



Inspection carried out Under Canon 804 and 806
and in accordance with Section 48 of the Education
Acts 2005 and 2011

DIOCESE OF SALFORD

Name of School: St Mary's RC Primary School ,Victoria Rd, Horwich, Bolton BL6 6EP
Inspection date: Thursday 28th November 2019
Reporting Inspectors: Fiona Robinson, Donna McNicoll, Peter Moore and Ruth Vayro

Type of school	Primary
URN	105250
Age range of pupils	5-11 years
Number on roll	217
Appropriate authority	The Governing Board
Chair of Governors	John Shannon
Headteacher	Anne-Marie Davies
Religious Education Subject Leaders	Debi Ford/Catherine Hesketh
Date of previous inspection	2 nd December 2014
Grade of previous inspection	Good

Explanation of the Grades - 1 = Outstanding, 2 = Good, 3=Requires Improvement, 4 = Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of: St Mary's R.C. Primary School, Horwich	Overall grade	3
The Catholic Life of the school (incorporating Welcome, Welfare and Witness)	Grade	2
Religious Education (incorporating Word)	Grade	3
Collective Worship	Grade	2

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

St Mary's is a Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic Primary school in the Diocese of Salford. The school is situated in the small town of Horwich, in the metropolitan borough of Bolton. The school serves the parish of St Mary's, Horwich. It is a one form entry school with 217 children currently on roll. The majority of pupils are of white British heritage with only 1.7% of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL). 90% of the children are baptised Roman Catholic. 3 of the Roman Catholic teachers have the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. 7% of the pupils are eligible for free school meals with 12% receiving pupil premium funding. 11.7% of the pupils are on the SEND (Special Educational Need and Disability) list. The headteacher has been in post since February 2018 after a period serving as acting headteacher. The deputy was appointed in September 2018.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

St Mary's has many good qualities and is a school that should be proud of the welcome, welfare and witness to the Catholic faith that they provide for everyone in the school community. The governors and leadership of the school recognise that Christ is central to all aspects of school life and all connected with the school are fully committed to developing the Catholic faith life of the children in their care. The GIFT team is developing their role in enhancing the spiritual life of the school. The children are very proud of their school and feel very well cared for and supported in their education. The behaviour across the school is excellent. However, the quality of the Religious Education requires improvement and therefore this is the school's overall judgement. There is inconsistency in the quality of Religious Education teaching across the school and standards and expectations are very low in some classes. The leadership team and teachers would benefit from visiting other schools to witness outstanding teaching and expectations in Religious Education and so further develop their own practice.

THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- The mission statement which is known and lived throughout the school.
- The excellent links between the governors and staff of the school.
- Children that are polite, well behaved and very respectful.
- Staff who provide effective and supportive pastoral care for all pupils.
- The sense of community and culture of welcome which permeates the school.

AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- Provide more challenging and creative activities in Religious Education for all children
- Further develop the monitoring of the teaching and learning of Religious Education to ensure that teaching is of the highest standard and consistent across the school.
- Ensure children have feedback on their Religious Education work so that they know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- Monitor the collective worship sessions to ensure they are of a high quality and support is offered to all staff.

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

The Catholic Life of the school (incorporating Welcome, Welfare and Witness)	Overall grade	2
Outcomes - The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school		2
Provision - The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school		2
Leadership - How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school		2

The mission statement of St Mary’s ‘We care, we pray, we work, we play in Jesus’ way’ is known by everyone and displayed throughout the school. Parents feel very involved in the life of the school and that the children’s spirituality is well developed. Any issues, which are rare, would always be addressed in a fair and friendly way. Pupils are proud of their faith and the GIFT team are passionate about spreading the Word of God, helping others develop spiritually and doing charitable acts for the less fortunate. They support many charities including CAFOD, Caritas, and Macmillan for Cancer and the Christmas Shoe Box appeal. They talked about the importance of caring for the environment and our common home. They felt happy and secure in school and were respectful of other faiths. They spoke with confidence, reverence and showed impeccable manners. They described their school as one where children look after and help one another. Staff provide supportive pastoral care for all pupils and there is a clear commitment to the most vulnerable. Children said that they would happily go to any adult in the school if they had any issues or worries and they knew they would be helped. The school environment is enhanced by the outdoor prayer garden and chaplaincy room which are helping to deepen further the prayer life of the children. The school has very good links with the parish and the work of the parish priests enhance the provision of the Catholic life of the school. The school is committed to the development of all staff and provides relevant CPD and support for all including NQTs. The school actively engages with the Diocese and is a key partner in the Bolton cluster group (BOSCEP) of Catholic schools. St Mary’s also has excellent links with the local Catholic High School, St Joseph’s. The governors, headteacher, senior leaders and all members of the school community strive to ensure that Christ and his teaching is at the centre of all their work and all are deeply committed to developing the Catholic faith life of the children. The governing body is a strength of the school: very committed to their own development and training and supportive of the headteacher and staff of the school. They are regular visitors to the school. The headteacher provides them with very detailed reports particularly on the faith life of the school and Religious Education. Parents are very supportive of the school. They stated there was a culture of welcome led by the headteacher. Parents talked about her very approachable and warm style and that the door at the school is “always open”.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious Education (incorporating Word)	Overall grade	3
Outcomes - How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education		3
Provision - The Quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education		3
Leadership - How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education		3

The quality of Religious Education requires improvement. The ‘Come and See’ programme is used as the core of the Religious Education curriculum and supplemented with Caritas in Action. All teachers plan their work according to this scheme. However, Religious Education is not good because of the quality of some of the lessons observed and the standards of the work in the children’s books across the school. Where teaching was good it was well planned and consisted of appropriate activities matched to the children’s age and abilities and with a clear focus on what was to be achieved. Teachers need to be more flexible with the Religious Education scheme and be clear about what they want the children to achieve in their Religious Education lessons. Activities in the scheme are only suggestions and therefore teachers have to plan activities that are interesting, challenging and matched to the abilities of the children. Challenging and thoughtful questions need to be asked of the children and opportunities given for children to ask questions so that they improve and develop in their knowledge and understanding. Religious Education books are neat and well presented, however, the work in the Religious Education books is not of the quality evident in the English books which have more challenging work and pieces of greater depth and length. There is no evidence of independent learning or research. Pupils will have a limited understanding of how well they are doing in Religious Education because comments and feedback on their work is very sparse. Marking does not have comments or reflections for the children to develop deeper thinking. There is no evidence of whole class feedback on work undertaken by the children. When asked about their

Religious Education the lessons children commented that they like ‘doing fun things in Religious Education like decorating front covers’. The leadership team are committed to improving the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Religious Education, therefore, would benefit from closer monitoring of teachers planning, teaching and learning and more detailed guidance and feedback from lessons observed. Assessments are completed in Religious Education every term and work is ongoing in developing this area further in line with the recent training from the diocesan Religious Education team. Leadership have ensured that children are knowledgeable and respectful of other faiths by studying Islam and Judaism which is planned across the Religious Education curriculum. Visits to a mosque have taken place and the school welcomed a visitor from the Jewish faith who worked with the children.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Collective Worship	Overall grade	2
Outcomes - How well pupils respond to and participate in the school’s Collective Worship		2
Provision - The quality of Collective Worship provided by the School		2
Leadership - How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship		2

Prayer and worship are central to the life of St Mary’s school. Children have a good knowledge of the liturgical year and know many traditional prayers. Children were respectful and reverent during prayer times in the whole school assembly which took place in the morning. Class Masses take place each term and parents and parishioners are invited into school to celebrate Mass on feast days and at other significant times. The headteacher leads weekly collective worship. Meetings for the sacramental programme have recently returned to the parish church so that links between the parents, school and parish are further strengthened. This has been a success as parents from last year’s programme are now catechists and leaders. A prayer garden and chaplaincy room have been established so that the children can have moments of prayer and quiet contemplation. The GIFT chaplaincy team are developing in their role and they meet regularly to work on plans and activities. These pupils now need to be developed further in their leadership by planning and leading their own class collective worship for other pupils around the school. The Year 6 children are very proud of the “pasta prayer work” they completed with one of the parish priests, who is a frequent visitor to the school. The leadership of the school have taken an active role in the provision and training of staff for collective worship. The Religious Education subject leader has attended training by an outside provider and disseminated information to the rest of the staff. However, Collective Worship is an area that does still need further development. The leadership team must ensure that class Collective Worship is age appropriate, well planned and include times of quiet and reflection. Frequent visits and monitoring by the leadership team to these sessions will ensure that the quality of worship in the school is strengthened. Teachers observing good practice in other schools will help their own practice develop further. Prayer areas are established in every classroom. Parents commented on the prayer life of the school and how prayers are well known by the children and used at home.