

**INSPECTION REPORT**

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**Inspection carried out Under Canon 806**  
**and in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005**

**Name of School**      **St Mary's R C Primary School, Clive Road, Failsworth, Manchester M35 0NW**

**Inspection date**      Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2019

**Reporting Inspectors**      Mark Mountcastle, Clare Campbell and Carl McIver

Type of school	Primary
URN	105727
Age range of pupils	3 - 11
Number on roll	462
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Mike Aston
Headteacher	Mary Garvey
Religious Education Co-ordinators	Jacqueline Faulkner, Stephanie Bushi
Date of previous inspection	Thursday 10th April 2014

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades
Overall effectiveness of the school	1	1 = Outstanding  2 = Good  3=Requires Improvement  4 = Inadequate
The quality of Catholic Leadership	1	
The Catholic Life of the school (incorporating Welcome, Welfare and Witness)	1	
The quality of Religious Education (incorporating Word)	1	
The quality of Worship	1	
The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements		

## **CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL**

St Mary's is a larger than average primary school which serves the newly formed Parish of the Nativity in Failsworth in the local authority of Oldham. There are currently 462 pupils in the school of whom the majority (86%) are white British and 83% are baptised Roman Catholic. The number of children who have a Special Educational Need or Disability is slightly lower than the national average at 12% and 22% of the children are eligible for pupil premium funding. The current headteacher has been in post since 2016 and the deputy headteacher since 2015. Of the 21 teachers, 16 are Roman Catholic and 6 hold the CCRS. There have been a number of recent changes to the Governing Body. The school was last inspected by Ofsted in September 2018 and was judged to be good.

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

- **The children's use and knowledge of Sacred Scripture is deep rooted and widely used.**
- **Relationships between all members of the school community is a great strength; there is a real and deep sense of respect for one another and their community.**
- **The children live the values and mission of the school and they contribute significantly to all aspects of the Catholic life of the school.**

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

St Mary's is an outstanding Catholic primary school providing an excellent standard of Catholic education, guidance and support for all the children and families that it serves. The values that the school lives by are clearly evident throughout every aspect of school life but particularly joy, love and honesty. All stakeholders are clearly proud of their school. The children are fantastic ambassadors, being polite and well behaved and all the staff are dedicated and hard working. The faith opportunities offered to the children are outstanding and the quality of teaching across the school is of a very high standard. The staff enrich the Religious Education curriculum effortlessly to ensure it is fit for purpose for the children and also the community it serves. The children are very happy at St Mary's and clearly love school and their experiences. Their voices are heard and they are trusted to take leading roles and as such the older ones are excellent role models for younger children. The school has moved on considerably in the last 18 months and the work in Religious Education has reached an outstanding level which is a real strength of the school. The school have responded very positively to the previous inspection findings and taken the school to the next level; particularly ensuring outstanding teaching and learning and enhancing the provision in Religious Education. The leadership team care deeply about the vision they have shaped and they work tirelessly to achieve the best for the school and community. They are also very humble; often reflecting and articulating what they need to do to improve the school even further and striving for the best outcomes possible ensuring St Mary's is an outstanding Catholic school.

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

St Mary's is extremely well led by an exceptional headteacher who has very high standards and ambition for her school. Since her appointment in September 2016 she has had a significant impact on the school and has driven forward her vision to create an outstanding Catholic school. Together, with a very strong senior leadership team, they have created outstanding Catholic leadership at all levels including the children, staff and governors. By having two members of staff responsible for Religious Education, one for Catholic life and one for Word, they have ensured that the church's mission in education is central to everything they do and the standards of work, prayer and values are the key reasons this is such an outstanding example of Catholic education. The governing board has undergone some recent changes but they are very knowledgeable regarding their roles and they know the school, its strengths and areas for development very well. An open and honest relationship with the headteacher has resulted in a positive atmosphere of trust and challenge that can only improve the school even further. The sense of trust and inclusion in leadership is evident at all levels and particularly with the children. They are rightly very proud of their achievements and clearly enjoy taking a leading role. During one child led assembly it

was clear the children had planned all the content and were not reliant on adults at all. The children (as are all leaders) were completely trusted and the impact was immense.

### **THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL (incorporating Welcome, Welfare and Witness) IS OUTSTANDING**

'I chose this school because I want my children to have a knowledge of God. St Mary's is a wonderful school.' This was just one of the many positive and supportive quotes from a range of parents who are very appreciative that their children attend such a wonderful school. Everyone is fully welcomed and supported, regardless of abilities or needs and parents feel the school and therefore their children have a very detailed understanding of fairness and kindness which all the staff and children clearly live. The parents constantly talk of the wonderful and dedicated staff and the values that they instil in the children. They value the strong leadership and also perceive special qualities, referring to one member of staff as having a 'magical gift' as they extend the opportunities for their children beyond the curriculum. Children clearly love school and even 'skip' in early for pre-learning lessons. Their behaviour around school, in lessons and at play is excellent and where an issue was raised by a parent around lunchtimes it was dealt with swiftly and positively. Everyone feels valued and a part of the school family. The children are encouraged to support many charities and each class has their own special focus. In all lessons and activities observed they are constantly referred to and one in particular in upper Key Stage 2 had made a real difference but the children wanted to extend this further. A local supermarket had donated food to help the homeless but the children were not satisfied. They said it was good, but could be even better if other supermarkets had done the same. They are making a difference but also being given the skills to impact change. Children are cared for in all areas of their lives, academic and beyond and one of the most positive examples observed were the wellbeing sessions. The children are encouraged to express themselves and given the opportunity to socialise, relax and participate in mindfulness.

### **THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (incorporating Word) IS OUTSTANDING**

All lessons observed during the inspection were consistently of a very high standard. Staff have very high expectations of the children and this is clearly evident in well planned and delivered sessions that are relevant and personalised for the children in their care. The children are exceptionally engaged in their learning and are motivated and eager to learn. They have an outstanding knowledge of Sacred Scripture providing positive examples in their daily lives. In Key Stage 1 children were very keen to share their experiences and told inspectors all about the Bible, the scripture they use and were overheard having conversations with their peers referring to God 'being everywhere.' The priority given to Religious Education has recently had a significant impact, as the school has identified areas that needed to be addressed and has worked tirelessly to improve them. The two members of staff who lead the subject work together seamlessly delivering their vision. The Gift team feel that the Religious Education subject leader has immense faith in them and she leads with great passion and knowledge. She is complimented well by the lead teacher for Word who has ensured that the quality of lessons and Religious Literacy are so high. The 'grow your vocab' is a particularly good example of how the children have amassed an outstanding knowledge. The children's work displays clear progression and consistently high standards and the children are clearly very proud of all their achievements. St Mary's are very clear about their core values that underpin everything they do and this is reflected well in the mission statement which has recently been updated to articulate their vision. Everyone in the community feels involved and part of their journey.

### **THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS OUTSTANDING**

It is particularly evident that the children are empowered and trusted to take the lead in Collective Worship. They are supported by a dedicated, hardworking and thoughtful staff on their journey and it is clear the children are having a huge impact on this aspect of school life. They have been given clear responsibilities and they are forging ahead with enthusiasm. The Gift team, expertly guided by the Religious Education subject leader, have taken responsibility for many areas. The positive impact in leading others is evident. The children are in charge of the budget and they have their own action plan introducing and managing many new initiatives, for example the themed bags and liturgy boxes. They were observed on a number of occasions leading high quality prayer and worship sessions that they had planned independently. While leading an assembly for lower Key Stage 2 they addressed the theme of 'being mean' through drama and role play, expertly including

the children – inviting questions and input. The staff allowed the children to agree the content hence they are able to tackle issues openly and honestly through assembly and discussion. Another example was observed when the Gift team led a ‘stay and pray’ activity. The session was extremely prayerful and the readings chosen by the children were relevant and thoughtful. The session ended with questions and again the children showed great skill in dealing with issues, encouraging Year 3 children to look forward to making their First Holy Communion. It is powerful to witness children helping children with concerns and worries, knowing they are the ‘eyes and ears of God, spreading the message of the Gospels.’

#### **AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT**

- **To use big questions throughout the curriculum to engage in a more purposeful and meaningful manner.**
- **To increase the children’s awareness and contribution to social justice beyond their community.**