

INSPECTION REPORT

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**Inspection carried out Under Canon 806
and in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005**

Name of School: St Patrick’s RC Primary School, Higher Walton Road, Walton-le-Dale. PR5 4HD

Inspection date 26th June 2019

Reporting Inspectors Peter Eavers, Julie Frazer

Type of school	Primary
URN	119640
Age range of pupils	4 – 11
Number on roll	193
Appropriate authority	The Governing Board
Chair of Governors	Elizabeth Grindley
Headteacher	Catherine Maddocks
Religious Education Subject Leader	Elizabeth Hindley
Date of previous inspection	3 rd December 2013

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

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

St Patrick's RC Primary School is a slightly smaller than average primary school in the Walton le Dale area of Preston. It serves the parish of Our Lady and St. Patrick's and has a long tradition in the area with the original school being opened in 1858. There are currently 193 children on roll, 86% of whom are baptised Roman Catholic pupils, 6.2% Christian, 1.5% Muslim with 6.2% with no religion recorded. Most children come from families whose socio-economic circumstances are above average and 6.2% are in receipt of free school meals which is significantly below the national and local average. 3% have English as an additional language which is well below the national average. 7% of pupils have been identified as having a Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND) and 2 children have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP). All of the teaching staff are baptised Roman Catholic with 5 teachers having the CCRS, and one having completed the Catholic Leadership and one the Catholic Middle Leadership Programme. There have been a number of staffing and governance changes since the last inspection, the headteacher having started in September 2015 and the deputy headteacher, who is also the Religious Education (RE) subject leader, and chair of governors taking up post in September 2018.

THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- **Committed, inspired and resilient leadership which ensures that the school's Catholic mission is central to all that it does.**
- **Hard-working, talented, caring and dedicated staff who enable that mission to come alive on a daily basis.**
- **Wonderfully polite and enthusiastic children who treat all in the school community with respect and whose exemplary behaviour and attitudes to learning are testament to that same mission.**
- **A beautiful learning environment which inspires and values children's learning and reflects the school's Catholic mission.**

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS GOOD

St Patrick's RC Primary School is a good Catholic school with many truly outstanding features. It is an oasis of welcome, nurture and love in which all are made to feel valued and cared for and its Catholic mission is lived and experienced on a daily basis. The headteacher has a clear, strong vision and is deeply committed to providing children with the best possible Catholic education. She is very well supported in this by her deputy and senior leadership team, a talented staff team and committed and diligent governors. The children are a delight, being extremely well-behaved, respectful to all and loving to one another. They enjoy and are very proud of their school, keen to learn and enthusiastic in their faith. They feel safe and well cared for. They work hard in their RE, demonstrating high standards of religious literacy which should now be developed even further through the provision of greater opportunities for creativity and independent learning. The parish priest is a welcome and valued member of the school community. Parents are very supportive of the school and speak highly of the work of the headteacher. They are proud of and loyal to the school, many having been there as children. They feel welcome and valued and that their voices are listened to. The learning environment is beautiful, reflecting the explicit value that the school places on the children's learning, particularly in RE. The development of the new mission statement, led by the headteacher in partnership with staff and governors, has had a significant impact on the school, acting as a unifying force across school, home and parish and enabling all to feel a genuine sense of ownership of and involvement in this unique Catholic mission. The school has correctly identified the areas in which it needs to improve still further and is ambitious and determined to ensure that continuous improvement.

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

The extremely dedicated and experienced headteacher leads the school with a genuine sense of Catholic mission and purpose. She cares deeply about the children in her care and is determined and passionate about providing them with a truly authentic Catholic education rooted in the person of Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit. She is very well supported in this vision by a very skilled and equally committed senior leadership team and a very talented and hard-working staff team. The governing board are dedicated and diligent in their roles and demonstrate a real commitment to the school and to the Church's mission in education. They are well-informed about the Catholic life of the school through their active involvement, in particular that of the pro-active and extremely supportive chair, and through comprehensive termly reports from the Religious Education subject leader. A clear example of the unity across the leadership of the school would be the shared development of the new mission statement which has been carefully crafted across a number of months, led by the headteacher in partnership with staff and governors and involving the whole school community and parish, so that it truly embodies a shared vision for the school. Leadership decisions are clearly driven by Gospel values and resources are well targeted to support those in greatest need. An example of this would be the employment of a Caritas Family Support Worker to support children and families experiencing difficulties. The parish priest is a valued presence in the school and in the spiritual lives of children, staff and parents. High priority is given to the development of the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural education and celebration of achievement and success is central to the life and mission of the school.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL (incorporating Welcome, Welfare and Witness) IS OUTSTANDING

There is a strong and all-pervasive sense of warmth and welcome extended to all who enter St Patrick's and staff work very hard to ensure that all within and beyond the school community feel valued and respected as individuals. High quality support provided to those children with additional needs and difficulties ensures that their needs are met extremely well and that they feel valued and empowered. Parents overwhelmingly support the work of the school. They feel welcome and valued and that staff will always listen to any concerns and be very willing to help and support. They are confident that any issues will be dealt with quickly and effectively. They feel that staff know their children well and have a great deal of trust in the school to 'do the right thing' by them. They enthusiastically describe how much their children enjoy school with one commenting that 'children come home happy every night'. A number spoke of how they had specifically chosen St Patrick's for their children for these very reasons. Those interviewed spoke very highly of the headteacher whom they found to be very caring and approachable. They commented on the impact that she has had since arriving at the school, describing 'a sea change' in improvements in communication and involvement. They were particularly impressed with the work done on the new Mission Statement and the efforts made to involve all in this process. The school has very effective procedures to keep children safe. Those children and families experiencing difficulties are very well supported and there is a strong sense of the love of Christ for all across the school. A very simple but effective example of this would be the inclusion of 'and God bless' into every greeting of child or adult in the school. Staff across the school model genuine Christian relationships in their interactions with each other and with children and parents and this modelling provides children with excellent examples of how to 'be Christ for others'. Children's behaviour in classes and around school is exemplary and they treat all members of the school community with respect and dignity. They are very proud of their school, describing it as 'a friendly, wonderful, caring, fun place which teaches people how to follow Jesus'. They feel that incidents of bullying are extremely rare and if they happen, they are dealt with very effectively. The positive impact of the school's focus on restorative practice is clear. Children feel safe, loved and well looked after, stating that 'teachers never shout and really listen to you'. A number felt that the school had improved since the arrival of the new headteacher, particularly in behaviour. Children and parents are actively involved in raising money for a wide range of charities and are very generous in their contributions. Members of the School Council and GIFT Team take their roles very seriously and see themselves as important ambassadors for the school and for Christ.

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (incorporating Word) IS GOOD

The school's Mission Statement, 'Christ with me as I learn, grow and shine', which was developed over a number of months involving all members of the school community, is known, lived and clearly evident throughout the school. Its development has been a powerful unifying force across both school and parish and it inspires all that happens in the school. Religious

Education (RE) is given a high priority in the curriculum. It meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory through the use of the *Come and See* scheme and is very well led by the subject leader. Children clearly enjoy their learning in RE and their religious literacy is well developed. Inspectors saw some wonderful examples of extremely talented and skilled teachers helping children to reflect deeply on their learning through skilful questioning and well-planned activities. A number of children were able to give extremely thoughtful and indeed thought-provoking answers to questions, demonstrating a deep understanding of Jesus as 'the Light of the World'. Teachers can now improve the children's learning in RE even more by tapping into their innate creativity to provide greater opportunities for independent learning and challenge. The use of 'Big Questions' of purpose and meaning is developing well in classes and there is scope for this to be even more child-centred. Children's behaviour for learning in RE is exemplary. They are enthusiastic and keen to learn. The environment across the school is outstanding with very high-quality displays reflecting the explicit value that the school places on the children's learning, particularly in RE. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is clearly helping the children to develop as responsible, caring and loving members of God's family. Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is well delivered through the *In The Beginning* and *Journey in Love* schemes. Children learn about other faiths both within the *Come and See* scheme and through Faith Weeks. However, this learning is not yet embedded well enough and although the children talked eloquently and with heart-warming sincerity about the necessity to love and understand those of other faiths, they were not always able to talk knowledgeably about those faiths.

THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS GOOD

Children at St Patrick's have a very well-developed sense of respect and reverence during prayer time. They respond with dignity and behave impeccably during school mass, singing hymns beautifully and with enthusiasm. Emphasis should now be put on developing an age appropriate prayer programme which builds the children's knowledge of the key responses of the Mass, to tie in with the *Come and See* scheme. Inspectors saw some lovely examples of children's involvement in class worship, reading excerpts from their 'Respond Booklets' and children clearly take the opportunity to meet God in prayer during class worship seriously and are keen to participate. However, the school has correctly identified the need now to develop much greater child involvement in and leadership of these opportunities and to minimise teacher direction of worship and maximise the children's time for reflection. Prayer is clearly central to the life of the school. Staff come together to pray regularly. Each class has identified with a particular appearance of Our Lady. The Sacramental Programme is well led by the parish with very good cooperation with the school. The parish priest is a valued member of the school community and links with the parish have been further strengthened by the excellent work of the deputy headteacher. School masses are well attended by parents and members of the parish. Parents speak highly of the work the school has done to make the liturgical year accessible to the children through the consistent use of liturgical vocabulary and colours for class altars. They greatly value the school's emphasis on prayer, for example the pupil-led praying of the Angelus each Friday at noon and the Rosary during the months of May and October, and a number commented that their children will often do the same at home. They feel that the school and parish are well-connected and that their children associate strongly with the Church. One parent commented that 'as a non-Catholic, I can really buy into the ethos of the school'.

AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- **To continue the work already started on ensuring greater opportunities for creativity and independent learning in Religious Education to further stretch all pupils, especially the most able.**
- **To ensure that the children's learning of other faiths is embedded more fully so that they have a more secure knowledge of those faiths.**
- **To continue the school's emphasis on developing child-led acts of worship which are genuine opportunities for children to reflect and meet God in prayer.**