

**INSPECTION REPORT**

**St Edward's RC Primary School, Blackburn Road, Darwen. BB3 0AA**

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Inspection date 14<sup>th</sup> June 2016  
 Reporting Inspector Mr J Thorpe  
 Mrs P Macro

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

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Type of School Primary  
 URN 119666  
 Age range of pupils 4-11  
 Number on roll 207  
 Appropriate authority The Governing Body  
 Chair of Governors Mr R Beardsworth  
 Headteacher Mr G Keane  
 Religious Education Subject Leader Mrs C Wilkinson  
 Date of previous inspection March 2011

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<b>The Inspection judgements are:</b>	<b>Grade</b>	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	1	
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 Edward's is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school in Darwen serving the parish of Sacred Heart and St Edward's. The school admission number is 30. There are currently 207 pupils in the school, in 7 single age classes. The school does not have a nursery. The school attracts the majority of its pupils from the Catholic population of northern Darwen; 85% of pupils are baptised Roman Catholics. Pupils are predominantly white British, although there is a rising number of Polish and Italian heritage pupils. There is a small number of other ethnic minority pupils (10% in total). 8% of pupils have English as an additional language, 3% of pupils have Education, Health Care Plans. There is an increasing number of pupils receiving Pupil Premium Grant (23%). 20% of pupils have been identified as having a special educational need of some sort. Pupils enter Reception from a broad range of socio-economic circumstances; a large number of families experience significant levels of social and economic disadvantage. Attainment on entry is generally below national average. Of the 10 teachers, 8 are Catholic, 7 of whom have been awarded the Certificate of Catholic Religious Studies.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS OUTSTANDING**

St Edward's is an outstanding Catholic primary school. This warm and friendly school is very successful in offering all pupils a traditional, holistic Catholic education in a caring and supportive environment where all are welcomed and differences are celebrated. The school mission statement, produced by all stakeholders, is reviewed annually. A strong Catholic ethos is at the very centre of everything it does. The governors place their trust in the very dedicated headteacher and his leadership team. Highly skilled teaching and support staff are totally committed to the school and the pupils. Pupils make good or outstanding progress including those with SEND. Relationships across the school are outstanding, being based on the Gospel values of Jesus Christ. As a result of considerable hard work, relationships between home, school and parish are outstanding. The collaborative working of home, school and parish ensures the pastoral, spiritual, social and emotional needs of the pupils and their families are fully met. Throughout the day of inspection, pupils were outstandingly well behaved, respectful and considerate towards each other and the adults around them; no raised voices were heard at any time. Lessons observed ranged from good to outstanding. The well informed and active governing body has established its role in monitoring the work of the school and is immensely proud of the school's achievements. Parents feel welcomed and valued, they are very positive about the care and support given to pupils and families, particularly parents of pupils with SEND. The school has successfully addressed the areas for development identified in the last inspection.

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

- The high quality of the relationships across the school.
- The strength of the links between the school and parish.
- The welfare of pupils and staff is of paramount importance.
- A well informed and supportive governing body.

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

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. The strength of the leadership has evolved over time. It is a distributive leadership model, which recognises the gifts and talents of its members. The headteacher and RE subject leader share a clear understanding of the nature of the Catholic school and, together with other members of the leadership team, promote the Catholic life of the school highly effectively. The recently appointed subject leader keeps meticulous records covering monitoring, assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and learning in RE which enables the school to be clear about its strengths and areas for development. Staff fully support the many opportunities for prayer and worship available to pupils. The sacramental programme is supported in school with close co-operation with the parish. Pupil members of the chaplaincy team are developing their key role in leading prayer and worship in different ways across the school. The governing body is well led by the knowledgeable

chair; the governors trust the judgement of key leaders. The headteacher and subject leader regularly present detailed reports to the governors that keeps them well informed of all aspects of school life. RE has its own action plan and has priority in the school development plan. The subject leader is a member of the leadership team. RE enjoys at least 10% of teaching time; funding for RE resources is readily available. The parish priest is a popular and regular visitor, fully involved in the religious life of the school and committed to supporting and encouraging the religious welfare of pupils and staff. Parents are kept well informed about the school through newsletters and the informative and regularly updated website.

### **THE QUALITY OF THE WORD IS OUTSTANDING**

The school uses 'The Way, The Truth, The Life' scheme and is planning to add 'Come and See' to further enhance its provision. Displays in public areas and classrooms are of a high standard throughout the school. They follow the liturgical year and place high value on the work of the pupils. Each classroom has a prayer focus area that shows traditional and pupil composed prayers alongside religious artefacts and images. Teaching and learning observed was at least good, in the majority of classes outstanding. From an early age pupils are learning about the importance of God in their lives and show a developing religious literacy. In Reception class pupils identified by name objects they had seen on their visit to the parish church and enthusiastically discussed their religious significance. Across the school a judicious use of drama, music, song, talk partners, prayer and ICT were used to enrich and extend learning. All lessons were well planned. Pupils benefitted from thoughtful teaching complemented by the effective deployment of support staff; as a result teaching and learning was always good or better. Teachers are confident in guiding children at the appropriate pace and level in understanding the more complex questions of faith. In key stage 2, pupils were happy to work independently and collaboratively in order to produce written and discussion work of high quality. Pupils learn about other faiths through lessons and assemblies; they are able to recognise similarities rather than differences between their faith and others. This helps them to understand and respect the beliefs and cultures of others. The pupils show a keen interest and enthusiasm in RE and are happy and confident to share their understanding of their faith. Standards of attainment in RE are at least as high as those in other subjects. Books are almost always marked to a high standard; clear feedback and next steps confirm high expectations. The challenge for the school now is to create additional opportunities for pupils to take more responsibility for their future learning by reducing teacher control and allowing greater pupil independence.

### **THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING**

St Edward's provides a very warm, welcoming and totally inclusive environment for all its pupils, their families, staff and visitors. This is a calm school, bright, clean and airy. The whole school community values their built environment and treats it with respect. Similarly, the distinctive culture and a loving, caring ethos based on a shared knowledge and understanding of Christian beliefs and Gospel values enables the school to identify and respect every single member of the community. The importance of the dignity of the individual is clearly evidenced at all times. Staff go out of their way to ensure that all visitors are welcomed with love and respectful care. On entering the school visitors are immediately aware of the mission of the school, that they are in a place of learning and the operational significance of the 5W's. A strong commitment to safeguarding in no way compromises the genuinely warm welcome. Pupils were polite and well-mannered throughout the day, they asked the inspectors several times if they needed help finding classrooms! Relationships between pupils and staff are outstanding. Many families have been associated with the school for several generations and feel a strong sense of belonging. Parents spoke highly of the school and of the opportunities they are given to develop this sense of belonging. Other parents commented on the many improvements that have taken place to the building in recent years. All parents were more than happy with the quality of education at the school and how their children were encouraged to develop as well balanced people. Parents also valued the open door policy of the school which enables parental concerns to be speedily and effectively dealt with. Governors appreciate the fact that whenever they arrive in school they are always welcome, able to see the headteacher even if they do not have an appointment. There are effective induction programmes for new pupils, new

families, NQT's, newly appointed staff and governors that successfully induct them into the Catholic life of the school.

### **THE QUALITY OF WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING**

St Edward's staff and pupils demonstrate a high level of respect and care for each other. The school gives a high priority to those in the greatest need. Procedures to safeguard and protect are fully endorsed. Throughout the school there is good practice enabling pupils and staff to feel safe and well cared for and to adopt safe practices themselves. There is a genuine concern from all staff for the welfare of pupils; Jesus Christ is used as an example for the whole community to aspire to. Pupils care for one another, older pupils and pupil chaplains show younger pupils how to become more prayerful. When asked about bullying pupils stated that it was not an issue as everyone knew exactly what to do if there were any problems. Pupils and staff feel free to safely express their opinions and know that they will be valued. In classrooms pupils listened respectfully to the opinions of others and appreciate the fact that we are not all the same. Calm support is offered by adults when pupils have difficulty remaining on task. School has put in place an excellent nurture programme in response to parent's busy lifestyles and changing family structures and circumstances. Pupil Premium spending is tightly focussed. Additional staff have been appointed and external agencies brought in to support identified pupils. SEN spending is always in excess of that which the school is statutorily required to spend. This expenditure indicates the school commitment to Christian stewardship and relentless service to others. Parents of pupils with SEN were overwhelmed by the willingness of the school to do whatever is necessary to help their children. Breakfast Club and after school care is available to pupils. The compassionate and caring ethos naturally leads to the school supporting local, national and international charities. The parish priest knows where the school is in its faith journey and supports the religious welfare of the school community.

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

Worship at St Edward's is best described as deeply prayerful. The school provides a variety of worship opportunities for its pupils which are appropriate to their backgrounds and faith experiences. Prayer is at the heart of the school's and it is enabling pupils to become closer to God. On the day of inspection two good acts of worship were observed; a whole school assembly and a class based worship. The worship was child centred, thoughtful and relevant. They provided opportunities for participation, joyful singing and brief reflection. Pupils were respectful throughout. Displays around the school showed the influence of the liturgical year on the themes of worship. The importance of prayer and worship was obvious in the visual records of activities kept by the subject leader. The school seeks to inspire and explore a deeper relationship with God by giving children and staff many opportunities to create and lead prayer and worship. Staff and pupils work together preparing and delivering acts of collective worship in different formats. The subject leader has a development plan designed to hand over more control of the planning and preparation of worship to the pupils and extending the influence of the pupil chaplains. Each classroom has an age appropriate prayer focus area, the displays in these areas indicate that pupils are comfortable in composing their own prayers and reflecting on their own experiences. One parent mentioned that her child comes home and teaches the family new prayers. Parents and carers are invited to attend special assemblies and masses throughout the year. The school willingly accepts its responsibility to support in school those pupils completing the sacramental programme. Governors and parents expressed their appreciation for the contribution made by the school in supporting the parish activity.

### **THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS OUTSTANDING**

Witnessing to Christ and the values of the Gospel are central to the life of St Edward's and evident through the behaviour, relationships, learning, work in pupil's books and displays of pupil's work throughout the school. Pupil members of the chaplaincy team, school council, social and communication club and friendship club were found to be most willing to speak about their faith and why it is important to them. The pupils spoke of their pride in being members of a faith community. They are proud of their school and took great delight in explaining why. Some of these pupils provided evidence that they are given the opportunity to positively

influence the strategic decisions of the school. They believe that the management of the school listens to what they have to say and that they can effect change. Pupils are able to recognise the important contribution made to the community by people of other denominations and faiths and understand why this is part of being a Catholic community. Adults act as role models for the school's mission and values, they promote the ethos of the school to pupils and the wider community. The hard work of the staff enables the pupils to make excellent spiritual and academic progress. Pupils engage with the 'big questions' relating to faith, their questions are always answered sensitively and with compassion. The community knows its responsibilities in relation to equal opportunities, reconciliation and Christian stewardship. This understanding is the driving force behind the school's work supporting justice and peace, care for the environment, Christ's love for all, forgiveness and compassion. There is a very strong sense of teamwork amongst the staff, pupils and parents, which gives the school a true family feel. Professional collaborations involve the school in working alongside and supporting schools in Darwen and the Salford Diocese. Charitable donations are made to McMillan Nurses, St Joseph's Penny and Cafod, Text Santa, Derrian House, Night Safe (homeless charity) and Poppy Appeal.

**AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:**

- To clearly identify training opportunities for the recently appointed subject leader.
- To further enhance the development of assessment in RE.
- To ensure that the outstanding practice observed is shared, so that inspirational teaching is evident throughout the school.
- To introduce a holistic sex and relationships education programme in line with the church's teachings.

Date: 14<sup>th</sup> June 2016

Dear Pupils,

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us and for making our visit to St Edward's such an enjoyable occasion, we really enjoyed our time with you. You and the adults in your school work very hard to always do their best and because of this your school is an outstanding Catholic school. Bishop John will be very pleased when we tell him.

We really enjoyed seeing your lessons and learning about all the wonderful things you do in your school. We saw as many of you as we could and we are sorry if we didn't see you in your class. Thank you for sharing your work with us. We were impressed by the way you all try to do your best at all times and the beautiful displays around the school. It was clear to us that you have a good knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith.

It was lovely to see so many happy faces. It was obvious you are all very proud of your school and all that you have achieved together. You were all so well behaved; your politeness and manners were simply superb. It was a privilege for us to come into your school.

It was pleasing to see how attentive and confident you were in the prayer and worship we saw. Everyone showed great respect and reverence, your singing was really uplifting!

Mr Keane, all the staff, Fr Peter, the school governors and your parents are extremely proud of all of you and of what you have achieved, well done, keep it up!

Your teachers are very keen to help you develop even further the Catholic life of your school so that together you can continue to 'have life and have it to the full'. To do this they are going to work with you and your parents to acquire additional resources and create opportunities for you to become more independent learners and leaders in school.

So, well done and thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Mr John Thorpe and Mrs Pam Macro  
(Section 48 Inspectors)

## Summary Report to Parents

On 14<sup>th</sup> June 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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