

INSPECTION REPORT

ST WULSTAN RC PRIMARY SCHOOL, RUSHTON STREET, GREAT HARWOOD, BLACKBURN, BB6 7JQ.

Inspection date 20th May 2015

Reporting Inspectors Mr J Thorpe
Mrs M Kwiatkowski

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

Type of School Catholic Primary
 URN 119646
 Age range of pupils 4-11 years
 Number on roll 172
 Appropriate authority The Governing Body
 Chair of Governors Mrs E Hayes
 Headteacher Mr V Murray
 Religious Education Subject Leader Mr V Murray
 Date of previous inspection September 2010

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades 1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3=Requires Improvement 4 = Inadequate
Overall effectiveness of the school	2	
The quality of Catholic Leadership	2	
The quality of the Word of God community	2	
The quality of the Welcome community	1	
The quality of Welfare	2	
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 Wulstan's is a voluntary aided, Roman Catholic primary school in the Diocese of Salford serving the parishes of St Wulstan and Our Lady and St Hubert in Great Harwood. The pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The school is smaller than average with an Admission Number of 25. There are 172 pupils on roll of whom 137 are baptised Catholics. 23% of pupils are eligible for free school meals and Pupil Premium Grant. This is above the national average. 13% of pupils have been identified as having a special educational need of some kind. 4 of these pupils have Education and Health Care Plans. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is small as is the number of pupils for whom English is an additional language. There are 8 teachers, of whom 6 are Catholic; 5 of the 6 teachers hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies.

In 2011 the school entered into a hard federation with Our Lady and St Hubert's RCPS. A single governing body and a Head of Federation are responsible for the management of the two schools.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS GOOD

St Wulstan's is a good school with several outstanding features. It has a strong Catholic ethos and is therefore very successful in offering its pupils a traditional Catholic education in a friendly, warm and supportive environment. Class teachers have worked hard to create an ethos where everyone recognises the need to work together as a family. Teachers are well supported by the effective deployment of teaching assistants and administrative staff.

There are excellent parish links, the school works closely with the parish priest who positively influences the support and guidance within the school. On the day of the inspection the parish priest was not available due to a prior commitment.

Some pupils have difficult home circumstances and to support these pupils and their families the school employs a Family Support Worker. The collaborative working of the school and the parish ensures the pastoral, spiritual, social and emotional needs of the pupils and their families are fully met. Positive relationships are evident throughout the school community. Pupils are respectful, well behaved and considerate towards each other and the adults around them.

Lessons observed ranged from good to outstanding. Most groups of pupils make good progress including those with SEND. The active governing body has a well-developed role in monitoring the work of the school. Parents are very committed to the school, believe it is constantly improving the quality of its provision and feel very much part of its daily life.

Following the last Section 48 inspection in 2010 the issue identified for improvement has been addressed. The Mission Statement has been re-written and combined with that of the sister school.

'Believe to achieve: Love God, love learning, love one another.'

THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- Pupils clearly love their school and show a high level of concern for each other.
- The relationships between staff and pupils are very good which helps pupils build a positive self-image and a sense of well-being.
- The commitment and dedication of both the teaching and support staff is a strength of the school.
- The school has recognised its areas for development and is well placed to deliver the priorities in its RE development plan.
- The governing body, headteacher and staff share a clear vision for the future development of the school.

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS GOOD

The quality of leadership is good. Under the leadership of the hardworking, dedicated headteacher and his deputy the well-being of each pupil is central to the work of the school.

The governing body fulfils its role well in respect of its Catholic foundation. It has good knowledge of the school through headteacher reports, RE subject leader reports and reports provided by the RE governor. There is a strong Catholic ethos in the school. Governors have a strong commitment to the church's mission in education and this is a clear priority for them in school. There is a clear witness to Gospel values and commitment to meet the needs of all pupils and to overcome the perceived barriers to learning within the school. The parish priest is a welcome and regular visitor to the school; the school plays a significant part in the delivery of the parish Sacramental Programme.

The partnership of school, parents and parish completed a thoughtful review of the mission statement. The re-written statement '...places emphasis on the relationships between individuals and with God.'

Pupils across the school are eager to and are capable of further developing their existing leadership roles; they are ready to be given greater freedom and responsibility. Parents spoke highly and enthusiastically about the school and were very proud of what the school seeks to achieve. The parents of a Year 2 pupil said, 'The school has improved since the creation of the federation and keeps getting better.' The leadership of RE could become outstanding with a more even re-distribution of roles and responsibilities which could create more time for staff training and monitoring and evaluation.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORD OF GOD IS GOOD

The recently re-written mission statement is displayed around the school. It is well known, celebrated and used in the daily life of the school as a focus for encouraging everyone to do their very best. Across the school wall displays of high quality show: prayers, celebrate pupils achievement, follow the liturgical year, explain the 5 W's and are all child centred.

The overall quality of teaching and learning across the school was found to range from at least good to outstanding. Where teaching was good or better, considerable thought, detail and research was evident in the teacher's planning. Speaking and listening was encouraged, discussion was promoted, the classroom environment reflected high standards of religious literacy and differentiation was evident in planning, delivery and outcome. Good subject knowledge was delivered imaginatively to maximise and sustain pupil interest. Misconceptions and errors were skilfully turned into learning opportunities by the teacher. Very good questioning by the teacher probed pupil knowledge, skills and understanding. In these lessons the quality of discussion is outstanding. It is obvious the pupils are used to sharing ideas and developing thinking related to their faith and belief. In a Key Stage 2 lesson pupils listened intently and respectfully to their teacher. Through well considered activities, excellent questioning in a calm and purposeful environment, pupils were challenged to think deeply on a 'Big Question'; the dignity of the human person. By asking such questions the teacher was able to guide discussion to encourage higher order thinking skills. The role of teaching assistants in classes contributes significantly to effectively meeting the differing needs of pupils.

In some classes, pupils were clearly being taught to recognise good, challenge injustice and respond to those in need but their learning was hindered by a lack of appropriate differentiation, no time was found for personal reflection and pupils spent too much time sat on the carpet. In these lessons there were limited opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. Religious literacy is developing, this was particularly evident in Key Stage 2 classes where pupils attitude to learning is very good, they show a genuine interest in and enthusiasm for their RE work.

The standard of work in the pupil's books gives clear evidence that RE is of paramount importance at St Wulstan's. It is at least in line with standards in literacy books. Constructive marking is used to enable pupils to take the next steps in order to improve their learning.

RE is well funded and resourced in line with other core subjects and receives the required 10% of curriculum time.

THE QUALITY OF THE WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING

St Wulstan's provides a very warm, welcoming and inclusive environment where staff have high expectations of pupils. Pupils and staff were very confident and welcoming towards inspectors, keen to tell the story of their school and clearly very proud to be at St Wulstan's.

On entering the school visitors are made immediately aware they are in a happy, inclusive place of learning. Wall displays proudly set out the school's mission and explain the operational significance of the 5 W's.

A strong commitment to safeguarding in no way compromises the genuinely warm welcome.

Opportunities to develop a sense of belonging to the school are fully exploited. All staff and pupils attended the whole school assembly presented by the headteacher. Pupils entered the hall quietly and respectfully, they all were proud to wear their school uniform and eager to contribute by answering and asking questions of the headteacher, praying reverently and singing tunefully. Older pupils addressed the whole school reading aloud their own perceptions of 'heaven' and what they believe it to be, the presentation being based on the 'Ascension into Heaven' of Jesus Christ. A shared knowledge and understanding of Christian beliefs and Gospel values support the school's distinctive ethos.

Pupils were polite and well-mannered throughout the day, many pupils asked the inspectors if they needed any help several times during the day. The pupils invited the inspectors to eat lunch with them on the 'VIP table' where pupils took the opportunity to talk at length about how much they enjoy being at St Wulstan's and how safe and secure they feel.

The school operates an 'open door' policy for which parents are very appreciative. Parents are invited into school regularly to join assemblies and faith celebrations at Christmas, Easter, Lenten Stations and the October Rosary. Parents are also welcomed into classrooms to support reading etc. Many families have been involved with the school for several generations feeling a strong sense of belonging. One grandparent, aged 67 has been involved since the age of 3 and now has grandchildren in the school.

THE QUALITY OF THE WELFARE IS GOOD

St Wulstan's school community clearly demonstrates respect and care for one another. Children are provided with a safe and secure environment where all procedures to safeguard and protect are fully endorsed. Children are encouraged to make the right choices and adopt safe practices. Pupils interviewed during the day felt very safe in school, pupils showed they would not tolerate bullying and all knew what to do should it be seen. Pupils stated they were free from worry and were happy in school. Christ is at the very centre of what the school community aspires to achieve. There is a genuine concern from all staff for the welfare of all pupils and the pupils care for one another.

Staff and pupils are happy to be in school, relationships between all are of high quality. Respect for the dignity of the individual is clearly evident across the school. The caring ethos and the development of pupil's personal qualities are of paramount importance to the staff and governors. Older pupils care for younger pupils and act as peer mediators to ensure playtimes are fun and peaceful being a good example of this.

It was especially impressive how the members of the School Council and the Eco Council warmly welcomed the inspectors to their school. They spoke confidently about how brilliant it is to be part of St Wulstan's family and are rightly proud of their school.

The provision for Sex and Relationships Education is currently under review as the school has already identified that the present provision needs to be enhanced. The school is planning to involve parents and teachers in awareness raising and training for the delivery of SRE in the immediate future.

The management of the school ensures that careful consideration is given to supporting the needs of all pupils when making resource decisions. Therefore in response to parents' increasingly busy lifestyles and changing family structures and circumstances, the school employs a Family Support Worker to work closely with families who request support. This is very much appreciated by those families involved.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORSHIP IS GOOD

Examples of quality prayer and worship are evident around the school and clearly it is a very important aspect of school life. Pupils respond well to collective worship opportunities in school as exemplified by the whole school assembly. During this assembly samples of pupils work were read to the school by the headteacher whilst older pupils read their own work to the school. All pupils understood the importance of the occasion and were very respectful in their behaviour. Pupils were comfortable with their feelings and displayed a good level of religious literacy. Every classroom has a religious focus area, examples of pupils' prayers can be found decorating these areas. Pupils' prayers are also taken into church each week to share with the parish. Inspectors agree that the quality of worship could be enhanced by giving consideration to incorporating more time for reflection and meditation. The impressive maturity of older pupils and how they were able to reflect on the messages of the Pope indicates that they are ready to respond to greater challenges. The very youngest pupils understood the effect on the disciples of 'Jesus going back to his father in Heaven.' Other pupils recognised the characteristics of a disciple and the need for us to try to copy these behaviours. Yet another group of children understood the significance of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and used this understanding to support their personal prayer writing.

All of these examples could be enhanced by reflection and meditation and more opportunity for pupils to share their achievements with other classes on a more regular basis. Currently there is an over reliance on the teachers to lead prayer and worship. Practice would be considerably enhanced by giving more responsibility for this to pupils.

The school shares the celebration of mass with the parish. Key events are celebrated with special masses; key saints, festivals including the crowning of Mary, Holy Rosary, and Stations of the Cross etc. are all shared with the parish.

The school has plans to consider the introduction of a pupil chaplains group to encourage greater pupil independence and involvement in the religious life of the school.

THE QUALITY OF THE WITNESS IS GOOD

Witnessing to Christ and the values of the Gospel are central to the life of St Wulstan's and clearly impact on the school community. Gospel values are to be seen in displays around the school, in classes, in pupil's books and in relationships between everyone. Staff and children clearly demonstrate and witness to justice, compassion, love, reconciliation and forgiveness in their relationships.

The school Mission Statement is contemporary, is known and understood by all at an age appropriate level and has the pupils at its centre.

The pupils know their responsibilities in terms of equal opportunities, reconciliation and Christian stewardship. This understanding is the driving force behind the school's work supporting CAFOD, CARITAS, Maundy Grange, Packs for Africa and a local food bank all of which represent just a few of the many areas where the school witnesses to a commitment to the Gospel.

Parents and families are keen for their children to attend the school. It is oversubscribed and has grown in size since its last inspection. The school is held in high regard within its local community and especially with the families it serves. The inspectors noted that at all times the behaviour of pupils was outstanding.

The governing body is effective in undertaking its role of developing the school as a Catholic community.

AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- To embed 'Caritas in Action' to further promote Catholic social teaching specifically relating to Sex and Relationships Education.
- To introduce and develop a pupil chaplaincy that is pupil led and encourages greater pupil independence in the prayer life of the school.

Wednesday 20th May 2015

Dear Pupils,

Thank you so much for making our visit to St Wulstan's in May so enjoyable. You made us feel very welcome. We had a very interesting day and really enjoyed listening to you tell us what you enjoy and are learning. St Wulstan's is a good school and much of what goes on in your school is outstanding. This is because you are trying to live out your Mission Statement and be the very best you can be.

We were very impressed with your behaviour, respect for each other and the way you are clearly very proud of your school. You make everyone feel welcome; your relationships are special and you make everybody feel special.

I know the Bishop will be delighted to hear this.

To help you improve further your teachers are going to develop your RE so that it is the leading area of learning across the school and invite you to become better, more independent learners.

To all St Wulstan's pupils we would like to say 'Thank You' and 'Well Done.' Keep up your very high standards of behaviour, respect and love for one another.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Thorpe and Mrs Kwiatkowski
(Section 48 Inspectors)

Summary Report to Parents

On 20th May 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.

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