

Department for Formation, Office for Education

Telephone: 0161 817 2204

Fax: 0161 372 9991

Email: <mailto:education@dioceseofsalford.org.uk>

INSPECTION REPORT

St Joseph's R.C. Primary School

Market St, Mossley, Ashton Under Lyne OL5 0ES

Inspection date 25th June 2014

Reporting Inspectors

Lead Inspector

Mr. A.J. Sowerby

Additional Inspector

Mr. D. Harrison

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

Type of School	Roman Catholic Primary
URN	106254
Age range of pupils	3-11 years
Number on roll	168 including 22 part time nursery children
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Mr Stephen Newton
Headteacher	Mrs Sheila Partington
Religious Education Co-ordinator	Mrs Mary Farmer
Date of previous inspection	

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 the Word of God community	2	
The quality of the Welcome community	2	
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. Joseph's is a Roman Catholic Primary School situated in Mossley a small mill town situated on the edge of the Pennine Moors. The school serves the parish of St Joseph's Mossley though due to its popularity a number of children travel from outside the local area. It is a slightly smaller than the average size Primary School with 168 pupils on roll (including 22 part time nursery children). 79% of children are baptised Catholic. The school's deprivation indicator shows that it is broadly in line with national averages, though this has shown a decline in recent years. Pupils who attend the school are mainly white British as the proportion of pupils identified as coming from ethnic minority backgrounds is below the national average. 31 pupils are on the SEN register with 1 pupil having a statement of educational need. 21% of pupils are eligible for FSM, which is below the national average though this is a rising figure. Mobility in the school is also rising and in some year groups is above the national average. 31 children receive the Pupil Premium Grant. 5 out of 8.9 teachers are Catholic and all have the Catholic teachers certificate or its equivalent All teachers teach R.E. and lead collective acts of prayer and worship. There are 8.5 support staff of which 3 are Catholic.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's is a good Catholic Primary school. There is a genuinely warm and caring welcome given to all. All children are offered a Catholic education in a friendly and supportive environment where differences are welcomed and celebrated. The school supports the sacramental programme through the effective preparation of the children. The children have a rich experience of a variety of collective acts of worship which ensures the pastoral and spiritual needs of the learners are well met. The effective head teacher has high expectations of adults and children. She knows the school well and has a clear vision for future improvement. Together with the hard working staff she has created an ethos where everyone recognises the need to work together as a "family", showing love and concern for all its members. The recently revised Mission Statement is brought alive through the commitment and sense of ownership of the whole school community. The children enjoy coming to school and the school council expressed how very proud they are of all the opportunities given to them. As one child stated "This school is perfect except that we don't have enough pyjama parties" Pupils are friendly, polite and welcoming and their behaviour at all times is exemplary. They work hard to achieve the high expectations of the adults who work with them. They enjoyed every opportunity to share with the inspectors their work. The staff and pupils demonstrate a very high level of respect, care and service to others. This evidenced through their support for a variety of local initiatives and charities such as No Smoking campaigns. Work for Water Aid and St Joseph's Penny. The quality of relationships is a notable strength of the school.

THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- The outstanding quality of welfare of the children
- The quality of relationships
- The behaviour of the children
- The effective leadership of the head teacher
- The high quality acts of collective worship

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP is good

The leadership of R.E. across the school is good. This is due to the hard and effective work of the head teacher which has ensured that that the development of the Catholic life of the school is at the forefront of the school's work. This leadership would be enhanced by the greater involvement of all members of the governing body in the day to day life of the school and the appointment of a new R.E. Coordinator who will continue to provide much needed

support for the head teacher with the development of R.E across the school. The school has a clear plan for developing R.E 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. As a result the inspectors can verify that this evaluation is both accurate and reflective.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORD OF GOD is good because:

- The recently revised Mission Statement is clearly displayed throughout the school. It is known, lived and witnessed to and is evident at every level of the school. It is reflected in all school policies which have a significant impact on learning and the life of the school.
- The Religious Education of the pupils is the core of the Core Curriculum. The staffing and resources devoted to RE are of a high standard, reflecting its significance and importance in the school.
- Based upon an evaluation of work scrutiny, lesson observations, discussions with pupils and analysis of data, teaching and achievement is judged to be good with some outstanding features. 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 both key stages when children were asked to reflect upon what is the church and where the children were involved in discussing which of the church's seasons was the most important.
- Learning would be enhanced through greater consistency in the quality of teaching across all classes. Marking and feedback to pupils was also found to be variable in helping pupils understand how they could improve their knowledge and understanding in RE.
- Scripture is clearly known, understood and made relevant throughout the school. The staff and pupils demonstrate and can articulate the centrality and importance of the Word of God. There is evidence on the displays in the classroom and halls of the importance of this.
- The home, school and parish links are effective and the school supports the sacramental programme well. Pupils are actively trained in outreach to the local community. This can be seen in the 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 Water Aid in Africa

The Inspectors cite the following evidence to confirm their judgement:

- Overall the standards of attainment, progress and hence achievement are good. As the curriculum is based on the mission it is challenging, interesting and fulfilling. The children are developing the age appropriate knowledge and skills.
- The school has begun to incorporate "The Way, The Truth and the Life" scheme. This is supplemented by other R.E. resources so that as a result standards of teaching are generally good
- Work in R.E is clearly as good as work in other subjects due to the high priority given to it in school. This was seen by inspector in during the scrutiny of both the R.E and Literacy books.
- The children use ICT confidently and other resources well and enjoy learning set prayers and special aspects of their faith. There are regular visits into and out of school to enrich the RE curriculum such as participating in joint Diocesan Masses and the Diocesan Relay of Prayer.
- The children expressed a high sense of pride and ownership of their new school Mission Statement
- The children in the Foundation Stage enjoyed a visit to their parish church, bringing the visit to life in their learning and play, talking enthusiastically about the experience.

THE QUALITY OF WELCOME is good because:

- There is a culture of welcome and all the pupils and staff demonstrate a very high level of confidence and outreach to all within the school community. This sense of welcome would be further enhanced through the development of the new entrance area of the school in order to ensure it becomes a more visible sign of Christ's presence in the school.
- Visitors are welcomed with love and respectful care. The importance of the dignity of the individual is clearly evident at all levels. Clear structures and procedures are followed by all staff and pupils who consistently witness to Christ being at the heart of the community through excellent communication, relationships and a joyful approach to daily life.
- All members of the school community demonstrate a very high level of belonging and ownership of the school. Pupils are given a high level of responsibility in creating and sustaining the schools sense of welcome.
- Parents are very welcome into school and are encouraged to engage in their child's learning. This could clearly be seen in the way that staff from all classes met parents at the start of the school day and discussed with them any concerns that they had.

The inspectors cite the following evidence to confirm their judgements:

- New families are welcomed into the school with warmth by the opportunities which are created to visit the school and meet the whole team. Parents voiced to the inspector how wonderful and special this made them feel. As one parent said "I brought my child to the school following a difficult time and was treated with the utmost respect." Another commented that the "The Head Teacher and senior staff are always available at the start of the day to discuss any concerns I may have"
- In the first few weeks of the school year parents and carers of children in the nursery and reception classes are invited to bring their child into school in the morning and stay until the children settle down.
- Parents are kept informed and up to date about the curriculum and events in school through the use of the school newsletter and school website. The school also ensures that the voice of the children is heard and respected. The School Council were keen to express their opinion about the changes they had brought about in school such as the provision of improved play facilities.
- Children of other faiths who attend St. Joseph's are welcomed with dignity and respect. Currently the school has only a small number of children from other faiths who attend the school. These are made to feel welcome and respected and as a result play a full role in the life of the school. As a result of the strong Catholic ethos all children are taught to respect each other so that everyone at the school feels part of the St. Joseph's family.
- Within school relationships are of the highest quality. Older children care for the younger ones, play leaders and buddies work to ensure playtimes are fun and peaceful.
- Parents and other members of the school community talked very positively about the welcome they receive when they attend the high quality assemblies the school provides.

THE QUALITY OF WELFARE is outstanding because:

- The staff and pupils demonstrate a very high level of respect, care and service to others. This was witnessed in all classes where children's needs were met in a calm and positive manner. The structures and procedures ensure that all pupils

and staff feel safe and are treated with respect and dignity. The Christ-centred ethos is loving, creative, highly positive and fosters understanding, empathy and forgiveness.

- All pupils and staff feel safe and free to express their opinions and know that these will be valued. Importance and recognition is given equally to all.
- The budget, staffing and resourcing decisions demonstrate a consistent commitment to Catholic stewardship throughout the school.
- The parents and friends play a highly significant part in school life and their contributions are valued throughout the school.

The Inspectors cite the following evidence to confirm their judgements:

- The physical, spiritual and mental well-being of each person is central to the school's mission. The school council discussed with the inspectors the need to reach out with kindness to others for example those less fortunate in the world. Children are caring and have a true sense of right and wrong.
- The school is a very caring community where everyone is valued! Children during lessons listened respectfully to other pupils' ideas. Play partners and buddies look after and care for younger children. Children told the inspector that they have to look after the younger children because when they were once little and the older children were there to look after them and they must follow Jesus' command to treat others as you want to be treated.
- Calm support is offered by sensitive adults when children have difficulty remaining on task. Such role models ensure learning and loving friendships develop.
- Maturity and self-responsibility are strongly encouraged. This is evident in the work of the School Council
- 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's Fairtrade programme, St Joseph's Penny some of the local community initiatives such as the No Smoking campaign.
- The children of the school council confirmed they feel very safe! The school goes to great lengths to ensure as far as possible children are free from worry and a happy, calm atmosphere is the norm. The school provides a variety of activities in order to ensure that this occurs. The mission is continued after school with a host of excellent clubs that are extremely varied hence meeting the needs and interests of all the children.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORSHIP COMMUNITY is good because:

- The school provides a variety of worship opportunities for pupils throughout the school (prayer, reflection, liturgies) including small and large groups – which are appropriate to their backgrounds and faith experiences.
- The development of opportunities for pupils to worship according to their intellectual and life experience needs and stages of faith development is evident. However this would be enhanced through the provision of extended opportunities for children to participate in moments of quiet reflection.
- Worshipping opportunities promote a strong community sense of service for each other. Some staff are trained and supported in the formation and development of the prayer life of the school but this would be enhanced by further training for all staff.

The inspectors cite the following evidence to confirm their judgements:

- The parish priest regularly celebrates the Mass which the children attend on a rota, in church. Key events are celebrated with special masses: the beginning of

each school year, the parish and school feast day, Holy Days and at the end of the year.

- During Advent, Lent and the Easter season the school holds assemblies, liturgies and times of reflection/ reconciliation that are all shared by the whole school community. The children are encouraged to voluntarily say the rosary on a regular basis in the Rosary Prayer garden which the school has developed in the church grounds.
- There is a daily act of collective worship. These take place in a variety of formats. Children pray in classes, small groups and individually with great reverence, respect and thought. Those children who are not Catholic either join in or show great reverence to the worship taking place.
- The inspection team observed an effective class-led whole school assembly which demonstrated that the children's positive attitudes to collective worship and the important place this has in their school life.
- Pupils are comfortable with their feelings and have a good and knowledgeable vocabulary. Each class has a special area of focus. The children know many school prayers. In some 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 Gospel values are clearly evidenced throughout all the policies and procedures and have a significant impact on learning and the life of the school.

THE QUALITY OF WITNESS is good because:

- 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.
- 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 and values of a Christian 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.

The Inspectors cite the following evidence to confirm their judgement:

- The school mission is known and understood by all at appropriate levels. It is in 'child and adult speak', but is powerful in its ambition. It is discussed and shared in assemblies, in class and in RE lessons. The statement can be seen displayed in school.
- Relationships are outstanding at St Joseph's and a strong sense of teamwork and belonging exist. The school and parish were described by parents as "a big family", where relationships are built on love and trust.
- Children showed a clear understanding of the beauty and mystery of God's world.
- The children have a highly defined sense of fairness and justice. They know their responsibilities in terms of equal opportunities, stewardship and reconciliation.

- The children are encouraged to develop as thinking students, to feel comfortable asking questions and have a strong sense of ownership and voice in the direction of their school.
- Children are respectful of each other and the inspectors noted at all times behaviour was outstanding.

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- To improve the outcomes of learning in curriculum R.E. through:
 - a. the provision of consistent high quality teaching
 - b. the implementation of an effective marking policy which provides children with the next steps in their learning and celebrates their success.
- To improve the opportunities for children to develop their involvement in the planning and delivery of the reflective prayer life of the school through the introduction of pupil chaplaincy.
- To improve the effectiveness of the leadership of curriculum R.E. through the appointment of a new R.E. Co-ordinator

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Dear Pupils

Thank you for making our visit to St Joseph'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. Joseph's is a good Catholic school.

We enjoyed being part of your lessons and 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 hard working school and we were most impressed by the way you work together so co-operatively in your lessons. The assembly we saw were a very good and uplifting experience. We have asked your teachers to continue to ensure that they mark your work well so that you all know how to improve your learning and further develop the excellent work you are doing with developing the prayer life of the school so as to help you all understand more about your faith and relationship with God.

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

Yours sincerely,

**Mr A.J Sowerby
Mr D Harrison
Section 48 Inspectors
Diocese of Salford**

Summary Report to Parents

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

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