

INSPECTION REPORT

St Charles RC Primary School, Swinton, Salford, M27 9PD.

Inspection date Tuesday 7th July 2015

Reporting Inspector Mrs Susan Gedzielewski
 Mr Andrew Sowerby

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

Type of School Primary
 URN 105955
 Age range of pupils 3-11 years
 Number on roll 244
 Appropriate authority The Governing Body
 Chair of Governors Mrs Noreen Collins
 Headteacher Mrs Clare Campbell
 Religious Education Subject Leader Mr Stephen Murphy
 Date of previous inspection September 2013

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades 1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3=Requires Improvement 4 = Inadequate
Overall effectiveness of the school	1	
The quality of Catholic Leadership	1	
The quality of the Word of God community	2	
The quality of the Welcome community	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 Charles is a Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic primary school serving the needs of the parish of St Charles, Swinton, Salford. This is an average size primary school serving an urban area just outside the town of Swinton. There are 244 pupils on roll, the majority of which are white British. Children start school with attainment below that typical for their age, although they make rapid progress in the EYFS. Pupils make good progress overall in the light of their lower starting point when they start school. The achievement of pupils leaving the school in Year 6 has improved significantly in a short period of time. Attendance is above average and punctuality is excellent. The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium fund is below national average, but increasing. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is average. 88% of the children are baptised Roman Catholic. 77% of teachers are Catholic.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS OUTSTANDING

St Charles is an outstanding Catholic primary school offering the children a rich faith experience, alongside rapidly improving standards. The drive, determination and focussed leadership of the headteacher has meant that the school has improved significantly since its last inspection. The cohesive team of governors and staff have dedicated themselves to developing a Catholic learning community and environment which is a source of inspiration. The quality of teaching in RE is good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils. Children enjoy and are challenged by their learning in RE. They have a good knowledge of scripture and significant resourcing has been dedicated to this. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is fully embedded across all aspects of the curriculum. Monitoring and self-evaluation of the Religious Education curriculum by the RE subject leader, headteacher and the governors has ensured that there has been significant improvements since the previous inspection. The celebration of mass, prayer services and assemblies are well prepared and give pupils many opportunities to develop and enrich their prayer life. The pupil chaplaincy team are having a positive impact on prayer and worship, and are keen to develop their role further. Children talk confidently about Gospel values and how these affect their life and learning across the school. The school embraces and places a high priority on partnerships with the home and parish. There is a culture of welcome; pupils and staff demonstrate a very high level of care and outreach to all within the community. School is developing as a real witnessing community.

THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- The school's leadership, including that of the governors, is outstanding. The headteacher, RE subject leader, staff and governors share a collective vision and demonstrate a deep commitment to school improvement and Catholic education.
- Care, guidance and support for pupils is outstanding, particular for pupils with special education needs and disabilities.
- The quality of the learning environments is exceptional.
- The pupil chaplaincy is having a high impact in prayer, worship and witness.
- The welcome and inclusion is a great strength of the school, everyone's contribution is valued.
- Philosophy for children is having a positive impact on pupils' thought processes, questioning skills and the development of empathy.

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

The school's leadership, including that of governors, demonstrates a deep commitment to the Church's mission in education. The dedicated headteacher is energised by the task of leading this school and under her leadership, pupil progress and achievements have rapidly improved. Alongside her senior leadership team,

she has inspired and motivated staff. This is evident in the new teaching strategies, self-evaluation and monitoring, support for families and vulnerable pupils, RE assessment and marking, to name but a few. There is a strong sense of ownership and vision across the community: governors, staff team, pupils and their families are unified and guided by a living mission statement. Governors demonstrated that they had a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, this was due to their regular joint monitoring of all aspects of Religious Education by the RE working party. The Chair of Governors works closely with the headteacher to ensure all the governors are kept informed. Strong leadership from the Religious Education subject leader, who is also the deputy headteacher, has ensured that strategies for improving teaching have been effective. The senior leadership team are aware that there are still areas that need attention and they are offering support to teachers to ensure improvement continues. Appraisal is thorough and effective, and performance management objectives for Religious Education are a regular feature. The parish priest is fully involved in the religious life of the school. Leadership skills for the children are developed through the varied opportunities within the school, but we would like the school to continue on this journey by providing greater opportunities for pupils to lead the learning in their RE lessons.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORD OF GOD IS GOOD

Religious Education is at the core of the curriculum and all requirements are being fully met. Children are extremely positive about their learning in RE lessons and the quality of teaching is good with some outstanding aspects. Teaching and learning is characterised by high expectations, creative teaching strategies and effective marking. Children talked about the importance of Gospel values and "how we are fellow workers with God." Pupils' knowledge and understanding of scripture was found to be of a high standard and where the philosophical approach is used the higher order thinking and questioning is resulting in exceptional learning. Pupils made outstanding progress in the lesson where the teacher gave pupils responsibility for their own learning and constantly challenged their thinking with higher level questions. Good progress was made in the lesson where teachers had high expectations and used a variety of teaching techniques in order to engage learners. More could be done in school to share outstanding teaching with others and ensure all pupils are engaged throughout the lesson. Prayer and reflection are a strong feature in all lessons. In a number of classes pupils were encouraged to reflect upon 'stewardship of God's creation', and how they can 'help to do God work'. Assessment of pupils' learning is thorough, achievement is tracked over time and shared with parents. Marking is having a positive impact on learning and pupils are responding to the teachers' comments. Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural education was found to be outstanding. The school is working hard to develop links in its evangelising and catechetical mission in working alongside home and parish. Well established pupil chaplaincy, the school chapel, weekly masses and daily collective worship are just some examples of this work. The school prioritises Religious Education in its professional development programme for staff. There are effective systems in place to support teachers new to the school with their subject knowledge. Witness to the Word of God is clearly evident in the wonderful displays and learning environment.

THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING

At St Charles, pupils and staff clearly understand the importance of welcoming others into their community. They demonstrate their understanding in a variety of contexts and systems have been strengthened in this respect since the school introduced the Caritas in Action programme. The children spoke with great warmth and affection about their teachers and with great enthusiasm about their school. Parents, staff, governors and children talk about the welcome that everyone receives and the support that is given, particularly to vulnerable pupils. Parents spoke about the welcome they receive from staff on a daily basis, but reserved particular praise for the warm welcome and 'smile' they receive from senior leadership team. Parents and friends play a highly significant part in school life and their contributions are valued. The EYFS staff make home visits to pre-school children to make them and their families feel 'a member of the family St Charles'. The school worked closely with the Diocese to take additional Catholic pupils into the school. Staff work effectively as a team, morale is good and there is a clear sense of ownership and pride in the school community. The school has excellent links with the parish and the parish priest is a very valued presence around school. Parents are extremely active in orchestrating many successful school and family events.

THE QUALITY OF WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING

It was evident from speaking to parents, that pupils at St Charles receive outstanding care, guidance and support; this was also confirmed by the children. The excellent, caring relationships between children and staff was evident in all lessons and throughout the school. Teachers are approachable and parents feel able to talk with them about issues that concern them; concerns are dealt with effectively. Provision for safeguarding and keeping children safe is outstanding. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities ensures that these children make equivalent progress to their peers; as do pupils receiving support through pupil premium funding. The SENCO is a trained counsellor. Vulnerable pupils and their families are exceptionally well cared for and supported. The Artful Place Art therapy studio opened in September 2014. 35 children from seven different schools across Greater Manchester access this provision at St Charles, weekly, to raise self-esteem and provide therapeutic care for mental health and wellbeing. Pupils are confident that if they have any problems they can speak to a member of staff and that any problems will be dealt with sympathetically. Behaviour and movement of pupils around the building is outstanding. The school promotes high attendance and punctuality. Pupils within the school clearly have a voice and are listened to through school council and the chaplaincy team. They make decisions about ways in which the children can raise money for the school's chosen charities. The quality of induction and transition are such that all children quickly feel part of the school community. A fully embedded, holistic and comprehensive Sex and Relationship education programme is provided by the school.

THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

The spiritual life of the children is held in high regard with children afforded opportunities every day to be involved in prayer and worship. Pupil led prayer and worship was a strong feature of the collect worship during the inspection. Although much of the planning and preparation was undertaken by the Year 6 pupils, all classes enthusiastically contributed to this uplifting and spiritual experience. Teachers are supported in furthering the prayer life of the school and they have recently been trained in 'mindfulness' meditation. They plan creative, prayerful opportunities, which include time for quiet reflection. Children are encouraged to use meditation to calm the body, focus the mind and to listen to the "still, small voice within" in order to develop personal prayer. These opportunities could be further enhanced, however, with the inclusion of quiet music and longer periods for silent prayer. Throughout the school and in each classroom there are focal points for worship; the quality of each display is exceptional. The recently developed Chapel is promoting a more spontaneous approach to prayer. Throughout the school there is evidence of high quality resources in all areas. There are weekly masses to which families and parishioners are invited. Whole school assemblies reflect on personal faith, moral issues, festivals, special occasions and other religions and cultures. It was evident during the inspection that children are aware of different ways to prayer to God. The school has strengthened its partnership with families, the parish and the local community in relation to collective worship activities; many of which are led by pupils. This was particularly so during the parish jubilee celebrations.

THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS OUTSTANDING

An explicit Catholic culture permeates the whole of the school and is clearly articulated and witnessed. The school encourages and supports its pupils to develop a relationship with God and to share their beliefs with others through words and actions. All within the community are very clear about their role as missionary disciples and stewards of creation entrusted with the mysteries of God. Pupils clearly have a say in how things should be done. There is a strong sense of belonging to the school and relationships are excellent between all members of the community. Pupils demonstrate witness to justice, compassion, reconciliation, love and forgiveness; this was particularly evident in the philosophy for children lesson. Witness is clearly evident in RE lessons. The pupils are keen supporters of local and international charities including: the homeless charity 'Coffee for Craig', shoebox appeal, Caritas, CAFOD, Red Nose day, children hospice and Macmillan nurses. The school choir perform at many local venues and events. The support for families in difficulty is exceptional. Pupils treated each other with respect, care, patience, concern and there is an emphasis on creating a pleasant working environment for everyone in school. The pupil chaplaincy team are well established, resourced and they are having a significant impact on the life of the school. They are extremely proud of the work they do and they are particularly proud of the working they have undertaken with younger children. Close links with the parish are enhanced with the regular visits of Father Paul and the work of the catechists for the sacramental programme. The school is proactive

in their evangelising mission. Staff and governors have spoken of their desire to further develop prayer and worship so that more families engage in the life of the parish. Parents and governors spoke highly of the drive and ambition of the headteacher and senior leadership team in ensuring that the beliefs and values of the school as a Catholic community were at the central to their work.

AGREED AREA FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding by:
 - a) ensuring that teachers sustain pupils' attention and are given enough time to produce their best work;
 - b) sharing and observing outstanding teaching in school and elsewhere;
 - c) continuing to introduce creative and collaborative learning activities.

Tuesday 7th July 2015

Dear Pupils

Thank you so much for the wonderful welcome you gave me when we came to visit you. I really enjoyed learning about all the wonderful things you do at St Charles. You and your teachers are working so hard to always do your very best and as a result your school is outstanding.

We enjoyed being a part of your lessons, assembly and collective worship sessions and meeting and talking to your pupil chaplains and school council. It was lovely to see how very proud you are of your school and all that you have achieved. We know that the pupil chaplains have plans for taking a lead in worship; they are a credit to your school.

Your teachers are helping you to learn and we were very impressed by your excellent behaviour and relationships. It was wonderful to see how you participated in and led prayer during collective worship. I agree with the child that said "being kind and gentle is much more powerful than using force". The chaplains are doing a wonderful job and I hope you continue to promote prayer and the school chapel.

You told us about how much you enjoy your RE lessons and that, for many of you, it is your favourite subject. Your teachers are going to help you do even better by making some improves to their teaching. Thank you for the warm welcome we received from everyone.

God bless you all and enjoy the summer holiday.

Mrs Susan Gedzielewski
Mr Andrew Sowerby
(Section 48 Inspectors)

Summary Report to Parents

On 7th July 2015 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.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS OUTSTANDING

St Charles is an outstanding Catholic primary school offering the children a rich faith experience, alongside rapidly improving standards. The drive, determination and focussed leadership of the headteacher has meant that the school has improved significantly since its last inspection. The cohesive team of governors and staff have dedicated themselves to developing a Catholic learning community and environment which is a source of inspiration. The quality of teaching in RE is good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils. Children enjoy and are challenged by their learning in RE. They have a good knowledge of scripture and significant resourcing has been dedicated to this. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is fully embedded across all aspects of the curriculum. Monitoring and self-evaluation of the Religious Education curriculum by the RE subject leader, headteacher and the governors has ensured that there has been significant improvements since the previous inspection. The celebration of mass, prayer services and assemblies are well prepared and give pupils many opportunities to develop and enrich their prayer life. The pupil chaplaincy team are having a positive impact on prayer and worship, and are keen to develop their role further. Children talk confidently about Gospel values and how these affect their life and learning across the school. The school embraces and places a high priority on partnerships with the home and parish. There is a culture of welcome; pupils and staff demonstrate a very high level of care and outreach to all within the community. School is developing as a real witnessing community.

THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- The school's leadership, including that of the governors, is outstanding. The headteacher, RE subject leader, staff and governors share a collective vision and demonstrate a deep commitment to school improvement and Catholic education.
- Care, guidance and support for pupils is outstanding, particular for pupils with special education needs and disabilities.
- The quality of the learning environments is exceptional.
- The pupil chaplaincy is having a high impact in prayer, worship and witness.
- The welcome and inclusion is a great strength of the school, everyone's contribution is valued.
- Philosophy for children is having a positive impact on pupils' thought processes, questioning skills and the development of empathy.

AGREED AREA FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding by:
 - a) ensuring that teachers sustain pupils' attention and are given enough time to produce their best work;
 - b) sharing and observing outstanding teaching in school and elsewhere;
 - c) continuing to introduce creative and collaborative learning activities.