



INSPECTION REPORT

School: Our Lady and St Paul's Roman Catholic Primary School

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Headteacher: Mr John Nish

Chair of Governors: Mr David Dodd

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Diocese of Salford
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Date of inspection: June 2012
Date of previous inspection: February 2007
Reporting Inspector: Mrs Margaret Dolan

Information about the school

Our Lady and St Paul's is a Roman Catholic voluntary aided primary school in the Diocese of Salford. It serves the parish of Our Lady and St Joseph in Heywood. The school is situated in an area of below average social and economic circumstances. Most of the pupils are of White, British Heritage and all pupils speak English. The admission number is 30 and there are 225 pupils on register including the nursery of whom 82% of pupils are baptised Roman Catholic. 17% of the pupils in school are entitled to free school meals. 18% of the children are on the special needs register of which 8 have a statement of special educational needs and require intensive support.

There are 11 teachers of whom 88% are Roman Catholic. 7 teachers have the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies and 2 teachers are in their second year of study.

Overall Effectiveness

Grade 2

Our Lady and St Paul's school is a good school with outstanding features especially in collective worship. It is a school where every child matters, is made to feel special and also where they feel safe and cared for. The children are very proud of their school and feel that, 'The teachers are caring and kind, the children work well together and they do lots of fun things.'

Pupils are very well behaved around the school and in the classrooms. They are well motivated and keen to achieve high standards. Positive reinforcement of good behaviour, with praise and encouragement and the commitment of teachers and support staff as models of their own faith is reflected throughout the school and amongst the pupils.

The staff and governors are justly proud of the prayer life of the school and the children are given many opportunities to celebrate Mass, take part in liturgies and assemblies and to learn traditional, reflective and private prayer.

Capacity for sustained improvement

Grade 2

Capacity for sustained improvement at Our Lady and St Paul's school is good. The headteacher has only been in post for one year but already his dedication and enthusiasm, with the support of the staff and governors, is seen through the development of the faith life of the school and the Religious Education curriculum.

The mission statement is central to everything that happens in the school. The vision of being rooted in their faith with wings to grow and develop and a moral and spiritual compass to guide them is not only a vision for the children but for the whole school community. The relationship between children, staff and parents is excellent.

Assessment and planning for future learning opportunities is good and the school shows excellent progress and the ability to develop even further in the future. The very committed Religious Education coordinator is responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the Religious Education curriculum and she has ensured that The Way, The Truth and The Life has been fully implemented to cover the full range of abilities in the school.

What the school needs to do to improve further

1. Ensure that marking is consistent in the children's Religious Education books and that expectations are comparable with other subjects.
2. Develop the Religious Education curriculum to include regular written reporting of monitoring and assessment to the Religious Education governor.

PUPILS

How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups

Grade 2

Our Lady and St Paul's is a good school. The standards that pupils achieve are generally above average and pupils make good progress during their time in school, achieving at least national standards and above by the end of year 6. Work shows signs of even greater improvement in the future. The prayer life of the school is outstanding and is a strength of the school. Pupils are enthusiastic about their Religious Education lessons and relationships are excellent. Children with Special Educational Needs are well supported by committed and dedicated support staff and intervention strategies take place when necessary. The new programme to reinforce positive behaviour, 'Good to be Green,' has been well developed in the school and this aids personal and social development. The older children have responsibilities around the school including playground friends and there is a head boy and girl and their deputies. The school council meets regularly and they arrange events for the other pupils such as film nights and they also help to organise fund-raising events. The school supports national and regional charities including Caritas, CAFOD, Francis House and Barnardo's, as well as local charities including local cancer support groups.

The outstanding prayer life at Our Lady and St Paul's school includes Masses, assemblies, liturgies on aspects of the seasons of the church and collective worship themes in the classrooms. The children help to prepare liturgies and assemblies and participate with reverence and respect. During inspection the whole school celebrated Mass in church on the feast of St Alban. The older children read from the readings of the day and children from all the age groups took part in the Eucharistic procession presenting gifts to represent the Fruits of the Holy Spirit. The children were very well behaved and the accompanied singing was very good. In collective worship in Year 1, the children were learning about the miracles of Jesus and talked about how we can help our friends in the same way as Jesus did. They passed a beautiful smile around the circle and finished with a joyful rendition of 'Our God is a

Great Big God'. Year 4 children discussed being members of the church family and decided that the church was not a building but, 'something that was in our hearts and minds'. A reading from St Paul reinforced that we all play a part in God's church in our own special way. In an outstanding collective worship celebration in Reception class, a special box, with a mirror in its base was passed amongst the children to remind us that we are all special and unique. There was an excellent relationship between staff and children, and praise and encouragement ensured good listening skills. A beautiful prayer focal display reminded the children that June is the special month for the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In a good collective worship celebration in Year 5, the children were asked, "Would you hide your faith?" and were shown a video of a Jewish man who had stood by his beliefs. The children formed a 'conscience alley' and considered how they would react in a similar situation. In the afternoon, an outstanding Benediction was celebrated for the whole school, families and parishioners in the school hall. The parish priest processed into the hall under a canopy carried by children from Year 6 and the children sang joyfully and joined in the Benediction prayers including singing Tantum Ergo in Latin. The reverence shown to the Blessed Sacrament and the children's very good behaviour was exceptional and something that the school should be very proud of.

Celebration assemblies take place weekly when certificates are given out for, 'rising stars', to children who have behaved or worked in a special way during the week. There is a termly, 'fabulous file' assembly for exceptional behaviour or achievement. This is very popular with parents and is well attended. Regular class assemblies are prepared, arranged and led by the children in all the classes and these are based on the liturgical year or Religious Education topics being developed in class. The children recently took part in the Relay of Prayer organised by the diocese. Staff, pupils and governors participated in the launch, assemblies and celebration concerts and the school passed on the torch and the story of Yemen, to the next school in Bury.

The Sacramental programme is organised through the parish with the full support and cooperation of the school. The two primary schools in the parish, work together on the celebrations which are shared very successfully between the two churches and school communities. Reconciliation is available in school and church for all Key Stage 2 pupils and the children have a good relationship with the Parish Priest, who is a regular visitor in school and visits the homes of the children on the sacramental programme. The sick and housebound feel involved, by being encouraged to pray especially for the children on the sacramental programme during the year.

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

Grade 2

Provision for Catholic Education is good. Teaching and learning is good with examples of outstanding practice. Religious Education contributes to the whole school goals on improving literacy, and work is planned using different genres to take account of different skills and abilities. Marking is satisfactory overall with examples of good practice and children are expected to produce their best work. There is an emphasis on learning from Religious Education to boost personal and emotional skills, as well as learning about Religious Education by developing the

curriculum through the use of The Way, The Truth and The Life scheme of work. World Religions is planned for the summer term as part of the creative curriculum and children enjoy links with schools in Ghana, Northern Ireland and Australia. The children enjoy the cultural activities and extend their knowledge through regular visitors and exploring life in The Gambia and other countries. Each Friday afternoon the children work in Learning for Life groups which develop cultural and life skills through activities including ecology, cookery and design projects.

The liturgical seasons of the church are observed in prayer, and in the beautifully presented reflection areas in classrooms and around the school. Religious Education follows the diocesan syllabus and national guidelines. In Year 3 children considered their gifts and talents and how they could use these to help others. Tasks and activities were well differentiated and included writing prayers, and considering the talents of others by forming talent and gift webs on the interactive whiteboard. In Year 6 the lesson observed was about recognising that we are called to use our talents in God's service. The well planned and differentiated activities included mind mapping, drama, painting and poetry. The children, in a good lesson in the nursery class, talked about their visit on the previous day, to the parish church. The teacher reminded them of all the different things they had seen in church and they finished by saying the Hail Mary together with appropriate actions. An outstanding lesson in Year 2 considered how the apostles received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and how they spread the good news. The children thought about how they would feel when they were waiting for a visitor to arrive and then read their stories to the rest of the class. The lesson had a very good pace and the children were keen to take part and answer questions.

Lessons were creative and explored many aspects of faith, using different styles and genres. There was a good balance between learning about religion, and learning from good example which is seen around the school and in the classrooms. The teachers are excellent role models with very high personal and professional standards.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the School

Grade 2

The Catholic life of Our Lady and St Paul's school is good, is well led by the headteacher and staff and is supported by the governing body. The mission statement is an integral part of children's prayer life and all the children are included and encouraged. It is central to the school's existence, is displayed around school and lived out by the whole school community.

Governor and staff meetings begin and end with a prayer and particular attention is paid to the induction of new staff members to assist them in their personal spiritual development.

The Religious Education coordinator keeps a well organised and informative file of the religious life of the school and collates assessment information and children's

levels. Assessment is rigorous and monitoring includes work scrutinies, pupil interviews, focussed learning walks, good quality planning and classroom observations. Information on standards comes from assessment sheets for each unit and a teacher questionnaire for each Religious Education topic. Monitoring activities are reported back at staff meetings and verbal reports are given to the Religious Education governor. A further development to enhance monitoring would be a more formal written report for the Religious Education governor, which could be considered by the whole governing body. Assessment For Learning is well embedded to support children's learning and is also part of the Religious Education curriculum.

There are strong home, parish and school links that enrich pupil's spiritual, moral and social education; and the parish priest is a regular and welcome visitor to the school. The governors are well informed of the life of the school through the very good headteacher reports, and the governors feel they can also see the fruits of the children's Religious Education on regular visits around the school. During governors week in the autumn term governors linked with classes and observed children's activities in the classroom. The governors have a good relationship with the headteacher and staff, but are willing to challenge decisions and achievements to ensure that the school develops to the very highest standards.

Parents are welcomed to assemblies, Masses, liturgies and celebrations. They feel that they can always talk to staff and that any problems are quickly resolved and sympathetically dealt with. There is a bi-annual summary of Religious Education sent to parents regarding their child's progress. Parents are fully informed of the life of the school and parish, through very informative Friday newsletters and parish bulletins which are sent home with the children. The Wednesday Word is sent home weekly for parents to share aspects of the liturgical year with the children. Parents are also kept informed through the school's texting service and very comprehensive website. The children are involved with the local community through participating in the Rochdale Music festival, Young Voices and an Arts Week arranged in collaboration with two local schools. The children have also sung in the community, including the care home for the elderly. Parish links will also be developed through the expansion of the St Vincent de Paul Society and the Developing Worlds group to include the staff and pupils in school.