

INSPECTION REPORT

St Brigid's RC Primary School, Grey Mare Lane, Manchester, M11 3DR

Inspection date 8th December 2016

Reporting Inspector Julie Frazer
 Sue Molloy

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

Type of School Primary
 URN 105523
 Age range of pupils 3-11 years
 Number on roll 241
 Appropriate authority The Governing Body
 Chair of Governors Brendan Hennessy
 Headteacher Julie Miles
 RE Subject Leader Linda Brennan
 Date of previous inspection February 2011

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

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

St Brigid's is a Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic Primary School, admitting 95% baptised Roman Catholic pupils. It is similar in size to most other primary schools nationally; it includes nursery provision and serves the Roman Catholic Parish of St Brigid's and St Anne's. Many of the children entering the school come from home backgrounds which experience some hardship and economic difficulties. The proportion of children from minority ethnic backgrounds is 77%, which is very high and the number of children who speak English as an additional language is 49% which is high. The proportion of children who are in receipt of pupil premium is 58%, which is considerably above the national average and there are 15% of the children on the special educational needs and disability (SEND) register, with none of the children having an Education Health Care (EHC) plan. The school's pupil stability is broadly in line with the national average. The school operates a very popular breakfast club each day and there is often a waiting list. Eight of the teaching staff are Catholic and one other teacher is in the process of becoming Catholic. Seven of the nine teaching assistants are Catholic. The religious education (RE) subject leader has been in this role for seven years. In the current academic year she is not class based, allowing her the opportunity to further develop the Catholic life of the school and to support the school's three newly qualified teachers (NQT), as well as one recently qualified teacher (RQT).

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS GOOD

St Brigid's is a good Catholic school with many outstanding features. It is very successful in offering its learners a holistic Catholic education in an extremely warm, friendly and exceptionally supportive environment. The school community, very well supported by the governing body and driven by the headteacher, works very hard to ensure the pastoral and spiritual needs of all learners are met and often exceeded. This support is frequently extended to parents and family members. The school impacts on the day to day welfare of children and their family members, which can have a life changing effect in some instances. Positive relationships are evident throughout the whole school community. The strong commitment of the headteacher and senior leadership team, together with the hard work and dedication of the staff, has created a culture in which gospel values are clearly evident and all are encouraged to 'be shining examples of God's love'. Pupils, staff and parents are happy to belong to St Brigid's school community. Pupils enjoy coming to school and they readily say that they have high levels of respect for everyone. They are friendly, polite and welcoming and the behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils feel that when issues arise they are encouraged to resolve them themselves, but if adult intervention is needed everyone's voice is listened to. The manner in which pupils and parents are supported by the school is a particular strength. The school offers its learners a wide variety of opportunities to develop their confidence. As affirmed in its mission statement, the school helps all members of its community to 'Dream it. Believe it. Achieve it.'

KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- Everyone within the school community, including parents and other family members, feel safe, protected and respected. They are loved and treated with exceptionally high levels of dignity.
- The school demonstrates an exceptionally warm and inclusive welcome to everyone within the school community, as well as visitors.
- Jesus Christ is at the centre of the school community and this is witness to on a daily basis and permeates through all aspects of school life.
- The headteacher and the governing body demonstrate exceptionally strong leadership; they clearly have a deep commitment to the Church's mission in education.

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

The headteacher is clearly, deeply dedicated to the Catholic life of St Brigid's School. There is explicit evidence that she places Catholic faith at the heart of the school and everything that she does in the school. She has a clear holistic vision for the school which is readily extended to families and the wider community. The senior leadership team, the RE subject leader and staff support her well in promoting her vision for this Roman Catholic School.

Members of staff have worked hard to implement the 5Ws model within the school and there is a wealth of evidence to support the positive impact that this is having. The children understand the concept of the 5Ws in a meaningful way and, through clear leadership and guidance, are able to embed these principles as part of their daily lives. There is a real sense of respect and justice permeating throughout the whole school. The chair of governors meets with the headteacher on a regular basis and the school benefits from the open and productive conversations that this facilitates. Governors, as well as staff, share the vision of the headteacher and work hard to support her in ensuring the highest quality of provision for the children of St Brigid's; they make a significant contribution to the Catholic life of the school. The parish priest demonstrates a clear commitment to the school and two classes, on a rolling programme, attend Mass on a weekly basis in the parish church, alongside parishioners. He knows where the school is in its faith journey, and he works hard to support the children and their families as part of the home, school, parish community. He is well supported by teachers in school who work hard to support the sacramental programme.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORD IS GOOD

The school's mission statement was updated in summer 2016 and pupils were involved in this process. It is contemporary, known and understood by all in the school and it had an impact on learning and the life of the school. The religious education of the pupils is the core of the core curriculum. The school places great importance on RE and it is well resourced. Standards are at least as good as those in English. The recently introduced assessment strategy is being used effectively throughout the school and teachers are able to track pupils' progress accurately. Constructive marking is used to enable children to reflect and it provides support to improvements in children's learning; they are clearly given sufficient time and opportunity to respond to teachers' comments, questions and challenges. The RE subject leader fully supported by the headteacher, governing body, parish priest and senior leadership team, has enabled the school to develop a clear vision on how RE should be taught. In order to support the three NQTs and one RQT she has been released from class teaching. In addition to this she is further developing the Catholic life of the school, along with teaching and learning. As a result, the quality of teaching throughout Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is good and is outstanding in the Early Years Foundation Stage. There is clearly the capacity for this to become outstanding throughout the school in the future.

Pupils' attitude to learning is good. They show interest in and enthusiasm for their RE work and talk enthusiastically about topics they have covered. Children have a very good awareness of cultural differences and other world faith traditions. Links between the home, school and parish are very strong and there is clear evidence that the school recognises and embraces the opportunities for working with and supporting families. This has a significant impact on pupils' approach to their learning and parents' understanding of the religious life of the school. Throughout the school Sacred Scripture is known and lived. This was evidenced, and indeed parents said, that children bring their faith home and that they learn from them.

THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING

St Brigid's places Christ at the centre of its community and of its welcoming ethos throughout the school. It provides a very warm, welcoming and inclusive environment where committed staff have high expectations of the pupils. The strong welcoming tradition of the school is maintained through deep faith commitment and a genuine supportive ethos from all staff, children, governors and parish priest. Staff demonstrate a very high level of confidence and outreach to all within the school community, recognising, valuing, respecting and celebrating diversity at all levels. The importance of the dignity of the individual is clearly evident at all levels. The children understand their rights and responsibilities and the positive playtime rules provide an effective strategy in ensuring that everyone is included in a positive playtime experience. The children said that the 'traffic light' system helps them with their behaviour and that every day is a new start. St Brigid's is

a respectful and reflective community where the inherent dignity of each person is celebrated. The caring ethos and the development of pupils' personal qualities are of paramount importance to the staff and governors. The school constantly strives to find ways of engaging all members of the community. Staff engage with their parents and families in a caring, respectful and dignified manner. Parents who were interviewed during the inspection said that they were overwhelmed by the care that is afforded to them by the headteacher, particularly in challenging situations.

THE QUALITY OF WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING

Parents spoke very highly of the pastoral support their child receives in school. As well as the very effective induction programme, they say that all the teachers and support staff know about their children and staff, including the headteacher, greet children and parents as they come to school every day. This enables the teachers to deal with any issues which may have arisen and helps to address any concerns that either children or their parents may have. This ensures that pupils are in the best possible position to engage in learning. Parental concerns are dealt with effectively by the class teachers. If parents ring or call into school, they are seen as soon as possible and teachers resolve any issues quickly and effectively. If any issues or concerns are identified during the school day the school happily and readily contact parents to resolve them. Parents say that the community within the school is phenomenal and that it's not just a school.

The quality of transition is such that all children quickly feel part of the school community. Parents who have moved their children to St Brigid's say that their children settled quickly into school life. Children feel safe within the familial setting of the school. They know that they are loved and valued and they both show and are shown high levels of respect by other children as well as adults within school. Adults were observed being very patient with the children. Pupils within the school clearly have a voice and are listened to. They make decisions in their roles as GIFT chaplaincy team members, class/play/buddy leaders, librarians and charity groups. Last year three staff visited Kibera in Kenya and helped to train teachers there. The children were very enthusiastic in raising money for children whom they recognize are much less fortunate than themselves.

THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

Worship is an integral part of the whole school community and pupils are extremely respectful and reverent when taking part in or listening to acts of worship. The children are actively involved in planning for assemblies and acts of worship, which are holistic, pupil centred and entirely relevant to their lives. Pupils have gained and are continuing to gain confidence in leading meaningful prayer in order to further develop their relationship with God. The assembly which was observed by the inspectors was led by the GIFT chaplaincy team who took control of the entire event, from writing and reading their research and prayers, to running the computer for the accompanying power point presentation.

A high level of creativity is evident in worship and assemblies, engaging all pupils and staff. Children respond well to collective worship opportunities in school. They are aware of its importance and are reverent in their behaviour. All children are encouraged to speak to God in their own special way. Parents respond positively to how the school offers opportunities for prayer and worship. The school actively prepares pupils to take a leadership role in preparing for and taking part in meaningful acts of worship.

The newly opened school chapel was designed by the children and is now at the heart of worship within the school. It is highly valued by the whole school community and especially the children.

THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS OUTSTANDING

Staff and pupils are confident and secure in their witness to Christ, the Gospel and the teachings of the Church. Throughout the inspection, observations showed that children treated each other with respect, care, patience, concern and with dignity and there is an emphasis on creating a pleasant working environment for everyone in school.

An explicit Catholic culture permeates the whole school and is clearly identifiable through relationships, decision making and actions. The governing body, along with the headteacher and senior leadership team, is very effective in undertaking its role of leading the school and developing it as a Catholic community. The

school's GIFT chaplaincy team is well resourced, relevant, inclusive and has a high impact on the life of the school. Staff and children clearly demonstrate and witness to justice, compassion, reconciliation, respect and dignity in their relationships and are able to see the relationship between their own behaviour and Christian values.

AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- To develop 'Word' from good to outstanding by continuing to strengthen religious literacy throughout the school and by providing opportunities for teachers to observe outstanding practice.
- Through consistently high quality teaching and learning, empower pupils to be creative, independent and reflective learners.

8th December 2016

Dear Children,

Thank you for making our visit to St Brigid's so enjoyable when we came to inspect your school for the Bishop. Thank you for making us feel so welcome. We really enjoyed our time with you. Your school is a good Catholic school.

We really enjoyed seeing your lessons and we were sorry we didn't see all the classes. It was lovely to see your activities: your work, your prayer and worship sessions and your very polite manners. Thank you. You have a very sensible attitude to life and to school, and we could see very strongly that you are proud of your school. We could see that you all believe that every child is special and is valued as part of your school community.

We were made to feel very welcome by all the children that we met. You treat each other with dignity and respect; you treat each other the way you wish to be treated, and it was great to see. Every child has a part to play at St Brigid's.

Your headteacher and teachers work very hard and they make sure that you all enjoy coming to school and are eager to learn. They have a high opinion of you and your families and they care a great deal for every child in the school. It was a privilege for us to come into your school.

Jesus Christ is at the centre of your school community and this is seen throughout the school every day. Your teachers are going to help you to develop even greater levels of understanding about Jesus and the Catholic faith. Many of you have a very good knowledge and understanding about your faith, so this should help you to do even better.

God bless all in your school,

Mrs J Frazer and Miss S Molloy

(Section 48 Inspectors)

Summary Report to Parents

On 8th December 2016 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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