

**INSPECTION REPORT**

**St Mary Magdalene R.C. Primary School, Wellfield Drive, Burnley, BB12 0JD.**

Inspection date 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016

Reporting Inspectors Mr Andrew Sowerby  
Mrs Pam Macro

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

Type of School Roman Catholic Primary

URN 119489

Age range of pupils 4-11 years

Number on roll 205

Appropriate authority The Governing Body

Chair of Governors Mr Martyn Hargreaves

Headteacher Mrs Julie Frazer

Religious Education Subject leader Mrs Emma Platt

Date of previous inspection November 2011

<b>The Inspection judgements are:</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Explanation of the Grades</b>
Overall effectiveness of the school	1	1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3=Requires Improvement 4 = Inadequate
The quality of the Word community	1	
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 Mary Magdalene's is a Roman Catholic school supported by the Diocese of Salford, serving the parish of St Mary Magdalene Burnley. The school is situated in the middle of a housing estate with good quality housing; however it also serves families from a more deprived area of the parish. There are 205 children on roll, aged between 4-11 years, 89% of which are baptised Catholics. Six of the eight full-time teachers are Catholic, and almost all of the teaching assistants are. The school actively seeks to recruit Catholics whenever possible. The number of children eligible for free school meals is sixteen; which is low compared to other schools locally. There are three children from ethnic minority backgrounds, who have English as an additional language, and three children who are looked after by the Local Authority. There are two children in school who have statements of special educational needs and a further nineteen (10.1%) children who are on the special educational needs register and are supported by an Individual Education Plan. The school has achieved a number of awards including the Healthy Schools Award, School Games Gold Award and the Burnley Community School Awards for Sport.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

St Mary Magdalene's is an outstanding Catholic Primary school. Upon entry to the school one is struck by the wonderfully warm and friendly welcome given to all, especially by the school's Catholic ambassadors. All children are provided with a Catholic education in a caring and supportive environment where individual needs are exceptionally well catered for. The pupils take a great pride in the school, which is fully inclusive. The Word of God is exceptionally central to the life of the school. This ensures the pastoral and spiritual needs of all families and children are very well met. The dedicated and passionate headteacher, enthusiastic R.E. Co-ordinator and Leadership Team have very high expectations of adults and children. Together with the hard working staff, they have created an ethos where everyone recognises the need to work together in order to ensure that the needs of everyone are catered for. This work is further enhanced by the support of a very effective and knowledgeable governing body.

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

- The Catholic leadership of the school, including governors.
- The strong and inclusive links with the parish of St Mary Magdalene.
- The quality of relationships across the school.
- The outstanding quality of witness to the faith that is evident across the school community.
- The high quality acts of collective worship.

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

The quality of Catholic leadership is outstanding. The dedicated and passionate headteacher, enthusiastic RE subject leader, along with a knowledgeable and supportive governing body, provide strong and decisive leadership by clearly living their vision for Catholic Education. There is excellent leadership at all levels of the school community, which contributes significantly to the outstanding provision for Catholic Education that the school currently provides. They ensure that the development of the Catholic life of the school is at the forefront of the school's work. Together with the other staff, they ensure that the teaching of RE and the development of the Catholic Life of the School have an extremely high priority. The school has a clear plan for developing RE across the school and this is reflected in the priority it is given. Evidence for this can be found in the school's clear self-evaluation plan, which is based on the 5Ws model. The school is aware of its next steps and has clear plans for implementing them.

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

The school's new mission statement is clearly evident in all areas of the school. It is child centred and reflects the determination of all to ensure that the school provides the highest quality of Catholic education to all who attend the school. The staffing and resources devoted to RE are of the highest standard, reflecting its significance and importance in the school. Children clearly enjoy RE and were keen to express this to the inspection team during their stay in school. Pupils are challenged to engage with the 'big questions' of the purpose and meaning of life throughout the curriculum. This could be seen particularly in those lessons where children were challenged to implement the gospel message in their own lives. Examples of this were seen in the quality of discussion focused on the difficult issue of death and loss, as well as in the high quality acts of worship seen across the school. There are also examples of this on the bright and attractive displays that are to be found throughout the school. Scripture is clearly known, understood and made relevant throughout the school. The home, school and parish links are inclusive, creative and effective. This is in many ways due to the commitment of the parish priest and headteacher to work together in order to ensure that the children receive the highest possible quality of Catholic education. Pupils are actively trained in outreach to the local community. This can be seen in the vast number of charities that the school supports. These are not just the Catholic charities such as CAFOD and St Joseph's Penny, but also the support the school gives to other local charities such as the homeless people of Burnley and the local hospice.

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

St. Mary's provides an exceptionally warm welcome for all who attend the school. Parents were keen to express how all feel included and that any concerns they have are quickly and sensitively dealt with. The development of the school's new mission statement included all members of the school community and demonstrates how well the school makes all its stakeholders feel welcome. There is a holistic approach to ensure that children's emotional, social and cultural needs are very well cared for. Children love come to school. As one child put it "I love St. Mary Magdalene's as everyone looks after each other and no one is left out" This was highlighted by the school's 'Seeds and Gardeners' Project which ensure that when children enter the school in reception they are helped to settle in by the Year 6 children. Parents also spoke very clearly about the high quality communication the school provides, so that they all feel very well informed about the life of the school.

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

The staff and pupils demonstrate a very high level of respect, care and service to others. This was witnessed throughout the day in the manner that the staff supported children and colleagues who felt distressed in a very dignified and supportive manner. The structures and procedures ensure that all pupils and staff feel safe and are treated with respect and dignity. The outreach support provided by the school ensures that the needs of parents and young families are met in a structured and sensitive manner. Relationships at St Mary Magdalene's are of the high quality. Children love their teachers whilst all adults show great respect, care and appreciation of the children. "The statement 'What would Jesus do' (WWJD) is a real tool that helps regulates the children's behaviour" stated one parent. All pupils and staff feel safe and free to express their opinions and know that these will be valued. This was seen during discussions with the children who expressed their opinions about the variety of opportunities provided for them and how they felt empowered to express their opinions. Importance and recognition is given equally to all. The quality of outreach support provided by the school is absolutely outstanding as senior leaders live out the gospel message to care for others in their service to the community. One example of this work is staff supporting families in need well after they have left the school. Calm support is offered by sensitive adults when children have difficulty remaining on task. Such role models ensure learning and good relationships develop. The school stresses the importance of reaching out beyond its own community, so that children feel part of God's world. The charity work is a living example of this as children support CAFOD, St Joseph's Penny as well as providing on-going support to the homeless in Burnley.

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

The school provides a variety of worship opportunities for pupils throughout the school including small and large groups, which are appropriate to their backgrounds and faith experiences. All children are provided with the opportunity to pray and reflect in a variety of settings. This was experienced during an uplifting whole school assembly, as well as a reflective and contemplative act of worship in Year 6. Here the children are provided with the opportunity to experience a moment of quietness in the hustle and bustle of everyday school life. The inclusive and reflective collective acts of worship help pupils to grow in confidence in prayer and develop a close relationship with God. The provision and development of a variety of places for personal prayer across the school showed the whole school's commitment to the development of the Catholic Life of the school. The school has strong links with the parish of St Mary Magdalene where they participate in a variety of masses and other liturgical celebrations. There are strong links between the parish and the school particular with regard to the preparation of the children for the sacraments of initiation and the current celebration of Jubilee Year of Mercy. Pupils are comfortable with their feelings and have a good and knowledgeable vocabulary. Each class has a special prayer focus. The children know many school prayers and compose powerful prayers for themselves. In many classes there were examples of displays of the children's own prayers. Attractive displays which were seen around school are used to show and stimulate prayer opportunities. Hymns, music and singing enhanced the quality and enjoyment of prayer in school. The newly established Catholic ambassadors are beginning to have a real impact on the development of the prayer life of the school, so that the children are becoming more effective at planning and leading prayer services.

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

All staff act as excellent role models for the children and help them in recognising that God is with them in every aspect of school life. Adults and pupils witness to the mission statement of the school, which informs everything and is explicit in policies and the lived experience of the whole community. Adults act as role models of the school's mission and values and as key promoters of the ethos of the school for the pupils and the school community's witness to the wider community. The staff and pupils feel confident and secure in their witness to Christ, the Gospel and the teachings of the Church. Pupils are confident in witnessing to the beliefs values of a Catholic community and are actively encouraged and supported in being pro-active citizens who participate in the decision-making processes at a local and national level. This is seen in the way the school promotes support for various charities so as to promote support for the Common Good. Examples of regular fund raising activities organised by the children including the 'Race back to Jesus' and the raising of money to support the homeless in Burnley.

An explicit Catholic culture permeates the whole of school and is clearly identifiable through relationships, decision-making and actions. Relationships are outstanding at St Mary Magdalene and a strong sense of teamwork and belonging exists. The inspectors noted at all times behaviour was outstanding. Children are respectful of each other. Adults working as a committed team have high expectations of the children and in this atmosphere the children thrive.

### **AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:**

- To embed the newly introduced 'Come and See' scheme across the school, so as to further enhance the RE Curriculum.
- To improve the consistency and quality of RE assessments, so that they accurately match the changes in the school RE curriculum.
- To further enhance the work of the Catholic ambassadors, so as to ensure that all children have regular opportunities to actively participate in the preparation and delivery of the prayer life of the school.

**Department for Education**

1st March 2016

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making our visit to St Mary Magdalene's so enjoyable when we came to inspect your school for the Bishop. We really enjoyed being with you. Thank you for looking after us so well and helping us to feel very welcome. St Mary Magdalene's is an outstanding Catholic school.

We enjoyed being part of your lessons and we were sorry not to see everyone. Thank you for showing us so much of your work and activities. We could see that you are very proud of your school and all that you have achieved together. We were particularly impressed that you thought that the most important part of your learning and life together was that you *'felt connected to one another as all part of God's family'*. I know the Bishop will be delighted to hear this.

Your teachers are really helping you to learn very well and we were very impressed by your excellent relationships and behaviour. It was good to see so much of your Mission Statement coming through everything you are learning; your relationships and the special way you make everyone feel valued. It is wonderful to see a school made up of pupils and adults who get on so well together so that everyone is cared for as a member of God's family. This is a true reflection of being part of a Catholic community where everyone is welcome and has a place.

You have started using your new RE programme and are doing very well. You are a very creative school and we were most impressed by the way you work together so co-operatively in your lessons. The prayer services we saw were very good and uplifting experiences. Your teachers have started to develop an excellent way of teaching RE using the 'Come and See' scheme and we have asked them to continue to develop this with you. We have especially asked them to continue to develop the work that Catholic Ambassadors are doing so as to help you all understand more about your faith and relationship with God.

God bless you all and have a really happy Easter holiday.

Yours sincerely,

Mr A J Sowerby  
Mrs P. Macro  
(Section 48 Inspectors)

## Summary Report to Parents

On 1<sup>st</sup> March 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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