

INSPECTION REPORT

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**Inspection carried out Under Canon 806
and in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005**

Name of School **St Mary’s RC Primary School, Roman Road, Heaton Norris, Stockport, SK4 1RF**

Inspection date 15th March 2018

Reporting Inspectors Brendan Hennessy, Anne Heard, Claire Harrison

Type of school	Primary
URN	106124
Age range of pupils	3-11
Number on roll	158
Appropriate authority	The Governing Board
Chair of Governors	Martin Saunders
Headteacher	Paul Towey
Religious Education Co-ordinator	Paul Towey
Date of previous inspection	June 2012

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

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

St Mary's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School serves the parish of St Mary's and St Winifred's Stockport. This is a smaller than average sized primary school with 143 pupils on roll and 15 part time pupils in the school's nursery, 35% of pupils are baptised Roman Catholic. The school is situated in an urban area in the centre of Stockport. On entry to school the children's starting points are below the national average. Pupils generally make made good progress in their learning by the time they leave at the end of KS2. The school currently has 52% of the children eligible for Pupil Premium, 28% with Special Educational Needs and 18% with English as an additional language. There are 11 teachers in the school, 9 of whom are Catholic and 2 hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies.

THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE: (5 max)

- **The dedication and commitment of all staff to provide a caring and nurturing school that impacts positively on the children's well-being.**
- **The children live out their mission of loving and taking care of each other like Jesus did.**
- **The affirming atmosphere of teamwork coupled with a shared common mission of all staff and governors to ensure that Jesus is at the centre of every aspect of school life.**

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS GOOD

St Mary's is a good Catholic school with Christ clearly at the centre of all that it does. The school's mission statement impacts on and is central to everything that happens in the daily life of the school. The teachings of Jesus and Gospel values underpin all aspects of school life. This is a very inclusive school that provides a warm welcome to all. Parents feel included and valued, they state that there is a caring, supportive, family atmosphere throughout the school. The headteacher, senior leadership team and governors have a clear view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors provide both challenge and support for the school and its mission in Catholic education. A great sense of care and support for the welfare of all exists within the school; the headteacher and staff provide exceptional guidance for those families in need. All staff support the Catholic life of the school and seek to provide the best learning experiences for the children. The hardworking teachers and support staff have created a caring and safe environment for children where they are encouraged to always be the best that they can be. The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good with examples of engaging lessons observed across the school. Prayer and worship are very much at the heart of this school, enriching everyone's experience of God's presence and enhancing their individual faith journeys. The happy, well-mannered children thrive as they learn, play and pray together. Their behaviour is very good and they have a positive attitude to learning. The children show great care and consideration each other and the older children enjoy the additional responsibilities they are given. The school does all that it can to build on the links with the parish and home. Effective self-evaluation of Religious Education has ensured that the school has continued to develop since the last inspection. The school has acted successfully on the areas for development outlined in the last inspection.

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS GOOD

The experienced headteacher, who is relatively new to the school, has a clear vision for Catholic education at St Mary's and demonstrates a deep commitment to the church's mission in education. He has a deep, spiritual commitment and strives for excellence for all within St Mary's school. As Religious Education subject leader the headteacher provides strong guidance and support with regard to the catholicity of the school. The headteacher is supported in this by a dedicated senior leadership team and an enthusiastic staff team. The governors are totally committed to providing high quality Catholic education for all the children. They are actively involved in the life of the school providing both support and challenge. They share with the leadership team a vision for the on-going development of the school. Pupil leadership is established through the school council, well-being council and Buddies. The school is currently supported in their mission

in education by the parish priest and a visiting priest. Continuing professional development for staff and honest self-evaluation is making a positive impact on the quality of provision in RE. It has also ensured that the leadership team is clear about the strengths of the school and what needs to be done to develop even further. School encourages an open climate where the staff team are willing to share with each other strengths and areas for development. All school leaders do what they can to work together for the education of the whole child and keep the development of the Catholic life of the school at the heart of what they do. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is evident across the curriculum and permeates all aspects of school life.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL (incorporating Welcome, Welfare and Witness) IS GOOD

A warm, friendly welcome is extended to all visitors to St Mary's from the moment you enter school. Parents stated that they always feel welcomed and valued by the staff, "My children and I have been embraced by this school". Pupil welfare is of paramount importance to all staff and governors and their approach to this is exceptional. The recently established health and well-being council for staff and pupils is an example of this care. All staff lead by example clearly demonstrating a caring nature for the children, parents and each other. Additional support for children is provided by a dedicated and much valued learning mentor, committed teaching/learning support assistants and external providers. The happy, enthusiastic and polite children state that they feel safe and cared for in school and are confident in using class worry boxes if they have concerns. The older children happily support the younger children not only as "Buddies" and "Well-Being Councillors" but in all aspects of school life. The children, parents, staff and governors have a strong sense of belonging to the school community. The Gospel values of love, care and respect for others are clearly evident across the school. Behaviour is good and is modelled by staff and children within school. A restorative approach is used to settle differences empowering children to overcome issues that may arise. The children understand that it is important to help others and show compassion for those less fortunate as they support CAFOD, Francis House and other local charities. There is a wide range of opportunities available for parental involvement in school and good links with the parish and wider community. The school mission statement underpins all aspects of school life and all members of the school community do their best to live it out each day. St Mary's provides a nurturing environment that supports children and their families on a daily basis sharing Gospel values in all their actions.

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (incorporating Word) IS GOOD

Religious Education of the children is at the centre of the school's core curriculum. The Mission Statement is known, lived and witnessed throughout the school. Good teaching and productive learning was observed across the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge and overall, lessons were well planned with clear learning objectives, reasonably good pace, differentiated activities, good use of questions and effective use of plenary sessions to assess that the learning objectives had been met. Good standards of work were evident in the children's books although this was not always consistent, and in some classes there was a lack of expectation in Religious Education in comparison to literacy work. The leadership team are aware of this and have recently introduced the Come and See programme to meet the needs of the pupils, enhance the Religious Education curriculum, improve consistency and raise standards. The children are motivated and engaged, they show a real interest and enthusiasm in Religious Education, and were happy and confident to share their understanding of their faith. They know how to improve their work and where constructive marking was used it provided challenge and enabled them to reflect on and improve their learning. Teaching Assistants have a good knowledge and understanding of the teaching of Religious Education, they effectively interacted with pupils to support their learning and they contribute significantly to Religious Education across the school. Religious literacy was promoted in the best lessons and children were confident in their use of religious terms. Around the school there are many vibrant displays of Religious Education themes with appropriate references to Scripture and very good examples of children's work relating to the various themes. Pupils learn about other faiths in lessons and assemblies, this helps them to understand and respect the beliefs and cultures of others. The school prioritises Religious Education on their professional development programme and it has a high priority on the School Improvement Plan. Parents were very positive about the quality of Religious Education provided for their children.

THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS GOOD

The importance of prayer and worship is expressed and witnessed through classroom acts of reflection, assemblies, Mass and liturgies. All around the school there were good examples of the opportunities for worship throughout the liturgical year that showed worship is at the heart of this school community. The Catholic life of the school was clearly demonstrated around the school in many thoughtful and informative displays, which the children and staff are rightly proud of. Each classroom has an age appropriate and relevant focal point for prayer and these are clearly valued by the children. The children are happy to write their own prayers and to share their thoughts and feelings with others. Staff and children pray together as a school, in classes, small groups and individually, with reverence and respect. The staff and children work together preparing and delivering acts of collective worship in different formats. The acts of prayer and worship observed were child centered, thoughtful and relevant ensuring that children and adults were given the opportunity to pray together as a community. At the Key Stage 2 assembly the children were given opportunities to reflect on the meaning of Ichthus – Jesus Christ Son of God Saviour and the importance of following Jesus. In this act of worship the children showed reverence and respect, were encouraged to speak to God in their own way and enjoyed praising God in prayer and joyful singing. In other acts of worship, including those incorporated in RE lessons, these special moments of quiet prayer and reflection were respected by the children fostering their personal relationship with God. The development of a pupil GIFT chaplaincy team will give more opportunities for children to take a leading role and make a significant impact on prayer and worship throughout the school. Parents and carers are invited to attend assemblies and Masses throughout the year and were positive about the opportunities the school offers for prayer and worship. They stated that their children “love church, prayers and singing hymns”.

AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- **To develop further prayer and worship in school in order to expand pupil leadership in creative and exciting forms.**
- **To develop the recently introduced Come and See programme to promote a consistent approach to Religious Education and ensure high expectations for all groups of pupils.**
- **To revisit the 5 Ws Framework for self-evaluation in order to enhance the Catholic life of the school.**
- **To strengthen the capacity for leadership in Religious Education.**