

**INSPECTION REPORT**

**St Joseph’s RC Primary School, Richmond Grove, Longsight, Manchester. M13 0BT**

Inspection date 14<sup>th</sup> March 2017  
 Reporting Inspector Mr John Thorpe  
 Mr Brendan Hennessey

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

Type of School Catholic Primary  
 URN 105550  
 Age range of pupils 3-11 years  
 Number on roll 249  
 Appropriate authority The Governing Body  
 Chair of Governors Rev Ian Farrell  
 Headteacher Mrs E Eccles  
 Religious Education Subject Leader Mrs L Costello  
 Date of previous inspection April 2012

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

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

St Joseph's is a voluntary aided, Roman Catholic primary school in the Diocese of Salford serving the parish of St Joseph in Longsight, Manchester. St Joseph's is an inner city school, 2.5 miles east of the city centre. Most pupils live in the immediate vicinity of the school. The school is in an area of significant social and economic disadvantage. The Admission Number is 30, the school is average in size with 249 pupils on roll. The age range of pupils is from 3 to 11 years. 67% of pupils are baptised Roman Catholics. 21% of pupils are eligible for free school meals and Pupil Premium Grant which is above the national average. 16% of pupils have been identified as having a special educational need of some kind. 1 pupil has an Education, Health Care Plan in place and 1 pupil is in local authority care. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is significantly above the national average at 82%. For many of these pupils (56%) English is an additional language. 48 languages are spoken in the school. There are 13 teachers including the headteacher of whom 10 are Catholic, 9 of these teachers hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies.

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

St Joseph's is an outstanding Catholic primary school. All who visit or work at the school are aware of the genuinely warm and friendly welcome. Pupils are provided with a vibrant Catholic education in a caring and supportive environment where differences are celebrated. The whole community has tremendous pride in their fully inclusive school. The governors place their trust in the very dedicated headteacher and her deputy. They have gathered around them a team of highly skilled teachers and teaching support that is committed to the school and its pupils. For those pupils experiencing challenges in their lives school is an oasis of calm where their individual needs are identified and catered for. All pupils are loved, highly valued and encouraged to be the best they can be. Importantly, the pupils know they are loved and respond accordingly. Lessons observed ranged from good to outstanding, pupils making at least good or outstanding progress in their learning, their personal development and their religious literacy. Pupils were friendly, respectful and considerate to each other, polite and welcoming, their behaviour at all times was exemplary. Pupils enjoyed every opportunity to share their work with the inspectors. Parents spoken to were totally committed to the school and feel very much part of its daily life.

Since the last inspection a new leadership team has been established and several new teachers appointed.

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

- The headteacher has a clear vision for Catholic education in the school.
- The commitment of all staff to providing a caring and nurturing place of learning that impacts positively on the pupils sense of well-being and security.
- The enthusiastic leadership from a dedicated RE subject leader has secured the high quality spiritual life of the school.
- The positive partnership with the parish and the pivotal role of the parish priest in the life of the school.
- The quality of relationships between all members of the school community.

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

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. The spiritually dedicated headteacher is totally committed to providing strong, Catholic leadership for the school. The strength of the leadership team has evolved over time; it is a distributive leadership model which recognises the gifts and talents of its members. The team shares a clear understanding of the nature of the Catholic school and they, together with other staff, promote the Catholic life of the school highly effectively. The subject leader monitors the subject closely. She is dedicated and enthusiastic, zealously managing the subject ensuring it retains a high profile. She scrutinises planning and pupils' work in order to measure progress and continuity. She evaluates resources, observes teaching and provides constructive feedback. Meticulous records are maintained that enables the school

to accurately assess its strengths and areas for development. Self-evaluation was found to be both accurate and reflective. The governing body fulfils its role well in relation to the school's Catholic foundation. It has knowledge of the Catholic life of the school through headteacher reports, subject leader reports and book scrutinies. RE is prioritised in the school development plan. The parish priest is chair of governors, a frequent and welcome visitor to the school and highly valued. He has a very significant impact on the operational life of the school. 'Mini Vinnies' are developing their key role in leading prayer and worship across the school. RE teaching enjoys at least 10% of available teaching time.

### **THE QUALITY OF THE WORD OF GOD IS OUTSTANDING**

The school uses 'The Way, The Truth, The Life' scheme enhanced by a range of teaching materials that is constantly evaluated and improved. Judicious use of 'Caritas in Action' and the 'RE Curriculum Directory' enables pupils to develop their social, moral and cultural awareness. Teaching and learning observed was at least good, in the majority of classes outstanding. From an early age pupils are learning about the importance of God in their lives and display an already well developed religious literacy. In the EYFS, the calm and well organised environment contributed to the outstanding teaching and learning taking place. Here, the pupils enthusiastically discussed the Parable of the Sower and growing in faith during Lent. In key stages 1 and 2 teaching was consistently good or outstanding. There was a calm, purposeful atmosphere conducive to learning. Key stage 1 pupils benefited from thoughtful teaching. The story of Zaccheus enabled pupils to engage with complex areas of faith such as being sorry, forgiveness and reconciliation. Key stage 2 classes were happy to work collaboratively or independently in order to produce high quality work. In the very best lessons pupils were highly motivated and challenged. They were able to discuss in a mature manner the present day relevance of Jesus performing miracles, Jairus' daughter, the lost son, the everyday opportunities available to us to share our lives with Jesus, acts of mercy and the understanding of sin. Much of the work in classes was relevantly referenced to scripture. Drama, talk partners, song, dance, prayer, ICT and the specific deployment of highly effective teaching assistants all support learning. Work in RE books is at least in line with standards in Literacy books. Great care is taken with the presentation of work, marking of work is consistent across the school the best establishing a brief dialogue suggesting improvements and next steps.

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

The welcome extended to all visitors to St Joseph's is outstanding. The school provides a warm and totally inclusive environment for all its pupils, their families, staff and visitors. This is a calm school, clean, bright and airy. The whole school community values the quality of their built environment, which has a positive effect on the well-being of pupils and adults, who treat it with respect. The distinctive culture and ethos, based on a shared knowledge and understanding of Christian beliefs and gospel values, enables the school to identify, respect and celebrate the diversity of its population exemplified in an annual International Week. On entering the school visitors are made immediately aware of the school's mission; that they are in a place of learning and the operational significance of the 5W's. Staff go out of their way to ensure that all visitors are welcomed with love and respectful care. A strong commitment to safeguarding in no way compromises the genuinely warm welcome. School assemblies are well attended by parents who feel welcomed and encouraged to become involved in the life of the school. Pupils were polite and well-mannered throughout the day. Pupils asked inspectors on many occasions if they needed any help finding their way around the building. Relationships between pupils and staff are outstanding which encourages a sense of belonging, community, acceptance and genuine value. Older pupils were mature and willing to forego their own desires in order to help others by acting as 'buddies' to younger or new pupils, litter picking around the school grounds etc. The school has an effective induction programme for new staff, NQT's and new pupils and their families. School actively seeks to engage with and support members of the community which is much appreciated by parents.

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

Staff and pupils at St Joseph's demonstrate high levels of respect and care for each other; this was witnessed repeatedly in classrooms, on corridors, in the dining room and other public areas. The management of the school gives high priority to those in greatest need. Pupils are provided with a safe and secure environment

where all procedures to safeguard and protect are fully endorsed. There is a genuine concern from all staff for the welfare of pupils, Jesus Christ is used as an example for the whole community to aspire to. Classrooms are nurturing places. The calm support offered by adults ensures learning and relationships are constantly being re-enforced, strengthened and enhanced. In a key stage 2 class a teaching assistant was observed dealing with a boisterous young man experiencing difficulties with classroom etiquette. The pupil was taken to one side, spoken to quietly and sensitively before returning to work almost un-noticed by other pupils. This Christ centred ethos is loving and positive, fostering understanding, empathy and forgiveness. This has produced caring pupils with a keen sense of right and wrong, perfectly exemplified by members of the school council who spoke eloquently about their school life, their teachers and how they know exactly what to do should they experience any problems. Pupils are encouraged to make the right choices, they feel safe and free to express their opinions and know that these will be valued. Staff and governors are sensitive to the needs of the pupils in their care and strive to meet these needs by utilising the services of a range of external agencies. Intervention groups offer support to those pupils requiring additional and differentiated provision. A Caritas social worker is employed by the school to provide support to pupils and their families. The school's 'open door' policy is very much appreciated by parents.

### **THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS OUTSTANDING**

Provision for worship is outstanding, prayer and worship are at the heart of the school community. Across the school displays show good examples of the opportunities for worship throughout the liturgical year. Prayer has a high profile in the school. All classes have timetabled use of the Prayer Room. Pupils responded extremely well in all acts of worship observed. Acts of worship were child centred, thoughtful and relevant ensuring that pupils and adults were given the opportunity to experience praying together as a community. Worship involved all pupils praying respectfully and reverently, singing joyfully, dancing, drama, personal and traditional prayer, meditation and reflection. Pupils had almost complete control of the worship which enabled them to express themselves in prayer very comfortably. Consequently, pupils access a wide range of rich and meaningful opportunities to strengthen their relationship with God. Each class has an age appropriate prayer focus area; the displays in these areas show religious artefacts and pupils' personal prayer and reflections on their experiences. Pupils are happy to compose their own prayers and share them with their friends. The Marist Sisters support the school journey through Advent and Lent and pupils make off-site visits to the Marist Centre. Fr Farrell says Mass in school each week, classes regularly visit church to celebrate Mass. Parents are invited to attend all celebrations and do so in significant numbers. A good example of how school helps families to pray at home is the 'Travelling Nativity'. Each class has a hand sized crib, a different child takes the crib home each day on the lead up to Christmas. Families are asked to write in the accompanying diary how they as a family used the crib as an object of devotion. There are plans to develop a similar idea for Easter.

### **THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS OUTSTANDING**

The school is held in high regard by the local community and the families it serves. Witnessing to Jesus Christ and gospel values are central to the life of the school. Perfect examples of this are to be found in the behaviour of pupils and staff, relationships between all members of the school community, pupil learning, work in pupils' books and displays in classrooms and on corridors of pupils' work. The school places pupils at the very centre of its mission. In lessons pupils were willing to discuss their faith and beliefs and why these are important to them; upper key stage 2 pupils were particularly competent in so doing. Older pupils provided evidence that they are given the opportunity to influence the strategic direction of the school, such as developing outside areas and the Forest School work. They believe that they are listened to and that they can be agents of change. Pupils recognise the significant contributions made to the community by people of other faiths and understand why this is part of being a Catholic community. Teachers engage pupils with the 'big questions' relating to the Catholic faith and always answer pupil questions sensitively. The school accepts its responsibilities for equal opportunities, reconciliation and Christian stewardship. Adults act as role models for the school's mission and values. Pupils are encouraged to reach out to those in need, not just by their wonderful support for local, national and international charities, but also in how they show respect, care, compassion and consideration for each other. The hard work of the staff enables the pupils to make excellent spiritual and academic progress. The 'Mini Vinnies' are working with other schools to further develop their role and increase their impact across the school.

**AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:**

- The implementation, to an agreed timetable, of the recently acquired scheme of work for personal relationships.
- To continue to develop assessment in Religious Education.
- To develop even further the involvement of pupils in the planning, preparation and presentation of prayer and worship across the school.

14<sup>th</sup> March 2017

Dear Pupils,

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We really enjoyed our time with you. You and all the adults in school work very hard to always do their best and because of this your school is an outstanding Catholic school.

We really enjoyed sharing your lessons with you and learning about all the wonderful things you do in St Joseph's. We saw as many of you as we could and apologise if we didn't see you in your class. We were very impressed with your behaviour, your love for one another and of course the love you have for your faith and the teachings of Jesus. It was clear to us that you have an excellent understanding of our Catholic faith. It was a privilege for us to be with you.

It was so pleasing to see how attentive and confident you were in your acts of worship and the school assembly we saw. Everyone showed great respect and reverence; we found your joyful singing and dancing uplifting. It showed your enjoyment at being part of St Joseph's.

Mrs Eccles, all the staff, Fr Farrell, the school governors and your parents are extremely proud of all you do and of what you have achieved over the years, well done and keep up the good work!

Your teachers are keen to help you develop even further your Catholic life and that of your school. To do this they are going to work with you to find ways to increase the opportunities for you to lead the planning and preparation of prayer and worship around school and introduce a new scheme of work for personal relationships.

So, well done and thank you all.

Yours sincerely,

Mr John Thorpe and Mr Brendan Hennessy

(Section 48 Inspectors)

## **Summary Report to Parents**

On 14<sup>th</sup> March 2017 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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### **AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:**

- The implementation, to an agreed timetable of the recently acquired scheme of work for personal relationships.
- To continue to develop assessment in Religious Education.
- To develop greater involvement of pupils in the planning, preparation and presentation of prayer and worship across the school.