

**INSPECTION REPORT**

**St Ethelbert's RC Primary School, Melbourne Rd, Deane, Bolton, BL3 5RL.**

Inspection date 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2015

Reporting Inspector Mr Andrew Sowerby  
Mr John Thorpe

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

Type of School Primary  
 URN 106252  
 Age range of pupils 3-11 years  
 Number on roll 236  
 Appropriate authority The Governing Body  
 Chair of Governors Mr Tom Grady  
 Headteacher Mrs Mandy Messham  
 Religious Education Subject Leader Mrs Angela Meskell  
 Date of previous inspection November 2010

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

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

St. Ethelbert's R C Primary School is an average sized primary school in the Rumworth area of Bolton, one of the 10% most deprived areas in the country. It serves the parishes of St Ethelbert's and St Vincent's Bolton. The current number on roll is 236, including the nursery. Currently 71% of pupils are baptised Catholics. The remainder are either other Christian denominations or Muslim; with very small proportion of Hindu pupils. The pupils, who are aged 3-11 years, are arranged in single age classes. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language is above the national average. The total percentage of pupils identified with SEND is 8.2%, which is below the national average, whilst the proportion of disadvantaged children known to be eligible for pupil premium is well above the national average. There are 12 full time teachers of whom 9 are Catholic. 5 staff holds the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies and one other is completing it. The school also has fifteen teaching assistants. Children enter school with skills and knowledge significantly below expectations, especially in communication and language development.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

St Ethelbert's is a good Catholic school with some elements of outstanding practice. As one enters the school, one is struck by the genuinely warm and caring welcome given to all. The outstanding headteacher, Religious Education subject leader and the dedicated staff have worked extremely hard to create an environment where everyone is valued. They are part of a community that is based upon the gospel values of respect, tolerance and love. The word of God is central to the life of the school and this can be seen on the high quality displays that are evident throughout the school building. There are outstanding parish links. St. Ethelbert's works collaboratively with the parish priest and the school is firmly at the heart of the parish. This ensures the pastoral and spiritual needs of the learners and their families are well met. The children love coming to school and the school council is extremely proud of all the opportunities given to them. As one pupil put it: "St. Ethelbert's has inspired me to become a Catholic". All 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. The staff and pupils demonstrate a very high level of respect, care and service to others; whilst the quality of relationships is a notable strength of the school. They are supported by an effective governing body.

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

- The quality of personal relationships.
- The welfare of pupils and staff which is of paramount importance.
- The exemplary behaviour of the children.
- The Catholic leadership of the school.
- The informed and effective Governing Body.
- The quality of worship.

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

The leadership of RE across the school is outstanding. This is due to the drive and determination of the headteacher, along with a knowledgeable and informed governing body, so that the development of the Catholic life of the school is at the forefront of the school's work. The leadership has been well supported by the senior leadership team and an enthusiastic and talented RE subject leader. 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 outstanding leadership at all levels of the school community contributes significantly to the good provision for Catholic education that the school currently provides.

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

The school's mission statement is clearly displayed throughout the school. It is known, lived and witnessed to and is evident at every level. It is reflected in all school policies, which have a significant impact on learning and the life of the school. The staffing and resources devoted to RE are of a high standard. The school uses a variety of RE schemes to meet the demands of the RE Curriculum Directory and has begun to trial the "Come and See" scheme in school. This is an area the school clearly wishes to develop further.

Based upon an evaluation of work scrutiny, lesson observations, discussions with pupils, teaching and achievement is judged to be good. 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 all key stages, when children were asked to reflect upon how they could implement the advent message of John the Baptist in their lives and also where the children were involved in discussing what Mary's reaction would be when receiving the news that she was to become the mother of Christ. Most pupils are challenged to engage with the 'big questions' of the purpose and meaning of life, but this an area which still requires embedding in all classes. Expectations and standards of work in RE and English were consistent and although marking and feedback is consistent, it does not provide sufficient guidance to children as to how their work could be improved.

Scripture is clearly known, understood and made relevant throughout the school. There is evidence on the displays in the classroom and halls of the importance of this. The home, school and parish links are highly inclusive, so that all members feel part of the school community. This was commented on by a number of parents of Moslem backgrounds who stated very clearly at how welcome they were made to feel by the school. Further evidence of this was observed in the Advent Service which acknowledged the variety of customs and practices of those present without losing the Catholic message of love and tolerance. Pupils are actively trained in outreach to the local community. This can be seen in the number of charities that the school supports.

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

St Ethelbert's is a school where everyone feels welcome. Parents were keen to express their views by saying "all children and parents are made to feel welcome at the school", whilst another commented that this school is "mint!" All staff sensitively consider the spiritual and emotional well-being of children and adults, whilst at the same time achieving good academic standards. The importance of the dignity of the individual is clearly evident at all levels. This could be seen in the way that pupils and staff treat children with emotional and special educational needs. The school engages in impressive outreach work which meets the needs of the marginalised members of the school community. As one child commented "We are all part of one family at St. Ethelbert's". 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. The GIFT (Growing in Faith Together) team provides an outstanding example of this. The use of sacramental partners further enhances this sense of belonging. 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 the reception and nursery classes met parents at the start of the school day and discussed with them any concerns that they had.

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

At St Ethelbert's the welfare of the individual is of paramount importance. This was noticed throughout the inspection in the way that staff demonstrated a very high level of respect, care and service to others. The inspectors noticed that children feel confident and secure enough to tend to their personal needs without interrupting the learning of others. Further evidence of this genuine care for the welfare of others was observed in the way that parents and members of staff were treated with great sensitivity so as to ensure that their dignity and value was maintained and appreciated. 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.

Children are caring and have a true sense of right and wrong. During lessons they listened respectfully to other pupils' ideas. Play partners and buddies look after and care for younger children. Pupils told the inspector that they have to look after the younger children because they must follow Jesus' command to treat others as you want to be treated. Calm support is offered by adults when children have difficulty remaining on task. This could be seen in the way that children with special educational needs were managed, not only within the

classroom, but also through the provision and use of nurture groups and so as to ensure the needs of all are met. This work has been enhanced by the provision of separate nurture and friendship rooms. The school stresses the importance of reaching out beyond its own community so that children feel part of God's world.

### **THE QUALITY OF THE WORSHIP IS GOOD**

The school provides a variety of worship opportunities for all pupils, including small and large groups, which are appropriate to their backgrounds and faith experiences. The school has recently implemented a new developmental prayer policy entitled "It's Great to Pray", which has provided all teachers and children with a clear structure regarding the provision of such opportunities. This is being developed well, but further work is required so that it becomes embedded in school practice and consequently enables all children to have the opportunity to reflect and pray spontaneously whilst understanding and using the traditional prayers of the Church. All staff are trained and supported in the formation and education of the prayer life of the school. The school has developed well its chaplaincy provision through the formation of a GIFT team (Growing in Faith Together) and the team support the provision for prayer and worship throughout the school very well in deed. This work has been further enhanced by the provision of a small chapel, which provides a place for quiet reflection. 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. Pupils are comfortable with their feelings and have a good and knowledgeable vocabulary. Each class has a special area of focus. 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 QUALITY OF WITNESS IS OUTSTANDING**

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. Pupils are confident in witnessing to the beliefs and values of a Catholic community. They are actively encouraged and supported in being pro-active citizens, who participate in the decision-making processes at a local and national level. The school has implemented well the "Caritas in Action" scheme and this is having a positive impact on school life. The children spoke enthusiastically about the need to be "bucket fillers, rather than bucket emptiers" and how they must live out the gospel message in the way they treat others, both in and outside the classroom. This is recognised by the staff during school assemblies and also seen in the way the school promotes support for various charities such as CAFOD, St Joseph's Penny, Urban Outreach and Children in Need, so as to ensure support for the Common Good.

### **AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:**

- To fully implement across the school the "Come and See" RE scheme.
- To fully embed the schools development prayer policy, so as to ensure it is age appropriate, inclusive and relevant.

Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2015

Dear Pupils,

Thank you for making our visit to St Ethelbert'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 Ethelbert'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'*. We 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.

You are using your new RE programme very well. Your teachers have found many interesting and creative ways to enhance the Religious Education they teach you. You are a very creative school and we were most impressed by the way you work together so co-operatively in lessons. The prayer services we saw were very good and uplifting experiences. We have asked your teachers to continue to develop the RE curriculum and further develop the prayer scheme you have introduced.

God bless you all and have a really happy Advent and Christmas.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Andrew Sowerby  
Mr John Thorpe  
(Section 48 Inspectors)

## **Summary Report to Parents**

On Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 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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