

INSPECTION REPORT Sacred Heart RC Primary School

Inspection date 21st January 2015

Reporting Inspector Sister Judith Russi
Mrs Fiona Robinson

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

Type of School Catholic Primary School

URN 134479

Age range of pupils 3-11 years

Number on roll 245

Appropriate authority The Governing Body

Chair of Governors Mr Paddy Devlin

Head teacher Mrs Suzanne Walker

Date of previous inspection October 2009

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades 1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3 = Requires Improvement
Overall effectiveness of the school	1	
The quality of Catholic Leadership	1	
The quality of the Word of God community	1	
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

Sacred Heart is an average sized Catholic Primary school serving the Parishes of Sacred Heart and St Francis. 94% of the pupils are baptised Roman Catholic with 75% of staff being baptised Catholic. The school is one form entry but has recently increased the reception admissions to 1.5 form entry due to an increased demand from Catholic families. The school serves a community within the top 5% of the most deprived boroughs in the country. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average. The majority of pupils at Sacred Heart are eligible for support through the pupil premium which is considerably above the national average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action is similar to that found in most schools. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is also average. The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and Mathematics by the end of Year 6. The school operates a breakfast club each day.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS OUTSTANDING

The Governing body and staff of Sacred Heart have made significant progress in meeting the any challenges facing the school since the last inspection. Governors are proactive, innovative, fully involved, very well informed and rigorous in their governance holding the Head teacher and her team to account. They are clear about the challenges they face in delivering the very best possible education for all. The school Mission Statement "*Where Every Heart is Sacred*" and we are called to *"...reflect the love that Jesus has for"* and *"...We honour each other and our school with pride"* is evidenced at all levels within the school and serves as a focus for the all as they strive to be the best they can be. The leadership team's passion for learning, personal development and the well-being of all members of the school community ensures that all pupils receive an integrated Gospel based formation and education.

KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- The leadership of the Governors, Head teacher and senior leadership team are a source of inspiration throughout the school.
- The quality of the Word, Welcome, Worship, Welfare and Witness to the beliefs and values of the Gospel are all outstanding.
- Behaviour for learning, respect for all and the prioritising of exceptional care for those in the greatest need is inspirational.

THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

The leadership of Sacred Heart is permeated with a passion for the joy of the Gospel which calls forth leadership at every level in the school. The leadership of the school has worked hard to enable pupils to take up an innovative and risk-taking style of leadership which has significantly impacted on the way in which the pupils and staff see their school. There is a strong sense of ownership and understanding of the mission of the Church in education throughout. The option for those in the greatest need and the clear emphasis on 'going the extra mile' is seen through the decisions and choices made by governors, staff and pupils. Self-evaluation is rigorous and honest. All teachers have objectives related to the mission of the Church in education included in their performance management targets annually linking in directly to the whole school development of RE and the Catholic life of the school. Leaders are constantly evaluating the school's provision and the mission of the Church in education at all levels. They continuously seek ways to improve the Catholic education provided for the children as evidenced in the school improvement planning. Governors and the Head teacher facilitate training both in house and through outside agencies so that all staff receive the necessary training to ensure that they are competent to deliver the highest possible Catholic Education.

THE QUALITY OF WORD IS OUTSTANDING

The Mission Statement is understood, known, lived and witnessed throughout the whole school. It is clearly evident in policies impacting positively on all aspects of the life of the pupils and staff. RE receives 10% of curriculum time and is resourced to a high level. Religious Education is led to a high standard by a passionate and dedicated coordinator who provides clear and positive support for all staff. Teaching and learning were found to be outstanding over time and at its best, challenging pupils to reflect, analysis and explore new ways of learning. The openness to new thinking has resulted in pupils feeling free to challenge and engage in creative, innovative ideas for learning. The exploration of the 'Big Questions' of purpose and meaning of life throughout the curriculum was identified by students as being *"The best bit of RE because I like debates about things that matter"*. Assessment is informing planning and the senior leadership team monitors and evaluates progress of all groups on a termly basis. Early intervention strategies ensure that all pupils make the required progress and in the majority of instances, progress is outstanding. Many pupils demonstrated a high level of knowledge from prior learning which was found to be exceptional. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is clearly evident in the pupils learning and across the life of the school. Pupils were clearly able to make links with their beliefs and values with their everyday lives. They are confident and competent in their use, knowledge and understanding of scripture at all key stages. The introduction of the 'Caritas in Action' resource has provided the school with a means to deepening their knowledge and understanding of the Social Teaching of the Church. All classes are receiving dedicated time on a weekly basis to exploring the Social Teaching themes. The 'Wednesday Word' resources are welcomed by pupils who enjoy the activities at home. Religious literacy is developed to a high level with the children in Key Stage I being challenged to use key theological language at an early stage.

THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING

The warmth of welcome extended to all visitors, pupils and staff is underpinned by a common vision built on 'The Joy of the Gospel' (Pope Francis 2014) call to evangelisation and missionary discipleship. The school Mission Statement *"Every Heart is Sacred"* is known, understood and serves as a driving force for the whole school. Parent questionnaires demonstrated the inclusivity of Sacred Heart and the way in which staff ensure that families feel valued and welcome. Sacred Heart is situated in very challenging environment but never ceases to actively seek out and engage with the community, especially those who are often marginalised or discriminated against. Governors, parents and staff paid tribute to the distinctive character of the school as being a Catholic learning community which was uniquely different. They expressed their joy at being able to attend assemblies and a wide range of activities throughout the year. As one parent said *"This is the best school in the area that's why my eight children have and will attend Sacred Heart"*. All members of staff demonstrate a keen sense of community affiliation and the strength and quality of relationships exemplifies respect for the dignity of every member of the school community. Pupils demonstrated a high level of social awareness and the need to understand what they could do to reach out to those who needed support. Children, parents and staff are rightly proud of their school.

THE QUALITY OF WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING

The governors have those in the greatest need as their top priority and employ three additional staff to ensure that pupils and their families receive as much support as possible. The impact of these decisions is clearly seen in the improved readiness of pupils for learning. Relationships throughout the school are of the highest quality and standard. There is a strong sense of responsibility for justice and a clear ethos of service. Pupils with the greatest needs are achieving well due to the level of additional support and resourcing. Children are confident that teachers will treat their concerns seriously. Pupils clearly knew and felt confident in taking action against any bullying should it occur. Staff, parents and pupils spoke about the ease with which they could raise issues at all levels. The school's provision for safeguarding and keeping children safe is outstanding. The provision for Sex and Relationships Education is through the Diocesan Guidelines for Education for Personal Relationships and is currently

under review. Before and after school care, of a high quality, is provided for those families needing extra support. Commitment to healthy lifestyles for all is a priority. School dinners were as a group of pupil's aid *"The best!"* The school offers a wide range of clubs and activities to develop the whole person. Sacred Heart actively reaches out to those in need through a wide variety of charity work. Pupils spoke of their feelings concerning the homeless in their area and how they were actively collecting clothes and blankets for those living on the streets. Behaviour of pupils around the school is outstanding.

THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

The whole school policy for prayer and worship ensures a wide range of opportunities to develop and enrich the prayer life of the school community. These include Masses, Assemblies, 'Praise and Worship' opportunities, prayer clubs, meditation and collective worship during RE lessons. The leadership team has invested a considerable amount of time and training into developing prayer and worship throughout the school. Pupils are now designing their own celebrations, times of prayer and Masses. The active involvement of Fr Andrew Stringfellow is a significant strength of the school, linking both the school and the parish in many creative and innovative projects. Pupils spoke of how they really enjoy going to Mass and wished they could encourage their families to go to. The pupil Chaplaincy team are proactive and innovative in developing and sharing their faith. Children are trained to lead prayer and worship wherever possible and the school has recognised the importance of taking this further by giving KS1 pupil's greater responsibility and independence as they learn to create their own para liturgies and prayer experience. Parents and friends are frequently invited and many attend celebrations in the school and the Church adjacent to the school.

THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS OUTSTANDING

The level and understanding of the living out of witnessing to Christ and the values of the Gospel at Sacred Heart School is driven by the knowledge and understanding of the schools call to be missionary disciples. The Apostolic Exhortation 'The Joy of the Gospel' is known, displayed and explored. It serves as a reference point for the daily life of the school. The staff and pupils' recognition, understanding and celebration of the value and importance of each person was clearly outstanding. The witness to joy and striving for excellence are all expressed throughout the beautiful environment that is encountered and experienced throughout the school community and the relationships within the school. Displays celebrating the life of the school as it inter acts with the world today echo and give witness to a Christ centred universe. The 'Caritas in Action' developments and project are serving to raise awareness of the Social Teaching of the Church to a very high level. Pupils are clearly proud to be addressing ways in which as they as Caritas promoters said, *"We need to know and do something about justice in our country"*. This was clearly seen in the activities which engaged the pupils in issues of justice and peace and the Eco Leaders work in raising issues about care for the environment thereby 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 of the school is the ease with which the children speak about their life in relation to scripture, teaching of the Church on social issues and how this gives meaning to their lives. Sacred Heart pupils are clearly proud to be part of the Church and as one said *"I'm proud to be a Catholic"*.

January 22nd 2015

Dear Pupils

Thank you so much for the wonderful welcome you gave us when we came to visit you. A special word of thanks to the prefects, pupil chaplains, school council and the Caritas group who helped us throughout the day.

Together with your teachers and all the staff you have created an outstanding school. This is because you never cease to strive to be the very best you can be. Your learning is of a high standard and we could clearly see that you take this very seriously and are proud of your achievements.

We could see that you can make connections between what you are learning in RE with other areas of the curriculum and your daily lives. Your Caritas work is developing well and I know the Bishop will be delighted to hear how much you have achieved in such a short time.

We were very impressed by many aspects of your school. The wall displays in classrooms and on the corridors but most of all it was the way in which you cared for and supported each other as a family learning to understand that *"Every heart is sacred"*. We could see that together you are continuing to value, respect and build your school into a place of excellence. In order to help you to do this your teachers will be developing new and exciting assessment challenges which are fun and help everyone to do their best as well as helping the younger pupils to begin to lead their own prayer and worship times. All your teachers are keen to help you to reach your potential so your Head teacher and RE coordinator will be supporting every class to reach the highest possible standards.

God bless you all.

Yours sincerely

Sr. Judith Russi

(Section 48 Inspector)

Summary Report to Parents

On the 21st January 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.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS OUTSTANDING

The Governing body and staff of Sacred Heart have made significant progress in meeting the many challenges facing the school since the last inspection. Governors are proactive, fully involved, very well informed and rigorous in their governance holding the Head teacher and her team to account. They are clear about the challenges they face in delivering the very best possible education for all. The school Mission Statement "*Where Every Heart is Sacred*" and we are called to ..."*reflect the love that Jesus has for*" and "*...We honour each other and our school with pride*" is evidenced at all levels within the school as serves as a focus for the whole school as they strive to be the best they can be. The leadership team's passion for learning, personal development and the well-being of all members of the school community ensures that all pupils receive an integrated Gospel based formation and education.

KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- The leadership of the Governors, Head teacher and senior leadership team are a source of inspiration throughout the school.
- The quality of the Word, Welcome, Worship, Welfare and Witness to the beliefs and values of the Gospel are all outstanding.
- Behaviour for learning, respect for all and the prioritising of exceptional care for those in the greatest need is inspirational.

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- Continue to share and develop the outstanding teaching and learning so that it is securely embedded in all classes across the school.
- Further develop the assessment tasks to include a wider range of assessment methodologies so that all pupils are able to demonstrate more of their learning.
- Develop the pupil leadership of prayer and worship times for the younger children.