

**INSPECTION REPORT**

St Paul's RC Primary School, Feniscowles, Blackburn, BB2 5EP.

Inspection date 26<sup>th</sup> November 2014

Reporting Inspector Mrs Susan Gedzielewski  
Mr Andrew Sowerby

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

Type of School	Primary
URN	119649
Age range of pupils	4-11 years
Number on roll	200
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Mr Joseph Hickey
Headteacher	Mrs Catherine Monaghan
Religious Education Co-ordinators	Mrs Catherine Rigby
Date of previous inspection	November 2008

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades  1 = Outstanding  2 = Good  3=Requires Improvement  4 = Inadequate
Overall effectiveness of the school	2	
The quality of Catholic Leadership	2	
The quality of the Word of God	2	
The quality of Welcome	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. Paul's RC Primary School is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school in Feniscowles, Blackburn. It serves the needs of the parishes of St Paul's and St Mary and St John Pleasington. The school is situated in the Feniscowles area of Blackburn. The indicative admission number is 30 and there are currently 200 children on roll. Pupils come from a variety of social backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who are in receipt of Pupil Premium funding is significantly below national. 2% of children are entitled to free school meals. The school currently has 6% of pupils on the Special Needs Register which is lower than the national average. Attainment of children on entry to school is in line with national averages. 94% of pupils are baptised Catholics. 8 of the 9 teachers are Catholic.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS GOOD**

St Paul's is a good Catholic primary school, with a number of outstanding features, offering the children a rich faith experience in line with their mission statement. The Headteacher leads the school well and with a clear determination to improve standards and achievement. The governors are supportive, challenging and committed to their leadership role. Leadership from the dedicated Religious Education subject leader is having a positive impact on the spiritual life of the school and religious education. There is clear evidence of the Word of God informing teaching and learning, but the children's religious literacy skills and vocabulary is not yet outstanding. Teaching of Religious Education is good, so pupils learn quickly and they demonstrate secure subject knowledge. Monitoring and assessment of the Religious Education curriculum has ensured that there has been significant developments and improvements. Parents feel welcomed and at ease in school and able to talk to staff about their child's progress. The 'seeds and gardeners' project is hugely successful in welcoming new pupils into school. Support for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities is outstanding. Opportunities for the school and parish communities to celebrate together have been strengthened. The whole community clearly demonstrates outstanding witness to the church's mission in education. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is fully embedded across all areas of the curriculum.

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

- Leadership from the newly appointed Religious Education subject leader, alongside the Headteacher, is having a positive impact on standards and achievement in religious education.
- Care, guidance and support for all pupils are outstanding. It is clearly evident that 'pupil voice' is an essential part of decision making and care for vulnerable pupils is a high priority.
- An explicit Catholic ethos that permeates the whole of the school is clearly articulated, identified and witnessed to through the quality of relationships and actions.
- There is a strong sense of belonging to the school community and of support. An inclusive environment where everyone feels welcome and valued.

## **THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS GOOD**

The school's leadership, including that of the governors, demonstrates deep commitment to the Church's mission in education. The Headteacher has led the school well and has a clear determination that the school will continue to improve and demonstrate its commitment to Catholic education. She is supported by a developing senior and middle leadership team who, with the governors, continue to strive for further improvement. There is unequivocal and explicit evidence that the Senior Leadership Team clearly prioritises pupils with special educational needs and resources are targeted to those in greatest need within the school. The governing body is highly supportive of the school and effectively holds school leaders to account. The school has several new governors and they have embarked upon an appropriate induction programme and are keen to engage in more development opportunities. The Chair of Governors works closely with the Headteacher to ensure all the governors are aware of current strengths and areas for development. Religious Education and the spiritual life of the school are prioritised in the School

Improvement Plan and Headteacher reports to governors. Self-evaluation of the school's work at all levels is a coherent and accurate reflection of rigorous monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge. The enthusiastic leadership from the dedicated Religious Education subject leaders has led to important improvements in religious education and the spiritual life of the school. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is fully embedded across all areas of the curriculum.

#### **THE QUALITY OF THE WORD OF GOD IS GOOD**

Overall, the quality of teaching in Religious Education is good, with some outstanding features, leading to good achievement. Pupils have good knowledge of scripture and a positive attitude to learning. Although there is evidence that pupils are using and understanding religious vocabulary, more could be done to explain terms and extend their vocabulary. Pupils work hard and they cooperate well with each other and are respectful. Pupils are confident when talking about God and their faith and they are keen to learn more and achieve well. Teachers share their faith and love of God during lessons. Activities are carefully planned and differentiated, but the level of challenge could be greater for some groups of children. Teachers ask skilful questions to check what pupils can do and also prompt them to explain their thinking. Teaching Assistants are effectively deployed to support the learning. Marking is having a positive impact on progress, but this could be further improved by ensuring consistency of approach. Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural education was clearly evident across the curriculum. World religions are taught as part of the Religious Education curriculum and this helps children to understand and respect the beliefs and culture of others. The Religious Education budget is set according to the needs of the curriculum and the Catholic life of the school and is adjusted on a yearly basis in line with other core subjects. The school prioritises Religious Education on their professional development programme.

#### **THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING**

Jesus Christ is at the heart of this welcoming and caring school. There is a strong sense of belonging to the school community. The school clearly understood the importance of welcoming new pupils into the school community and the 'seeds and gardeners' project is truly appreciated by parents and pupils alike. The head boy and head girl show visitors around school and they clearly demonstrate how proud they are to be part of this community. The school actively seeks to engage with and support all members of the wider community. Particularly strong links have been established with Newfield special school and children from both schools get together for weekly play and learn sessions. Parents were extremely appreciative of all the things the school does to support children with special educational needs and disabilities. They are also appreciative of the way the school communicates with parents, breakfast club, the welcome they receive when visiting the school and the links with the parish. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in school life and the PTFA are extremely successful at raising funds for school projects. Members of the parish and local community share in the life of the school. The parish and school share responsibility for supporting pupils through the Sacramental Programme. All members of staff demonstrate a keen sense of community affiliation and the quality of relationships exemplifies respect for all members of the school community.

#### **THE QUALITY OF WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING**

The staff and pupils demonstrate a very high level of respect for, care of and service to others, as people made in the image and likeness of God. The school provides a variety of activities to ensure pupils are nurtured and cared for. The breakfast club is extremely popular and well attended. Effective structures and procedures ensure that all pupils and staff feel safe. Those children needing extra support with behaviour, welfare and learning are very well supported. Provision for SEND pupils is exemplary. The school promotes high attendance and punctuality. Pupils receive a comprehensive sex and relationship programme which respects the dignity of the person made in the image and likeness of God. Pupils are confident that if they have any problems they can speak to a member of staff and that any problems will be dealt with sympathetically. Pupils know what to do if they have worries and all felt bullying was not an issue because of the clear procedures in place. Teachers are approachable and parents feel able to talk with them about issues that concern them and their concerns are dealt with effectively. The quality of transition and induction are such that all pupils quickly feel part of the school community. Pupil voice is seen as an

essential part of the decision making process and fluently voiced through the School Council. Parents and pupils are extremely appreciative of all the clubs and activities that take place after school.

### **THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS GOOD**

Prayer is at the heart of the school community and pupils are provided with a range of opportunities to develop and enrich their prayer life. All staff are trained and supported in furthering the prayer life of the school, so that teachers are confident at leading collective worship. The Parish Priest is an active member of the school community. There are weekly celebrations of the mass to which parents and parishioners are invited and these are well attended. Children are encouraged to fully participate in preparing for mass and assemblies. Assemblies are interactive and children answer questions with confidence and a deep insight. During the inspection, pupils creatively dramatized the gospel reading of the Good Samaritan, but within a modern context so children could easily relate the story to their lives. The pupils have developed a good knowledge of traditional prayers. The prayer group, to which all children are invited, meet on a regular basis to deepen their prayer life. The new School Chaplaincy Team is leading new initiatives to enhance the spiritual life of the school. Prayer areas in classrooms, display materials and artefacts demonstrate creativity and relevance to the children. Key Stage 2 pupils have been on retreats to deepen their understanding of prayer. The sacramental programme is effectively led by the parish and supported by the school.

### **THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS OUTSTANDING**

The staff and pupils feel confident and secure in witnessing to the beliefs and values of a Christian community and are extremely active in sharing their faith with others. Strong links have been developed with the parish and wider community; including St Bede's RC High School and other Primary schools in the area. Links with the parish are enhanced with the regular visits of Canon Kenny, the work of the catechists for the sacramental programme and the 'faith friends'. The school gives generously to those in need within school and beyond. The staff place pupils' at the centre of the school's Mission and encourage them to reach out to those in need. The work of charities such as CAFOD, Fair Trade, Macmillan coffee mornings and CARITAS are fully supported. Staff and pupils clearly demonstrate witness to justice, compassion, reconciliation, love and forgiveness. Observations showed that children treated each other with respect, care, patience, concern and with dignity and there is an emphasis on creating a pleasant working environment for everyone in school. Relationships are excellent between all members of the community and pupils are not afraid to talk about their faith. Gospel values are clearly evidenced throughout all policies and procedures and have a significant impact on school life. A strong sense of belonging to the school community exists and all members of the school feel valued and cared for. The 'Eco Warriors' are hoping to achieve Eco status this year in recognition of the work they do to look after God's world. The 'Wednesday Word' is appreciated by parents and used to support the faith development of their children at home.

### **AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT**

- To ensure the marking policy is consistently applied across the school and that teachers' comments are having a positive impact on progress.
- To enhance act of collective worship through:
  - a) The further development of the school chaplaincy team.
  - b) Ensuring greater opportunities for quiet reflection and personal prayer are provided.

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2014

Dear Pupils

Thank you so much for the wonderful welcome you gave us when we came to visit you. We really enjoyed learning about all the wonderful things you do at St Paul's; the school garden, the breakfast club and all the clubs you do after school. We really like the 'seeds and gardeners' project where pupils in Year 6 support pupils in the Reception class. You and your teachers are working so hard to always do your very best and as a result your RE work is good. We were impressed with the beautiful school grounds and inside the school. However, we were especially impressed by the way you look after each other and your look after your classrooms. The prayers corners and RE displays are beautiful.

It was wonderful to see how you participated in the assembly. Your behaviour was exemplary, readers read really well, your singing was beautiful and the role play during assembly was really enjoyable. Mr Sowerby thought collective worship in Year 5 was also very special. We would like to ask your teachers to continue working with you on prayer in the future with more opportunities for quiet or silent prayer. We have also asked your teachers to create more opportunities for the Chaplaincy Team to lead prayer activities in school. Your teachers are keen to help you develop your learning further by making changes to the way they mark your books.

God bless you all and happy Christmas.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Susan Gedzielewski and Mr Andrew Sowerby  
(Section 48 Inspectors)

## **Summary Report to Parents**

On 26<sup>th</sup> November 2014 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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Mrs Susan Gedzielewski and Mr Andrew Sowerby  
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