

INSPECTION REPORT

Inspection date 20th November 2013

Reporting Inspector Mrs. J. Frazer

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

Type of School Primary

URN 105719

Age range of pupils 3-11yrs

Number on roll 246

Appropriate authority The Governing Body

Chair of Governors Mrs. Louise Killeen

Headteacher Mr. A. Dickenson

Religious Education Co-ordinator Mrs. Sandra Dickenson

Date of previous inspection December 2006

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades 1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3=Requires Improvement 4 = Inadequate
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	
The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements		

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

St. Joseph's School is a very popular choice amongst the local community which it serves and almost all the pupils who attend the school are Baptised Catholics. All of the teaching staff are Catholic as are the majority of the support staff and teaching assistants; many staff live within the parish. The school has 246 pupils on role, including a Nursery unit with a mix of part-time and full-time places. Teaching and learning takes place in single form year groups, with approximately thirty pupils in each class.

Four percent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals and five pupils have English as an additional language. The number of pupils on the Special Educational Needs Register and the number of pupils with statements of special educational needs significantly exceeds the national average. This represents a change in intake since the last inspection.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL : OUTSTANDING

St Joseph's is an outstanding Catholic school. It is very successful in offering its learners a holistic Catholic education in a warm, friendly and supportive environment. The school community, very well supported by the governing body and Parish Priest, who work very hard to ensure the pastoral and spiritual needs of all learners are met. The school is firmly at the heart of the parish it serves. Positive relationships are evident throughout the whole school community. The strong spiritual commitment of the Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team, together with the hard work and dedication of the staff, has created a culture in which Gospel values are clearly evident and all are encouraged to "have life and have it to the full" (John 10:10). Pupils and staff are proud to belong to St Joseph's school community. They enjoy coming to school and have high expectations of themselves and others. They are friendly, polite and welcoming and the behaviour of pupils at all times is very good. The school offers its learners a wide variety of opportunities to develop their talents. As affirmed in its Mission Statement, the school helps all members of its community to "achieve their dreams".

THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- Strong leadership and management by the school's Head Teacher and Governing Body.
- A clear vision of the Catholic Mission which is shared by the whole school community.
- Secure and confident pupils who are happy to bear witness to their living faith.

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS : OUTSTANDING

The Chair of Governors and the Parish Priest, along with other members of the governing body, demonstrate a deep commitment to the church's mission in education. They place this as a priority for the school and this is clearly evident in the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children. Governors contribute to the regular review of the school's mission statement and attend INSET training relating to the spiritual and religious life of the school. They challenge the Head Teacher in order to secure their assurance of the high expectations and priority given to this.

The Head Teacher has a very clear vision of the Catholic Mission and he communicates this very effectively to all members of the school community. There is a commitment to inclusivity within the school which goes beyond expectations; the school has admitted a pupil who the local Special Educational Needs School was unable to accommodate. The Head Teacher has led rigorous self evaluation for the school and his findings are accurate. The Senior Leadership Team has ensured that Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural values are fully embedded across the curriculum. They have created positive relationships throughout the school to guarantee that there is an openness of dialogue to ensure that all staff are confident in expressing the church's mission. The RE leader leads the sacramental programme which is spoken of very highly amongst parents. One parent said she learned more about her own faith during the year of her child's sacramental programme than she ever knew before. However this was underpinned by a supportive school/home relationship.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORD OF GOD is : OUTSTANDING

The mission statement is evident throughout the school, is referenced to in every classroom and children and staff use it as a point of reference in their lives. This is reviewed on an annual basis and is a living statement for everyone connected to 'the family of St. Joseph's'; having a significant impact on their lives. The staffing and resources given to teaching RE is of the highest standard and is given the highest priority within the school; reflecting the significance and importance given to it. The teaching across the school is outstanding overall and the impact of this teaching is deeply rooted at the heart of St. Joseph's and is reflected clearly and with confidence by the children. Higher order thinking is encouraged and children are used to being asked 'The Big Questions' which are carefully crafted to challenge children in all their stages of learning. Learning and teaching in upper key stage two are particular strengths of the school.

Pupils are able to talk confidently about their faith and beliefs and the impact that these have on their lives. Scripture is shared, talked about and understood by the children; these are relevant and central to their lives in what is recognised to be a modern and challenging world. The school demonstrates that it places the highest priority on providing for its evangelizing and catechetical mission, working alongside home and parish. This is demonstrated in a number of ways including sending home the advent candle for every family once during advent. Parents say that their children are happy, confident and knowledgeable in talking about their faith to other members of the wider community who might question why they go to church.

THE QUALITY OF WELCOME is : OUTSTANDING

St Joseph's provides a very warm, welcoming and inclusive environment where committed staff have high expectations of all the pupils. The strong welcoming tradition of the school is maintained through deep faith commitment and a genuine supporting ethos from all staff, children, governors and Parish Priest. A shared knowledge and understanding of Christian beliefs and gospel values support the school's distinctive ethos. The school welcomes all visitors, parents and members of the wider community with love and respectful care. This helps to build solid, long lasting relationships; St. Joseph's has served generations of children from families whose children are currently in the school. Staff and children are happy in the school. They share the love of Christ readily with visitors, communicate very confidently and show a very real desire to involve everyone in the life of the school. Respect for the dignity of the individual is clearly evident across the school. The caring ethos and the development of pupils' personal qualities are of paramount importance to the staff and Governors. There are a number of pupils in the school who have individual needs and present their own challenges for the community; these children are loved and cared for in this all embracing school.

The school constantly strives to find ways of engaging all members of the community. Staff, children, parents and Governors identify strongly with the school. Those interviewed stated that they were proud to belong to the St Joseph's community. Children interviewed were keen to demonstrate the whole school philosophy of 'Once a Joey always a Joey'.

THE QUALITY OF THE WELFARE COMMUNITY is : OUTSTANDING

Staff and children demonstrate a very high level of respect for, care of and service of others. Throughout the school there is outstanding practice which allows learners to feel safe and well cared for and to adopt safe practices. There is genuine concern from all staff for the welfare of all children. Incidents of bullying or unacceptable behaviour are very rare. Parents say that the children struggle to understand why anyone would choose to be unpleasant to someone. An important part of the school's philosophy is to help children to experience and learn to cope with a wider social environment; pupils are taught how to relate well to other people and to see things from another's point of view. Whole school responsibility toward others is a strong feature of the school. Children learn that it is important to help others and have compassion for those less fortunate. The school supports local, national and worldwide causes. Regular fund raising days are organised by the school e.g. CAFOD, CARITAS, Dr. Kershaw's Hospice, one of their own disabled pupils, homeless and terminally ill people. The school has raised thousands of pounds for these causes and prayer is considered to be fundamental to others' welfare. Older pupils are encouraged to develop their leadership skills by taking responsibility for younger children, helping them in playtimes. Staff and pupils are free to express their opinions and know that these will be valued. Pupils within the school clearly have a voice and

are listened to; they make decisions about ways in which the children can raise money for the school's chosen charities and are very enthusiastic about this. Governors and senior leaders ensure that careful consideration is given to supporting the needs of all the children when making budget, staffing and resource decisions. For example, the school made the decision to accept a pupil who has such significant special educational needs that the local Special Educational Needs School would not accept him. This pupil is now thriving in the committed environment of St. Joseph's.

THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP is : OUTSTANDING

Pupils and staff are confident and skilled in planning and leading prayer and worship which is pupil-centred, creative, inclusive and relevant. Children are given a range of prayer opportunities through which they can develop their relationships with God and pray as a community. The school's Welcome Wednesday assembly, led by the school's pupil chaplains, provides an excellent example of pupil leadership and active involvement in relevant, inclusive worship and meditation. The Prayer Garden, where children are able to read, write and reflect on a range of prayers, is popular with and well used by pupils. A high level of creativity is evident in the worship, liturgies and celebrations, engaging all pupils and staff. Children respond well to collective worship opportunities in school. They are aware of its importance and are reverent in their behaviour. All children are encouraged to speak to God in their own special way. The school actively prepares pupils to take a leadership role in engaging with families and parishes in prayer and worship. Parents respond positively to how the school offers a good range of opportunities for prayer and worship. They are keen to attend assemblies and seasonal events; engaging in worship as part of the whole school community. Parents speak very highly of the pupils' reverence and prayerful behaviour at school. All staff have access to a high level of dedicated funding and resourcing and as a consequence the school is well equipped with resources for prayer and collective worship.

THE QUALITY OF WITNESS COMMUNITY : OUTSTANDING

The children are living witnesses to the beliefs and values of a Catholic community and they are actively involved in decision making and are eager to talk about this and understand that this is part of their service to the Common Good. Gospel values are explicit throughout the school and are part of everyday life. One classroom had a gospel value tree and each day a different value is chosen by a pupil and the whole class is invited to write their own 'post it' prayer around this value. Staff and pupils clearly demonstrate their witness to the Catholic community. Staff demonstrate exceptionally positive relationships with both the children and one another. They are compassionate and passionate in giving their best to the children; they understand that children learn far better from people who bear witness to Christ rather than those who talk about it. The whole school community know and understand that 'Christ is our invisible leader'.

AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- To ensure that the children have an even better understanding of where they are in their learning and what their next steps might be and so that they are able to see their progress reflected in marking and teachers' comments.

December 2nd 2013

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making my visit to St Joseph's so enjoyable when I came to inspect your school for the Bishop. I really enjoyed being with you. Thank you for looking after me so well and helping me to feel very welcome. St Joseph's is an outstanding school in all the areas of what you do together.

I enjoyed being part of your lessons and was very happy that I was able to see everyone. Thank you for showing me so much of your work and activities. I could see that you are very proud of your school and all that you have achieved together. I was particularly impressed that you thought that the most important part of your learning and life together was that you are a family and everyone who comes to your school knows that, regardless of their abilities, they are welcomed as an equal member of that family. I know the Bishop will be delighted to hear this.

Your teachers are really helping you to learn very well and I was 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 is a particular strength of your school.

You are a very caring school and I was most impressed by the many charities that you raise money for; you are more than willing to care for God's family both far and near. The teachers are going to help you to do even better by working with you on your personal targets within your R.E. lessons. Many of you have a very good knowledge and understanding of your faith so this should help you to do even better.

God bless you all and have a really happy term.

Yours sincerely

Mrs. Julie Frazer
(Section 48 Inspector)

Summary Report to Parents

On 20th November 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.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's is an outstanding Catholic school. It is very successful in offering its learners a holistic Catholic education in a warm, friendly and supportive environment. The school community, very well supported by the governing body, works very hard to ensure the pastoral and spiritual needs of all learners are met. The school is firmly at the heart of the parish it serves. Positive relationships are evident throughout the whole school community.

The strong spiritual commitment of the Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team, together with the hard work and dedication of the staff, has created a culture in which Gospel values are clearly evident and all are encouraged to "have life and have it to the full" (John 10:10). Pupils and staff are proud to belong to St Joseph's school community. They enjoy coming to school and have high expectations of themselves and others. They are friendly, polite and welcoming and the behaviour of pupils at all times is very good.

The charitable and inclusive life of the school are particular strengths. The school offers its learners a wide variety of opportunities to develop their talents. As affirmed in its Mission Statement, the school helps all members of its community to "live each day to the full and help each other to achieve our dreams".

THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- Strong leadership and management by the school's Head Teacher and Governing Body.
- A clear vision of the Catholic Mission which is shared by the whole school community.
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