

**INSPECTION REPORT**

St Joseph's R.C. Primary School

Wellington Rd, Todmorden. OL14 5PH

Inspection date 11<sup>th</sup> November 2014

Reporting Inspectors

Lead Inspector Mr. A.J. Sowerby

Additional Inspector Mr. B. Hennessy

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

Type of School Roman Catholic Primary

URN

Age range of pupils 3-11 years

Number on roll 118 including 19 full time nursery children

Appropriate authority The Governing Body

Chair of Governors Mr Jim Livesey

Headteacher Mrs Maria Cooper

Religious Education Co-ordinator Mrs Suzanne McHale

Date of previous inspection May 2011

<b>The Inspection judgements are:</b>	<b>Grade</b>	Explanation of the Grades
Overall effectiveness of the school	2	1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3 = Requires Improvement 4 = Inadequate
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	2	
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 Roman Catholic Primary School in Todmorden which is a small mill town situated on the edge of the Pennine Moors. The school serves the parish of St Joseph's Todmorden though some children who attend the school come from outside the area. It is smaller than the average size Primary School with 118 pupils on roll (including 19 nursery children). 64% of children are baptised Catholic. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average. 75% of pupils who attend the school are white British with the remaining 25% of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language which is above the national average. The proportion of pupils identified as coming from ethnic minority backgrounds is below the national average. However this figure has seen a significant rise in the last three years. 22% pupils are on the SEN register with 1 pupil having a statement of educational need. 36% of pupils are eligible for FSM whilst 31 children receive the Pupil Premium Grant. All teachers are Catholic. All teachers teach R.E. and lead collective acts of prayer and worship. 2 teachers have the CCRS. There are 8 support staff of which 5 are Catholic. The school has achieved a number of awards which include Healthy Schools Award, Active Mark and various Family Learning awards to name but a few.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

St Joseph's is a good Catholic Primary school with some outstanding features. There is a genuinely warm and caring welcome given to all. All children are offered a Catholic education in a friendly and supportive environment where differences are welcomed and celebrated. The Word of God is central to the life of the school. St. Joseph'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 committed head teacher and her staff work hard to meet the needs of all children. The children enjoy coming to school and all parents spoke of the happy and caring environment the school has created. The children expressed how very proud they are of all the opportunities given to them. Pupils are friendly, polite and welcoming and their behaviour at all times is exemplary. They work hard to achieve the expectations of the adults who work with them. They enjoyed every opportunity to share with the inspectors their work and thoughts about the school. The staff and pupils demonstrate a very high level of respect, care and service to others. The quality of relationships is a notable strength of the school.

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

- The quality of relationships between all members of the school community.
- The outstanding way in which the school supports the welfare of the children and their families.
- The way in which all members of the school community witness to their faith in a practical way in line with the social teachings of the Catholic church.
- The manner in which the school has embraced the role of pupil chaplaincy.

## **THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP is good**

The leadership of RE across the school is good. This is due to the hard work of the head teacher, along with knowledgeable members of the new Governing Body, so that the development of the Catholic life of the school is at the forefront of the school's work. This leadership has been well supported by an enthusiastic R E Coordinator. 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 generally both accurate and reflective. There is good leadership at all levels of the school community which contributes significantly to the good provision for Catholic Education that the school currently provides.

## **THE QUALITY OF THE WORD OF GOD is good because:**

The school's Mission Statement is clearly displayed throughout the school. It is known, lived and witnessed to and is evident at every level of the school. It is reflected in all school policies which have a significant impact on learning and the life of the school. The Religious Education of the pupils is the core of the Core Curriculum. The staffing and resources devoted to RE are of a high standard, reflecting its significance and importance in the school. Based upon an evaluation of work scrutiny, lesson observations, discussions with pupils, teaching and achievement is judged to be good. Pupils are challenged to engage with the Big Questions of the purpose

and meaning of life throughout the curriculum. 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 both key stages when children were asked to reflect upon what is a community and how they in their own lives could improve things for others and 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. Marking and feedback to pupils was also found to be consistent and supported pupils in understanding how they could improve their knowledge and understanding in RE. Scripture is clearly known, understood and made relevant throughout the school. The staff and pupils demonstrate and can articulate the centrality and importance of the Word of God. There is evidence on the displays in the classroom and halls of the importance of this. The home, school and parish links are generally effective but more work needs to be conducted in order that they become even more inclusive. Pupils are actively trained in outreach to the local community. This can be seen in the number of charities that the school supports. These are not just the Catholic charities such as CAFOD and St Joseph's Penny but also other local charities such as the Cancer hospice and the Candle Lighters appeal.

**The Inspectors cite the following evidence to confirm their judgement:**

- Overall the standards of attainment, progress and hence achievement are good. As the curriculum is based on the mission it is challenging, interesting and fulfilling. The children are developing the age appropriate knowledge and skills.
- The school has fully incorporated "The Way, The Truth and the Life" scheme. This is supplemented by other R.E. resources so that as a result standards of teaching are generally good
- Work in R.E is clearly as good as work in other subjects due to the high priority given to it in school. This was seen by the inspectors during the scrutiny of both the R.E and Literacy books.
- The children use ICT confidently and other resources well and enjoy learning set prayers and special aspects of their faith. There are regular visits into and out of school to enrich the RE curriculum such as participating in joint Diocesan Masses and the Diocesan Relay of Prayer.
- The work of the school chaplaincy team has improved provision for R.E. across the school. They plan appropriate opportunities for prayer and quiet reflection. They are supported well by an enthusiastic and hardworking member of staff. Consequently they are beginning to fully embed this work across the school. The inspection team were delighted that the school were making a conscious effort to train and develop new members of the team.

**THE QUALITY OF WELCOME is outstanding because:**

There is a culture of welcome and all the pupils and staff demonstrate a very high level of confidence and outreach to all within the school community. Visitors are welcomed with love and respectful care. The importance of the dignity of the individual is clearly evident at all levels. Clear structures and procedures are followed by all staff and pupils who consistently witness to Christ being at the heart of the community through excellent communication, relationships and a joyful, approach to daily life. This was evidenced at the start of the school day when the inspectors witnessed the happy and confident way in which the children entered the school. All members of the school community demonstrate a very high level of belonging and ownership of the school. Pupils are given responsibility in creating and sustaining the schools sense of welcome through guiding visitors on tours of the school. 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 nursery and reception classes met parents at the start of the school day and discussed with them any concerns that they had. Parents also in discussion with the inspection team spoke very highly of the way in which the school made new parents feel welcome.

**The inspectors cite the following evidence to confirm their judgement:**

- New families are welcomed into the school with warmth by the opportunities which are created to visit the school and meet the whole team. Parents voiced to the inspector how wonderful and special this made them feel. As one parent said "The Head Teacher and senior staff are always available at the start of the day to discuss any concerns I may have".
- In the first few weeks of the school year parents and carers of children in the nursery and reception classes are invited to bring their child into school in the morning and stay until the children settle down.

- Parents are kept informed and up to date about the curriculum and events in school through the use of the school newsletter and school website. The school also ensures that the voice of the children is heard and respected. The School Council were keen to express their opinion about the changes they had brought about in school such as the provision of improved play facilities.
- Children of other faiths who attend St. Joseph's are welcomed with dignity and respect. Currently the school has only a small number of children from other faiths who attend the school. These are made to feel welcome and respected and as a result play a full role in the life of the school. As a result of the strong Catholic ethos all children are taught to respect each other so that everyone at the school feels part of the St. Joseph's family.
- Within school relationships are of the highest quality. Older children care for the younger ones, play leaders and buddies work to ensure playtimes are fun and peaceful.
- The school has a number of highly effective classroom support staff who provide high quality support that enables such a warm and welcoming atmosphere to exist.

**THE QUALITY OF WELFARE is outstanding because:**

The staff and pupils demonstrate a very high level of respect, care and service to others. This was witnessed in all classes where children's needs were met in a calm and positive manner. The structures and procedures ensure that all pupils and staff feel safe and are treated with respect and dignity. 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. The budget, staffing and resourcing decisions demonstrate a consistent commitment to Catholic stewardship throughout the school. The inspection team noted that the Governing Body has contributed to this through its commitment to paying not just the minimum wage but the living wage. The parents and friends play a highly significant part in school life and their contributions are valued throughout the school.

**The Inspectors cite the following evidence to confirm their judgements:**

- The physical, spiritual and mental well-being of each person is central to the school's mission. The school council discussed with the inspectors the need to reach out with kindness to others for example those less fortunate in the world. Children are caring and have a true sense of right and wrong.
- The school is a very caring community where everyone is valued! Play partners and buddies look after and care for younger children. The children told the inspectors that they have to look after the younger children because when they were once little and the older children were there to look after them and they must follow Jesus' command to treat others as you want to be treated.
- Calm support is offered by sensitive adults when children have difficulty remaining on task. Such excellent role models ensure learning and loving friendships develop.
- The school stresses the importance of reaching out beyond its own community so that children feel part of God's world. The charity work is a living example of this as children support CAFOD's Fairtrade programme, St Joseph's Penny and some of the local community initiatives such as the Candle Lighters campaign.
- The children of the school council confirmed they feel very safe! The school goes to great lengths to ensure as far as possible children are free from worry and a happy, calm atmosphere is the norm. The school provides a variety of activities in order to ensure that this occurs.

**THE QUALITY OF THE WORSHIP COMMUNITY is good because:**

The school provides a variety of worship opportunities for pupils throughout the school (prayer, reflection, liturgies) including small and large groups – which are appropriate to their backgrounds and faith experiences. The development of opportunities for pupils to worship according to their intellectual and life experience needs and stages of faith development is evident. Worshipping opportunities promote a strong community sense of service for each other and enable children to develop their own prayers. However some children need to develop further opportunities in order to ensure that they are all fully confident in doing this.

**The inspectors cite the following evidence to confirm their judgements:**

- The parish priest regularly celebrates the Mass and Benediction which the children attend in church. Key events are celebrated with special masses: the beginning of each school year, the parish and school feast day, Holy Days and at the end of the year.
- During Advent, Lent and the Easter season the school holds assemblies, liturgies and times of reflection/ reconciliation that are all shared by the whole school community. The children are encouraged to attend voluntary prayer services organised by the school chaplaincy team in the school's Rainbow room.
- There is a daily act of collective worship. These take place in a variety of formats. 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.
- The inspection team observed an effective class-led whole school assembly which demonstrated the children's positive attitudes to collective worship and the important place this has in their school life.
- Pupils are comfortable with their feelings and have a good and knowledgeable vocabulary. Each class has a special area of focus. The children know many school prayers. In some classes there were examples of displays of the children's own prayers.
- 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 Gospel values are clearly evidenced throughout all the policies and procedures and have a significant impact on learning and the life of the school.
- The inspection team witnessed at first hand the high quality support that members of the classroom support staff offered in ensuring that children were provided with such good acts of collective worship.

**THE QUALITY OF WITNESS is outstanding because:**

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. The staff and pupils feel confident and secure in their witness to Christ, the Gospel and the teachings of the Church. Pupils are confident in witnessing to the beliefs and values of a Christian community and are actively encouraged and supported in being pro-active citizens who participate in the decision-making processes at a local and national level. This is seen in the way the school promotes support for various charities so as to promote support for the Common Good.

**The Inspectors cite the following evidence to confirm their judgement:**

- The school mission is known and understood by all at appropriate levels. It is in 'child and adult speak', but is powerful in its ambition. It is discussed and shared in assemblies, in class and in RE lessons. The statement can be seen displayed in school.
- Relationships are very good at St Joseph's and a strong sense of teamwork and belonging exist.
- The children have a highly defined sense of fairness and justice. They know their responsibilities in terms of equal opportunities, stewardship and reconciliation.
- Children are respectful of each other and the inspectors noted at all times behaviour was outstanding.
- All members of the school family meet God each day and strive to meet all the challenges involved in this witness.

**AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:**

- To further embed the 5ws Framework for school self-evaluation
- To continue to develop the role of school chaplains through developing links with other Catholic schools
- To continue to build and strengthen links with the parish community of St Joseph's

19<sup>th</sup> November 2014

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making our visit to St Joseph'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. Joseph'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'. I 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 and has a place.

You have started using your new RE programme and are doing very well. You are a very hard working school and we were most impressed by the way you work together so co-operatively in your lessons. The assembly we saw was a very good and uplifting experience. We have asked your teachers to continue to develop the work your chaplains are doing to develop the prayer life of the school so as to help you all understand more about your faith and relationship with God. We have also asked your teachers to help you to focus on ensuring that everyone in the whole school community works well together to fully embed the work on the 5ws.

God bless you all and have a really good term.

Yours sincerely,

**Mr A.J Sowerby**  
**Mr B Hennessy**  
**Section 48 Inspectors**  
**Diocese of Salford**

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## Summary Report to Parents

### CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

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### AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

To further embed the 5ws Framework for school self-evaluation

To continue to develop the role of school chaplains through developing links with other Catholic schools

To continue to build and strengthen links with the parish community of St Joseph's