

INSPECTION REPORT St Bernadette’s RC Primary School

Inspection date 6th June 2013

Reporting Inspector Sister Judith Russi
Mr Martin Johnson

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

Type of School Catholic Primary

URN 105347

Age range of pupils 4-11 years

Number on roll 240

Appropriate authority The Governing Body

Chair of Governors Mrs Elizabeth Watts

Head teacher Mr Simon Tonge

Date of previous inspection January 2008

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

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

St Bernadette's is an average size primary school serving the parishes of St Michael and St Bernadette. The school has been heavily over-subscribed for a number of years. The Governing Body, with the support of the Diocese, agreed to increase its admission number from 30 to 45 with effect from September 2011. This has meant that significant building and remodelling work has taken place at the school since 2010 with phase 2 of the works completed in March 2013. Pupils are mainly of a White British background and EAL, mobility, Free School Meals eligibility and ethnic minority figures are all well below national averages. Attendance figures are high. The school has very good links with the parish and is well supported by the parish Priest Fr Chris Lough. Since the amalgamation with St Michael's into one parish, the school has been very active in forging links with their sister school St Michael's in order to strengthen the connections between the two former parishes. The link between the Year 6 classes in both schools has also helped considerably with transition for children to high school. The school has been awarded the Basic Skills Award on two consecutive occasions, as well as the International Schools' Award, Healthy Schools' Award and Eco Schools' Silver Award.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS GOOD

The governors and staff of St Bernadette's have dedicated themselves to the building up of a Catholic learning community which is good with many outstanding features offering the children a faith experience which permeates all aspects of school life. The school has embraced the 'Year of Faith' and draws on the key themes to enhance and focus pupils' learning. The children receive a Catholic education which enables them to understand their place in the world as future stewards who can influence, change and contribute to the common good for all people. The Governors, Head teacher and leadership team lead the school with a vision and sense of purpose recognising the dignity and value of every member of the community. The passion for learning and personal development ensures that all pupils receive an integrated Gospel based formation and education. The leadership of the school have a clear understanding of their next steps as the school strives for excellence. Parents expressed a high level of commitment and loyalty to the school. They were particularly thankful for the excellent pupil relationships which spanned all key stages.

KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- The Catholic life, relationships, behaviour and care for all within the school is outstanding.
- The outreach to parents and families in the local community is a strength of the school and the welcome for all is outstanding.
- The centrality of prayer and worship in the school is outstanding.

THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP IS GOOD

The mission of the school is clearly lived as part of the Church's mission in education. The Governors and leadership team are fully committed to the continuing professional development of all staff. Mentoring/Support and ongoing professional development at all levels has improved and developed significantly since the previous inspection. New staff are supported very well during their induction and beyond. The Mission Statement is known and lived throughout. This would benefit from being reviewed by the whole school community with a view to separating out the Mission Statement from the school aims. Pupil leadership is developing through the School Council and the older children are providing care guidance and support for younger children as peer mediators. The school has identified that pupil leadership will be further developed through the introduction of the pupil Chaplaincy initiative. The leadership of the school has demonstrated a high level of innovation and creativity in developing links with their sister school St Michael's and the parish community.

The leadership of RE has been recognised as being of the utmost importance and is therefore led at a senior leadership level which encourages all staff to contribute in the decision making process. The leadership of RE recognised the importance of continuing to develop assessment for learning,

diagnostic marking and the introduction of personalised targets to move all teaching and learning to an outstanding level across the school supported by the rigorous monitoring and evaluation process which is evident across the core curriculum.

THE QUALITY OF WORD IS GOOD

The school is developing the RE scheme, The Way, The Truth and The Life. Teaching and learning was found to be good and in some areas outstanding. Where teaching and learning was outstanding it was fully supported by the engagement of the teaching assistants in an effective and very creative way. A review of the use of assessment for learning, success criteria and diagnostic marking in RE would enable pupils to have a clearer understanding of how to achieve their next steps for learning. The use of highly creative teaching and learning strategies, the development of language in RE and higher order questioning skills enabled many pupils to achieve at a good, and in some lessons, very high level. Pupils clearly enjoyed their learning and had a very good understanding of scripture. The proposed mapping and evaluation of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education across all key stages will further develop and enhance the already outstanding learning in some areas. Pupils were readily able to talk about the beliefs and values of the Catholic community and were proud to explain or refer to the 5W's without prompting. Behaviour for learning was found to be outstanding in all lessons and around the school.

The Religious Education budget is set according to the needs of the curriculum and the Catholic life of the school. All classes receive a minimum of 10% RE curriculum time.

THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING

The welcome extended to all visitors is underpinned by a common vision built on Gospel values and the Mission Statement. The school actively seeks to engage with and support members of the community and this is particularly appreciated by the parents. Parents spoke of their love for St Bernadette's and the long standing family links with the school.

Those interviewed spoke of their delight at the very positive relationships across the school "*My son has many friends in different classes*" as well as their sense of belonging to a community where they are genuinely valued. Parents felt they were well informed and able to visit the school with ease. More recent members of the school spoke of the speed with which they were made to feel part of the community and that they knew they were valued, loved and safe. Children know what to do if they have any worries and spoke highly of their teacher's responses. The pupils' sense of ownership and responsibility for what happens in their school was remarkable. They felt that they were heard and their views welcomed. Members of staff demonstrate a keen sense of community affiliation and the strength and quality of relationships exemplifies respect for the dignity of all members of the school community. Children and parents are proud of their school.

THE QUALITY OF WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING

St Bernadette's pupils and staff demonstrate a very high level of respect and care for each other and for the fabric of their school building and grounds of which they are justifiably proud. Children are confident that teachers will treat their concerns seriously. When asked about bullying, pupils stated that it was not an issue as everyone knew exactly what to do if there were any problems. The school's provision for safe-guarding and keeping children safe is outstanding. The provision for SRE is under review and has been identified as being fully revised for the coming academic year. Issues are addressed, and delivered through PSHE, RE and Science. Pupils and parents spoke highly of the pastoral support for all and the open attitude of the school to listening to one another's needs. The 'Walk with Me' scheme and Rainbows programme have helped many children to come to terms with bereavement and loss in recent years. Quality care, before and after school, is provided for families

needing childcare support. The school actively reaches out to those in need at home and abroad, through a wide variety of charity work such as the Marist Sisters' school in the Gambia.

THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

The whole school policy for prayer and worship is creative, innovative and of a high quality which ensures a wide range of opportunities to develop and enrich the prayer life of the community. Quiet reflection moments in class and collective worship during RE lessons, ensures that prayer is at the heart of the life of the school. Staff and pupils are confident in leading prayer and worship. All year groups have a clear understanding of the liturgical life of the school. The active involvement of the parish priest is a significant asset for the school. Pupils, staff and parents expressed their commitment to the parish especially in the outreach to families through experiences such as the sacramental programme and the Advent and Lent celebrations. The whole school time of prayer and worship was creative and well balanced with periods of silent reflection allowing those taking part the opportunity for private devotion. The introduction of prayer partners with the sister school in the parish has proved to be very supportive and effective. Parents spoke of their appreciation of the 'Wednesday Word' which enabled them to reflect and pray with their children.

THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS OUTSTANDING

Witnessing to Christ and the values of the Gospel are central to the life of St Bernadette's. The confidence and background knowledge of staff concerning the beliefs and values of St Bernadette's as a Catholic school was outstanding and clearly reflected the leadership's priority of ensuring all staff are supported and trained as educators in Catholic education. This was clearly evident in relationships across the school, displays and children's work throughout. Children were found to be very confident and willing to speak about their faith and why it was important to them. They were able to link home, school, parish with ease. Displays showing the work on the Year of Faith and in discussion with pupils demonstrated that the values of the school have a very definite impact which extends beyond the school into the global Church community. This was clearly seen in the activities which engaged the pupils in care for the environment, actively encouraging an earth care ethic. It is clear that the school stands as a witness to Christ's love, justice, forgiveness and compassion. An outstanding feature was seen in a discussion with pupils concerning the difference between St Bernadette's and other schools that are not faith based. One pupil explained that she had "*to be in a school where Jesus was in the middle of everything*". The work in supporting St Joseph's Penny and the Marist Sisters in the Gambia, are just two of the many projects the school has undertaken in response to their understanding of the individuals' responsibility for caring for those in need.

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- Continue the development of assessment in the RE programme, through the setting of personalised pupil targets for each topic and greater sharing of the best practice in the use of success criteria.
- Further develop marking in RE to ensure it is diagnostic thus enabling all pupils to identify their next steps.
- Set up the proposed Chaplaincy team to further the already high level of pupil engagement in the Catholic life of the school.

DIOCESE OF  SALFORD
Department for Formation, Office for Education

June 17th 2013

Dear Pupils

Thank you so much for the wonderful welcome you gave us when we came to visit you. Katie and Grace thank you especially for looking after us at lunch time and making sure we felt at home. Your school is a good school with many outstanding features. This is because you and your teachers are working so hard to always do your very best and you look after one another so well.

You have a beautiful school. We loved all the displays about the Year of Faith and your explanations of the 5WS. Your work is of a good and often outstanding standard and we could clearly see that you take your learning very seriously and are proud of your achievements. To help you develop even further your teachers are going to help you with your RE targets and assessments.

Your RE is exciting and very creative and we could see that you can make connections between what you are learning in RE with other areas of the curriculum. Thank you for letting us share so much of what you are doing. We were very impressed by your beautiful assembly and prayer times. Thank you for inviting us to take part.

Your teachers are keen to help you develop the Catholic life your school even further and to do this they are going to start the exciting pupil Chaplaincy team to work with Father Chris in helping you to lead the Catholic life of your school.

God bless you all and have a really happy term.

Yours sincerely

Sr Judith Russi
(Section 48 Inspector)

Summary Report to Parents

On 6th June 2013 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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