

**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, Longsight Rd, Osbaldeston, Blackburn BB2 7HX**

Inspection date            29<sup>th</sup> June 2018

Reporting Inspectors      Julie Frazer, Clare Campbell

Type of school	Primary
URN	119647
Age range of pupils	3 – 11 years
Number on roll	85
Appropriate authority	The Governing Board
Chair of Governors	Ian Nugent
Headteacher	Judith Metcalfe
Religious Education Co-ordinator	Judith Metcalfe
Date of previous inspection	July 2013

<b>The Inspection judgements are:</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Explanation of the Grades</b>
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)	1	
The quality of Religious Education (incorporating Word)	2	
The quality of Worship	1	
The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements		

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

St Mary's is a Roman Catholic Primary School with 85 children currently on roll including pre-school children. The school serves the parishes of St. Mary's Osbaldeston and St. John Southworth, Samlesbury. 97% of the children are baptised Roman Catholic and 8 of the 13 members of staff are Roman Catholic, 4 of the remaining staff are Church of England and there is one member of staff who is of Hindu faith. Two members of staff have the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies. The school is a smaller than average sized primary school and the majority of pupils are from white British heritage. The school is situated in an area where there are high levels of socio economic advantage, however, this has declined over time and the school is increasingly welcoming children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs has increased recently and is now above the national average and the children receiving support in school is above the average for Lancashire. Considering the small number of children on role this represents a considerable number of pupils. This increase is largely in response to the school's inclusive reputation and for welcoming and nurturing all children who attend St. Mary's.

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

- **The extremely effective 'buddying' system, implemented throughout the school, which has a very positive impact on pupils' self- esteem. The system strengthens the relationships of older and younger children alike and benefits are seen for all age groups.**
- **The welcome that the school extends to everyone is a great strength. Many parents have chosen to move their children to St. Mary's because of its welcoming and nurturing ethos.**
- **The dedication and skill of all staff, who clearly love the children and ensure that they settle quickly and behave exceptionally well. It is also very clear that the children have developed a prayerful relationship with God.**

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS GOOD WITH MANY OUTSTANDING FEATURES**

St. Mary's is a good Roman Catholic school with many outstanding features. It prides itself on being a 'family' and dedicated staff and governors place the needs of each child at the heart of their work. All the areas for development since the last inspection have been met effectively. The school's recently reviewed mission statement clearly places Christ at the centre of its work and gives a clear and unambiguous vision of the aspirations for every child in the school. Governors are fully supportive of the school and its mission in Catholic education. The school provides an inclusive environment and welcomes wholeheartedly all the children in to the 'family' of St Mary's. Parents spoke very highly of the school and the reasons why they chose to send their children to St Mary's. A number of parents who were unable to attend on the day of the inspection provided written support for the school which they greatly value. Parents and visitors alike are welcomed in to the warm atmosphere that the school provides for all. A great sense of care and support for the welfare of all exists within the school. Children bear witness to Gospel Values and they place Christ at the centre of their school life. The introduction of a new scheme of work, along with rigorous monitoring and high expectations, has impacted positively on pupils' learning and their good levels of progress in curriculum Religious Education. Children are confident in planning for and leading acts of worship and are enthusiastic about this. Senior leaders, with the support of the governing board, have made a clear commitment to provide a Catholic school which places their children at the centre of all they do. As such, St Mary's is a school where children can grow and develop as individuals within a flourishing Catholic environment.

## **THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS GOOD**

The school's leadership at all levels demonstrates a deep commitment to the Church's mission in education. The governors and senior leaders have made the decision that they will accept and support children who have come to St Mary's from other schools even though they may have additional emotional, social and educational needs. To this end there has been funding made available for a Caritas social worker to work in school for half a day each week. The dedicated headteacher is very well supported by all staff and governors. The well-respected chair of governors was unfortunately unable to attend on the day of the inspection; however, his contribution to the wider life of the school is clearly invaluable. The school is well supported by the parish priest who has only recently arrived at St Mary's and has taken on the role of Religious

Education governor. The school has had to deal with the recent death of two members of its community, those being the parish priest and a parent of former pupils who unfortunately was killed during the Manchester Arena bomb attack. The senior leaders ensured that there was an effective response to these bereavements and the children were and still are encouraged to talk about their feelings in relation to these events. Parents were keen to say how well the school have supported their children. The school's mission statement has been reviewed recently and governors feel that regular review is essential to ensure that the Catholic ethos and life of the school is reflected accurately. There are rigorous monitoring systems in place to ensure that Religious Education and Catholic life of the school are effectively reviewed on a regular basis. Governors are an integral part of school life and they have a good understanding of the progress that children make in Religious Education

### **THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL (incorporating Welcome, Welfare and Witness) IS OUTSTANDING**

The Catholic life of the school is outstanding. St Mary's provides a school community in which everyone is valued and welcomed and Jesus is placed at the centre of all that it does. Parents are very keen to send their children to this school which they say is the sort of school they would have liked to have gone to 'because the learning and development of their children is phenomenal'. They are also very happy with the school's 'buddy' system. They say that this ensures that new arrivals are welcomed and looked after and they feel that it is a good way of preventing bullying. Each member of the school's community is highly respected and valued. Pupils are proud to be members of St Mary's school and some families have deep roots going back many years. There are clear systems and procedures in place to ensure safeguarding and children have a very clear understanding of what to do if they are worried or concerned about anything. All staff and pupils demonstrate a very high level of respect and care for others especially those who are new to the school and those with additional needs. A Caritas social worker is employed by the school and she has been extremely effective in supporting individual children with emotional needs. The United Nations Rights and Responsibilities Award recognises that the children have high levels of respect for all members of the school and wider community. Children and staff are confident witnesses to the values of a Catholic community. Christ is placed at the centre of school life and all members of the school bear witness to its mission statement. Pupils behave exceptionally well and understand that they bear witness to Christ in the manner in which they value and respect one another. The school's Mission Team plays an active role in school life; they are extremely confident in planning and leading assemblies, writing and reading bidding prayers in assemblies and on the day of the inspection, during a whole school Mass. Every member of staff and the governors who were spoken to on the day of the inspection, clearly demonstrate extremely high levels of dedication to the children in their care.

### **THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (incorporating Word) IS GOOD**

The recently revised mission statement is understood by all members of the school community and the overarching principle of providing a happy, safe and inspiring environment in which all members of the school community live by the values of Christ. The school strives to establish firm and lifelong foundations for the children. This has a real impact on the manner in which members of the school community conduct themselves within the ethos of rights, respect, compassion and forgiveness. Religious Education is at the core of the core curriculum and its effect permeates throughout the school and beyond. This is shown by the fact that parents say that they choose to send their children to St Mary's due to its Catholic ethos, nature and supportive environment. The Religious Education subject leader has introduced 'Come and See' to support learning and teaching in line with the Curriculum Directory. Following its implementation she has led training for staff and undertaken supportive yet rigorous monitoring of learning and teaching within this subject area. Very effective support is being provided for those children who might otherwise have presented with barriers to learning. Assessment is used effectively to inform planning and improve learning. During the inspection some very good lessons were observed and so the school is now well placed to build on these foundations to ensure that learning and teaching continues to grow. Sacred Scripture is known and understood throughout the school and the Word of God informs teaching across the curriculum. There is clear evidence that children are encouraged to and do ask Big Questions. This is evident in displays around classrooms and in the way that children are happy and confident in asking these questions. This was clearly demonstrated by the way in which the children are dealing with the two recent bereavements within the school community.

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

St Mary's places worship and prayer at the heart of its school community. During the inspection the acts of worship that were observed were planned and led very confidently by the children. One of the inspectors participated in an act of worship which she said 'gave her goose bumps'. Sacred Scripture was central to the acts of worship which were highly relevant and inclusive of all the children. The acts of worship that were observed were highly creative and engaged all pupils and staff. On the day of the inspection, the whole school community, along with members of the parish, attended Mass. During the celebration of Mass the children demonstrated very high levels of respect and participated well; this was in no small part due to the 'buddy' system which ensured that older children were sitting with younger children and helping them throughout the service. The Mission Team demonstrated high levels of contribution to the Mass and this included reading their own bidding prayers, reading scripture, taking part in the offertory procession and handing out leaflets at the beginning of Mass and their own hand made mementos of the celebrated feast day at the end of Mass. As a result of the firm foundation and support that the children have been given by adults in the school, they are now well able to develop and plan for their own acts of worship with high levels of independence. Children spoke very enthusiastically about their involvement in planning for and delivering acts of worship; they say that they enjoy doing this and that they enjoy helping their 'buddies'. Throughout the liturgical year, the school undertakes acts of worship and celebrations which are age appropriate and the school actively seeks to expose the children to and engage them with a wide variety of Scripture readings. The children who undertake the Sacramental Programme are very well supported by the school and the parish priest who has clear plans to strengthen this programme even further in the future.

## **AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT**

- **To develop further opportunities for children to experience awe and wonder in order to enhance worship even further.**
- **To develop further and fully embed the newly implemented Sex and Relationships in Education scheme of work.**
- **To begin to look for global links with schools in other countries to ensure that the good work of the United Nation Rights and Respect Award can develop further.**