

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 Richard's RC Primary School, Longsight, Manchester.**

Inspection date 30th January 2018

Reporting Inspectors Damian Harrison, Julie Frazer, Clare Campbell

Type of school	Primary (with Nursery)
URN	105544
Age range of pupils	3-11
Number on roll	473
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Fr Michael Dever
Headteacher	Sharon Sesnan (.6) John Keyworth (.4)
Religious Education Co-ordinator	K Broadbent
Date of previous inspection	13 th November 2012

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

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

St Richard's is a very large Catholic primary school, serving the parish of St Richard's, Longsight. The school has a rich cultural mix, with the level of diversity continuing to increase year on year. 44% of the children have English as an additional language, with 70% of the children coming from heritages other than white British. 36% of the children have been entitled to free school meals in the last 6 years (Pupil Premium) which is above the national average. The number of children with SEND is slightly above that which is found nationally.

St Richard's is a very popular school and has expanded in size significantly. Recently a further block of 4 classrooms has been completed. The site is cramped, but is extremely well managed by the school to maximize the space available.

THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- **The exceptionally high expectations for all, which permeate throughout the whole school community.**
- **The exceptional care pupils have for one another and the highly developed understanding they have of their personal responsibilities to their local, national and global community.**
- **The children's personal ambition to achieve the best they can.**
- **The outstanding leadership of the school which is relentless in its pursuit to provide the best quality of Catholic education for the children within a deeply nurturing Christian climate which allows them to excel in every way.**
- **The quality of the school's learning environment, with fabulous displays of the children's work, reflecting throughout, the school's Catholic tradition.**

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS OUTSTANDING

St Richard's is an outstanding Catholic school in every way. The school's Christian Mission is at the heart of everything, bringing to life its core purpose to provide an excellent Catholic education for the children.

The school has been successful in creating an authentic and distinctive character which allows the children to develop fully in their humanity, achieve well academically and feel happy, safe and well-cared for. The whole school community is rightly proud of its school and how well it does.

Undoubtedly, the school is where it is as a result of excellent leadership over time. The headteachers have been the driving force behind this, and have very effectively developed strong leadership at all levels. This has created a strong, cohesive staff team who work hard to sustain the high quality of Catholic education which exists. The Religious Education subject leader has skilfully brought about improvements, in line with the school's ethos to continually strive for excellence.

The Catholic life of the school is alive. There is a great sense of ownership and belonging throughout the school. This starts with the strong Christian welcome given to all, and the sustained level of care and support given to the children's families from the day they arrive. There is a deeply nurturing culture throughout the school. Hence, parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. The school very effectively supports the children to achieve well – not just academically, but as well-rounded, confident and beautifully behaved young people. This high level of personal development is matched by the exceptionally high standards achieved by the children over many years. The children make excellent progress in every part of their education, including Curriculum Religious Education, sometimes from low starting points or with barriers to their learning. The school is highly ambitious for all its pupils and celebrates their successes well.

The achievements of the school take place against a back cloth of a vibrant prayer life, creating a worshipping community in which the presence of God is recognised and celebrated daily.

St Richard's continues to go from strength to strength as a beacon of hope and excellence in its community.

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

St Richard's is a highly successful school which excels in every way, relentlessly driven forward by a cohesive leadership team. The success of the school has been sustained over many years as a result of the outstanding leadership of the headteachers. They are ably supported by a hard-working staff team who buy fully into the school's authentic character. The school's Catholic Mission is at the heart of these successes and there is a deep commitment across the whole school community to ensure that the children are given every chance to achieve well, regardless of their starting points. The Governing Board know their school well and have very effectively steered the school, providing a good balance of support and challenge. The leadership of the Religious Education subject leader is outstanding. Her recent involvement in the 'Building the Kingdom' programme has reinvigorated the school to improve even further and to look at new ways to enhance the Religious Education curriculum.

The parish priest is frequently in school – he is known and loved by the children, as well as taking on the role as Chair of the Governing Board.

Understandably, the school has attracted much attention due to the academic successes it has achieved. Teachers and leaders from other schools, locally and nationally, visit the school to witness how this is done, often recommended by HMI. The school has identified the improvement of the website as an action for improvement.

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

The school provides an exceptional Catholic welcome to all who attend or visit the school. It is highly successful in reaching out to the diverse community it serves and there is a deep sense of belonging, ownership and inclusion. Parents talk about the school with genuine admiration. They value highly the approachability of the staff and the value the school places on the individuality of each pupil. One parent commented, 'I would drive 30 miles to get here if I had to.' Procedures for welcoming the children when they first start school are excellent and they quickly become part of this special family. The school opens its doors for half an hour before lessons begin in the morning to give the children a lovely start to the day.

Equally, the quality of Welfare is of the highest order. The inspection team agree with parents that the children are exceptionally well cared for. Much of this is rooted in the warm relationship between the children and the adults who work with them. One child said, 'our teachers listen to us, and if we do have any problems they really understand.' The children feel valued and respected. They know that the school is ambitious for them to do well and their individual successes are celebrated. The school is proud of the achievements of former pupils too who have excelled 'against the odds.' Pastoral care and safeguarding is a key strength of the school, overviewed by a long standing member of staff who knows the families very well. Pupil voice is well established and acted upon. The provision of the beautiful new prayer room being a typical example, as this was requested by the pupils.

St Richard's gives outstanding witness to the values of the Gospel. Every aspect of the school has its Catholic Mission and core purpose at the heart. This produces a vibrant and spiritual ethos to the school. The children have an impressive understanding about the impact they can have to make their world a better place. This was demonstrated very powerfully in a Year 6 assembly on the 'Common Good'. The children take on ambassadorial roles (such as the chaplaincy / GIFT team, School Council) with enthusiasm. One child stated, 'Jesus is at the centre of all of our work'. The school provides a superb learning environment which reflects the school's deep commitment to its core purpose as a vibrant Catholic school.

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (incorporating Word) IS OUTSTANDING

St Richard's is an outstanding evangelising community with the values of the Good News of the Gospel permeating every aspect of school life - the Mission Statements of both the children and the adults being central to everything. The children develop their talents and skills to the full. The standards they reach both academically and equally in Religious Education are exceptionally high – and have been over time. The progress they make is excellent, and many of the children overcome significant barriers to their learning to achieve very well. This progress is matched in the children's spiritual and personal development. The curriculum is rich and balanced. It is well planned to meet the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory and the appropriate amount of curriculum time is allocated to Religious Education. The school has a particular aptitude for creative arts and design work which is celebrated through the wonderful display of children's work. In Religious Education, more has been done recently to reflect the Liturgical Year and the range of learning experiences has become richer and broader. In particular, the class books are a real point of celebration. As a consequence of the school's curriculum and the high standards in teaching and learning, the pupils develop with impressive confidence and curiosity and they are able to relate their knowledge and understanding to their faith and worship.

So impressive are the standards reached in the school, that much attention has been received both local and nationally (including HMI), and the school responds readily to welcome others to see this good practice.

The school will look to build on the children's excellent attitudes to learning by incorporating more opportunities for independent work with the children driving their own learning.

THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

St Richard's RC Primary school is an outstanding worshipping community. Everyone works extremely hard to ensure that this is an integral part of day to day school life. The children have a sense of inclusion and ownership, participating fully and joyfully in the opportunities they have for prayer. They pray with reverence and respect. Prayer and worship is wide and varied in nature and well planned by the staff. Children are encouraged to influence and create their own services and make an input into assemblies. One prayer service, prepared by the children for the children (with the GIFT / chaplaincy team) was particularly moving, with older children sharing the worries of the younger children. All prayer services make reference to Sacred Scripture. The children enjoy singing and this was a key feature of worship throughout the school. The children see God as central in their lives and they express this with confidence. Hence, they readily contribute in prayer services with their own personal thoughts, ideas and experiences.

The school provides 'Pause for Reflection' areas which allow the children to have time to stop and be still. These are often used at the beginning of the day when the children arrive in school.

Consideration is made for the children's different faith and cultural backgrounds so that all the children feel included. The sense of involvement of all the parents in the year 6 class assembly on 'the Common Good' was testimony to the inclusive nature of worship in the school.

The school's Prayer Room, requested by the children through their council, brings a wonderful new dimension to the prayer life of the pupils.

The parish priest, who is the Chair of Governors, attends many of the prayer services and assemblies, and the children appreciate his presence and involvement.

The high quality of worship could be enhanced further through a greater emphasis on silence, meditation and contemplative prayer.

AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- **To build on the children's exceptionally strong attitudes to learning by encouraging greater opportunity to be creative and independent learners, with a higher level of ownership in their learning in curriculum RE.**
- **To develop further the pupils' prayer life with greater opportunity for contemplative prayer and meditation.**
- **To ensure that the newly prepared website fully reflects the outstanding Catholic life of the school in a way that is simple to navigate.**