

INSPECTION REPORT

School: Sacred Heart R.C. Primary School
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URN: 105243

Headteacher: Mr. Martin Johnson
Chair of Governors: Mrs. Mary Anne Yearn

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Diocese of Salford
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Date of inspection: 24th May 2012
Date of previous inspection: November 2008
Reporting Inspector: Mrs. Pauline Leatherbarrow

Information about the school

Sacred Heart is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school serving Sacred Heart Parish, Westhoughton. The catchment area is one of relative social advantage. There is a socio-economic mix of housing including a large council estate south of the town centre, housing association homes and privately owned houses. There are 334 pupils on roll aged 4-11 of whom 321 are Catholic. 6.2% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. There are 26 children identified as having special educational needs and 2 pupils have a statutory statement of special educational needs. There are 16.8 full and part time teachers employed by the school of which 56% are Catholic. 10 full time staff hold CCRS or equivalent.

Overall Effectiveness

Grade 1

Sacred Heart is an outstanding school with a very strong Catholic ethos.

The school's motto, *'to shine like Jesus'*, permeates all aspects of the life of the school. Sacred Heart School is very welcoming to all. Pupils are well behaved, friendly and polite. They have very good attitudes to their learning and respond well to meet the high expectations of staff. Relationships throughout the whole school community are strong and based on mutual respect and the love of God. Parents are very supportive of the school. Strong home / school / parish links ensure learners are well supported on their faith journey. Both Headteacher and Religious Education leader are Eucharistic Ministers at all masses. The parish priest visits school to celebrate Mass in church and in school.

The well being of every pupil lies at the heart of everything Sacred Heart School tries to do. All staff show the utmost commitment to and involvement in caring for each individual.

The Headteacher gives outstanding leadership, and together with his Leadership & Management Team is supported by a very hard working and dedicated staff and well-informed Governing Body. As a cohesive team, they have a clear vision to ensure that all pupils grow and mature in their learning, love and understanding of God.

Capacity for sustained improvement

Grade 1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding. The school has continued to build upon the outstanding practice from their 2008 RE inspection. *'The pursuit of excellence in Catholic education has led to exceptional improvement and has securely maintained and built on previously outstanding performance'*.

Self-evaluation at all levels is based on sophisticated and accurate analysis by staff. Pupils are consistently involved in evaluating how well they achieve. Children engage in self- and peer-assessment to further improve their work.

The committed Governing Body at Sacred Heart clearly understands, and is able to articulate its role in developing the Catholic life of the school. The Roman Catholic foundation of the school is always at the forefront of all governor decisions.

The high aspirations of the innovative Leadership Team and staff are a major strength, and this is mirrored by the very high expectations of parents and governors. Processes for managing the performance of all staff and for their professional development are used effectively to further improve teaching and learning in the future.

The Headteacher and Leadership & Management Team communicate an ambitious vision for the Catholic dimension of the school and use challenging targets to raise standards for all pupils.

What the school needs to do to improve further

There are no issues to address as the school has clearly identified areas for future development in their School Improvement and Development Plan.

However the school has put as their priority to:

- Ensure innovative practice is shared with other schools within Diocese – DEEP Trust.

PUPILS

Grade 1

How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups

Teaching is consistently highly effective in enthusing pupils and ensuring that they learn extremely well and develop their understanding of the Catholic faith.

Lessons observed displayed excellent subject knowledge which challenges and inspires pupils. Children of all abilities make exceptional progress as learners in RE. High quality resources, including technology, are used to great effect, together with the excellent support provided by teaching staff, support staff and volunteers to optimise learning. Consequently, pupils are highly motivated, behave well and are able to sustain their concentration at all levels. Pupils say they enjoy their work because *'teachers try to make everything we do to be creative, fun and never boring.'*

Lessons observed gave opportunities for pupils to critically reflect on the Catholic faith and the responses it gives to questions of meaning and purpose. The innovative and creative use of outdoor spaces, and resources used, help bring the RE curriculum and liturgy to life. An example of this was found in the OLÉ group of Y4 and Y5 pupils around the campfire in the school grounds, who reflected on Jesus' appearance to the apostles by the sea of Tiberias. This activity provided an opportunity to understand the teachings of Jesus and other key religious figures and how these apply to their own lives.

Pupils were observed to clearly articulate their own personal response to the deeper questions of life. A KS1 lesson observed posed the question, *'The Holy Spirit brings special fruits to us too.... How can we use these in our lives?'*

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

Grade 1

Sacred Heart makes excellent provision for the spiritual needs of all its pupils. Throughout the school year it provides a wealth of rich and meaningful opportunities for pupils, parents and staff to develop and strengthen their relationship with God. This was clearly evidenced during the *'Stations of the Resurrection'* which was superbly attended and was a spiritually uplifting experience. The service commenced with a Liturgical Dance and then parents, parishioners and community proceeded to visit each class who led prayer linked to each of the 14 Stations of Light. The service ended with the school song which is based upon the words of their purpose statement, *'Shine as we come, talk, work, walk and pray together'*.

Sacred Heart School is at the cutting edge of Religious Education curriculum design. It successfully seeks to improve on the coherence, relevance and excitement of the well-planned opportunities provided. As a result, pupils have the opportunity to be enthusiastic and highly motivated learners, and benefit from excellent opportunities to improve their spiritual and moral development. Prayer spaces are made available in school where activities are changed regularly to encourage different forms of prayer and worship. Teaching observed was effective in enthusing pupils and ensuring that they learn extremely well and develop their understanding of the Catholic faith.

Children are recognised as an integral part of the faith family at Sacred Heart, and their involvement in the Little Church, Sacramental Programme, as welcomers and altar servers, solidifies their role within the community. Pupils regularly prepare and lead prayer and worship with confidence and enthusiasm from their earliest years in a variety of gatherings, for example, the *seedlings* – Reception / *gardeners* – Year 6 service on the theme of *'New Life'*. This was a beautiful reflection using a variety of resources to engage Reception and Year 6.

'Statements to Live By' images are displayed each week in the hall on the projector, with music playing associated with the theme, in class as posters, and put into class books, where children can record when they have done something to meet the statement. These statements provide a real opportunity to live out the school's mission statement in their daily lives. For example, the responses by pupils to the statement, *'I know what to do when I see anyone being hurt'*, include: *'When I see someone hurt, I go and comfort them...'* or, *'If I see anyone being hurt I would help them and comfort them and if they needed the teacher I will get her...'*. Lenten promise books observed also involve children in deciding how they can make improvements to the way they live their life in the way of Christ.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

Grade 1

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the School.

The school's leadership is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. Leaders and managers, including the RE leader, promote the Catholic life of the school very effectively. The school's vision, *that all children achieve their potential*, is embedded into the structure of the mission, values and purpose statements. These are referred to frequently in assemblies, classrooms and through the school newsletter. The leadership team put the school's mission statement at the forefront of everything they do, and they encourage staff, pupils, parents and governors to be actively involved in shaping and supporting it.

The Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and RE leader are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. The Headteacher's infectious enthusiasm inspires all those associated with Sacred Heart to create the best possible place to learn and grow in the love of God. He demonstrates strong leadership and has a clear vision for the school supported by the Governing Body, leadership team and staff.

The Governing Body committee structure ensures that the school is well equipped to carry out its function to be a beacon for education within a Roman Catholic environment. Governors, and in particular the RE Governor, have a very good understanding of, and are able to articulate, the mission of the school. They understand and encourage staff, pupils and parents to reflect on the Diocesan guidelines and seek to put these into practice.