

## INSPECTION REPORT

**St Brendan's Roman Catholic Primary School**

Brookfold Lane

Bolton

BL2 4DZ

Inspection date 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2013

Reporting Inspector Mr J Graves,

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

Type of School	Primary School
URN	105246
Age range of pupils	4 -11
Number on roll	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of Governors	Mr P Hodgkinson
Headteacher	Mrs M Kwiatkowski
Religious Education Co-ordinator	Mrs Pearson
Date of previous inspection	January 2007

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 OF THE SCHOOL**

- St Brendan's is a Voluntary Aided RC Primary school in the diocese of Salford.
- It serves the parish of St Brendan's in Harwood, Bolton.
- Pupils are arranged in single aged classes.
- The admissions number is 30
- The school is situated close to the parish church.
- The socio-economic make up of the pupils is that they are drawn from a wide and varied catchment area consisting of owner-occupied, social housing and rented accommodation.
- 96% of learners are baptised Catholics.
- Standards on entry to Reception are broadly average
- 3% of pupils are eligible for Free School Meals.
- 9% of pupils have been identified as having Special Educational Needs.
- 2% of children have English as an Additional Language
- Attendance is at 97% for the period 3/9/2012 to 20/4/2013.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

St Brendan's is an OUTSTANDING Catholic School. The school's leadership demonstrates a deep commitment to the Church's mission in education. Religious literacy is developed to a very high standard. Prayer is at the heart of the school community. Gospel Values such as love, tolerance, respect, dignity and community can be seen when visiting the school. An explicit Christian culture permeates the whole of the school. The Headteacher works hard to continuously evaluate the experience of pupils at the school. She leads the staff well to successfully identify areas that should develop, and maintain the very effective practice that currently exists. The Deputy Headteacher is very effective in supporting the Headteacher in leading the school. The Religious Education (RE) Co-ordinator has gathered a lot of evidence to know the children's standards. All children questioned were able to recite and explain the Mission Statement of the School. In all aspects of the inspection, the Mission Statement could be seen alive in the school – children and staff showing God's love to each other in all aspects of school life. Children are very proud of their school. They said that school is one large family: One child said that, "Everyone has friends and everyone looks after us." Children have many opportunities to reflect on their relationship with God, and are given guidance from the staff to allow it to grow. Many volunteered to recall their favourite RE lessons. Governors are committed to leading the school, together with the Headteacher. Parents value the school, describing it as "exceptional, warm and wonderful" in the educational experience their children receive, and the way that they are cared for. The school has fully met the improvements recommended by the previous Section 48 inspection.

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

- The Mission Statement of love can be seen alive throughout the school.
- The school is very well led: governors, senior leaders and staff are committed to the children.
- Expectations are high in learning and conduct
- There are rich opportunities for prayer and worship
- Children are well nurtured and cared for

## **THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP**

The quality of Catholic Leadership is OUTSTANDING. The Headteacher, well supported by the Deputy, has a vision for the school centred around the Mission of Catholic Education. She is rigorous in school self-evaluation which is both honest and accurate. Permeating through the school is a sense of justice and fairness, love and tolerance, forgiveness and reconciliation. Self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate, with systems to monitor RE and life in school well established. The school has Gospel Values on the walls, in lessons, on the playground and in conversations. Staff are well supported by the Headteacher and RE Co-ordinator and are confident in teaching the Mission of The Church. Governors have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities contributing to leadership and management, and a clear understanding of the Mission of Catholic education. The Governors know about life in the school, and provide support and

challenge to the management of the school to foster growth of the Catholic community. They clearly understand their responsibilities to the Bishop. Governors are very aware of things that go on in school, as they are regular visitors: speaking to co-ordinators, evaluating safety on the playground and running the football team. Monitoring of the curriculum and the ethos of the school is rigorous and follows a yearly cycle that is known across the teaching staff of the school. Where this evaluation finds areas to develop, these are the focus of improvement on action plans and the School Development Plan. Children's achievement and progress is tracked across the school and is compared to standards in Literacy. Parents commented on the school being well run, well organised, and quick to respond to parents' enquiries. They feel that the school prepares the child as a whole with valuable life and person skills.

### **THE QUALITY OF THE WORD OF GOD**

The quality of Word in the school is OUTSTANDING. The Mission Statement, which is clearly displayed in the school, is seen in action throughout the school. For example, pupils treated each other with care and respect when observed at lunchtime. Displays throughout the school are alive with the Word of God. Lovely examples of this are newspaper reports which retell stories of Jesus in the Gospel and the Resurrection. The RE Curriculum is well resourced and well monitored. The RE Co-ordinator's rigorous monitoring includes regular evaluation of children's work and regular staff training. Children's work shows that standards in RE are comparable with those in Literacy. This, together with lessons observed, shows a high quality of teaching and learning. Formal and informal assessment enables staff to be aware of children's knowledge, skills and understanding. Feedback is given to children so they know if they are doing well. In lessons observed, a variety of resources and strategies were employed to improve children's learning, from talking partners to You Tube video clips. Scripture is well known throughout the school. Children were observed showing understanding of a Gospel story and expressing feelings of characters. The leadership of the school encourages learning to be fun, for example with puppets made from paper plates, or using drama. The school evangelises alongside the parish – with Masses and visits to church. The RE Policy of St Brendan's aims to provide "a comprehensive and systematic study of Christianity." Children's books and their learning in lessons indicates that the school achieves this. The RE Policy says that RE "permeates all areas of the curriculum." This was seen when the learning in RE influenced the areas of classroom activity, and when the RE learning objective was successfully delivered through letter writing in Literacy.

### **THE QUALITY OF WELCOME**

The quality of Welcome in the school is OUTSTANDING. The school encourages outreach to all in its school community. This was shown when children entered the school. This was done in a calm, orderly manner, and all were greeted at the Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 doors by members of staff. They were also welcomed into classrooms by their teachers. Visitors to school are made welcome to the school, with children saying hello.

There is a sense of belonging and ownership to the school. When asked, children said they were proud of the school, and that it helps them to follow Jesus's way. Parents and the families and friends of the school community have many opportunities to become involved in school life. For example, they are involved in discussing new canteen arrangements and school uniform. There are Parent and Child workshops that enhance the welcome that is offered: All are welcomed into the school. Parents echoed this when they said they felt it was a privilege for their children to attend St Brendan's. Parents are encouraged to give their views on school life. They felt that the children were content, that the school was warm and that behaviour and manners were of a high standard. The annual Open Evening is a successful way of children and staff welcoming parents into the school, giving them a tour of the facilities, and further information in how the school cares for the children and enables them to grow. The school does a great deal to work with the community, helping its children to be tolerant and respectful towards all members of the community.

### **THE QUALITY OF WELFARE**

The quality of Welfare is OUTSTANDING. Throughout the inspection, children showed respect, care and service to others, for example, children co-operated with each other very well. This was encouraged by the staff in various ways, including their guidance under Kagan Structures. Safety is paramount at St Brendan's. There are strict procedures for adults to enter the school, and the environment within the school grounds has no visible issues. Older children take care of the younger children in keeping them safe, and instances of

bullying are few and far between. Children were able to clearly describe the procedure to follow if they ever felt that they were being bullied. They also said that, "There is no bullying" at St Brendan's, and that, "Everyone keeps us safe." Sex and Relationships Education is taken seriously, and the policy of the school is to deliver this in a Catholic context. However, the school acknowledges that this is an area to develop further, and there is a plan to do this. Behaviour observed in the school was excellent at all times. The school's Behaviour Policy is very positive with the 5 school rules and 3 school rights. The policy states that the school aims "to create a positive, caring and encouraging atmosphere" and this was observed in all aspects of the inspection. At lunchtime, when children had an accident, staff were gentle and caring. There is a respect for diversity from the school's ethos. For example, children work together and play together regardless of background. Pupil Voice has led to the introduction of "Green Time" to reward children who follow school rules. Children say that the staff care for them. The RE Policy of the school says that RE teaching "will affirm all children's worth and value" and this was seen throughout lesson observations. Children are concerned about the welfare of others. This was seen on several occasions in school at lunchtime, and this is also further afield through the display called "Friends around the World."

### **THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP**

The quality of Worship in the school is OUTSTANDING. The Prayer and Worship Policy states that the school aims to provide opportunity to "contemplate something of the mystery of God." This was observed during a class assembly that started with reflection about our hands, prayer and helping each other. This was one of the opportunities that the school provides for staff and children to lead in prayer. In assembly, staff and pupils were given prayerful, calm, serene opportunities to reflect on their relationship with God. Pupils feel that their relationship with God has been developed by the staff. The school gives a number of opportunities for pupils to lead in prayer with their families and parish in School Masses, Class Masses and services. The Prayer and Worship Policy says that acts of worship will "be a valuable experience for children, fundamental for the life of the school and its Catholic character and appropriate to their age and ability." This was observed in a classroom where children had been asked to write prayers and all were given the opportunity to reflect in a quiet, calm atmosphere. This session also linked to learning about the Mission Statement which was from RE lessons and on display. Other opportunities were seen when children had written their own prayers to be used before lunch and in assembly. One classroom has a prayer wall on display. All classrooms had attractive prayer tables. One child said that they enjoyed the displays they put together with teachers. Year 6 children have the opportunity to go on retreat each year. Twice per year, children have the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation in school.

### **THE QUALITY OF WITNESS**

The quality of Witness in the school is OUTSTANDING. The staff and pupils all contribute to the Catholic life of the school. This is shown in the excellent relationships that were observed during the inspection: the community is a large family, with love and trust in abundance. There is regular involvement of parents in the Parent Forums, and of children through the School Council. There is a culture of helping others, with charities such as St Joseph's Penny, CAFOD, Comic Relief, Marie Curie organised in school. St Brendan's has also worked alongside the parish for their charities, such as foodstuffs for vulnerable people in Bolton, or glasses for people in Africa. There are links with Lulamba School in Zambia, which the School Council claim a level of responsibility for. The Year of Faith has been celebrated in the school, and the school's displays are evidence of this. Children also write prayers in their "Year of Faith" Book. There is a good rapport among the staff, demonstrating that they have the Mission Statement's focus of love at the heart of their actions. This love extends to the children, and in turn the children show love to each other. This was evidenced when classes each choose a charity to help, then devise ways to raise funds for. This shows a clear impact of the Mission Statement in a school where staff, pupils and the leadership team bear witness to Christ's example. The Mission statement is displayed throughout the school, including an eye-catching way in the hall. Children also understand the Mission of the Catholic Church, as a display in one classroom clearly shows.

### **AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT**

- To further enhance the existing opportunities for parents to join children in prayer and celebration.
- To develop the Sex and Relationships Education programme in the school.

23<sup>rd</sup> April 2013

Dear Pupils,

Thank you for making my visit to St Brendan's school so enjoyable when I came to visit your school to inspect for the Bishop. You made me feel very welcome. Thank you. I really enjoyed the time I spent in your school. St Brendan's is an outstanding Catholic school.

I very much enjoyed seeing your lessons and I'm really sorry that I wasn't able to get round to everyone. It was lovely to see your activities; your work, your prayer and worship, your lovely polite manners. Thank you. You are rightly proud of your school and you live out your Mission Statement.

You treat each other with dignity and respect – and of course, with love. Everyone cares for each other in your community and you all make it a safe place to learn and have fun.

Your headteacher, deputy headteacher, RE Co-ordinator and senior staff work very hard and have a very good idea about the things your school will do next. Your governors show that they care a lot about the environment that you learn in. It was a privilege for me to come into your school.

Your teachers help you to grow day by day and they always try their best for you. Your teachers will look at a few ways to help you develop further, and look at ways to further involve your mums and dads in prayer and worship. They always try their best for you. Thank you for a lovely time at St Brendan's.

God bless all in your school,

Mr J Graves

(Section 48 Inspector)

## **St Brendan's RC Primary School, Bolton**

### **Summary Report to Parents**

On 23<sup>rd</sup> April 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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