

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST CHARLES' RC PRIMARY SCHOOL
KNOWLES STREET, RISHTON
BLACKBURN
BB1 4HT**

Inspection date 30TH March 2012

Reporting Inspector Mr D Harrison and Mrs P Leatherbarrow

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

Type of School Catholic Primary

URN 119650

Age range of pupils 4-11 years

Number on roll 187

Appropriate authority The Governing Body

Chair of Governors Fr Martin Dowd

Headteacher Mrs Vivien Baker

Religious Education Co-ordinator Mrs Vivien Baker

Date of previous inspection March 2006

| The Inspection judgements are: | Grade | Explanation of the Grades 1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3 = Satisfactory 4 = Inadequate |
|--|--------------|---|
| Overall effectiveness of the school | 2 | |
| Spirituality | Statement | |
| 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 | 2 | |
| <i>The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements</i> | | |

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Charles RC Primary School is a smaller than average primary school in the small town of Rishton, near Blackburn. It serves the parish of St Charles Borromeo and the Catholic population of Rishton and its local area. There are 187 children on roll from age 4-11. The socio – economic background of the school is wide and diverse. The school sits at the heart of the community and has vibrant parish links. Attainment on entry to the school is marginally below the national expectation and the children leave the school with attainment in line with national expectation. The Headteacher has been in post for 18 months and the governing body is in the process of appointing a new Deputy Headteacher.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

Overall this is a good Catholic school and has outstanding elements in Welcome and Welfare. The school is well led by a devoted Headteacher who gives a strong, purposeful and energetic direction for the school. Leadership and management of the Headteacher, who is the RE Coordinator, gives governors an honest assessment of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Her staff team support her well and the school benefits from high quality relationships. Problems are resolved sensitively, allowing the welcoming atmosphere to thrive.

The children are friendly and polite. They are a credit to the school in the way they relate to visitors and their pride in St Charles. The mission of the school is emerging around the 5W's of Word, Welcome, Welfare, Worship and Witness. Hence it is providing an excellent platform for how the school will move forward. Teaching observed in RE was generally good and on occasions outstanding when teachers planned exciting and thought provoking activities and when high expectations of behaviour were embedded.

Improvement since the last inspection

St Charles is improving rapidly under the direction of the Headteacher and the commitment of staff. As the school moves forward and completes its staffing structure, embeds new elements into its mission and grows as a faith community it has the potential to continue to make impressive strides forward .

What the school are to do to improve further

Under the dedicated leadership of the Headteacher, supported by the counsel of the parish priest, the whole school community should unite and embrace the school's journey towards outstanding provision in all areas of the Catholic life of the school and place Word, Welcome, Welfare, Worship and Witness at the heart of future self evaluation.

SPIRITUALITY IN ST CHARLES RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

St Charles RC Primary School successfully meets the sentiments of its mission statement and is a truly Christ centred school. Hence the spiritual life of the school and the spiritual growth of those who belong here, is central to the school's core purpose Children grow and flourish in a welcoming environment. It is a secure, safe and happy place to learn. Prayer, both formal and informal, is an active and pivotal part of school life. Relationships are strong and the children develop a sense of compassion and tolerance that ensures they have good friendships across the school. The Headteacher and her team have developed a growing sense of pride in the school and they ensure the school is true to its mission of 'Bring forth Christ'. The school sits at the heart of the community and the Parish Priest, supported by members of the parish, enhances the spiritual life of the school in a profound way. The children know him well and enjoy his presence around school and his special stories. The children love coming to school and rightly are proud to belong here. They speak affectionately about those who care for them and those who walk with them on their own journeys of faith.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORD OF GOD COMMUNITY is GOOD because:

The word of God sits at the heart of day to day life at St Charles. Teaching is good and often outstanding when great care is taken in preparing lessons with broad and far reaching activities. In one lesson in Key Stage 1, children were learning about forgiveness, the lesson was thoughtfully presented and learning involved music, art and drama. This meant the children were very successful in reaching the learning objectives set out and benefitted from the calm and purposeful atmosphere. Correspondingly the work produced by the children was of a high standard. The oldest children shared scary experiences as they emphasised with how Peter felt in denying Jesus. Learning was enhanced by the maturity of the children and the high expectations set by the teacher. Appropriate differentiation kept all on task, provided support and challenge to the more able and sensitively engaged children with behavioural needs.

In a lower Key Stage 2 lesson, a comparison was made of a modern day hero's welcome to that of Jesus on Palm Sunday. This interesting lesson was planned and delivered to a high standard and made excellent use of ICT and other resources. Outcomes were very good with children gaining a deeper understanding of how Jesus must have felt on his return from his time spent in the desert. Again appropriate differentiation kept children on task throughout the lesson.

The standard of children's work at the end of both Key Stages is at least as good as with Literacy. On occasions, when less thorough preparation was evident, children lost focus and became less engaged. This is why the provision in this area is not outstanding.

THE QUALITY OF THE WELCOME COMMUNITY is OUTSTANDING because:

On entering St. Charles school, there is a warm welcome to make you feel quickly at ease. Staff consistently 'go the extra mile' to ensure that they can help in any way, and this was clearly evidenced on the day of inspection. There is a definite sense of enthusiasm shown from all staff that gives a real sense of pride in their school and reflects that Christ is at the centre of everything they do.

New families are welcomed through opportunities to visit the school prior to admission. Parents, carers, families and friends are regularly welcomed into school for celebration assemblies and school mass with an impressive number attending. Members of the parish and local community are also encouraged to share fully in the life of the school and through various social events. Parents, carers and children are welcome to help in a joint venture in developing the Reviresco Garden on the school field where willow art, planting seedlings and an outdoor learning area are being created for the benefit of the whole school community.

Strong links have been developed with St. Augustine's high school and also a local primary school with a very different ethnic background to share friendship and cultural exchange.

Relationships within the school are of the highest quality and children benefit from the extremely positive atmosphere that prevails. Older children care well for younger pupils who take part in PALS to help to make sure that playtimes are organised, fun and peaceful.

The school works hard to reach out and welcome the most vulnerable children in the school. This was evidenced by a member of staff / governing body taking responsibility to offer a 'listening ear' and support for children with behaviour issues on the playground during lunchtimes.

THE QUALITY OF THE WELFARE COMMUNITY is OUTSTANDING because:

The care of the children is a key feature of life at St Charles. All adults reach out warmly to ensure each child is given special care so that they feel they always have someone to listen to them. Warm and close relationships exist across the school. The children talk confidently about their roles as special friends to others, and the older children care impressively for the younger children. They discuss the Love of God and the importance of having a good heart. By the time the children reach Y6 they are becoming thinking considerate Christians. Bring forth Christ, the school's motto, can be seen in how all members of the community care for each other. Children talk about their pride in caring for one another, how problems can be solved and how the school makes them feel loved and valued. They enjoy reaching out to others in school and in the global community as they support Diocesan charities and hold special events.

Adults care for children with Special Educational Needs with patience and understanding.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORSHIP COMMUNITY is GOOD because:

Children are encouraged to seek ways of deepening their relationship with Jesus through a variety of prayer opportunities to help become a truly worshipping community. From an early age, children are encouraged to make up their own prayers and these are shared with others. Children pray regularly throughout the day together, in groups and individually with great reverence, respect and thought. Every class has a special prayer focal area. There is a dedicated school prayer and all classes sing their Grace before meals at lunchtime and which is a joy to hear. Collective worship takes place in a variety of formats and is thought provoking and uplifting. A KS1 class was observed during a meditation reflecting on Jesus' time in the desert and how important Jesus' friends were to him. Children participated fully during this lesson in a reverent and respectful manner. The meditation concluded with a prayer about friendship and a promise to look for a new friend or to make someone smile.

Whole school and weekly class Mass is celebrated and are joyous occasions. The parish priest is a regular and very welcome visitor in school. He takes time beforehand to help children prepare in their understanding of the Mass by explaining the rites and different parts of the priest's clothing tailored towards the level of understanding of the children. Parents and parishioners are welcome to attend.

The liturgical year is followed through assemblies, liturgies and times of reflection. The quality of singing and accompanied music is excellent and helps create an atmosphere of celebration.

Children are given a number of different opportunities to stimulate personal prayer such as the Friday Rosary club, hymns, carols and singing which again enhances the quality and enjoyment of praying. Displays around the school are also used to show and celebrate children's achievements as well as how they live the 5 W's

THE QUALITY OF THE WITNESS COMMUNITY is GOOD because:

The values of the Gospel are witnessed with thought and care at St Charles. The mission statement is a powerful declaration of how the school bears witness to bringing forth Christ and is the school's distinctive purpose. The children develop a natural understanding of reconciliation and compassion. The school is seen as a focal point within the broader community where people can meet God each day in the work and in their play. Adults have a deep sense of pride in everything the school is trying to achieve and are supportive to the Headteacher in aspiring to further develop the school as a witnessing community. This commitment is clearly beneficial to the children who conduct themselves with care and love for one another. They 'Bring Forth Christ' in their daily lives and articulate well what means to be a child at St Charles and their pride to belong to this community. The children are compassionate and tolerant. In one class a child with SEN was warmly included in the activities the children ensured that the child was welcomed as part of God's family. The parish give special support to the school as parishioners come into school and share prayer and the Rosary with the children. The parish priest takes a special interest in all that happens at school and has helps the team to ensure the school becomes increasingly important within the local community as a source of harmony and cohesion. The ecumenical dimension of the school is particularly impressive. As the school moves forward and grows in its mission and as all stakeholders consistently have ownership of the schools' direction and vision then St Charles will be exceptional as a witness community.