

**INSPECTION REPORT St Patrick’s RC Primary School, Lee Street, Oldham, OL8 1EF**

Inspection date 9<sup>th</sup> February 2016

Reporting Inspectors Brendan Hennessy  
 Fiona Robinson

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

Type of School Primary  
 URN 105726  
 Age range of pupils 3 - 11  
 Number on roll 236  
 Appropriate authority The Governing Body  
 Chair of Governors Fr Philip Sumner  
 Headteacher Helen Halliwell  
 Religious Education Subject Leader Angela Carr  
 Date of previous inspection October 2010

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

## **CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL**

St Patrick's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School serves the parish of St Mary with St Patrick. This is an average sized primary school with 236 pupils on roll, including a 26 place part-time nursery; 22.5% of the children are baptised Roman Catholic. The school is situated in a socially disadvantaged and culturally diverse urban area. This context provides challenges and benefits, enabling school to provide a vibrant, inclusive and happy environment where children thrive. Currently in school 30.25% of pupils are entitled to Pupil Premium, 10.9% have been identified with Special Educational Needs and 87.8% speak English as an additional language. On entry to the nursery, the attainment of the majority of pupils is lower than the national average. Most pupils have made good or better progress in their learning by the time they leave at the end of KS2. There are 10 teachers in school, 7 of whom are Catholic; 2 teachers have the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. School provides extended provision for children both before and after school.

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

St Patrick's is a good Catholic primary school, with some outstanding features. This warm and friendly school offers children a Catholic education in a caring and supportive environment where all are welcomed and differences celebrated. The dedicated headteacher, enthusiastic leadership team and hardworking staff do all they can to ensure that the spiritual and pastoral needs are met. Christ is clearly at the centre of all aspects of school life and the Gospel values are lived out by all. The parish priest and governing body are very supportive. They are committed to providing a true Catholic education in this inclusive school. The quality of teaching in religious education is good and all staff strive to achieve high standards across the school. The prayer life of the school and the many opportunities for worship have enhanced the individual faith journeys of pupils and staff. The friendly, polite and well-mannered children are very proud of their school. They have high aspirations for themselves, and their behaviour and attitude to learning is very good. Parents stated that school was very much a "family" and it "taught what is necessary for life". They felt valued, they could talk to the staff and they were listened to. The leadership team is active in monitoring, assessing and evaluating religious education in school, which has ensured that the school has continued to develop since the last inspection.

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

- The outstanding way in which the school supports the welfare of the children and their families.
- The quality of the relationships across the school community and the excellent behaviour; good manners and respect for others shown by the children.
- The dedication and commitment of all the staff to providing a caring and nurturing school that has a positive impact on the lives of the children.

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

St Patrick's is very well led by a dedicated headteacher, who has a strong spiritual commitment and clearly values the individual worth of every member of the school community. The headteacher is very well supported by an enthusiastic leadership team, a committed RE subject leader and hardworking staff. The governors have a clear, strategic vision for the school and are becoming more proactive in providing support and challenge. They have worked with school to help shape a shared vision for Catholic education in St Patrick's. Staff and governors work hard to improvement this shared vision and keep it at the forefront of their thinking and practice. The supportive parish priest is a regular visitor to school and is fully involved in the religious life of the school. School leaders set the example for others in the school to follow. Through active monitoring, assessment and evaluation, the leadership team is fully aware of the strengths of the school and what needs to be done to develop even further. School prioritises religious education in its school improvement plan and its professional development programme for staff. This is having a positive impact on the quality of provision of RE in school. Pupil leadership has recently been strengthened through the establishment of the faith group as leaders of prayer and worship. The quality of leadership at all levels

of the school community is making a significant contribution to the provision of Catholic education in school. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very well established and permeates all aspects of school life.

### **THE QUALITY OF THE WORD IS GOOD**

The school's mission statement is clearly displayed throughout the school; it is known, lived and witnessed. The importance of the Word of God was clearly demonstrated all around the school in many thoughtful and enriching displays. The religious education of the children is at the centre of the school's core curriculum on which staff place a high priority. The RE curriculum is delivered through the "Come and See" programme and is grounded in the school's own mission, so that children can "live life to the full". Teaching and learning is good overall with some examples of inspirational teaching and engaging learning observed as staff strive to achieve high standards across the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons overall are well planned with clear learning challenges, differentiated activities, good pace, with opportunities for the children to share their thoughts and ideas. Good use of questions, including engaging children in thinking about the 'big questions', were observed across the school. A good example of this was a lesson where the children were asked to respond to "the challenge of the Sign of Peace". Engaging and effective learning took place which ensured the learning challenge was met. Another creative lesson fully engaged and inspired the children to compose a liturgical dance to the hymn "This is My Body". Constructive marking and feedback was evident across the school, which helps the pupils to improve their work and encourages them to reflect on their learning and understanding of RE. The children show a real interest and enthusiasm in RE. They were happy and confident to share their understanding of their own faith. Scripture is known, understood and made relevant throughout the school. Teaching Assistants interacted effectively with pupils to support their learning in RE. Parents were clear about the importance of RE and commented on how much the children enjoy RE lessons and how well they are taught.

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

St Patrick's is a very warm and welcoming school. The hand of friendship is extended to visitors, staff, parents, children and new arrivals to the school, who are often new arrivals to the country. As a fully inclusive school, St Patrick's welcomes children from other faiths and it is a place where diversity and difference are celebrated and valued. It is very apparent that relationships are based on tolerance, respect and understanding. All members of staff demonstrate a caring nature for the children, parents and each other. This gives a sense of belonging and an affirming ethos, where supportive relationships thrive. Children and staff work together producing a very happy and calm environment. The headteacher meets and greets children and parents each morning and the children are very happy coming into school. Respect for the dignity of the individual is clearly evident across the school and all staff set the example for children to follow. Parents spoke highly of the warm welcome and support they receive from the staff. Parental involvement is a high priority and there are many occasions when parents are invited into school. The parish priest is a valued presence around the school and the children spoke highly of him and his support for them and families of the parish. The school's caring ethos and the development of the children's personal qualities are of paramount importance to the staff and governors. All members of the school community demonstrate a high level of belonging and pride in this happy, caring, Catholic school.

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

It is clearly apparent that every child is loved and valued at St Patrick's. The care, guidance, and support for both pupils and staff at the school are outstanding. Staff and pupils demonstrate a high level of care and respect for one another and for others beyond the school community. Pupils spoke of how their opinions and ideas were listened to. They spoke of the "worry box", where their concerns were dealt with in confidence by a member of staff. The older children look after and care for the younger children and act as play leaders with great patience. The school places great emphasis on forgiveness and children are encouraged to develop this so that friendships are healed and deepened as the children move through the school. The children spoke of their involvement and support for charities including Dr Kershaw's Hospice,

the Mayor's Young Carer's charity, St Joseph's Penny, Caritas and CAFOD. The school staff are also involved in charity work and act as good role models for the pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported in order to access the curriculum at the appropriate level. Staff demonstrate a deep understanding of each child and all in the school community feel well supported. The school uses "In the Beginning" to teach SRE. The governing body demonstrated a duty of care to all within the school community and is very proactive in carrying out its role, for example, the school provides a Family Support Worker who liaises between the school and families. The breakfast club is a welcome support for working parents but also for families in need. Parents were full of praise for the school and the care that they provide as one parent stated "the care does not stop at 4 o'clock".

### **THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS GOOD**

All around the school there were good examples of the opportunities for worship throughout the liturgical year clearly demonstrating that prayer and worship is at the heart this school community. Displays are used to show and stimulate prayer opportunities. The importance of prayer and worship is expressed and witnessed through classroom acts of reflection, assemblies, Mass and liturgies. Each classroom has an age appropriate and relevant special prayer area, these are clearly valued by the children and they help them to focus when they compose their own prayers. Children are encouraged to voluntarily join in prayer and worship at key times of the liturgical year, for example, the rosary in October, reflections in Advent, Stations of the Cross in Lent. In Advent, prayer bags were sent home to encourage families to pray together. The Prayer Room provides a quiet, peaceful space for children to pray and reflect together or individually. The staff and children work together preparing and delivering acts of collective worship in different formats. The acts of prayer and worship observed, including those incorporated into RE lessons, were child centered, thoughtful and relevant; ensuring that children and adults were given the opportunity to pray together as a community. In the acts of worship observed the children showed reverence and respect, were encouraged to speak to God in their own way and enjoyed praising God in prayer and joyful singing. These special moments of quiet prayer and reflection were respected by the children and fostered their personal relationship with God. The parish priest visits the school to celebrate Holy Mass and he helps the staff and children deepen their faith and understanding. Parents were very positive about the range of opportunities the school offers for prayer and worship, stating that their children: "enjoy being involved in assemblies and Mass at special times of the year". The recently formed faith group is contributing to pupil leadership of prayer and worship, not least in their role in the preparation of the "Statements to live by" assemblies. This has given the children an opportunity to take a leading role and make an even more significant impact on prayer and worship.

### **THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS GOOD**

The mission statement is at the heart of the school and all at St Patrick's school try to live it on a daily basis. Staff and children give witness to the beliefs and values of the Catholic faith and to a loving God in their daily lives. The very well behaved children demonstrated quite clearly that the Gospel values of peace, love, justice, truth, reconciliation and respect for all are promoted and evidenced throughout the entire school community. Children are encouraged to reach out to those in need, not just by their support for local, national and world charities, but also in how they show respect, care, compassion and consideration of others. Relationships across the school community are very good and a strong sense of teamwork and belonging is very evident across the school. Staff are positive role models for the children promoting the ethos and values of the school and helping them to recognise that Jesus is with them in all aspects of school life. The school regards itself as a family and relationships are built on love and trust. A well-developed sense of belonging to the school community exists where everyone feels valued and cared for. All members of the school community are able to talk openly and confidently about their own faith. The school fosters a spirit of awe and wonder through religious education and the broader curriculum, where children are encouraged to be good stewards of creation and look after God's world and each other. The home, school and parish links are inclusive, effective and valued by all. Close links with the parish are enhanced by the visits of the parish priest and provision for the sacramental programme, which are appreciated by the

parents. It is clear that all members of this school family encounter God each day and do all they can to meet the challenges involved in this witness.

**AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:**

- Continue to inspire pupils and promote exceptional teaching across all phases, by modelling and coaching outstanding teaching, that will further enhance the development of RE.
- Extend the opportunities to develop best practice in marking, ensuring that improvement comments have an impact on the pupils learning and presentation of work.
- To further enhance the development of assessment practices in RE across the school in line with the new “Come and See” programme.
- Continue to develop pupil leadership in prayer and worship in order to embed the work of the recently established faith group and enrich the children’s faith experience.

9<sup>th</sup> February 2016

Dear Children,

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us and for making our visit to St Patrick's RC Primary School such a joyful occasion. We really enjoyed our time with you. You and the adults in school are indeed living your mission statement and you do try your best "to foster an atmosphere of love and respect for God and each other" and because of this your school is a good Catholic school.

We really enjoyed seeing your lessons and learning about all the wonderful things you do in St Patrick's. 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 enjoyed reading your RE books and were very impressed by your wonderful displays around school. It was clear to us that you have a good knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith and that you really try your best in all of your lessons.

It was lovely to see so many happy, smiling faces. You are clearly very proud of your school and all that you have achieved together. We were also very impressed by the way you really want to succeed in school and how well you look out for each other. You were so well behaved, and your politeness and manners were simply superb.

It was so pleasing to see how attentive you were in the acts of worship and the thoughtful class assembly we saw. Everyone showed great respect and reverence, your behaviour was excellent and your prayers were uplifting.

The staff, the school governors and your parents are extremely proud of all of you and of what you have achieved over the years, well done and keep it up!

All the adults in school want to work with you to improve the Catholic life of your school even further and to do this they are going to continue to help you develop as leaders of prayer and acts of worship.

God bless you all and enjoy the rest of the school year.

Yours sincerely,

Brendan Hennessy and Fiona Robinson  
(Section 48 Inspectors)

## Summary Report to Parents

On 9<sup>th</sup> February 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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