

INSPECTION REPORT
St Edward's RC Primary School,
Rowland Way, Lees, Oldham, OL4 3LQ

Inspection date Wednesday 29th April 2015

Reporting Inspector Mrs Susan Gedzielewski
 Mrs Anne Heard

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

Type of School Primary
 URN 105720
 Age range of pupils 3-11 years
 Number on roll 282
 Appropriate authority The Governing Body
 Chair of Governors Canon Eugene Dolan
 Headteacher Mr Peter Moore
 Religious Education Co-ordinator Mrs Maureen Woods
 Date of previous inspection October 2010

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

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

St Edward's is a Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic primary school serving the needs of the parish of St Edward's, Lees, Oldham, although a number of children attend the school from outside the parish and Diocese. This is a slightly larger than average size primary school serving a semi-rural catchment area to the east of Oldham town centre. The school shares its site with Hey with Zion CofE Primary School. There are currently 11 classes, some of which are mixed aged. Thirteen teachers are employed at the school, including the headteacher, all of whom are Catholic. There are 282 pupils on roll including part time and full time nursery aged pupils. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible to receive a free school meal is well below the National Average at 14%. The school is predominantly White British with 11.3% speaking English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below the National Average at 9%. Attendance is consistently above national at 96%. 84% of the children are baptised Roman Catholic. The school has achieved numerous awards including Activemark, Platinum Tooth award and International School award.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS OUTSTANDING

St Edward's is an outstanding Catholic primary school offering the children a rich faith experience alongside rapidly improving standards. All who attend the school are immediately struck by the safe, caring and happy school community. The headteacher is energised by the task of Catholic leadership, developing his team and continuous improvement. The ongoing rapid improvement is driven by an inspirational Mission Statement. Governors have a detailed and accurate understanding of their school and ensure that they are fully informed at all times. Monitoring and assessment of the Religious Education curriculum by the subject leader has ensured that there has been significant development since the last inspection. Pupils are inspired by creative teaching and consistently high expectations across the school. Teaching is well matched to the needs and capabilities of all pupils. Care, guidance and support for pupils is exceptional. Prayer and worship are at the heart of this school. Staff and pupils are confident at leading prayer and worship. The school embraces and places a high priority on partnership between home, school and parish. All members of the school are committed to the parish. Canon Dolan is a frequent visitor, active member of the school community and an effective chair of governors. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is fully embedded across all aspects of the curriculum.

THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- The leadership at every level is outstanding. Alongside senior leaders and governors, the headteacher has led the school with vision, compassion and clear witness to the church's mission.
- The Mission Statement is lived, visible and permeates all aspects of school life.
- Standards of achievement in Religious Education are outstanding.
- Care, guidance and support for pupils are outstanding.

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

There is strong leadership at all levels of the school community, which contributes significantly to the outstanding provision for Catholic Education that the school provides. The headteacher provides an extremely clear vision for the school and has worked hard to ensure rapid improvement in all areas. The governors are fully supportive of and promote the school as a Catholic learning community. They demonstrate a clear understanding of and commitment to their role in taking the school forward in its purpose and mission. The Chair of Governors works closely with the headteacher to ensure all the governors are aware of current strengths and areas for improvement. The enthusiastic leadership from the dedicated Religious Education subject leader has led to important improvements in religious education and the spiritual life of the school. Monitoring of the Religious Education curriculum by the headteacher and the Religious Education subject leader has been rigorous and it has had a positive impact on raising standards. Evidence for this can be found in the school's clear self-evaluation plan and the RE action plan. The inspectors can verify that this evaluation is both accurate and reflective. Leadership skills of the children are developed through the varied opportunities within the school, but we would like the school to continue on this

journey by the introduction of pupil chaplains. Parents feel that leaders and staff care about the children a great deal, and they value their hard work and dedication.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORD OF GOD IS OUTSTANDING

Religious Education is at the core of the curriculum. Teachers are enthusiastic and committed to teaching Religious Education and their subject knowledge is clearly disseminated to the children. Teaching and learning is characterised by high expectations and is well matched to the needs of all pupils. There is evidence of good questioning skills by teachers which challenge pupils to think more deeply; this was clearly evident during the drama activity in KS2. In the best lessons, pupils were actively engaged in practical, creative and collaborative activities which challenged their thinking and encouraged them to reflect on the 'big questions'. The inspection team felt that this could be developed even further by sharing and embedding good practice. Pupils know and understand the bible and are able to talk knowledgeably about scripture. Behaviour for learning is outstanding in all year groups. Pupils talked positively about Religious Education and they were proud of their RE book. Prioritising assessment in the RE action plan has had a positive impact on learning outcomes and teachers' assessment knowledge. Pupils clearly understood the marking policy and how they should respond to teachers' comments. Various samples of children's work were looked at during the inspection and it was clearly evident the marking was positively moving learning forward in the majority of classes. Standards in Religious Education are monitored carefully and current tracking indicates that children are working at or above expected levels. Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural education was found to be outstanding. Links between home, school and parish are strong; together they share opportunities to pray and proclaim the Word of God.

THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING

The quality of welcome is a strength of St Edward's; a warm and inclusive atmosphere permeates the whole school. The staff are a strong cohesive team and their support for each other and for the children is exemplified through their actions. The school demonstrated their understanding in a variety of contexts and they are living examples of the school mission statement. A calm, caring atmosphere pervades the school. Parents, pupils and visitors are extremely complimentary about standards of behaviour, the learning environment and pride at wearing the school uniform. The School Council and other pupil groups promote a sense of responsibility. They are involved in conducting tours for visitors and sharing their views. Parents play a highly significant part in school life and their views are sought through the 'parent forum'. Parents are particularly appreciative of the 'come dine with me' initiative, induction activities and the welcome they receive from the Headteacher in the morning, because they reinforce a sense of belonging to the school. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in school life and they feel a strong sense of 'family'. Caring for the individual is strongly manifested through policy, systems and ethos. The needs of vulnerable pupils are catered for extremely well and the pastoral leader plays a vital role in this respect. The school has recently started a breakfast club for vulnerable pupils and this is having a positive impact on attendance. There are an effective induction programmes for new staff and pupils.

THE QUALITY OF WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING

Parents spoke highly of the pastoral support their child receives in school. Staff and pupils demonstrate a very high level of care and respect for others. Structures and procedures ensure that all pupils and staff feel safe and happy in school. Provision for safeguarding and keeping children safe is outstanding. Bullying incidents are very rare and when they do occur, they are treated in due accordance with the behaviour policy. Pupils are confident that if they have any problems they can speak to a member of staff and that any problems will be dealt with sympathetically. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities is outstanding. The new sensory room helps to provide some children with additional needs a stimulating environment in which their needs can be met. The pastoral care support leader has introduced many initiatives to ensure the welfare of children received the highest attention; including punctuality and attendance. The Rainbows and Sunbeams groups are well attended for those who have suffered bereavement or any form of trauma.

Teachers are approachable and parents feel able to talk with them about issues of concern and concerns are dealt with effectively. All staff follow procedures set out in the schools behaviour policy and there are various reward schemes in operation. Pupils within the school clearly have a voice and are listened to through School Council and other initiatives. They make decisions about ways in which the children can raise money for the school's chosen charities. The quality of transition is such that all children quickly feel part of the school community. The school has developed and implemented the 'In the beginning' scheme for relationship and sex education, which many other schools in the Diocese use. The school actively promotes health education and has achieved the Activemark award.

THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

Prayer and worship are central to the life of the school. The school mission statement, the 'statements to live by' which are used in weekly assemblies, and the 'what would Jesus do' reminders, are all a constant reference to how Jesus wants us to live. Whole school assemblies reflect on personal faith, moral issues, festivals, special occasions and other religions and cultures. During the whole school assembly, through drama and questioning, the headteacher encouraged the children to reflect upon the needs of others and how they can help. Opportunities were given for personal prayer and reflection. All staff are trained and supported in furthering the prayer life of the school. The pupils have developed a good knowledge of traditional prayers and the recently developed prayer garden will promote a more spontaneous approach to prayer. During the inspection, the children prepared a collective worship incorporating music, prayer and reflection. The organisation and implementation of this activity was excellent and resulted in a deeply spiritual experience for all those present. Pupils understand that prayer takes many forms. Different opportunities arise to stimulate personal prayer including Lenten Prayer Pots, prayer day, visiting the Marist centre, Mass of the Y6 pupils during their residential field trip to Robin Wood. Prayer tables in classrooms, display materials and artefacts demonstrate creativity and relevance to the children. The parish and school work together to steer opportunities for community worship that is relevant and meaningful for the wider community. The sacramental programme is collaboratively led by the parish and school. Partnership with the parish is exceptional.

THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS GOOD

St Edward's encourages and supports its pupils to develop a relationship with God and to share their beliefs with others through words and actions. The school encourages and supports its pupils to be proactive citizens who contribute to the decision-making process. A strong sense of belonging to the school community exists based on the teachings of Jesus. Relationships are excellent between all members of the community. Pupils clearly demonstrate witness to justice, compassion, reconciliation, love and forgiveness. Observations showed that children treated each other with respect, care, patience, concern, with dignity and there is an emphasis on creating a pleasant working environment for everyone in school. The pupils are keen supporters of local and international charities; CAFOD, Caritas, Brain Tumour Trust, RSPCA, Mission Together, Children in Need, The Christie, Francis House, British Legion, Sensory Room appeal. Much of this fundraising was child initiated. Links with the parish and the local community are excellent. The youth Justice and Peace group work hard to be agents of change and of social transformation at the service of the common good, as builders of the Kingdom of God within the parish. The school has a designated prayer area where the Justice and Peace Youth team lead small groups of younger pupils in prayer. Opportunities for prayer in this area are provided during the pupil's playtimes and the Justice and Peace Youth group support the RE lead in these reflections. The Religious Education Subject Leader encourages staff to make links within the community and with other schools in order to further develop a witnessing community. The introduction of pupil chaplains will enhance pupil responsibility: nurturing, supporting and challenging pupils to live out and give witness to their faith.

AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- Continue to ensure that pupils make exceptional progress in religious education. Ensuring that teachers give pupils enough opportunities to engage in challenging, creative and collaborative learning activities.
- The introduction of pupil chaplains in order to further develop pupil leadership in prayer and worship.

Wednesday 29th April 2015

Dear Pupils

Thank you so much for the wonderful welcome you gave us when we came to visit you. We really enjoyed spending the day with you and I am pleased to be able to tell you that St Edward's is an outstanding school.

We enjoyed watching your lessons, because your teachers plan interesting activities and you helped one another. Your work is of a very high standard and we could clearly see that you take your learning seriously. We were impressed with the standard of work in your RE books and the fact that you read and respond to your teacher's comments.

It was wonderful to see how you participated in assembly and your singing was beautiful. Your behaviour is exemplary in class and you wear your uniform with pride. Through your charity work you show that you care for others in the world.

We agree with your teachers that you need to introduce pupil chaplains to improve the work you already do. We have also asked your teachers to continue teaching RE through drama, art, ICT and group activities, so you continue to enjoy your learning in Religious Education. You should be proud of yourselves and your school.

God bless you all and enjoy the summer term.

Mrs Susan Gedzielewski and Mrs Anne Heard
(Section 48 Inspectors)

Summary Report to Parents

On 29th April 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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