.

May 5<sup>th</sup> 2013

Dear Pupils

Thank you so much for the wonderful welcome you gave us when we came to visit you. Thank you especially for looking after us and making sure we were always where we were meant to be. Your school is an outstanding school. This is because you and your teachers are working so hard to always do your very best and you look after one another so well.

You have a beautiful school. We loved all the displays, art work and being with you in your lessons and play times. Your work is of a very good standard and we could clearly see that you take your learning very seriously and are proud of your achievements. To help you develop even further your teachers are going to help you with your RE targets and assessments.

Your RE is outstanding. Your creative ideas are very good and we could see that you can make connections between what you are learning in RE with other areas of the curriculum. Thank you for letting us share so much of what you are doing. We were very impressed by your beautiful prayer Attic. Thank you for inviting us to take part. We also loved your gardens. Well done gardening club.

Your teachers are keen to help you develop the Catholic life of your school even further and to do this they are going to start the exciting pupil Chaplaincy team to work with Father Peter and Mrs Summers in helping you to lead the Catholic life of your school.

God bless you all and have a really happy term.

Yours sincerely

Sr Judith Russi

(Section 48 Inspector)

### **Summary Report to Parents**

On 26th April 2013 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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