

INSPECTION REPORT

**St. Boniface RC Primary School,
Yew Street,
Salford.
M7 2HL**

Inspection date 25th March 2013

Reporting Inspectors Mr Dennis Harrison

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

Type of School	Primary
URN	105962
Age range of pupils	3-11
Number on roll	230
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Mr Ian Archer
Headteacher	Miss Julie Bainbridge
Religious Education Co-ordinator	Stephen Robinson
Date of previous inspection	2007

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	1	
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	
The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements		

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

St. Boniface is an average sized Catholic Primary School located in Lower Broughton, in the inner city area of Salford. The school draws pupils from a diverse community which includes pockets of significant levels of social deprivation.

30% of pupils take up their entitlement to free school meals. 23% of pupils are on the Special Needs Register and 18% of pupils speak English as an additional language. There are no children who are looked after by the Local Authority but 5 children are looked after by relatives.

There are currently two members of staff on secondment to other schools; both have been replaced by NQTs. 88% (7 out of 8) of the permanent teaching staff are Catholic and 67% of the support staff.

St. Boniface's was last inspected in 2007 and judged to be outstanding. At the time of the last inspection the school was led by an Executive Headteacher who remained in post for only one year on a part time basis. There have been numerous changes in the leadership of the school and this has had an unsettling effect and the school became significantly less successful. Throughout these uncertain times there was a significant turnover of staff. A new permanent Headteacher was appointed in September 2011.

THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- **The outstanding leadership of the Headteacher and the support and challenge given by the Governing Body**
- **The warm family atmosphere that emanates from the school's outstanding welcome and welfare.**
- **The school's distinctive Catholic nature and the spiritual guidance given to all the children.**

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a good and improving Catholic school. There is a new sense of purpose following times of enormous change and upheaval and the school has rekindled its passion to provide a quality Catholic education for the families it serves. Central to this is the devotion and commitment of the Headteacher who provides clear and unequivocal guidance to all. Her wisdom has placed the school positively for future improvements. She is well supported by a knowledgeable governing body who share her ambitions for the school. The RE curriculum is good and benefits from good and, on occasions, outstanding teaching. The RE coordinator is profoundly committed and treasures the role he takes. However there is not sufficient security of the attainment levels of individual children or groups of children. The standards achieved in RE are at least as good as those achieved in literacy and often better. The school is a profoundly welcoming place and one feels at home due to the friendliness and openness of all who work here. The children are very well behaved and confidently share their views and ideas. They also ensure visitors are made to feel welcome with their smiles and courteous attitudes. The children say they feel safe and cared for. Older children care for the younger ones in a special way and feel a responsibility to make sure that everyone is happy. St. Boniface increasingly bears witness to its role as a Catholic school. The centrality of the school's spirituality and its journey of faith are visible and tangible in all corners of the school. The school looks forward to the deepening impact of its new mission statement as all stakeholders become familiar with the vision and direction it sets for the school.

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS Outstanding

The outstanding leadership of the Headteacher sits at the heart of this successful Catholic school. Her strong and vibrant leadership has been pivotal in taking the school forward after a period of considerable instability. She has energized the whole community in ensuring the school meets the needs of all the children and fulfils the Church's mission in education in this part of Salford. Hence the school is improving rapidly and is in excellent hands for a bright future. She is well respected by staff and parents. The children speak highly of the care she bestows on them. Governors are astutely aware of the strengths of the school and rightly support the Headteacher in the challenging direction she has set for the school. Many governors are new and inherited a challenging situation. They have made excellent decisions based on a sound knowledge of the schools strengths, weaknesses and the interesting journey that has led the school to where it is today. The parish priest provides excellent counsel for the school and is keenly appreciated by the school community. The children find him very approachable and speak warmly of his involvement in school life. The Religious Education (RE) coordinator works hard to share his strong faith with others and to ensure the religious life of the school is constantly kept as a high priority. Assessment is emerging well but additional training is needed to ensure staff are well versed with leveling of children's work and setting appropriate next steps. This work can be enhanced further by the spread of good assessment practice and the modeling of outstanding teaching.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORD OF GOD is Good

St. Boniface is successful in meeting the aims of its Mission Statement and its motto 'Together we learn, grow and play with Jesus by our side'. Teaching in Religious Education is good and on some occasions outstanding. It is not outstanding overall yet because the majority of teaching and learning observed during the inspection, and evidenced in the children's work, needs clearer learning foci, revisitation of previous learning and helpful indicators for the next steps .

In the Foundation Stage the children were learning about Zaccheus. They listened intently and enjoyed dressing up and using role play to bring their story alive. Despite their tender years they listened intently and contributed confidently. In Key Stage One, the children created beautiful prayers to welcome Jesus in to their hearts in an outstanding lesson where impressive teaching meant the children learned at a rapid pace. In all classes observed learning and teaching are brought alive by thoughtful ways of sharing stories that require the children to think deeply and to reflect on matters like peace and justice. In Key Stage Two the children considered the trial of Jesus with impressive consideration of aspects of justice, fairness and impartiality. In another lesson younger children reflected on the Last Supper considering aspects of the passion of Jesus. The RE curriculum has increasingly higher expectations and is being explored across the curriculum. The school aptly uses The Way, The Truth and the Life as its core scheme and enriches lessons cleverly to increase children's interest and progress.

The quality of children's work is good although the volume needs to increase especially as children move up the school. Work could also be enhanced by providing guidance on the next steps of learning or where a piece of work could have been improved. Opportunities for those more confident in teaching high quality Religious Education to coach others should be embraced as should the opportunities for children to evaluate their work. On some occasions the use of support staff is effective, especially when they support individual children. However their skills could be put to greater use to support learning when the teacher is the providing the main input.

THE QUALITY OF THE WELCOME is Outstanding

St. Boniface gives a warm and cheery welcome to everyone who enters the school. A friendly greeting is there for all! This is founded on the knowledge that Jesus 'welcomed the small, lowly and infirm' and hence at St. Boniface everyone is welcomed whatever their strengths, weaknesses and vulnerabilities. There are strong, caring relationships around the school that ensure that all present have a sense of belonging. This is very much valued by parents, who find all staff very approachable. They feel at ease as they enter the school and they enjoy being a part of a special community. Time is given to home visits as families start their time at the school, and this is further enriched by invitation to share in the assemblies, concerts, trips and masses.

On the playground the children greet you with a smile and share their stories with enthusiasm. 'Lucky' the school pet dog provides an unusual element to the school's welcoming ethos making sure visitors are met with a wagging tail! The children play well together and no one is left out. Great attention has been paid to the quality of play equipment and this encourages the growth of strong friendships and a sense of fun.

THE QUALITY OF THE WELFARE is Outstanding

The children say how safe and well cared they feel at St. Boniface. This permeates from all adults and especially leaders who reach out to any child in need of comfort. The school serves a wide and diverse community and all children are treated equally and with love. The school is spacious and all areas are used to enhance the well-being of the children. There is a special nurture room that is used for prayer and supporting those in need. Adults deal with children in a sensitive way and the children respond by very positive accounts of their school life and how happy they are. The children feel that bullying or arguments, are not allowed to become a problem because they are sorted out straight away. The leadership in the school is insistent that the school's values of reaching out to care for others is applied consistently and this is undoubtedly a major success of the school. Harmonious relationships between adults and children promote the school's calm and nurturing atmosphere. The children reach out to help others in their work through St Joseph's Penny and Loaves and Fishes. They are aware of need in other lands and enjoy supporting overseas through CAFOD and other projects. The school is successful in its mission where 'all members of our school family reach out, through prayers and actions, to those in need'. The extent of the refurbishment of play areas and the well-considered use of the spacious areas around the school positively promote the school's harmonious atmosphere. Parents clearly value the care that is bestowed on the children and enjoy a very positive partnership with the school, and this is enhanced by the approachable nature of all staff. This is a school community that is 'loving, caring, supportive and safe'.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORSHIP is Good

The school's prayer life is of high importance and time is spent to arrange many opportunities for the school community to come together in prayer. The school calendar is linked to the liturgical year and there is a warm welcome for the parish community to share in the school's prayer life. The school provides a range of assemblies and other prayerful opportunities to promote knowledge of scripture and the life of Christ and other inspirational figures, prayer, reflection and moral issues. An outstanding assembly during Holy Week brought the whole community together to examine the Passover feast and cleverly used a range of media to keep the event very interesting to children of all ages and extremely relevant. The children's behavior and contribution was outstanding. Older children lead prayer services for the younger ones and they take their responsibilities very seriously, bearing witness to the school's mission to 'learn, grow and play with Jesus by our side'. The children are comfortable in their willingness to pray and enjoy their times of reflection. They enjoy the company of the parish priest who is a regular visitor to the school.

There are many carefully prepared areas for prayer around the school and every room has a focus for prayer and reflection. This all adds to the calm and supportive atmosphere that epitomizes St. Boniface RC Primary School. The school rightly wishes to extend this area so that children are given time for extended silent meditation and to comfortably place themselves into the presence of God to listen.

THE QUALITY OF THE WITNESS is Good

At St. Boniface the new mission statement is starting to have a deeper impact in all areas of school life. The statement gives a very clear direction for the school and is central to all policies and procedures. It is refreshing to know that the school now intends to formulate a special children's mission statement that will be worded in 'child speak' and that the children will lead this work. They will undoubtedly have ownership of it when it is completed. The values and beliefs of the school are clear and visible in displays and in the way people relate to each other. Hence the foundations for a wonderful team spirit are emerging. This is very well supported by the strong personal faith of many staff, which in turn, has a powerful effect on the faith journey of the children. The school leads the Sacramental Programme with pride and this enhances the warm relationships with parents and carers, as they share this important part of each child's spiritual development. The school is rightly proud to state that all staff demonstrate patience, compassion, love and forgiveness in their relationships with the

children. This is appreciated by the children who speak so fondly of everything that the school offers them. Members of the school community have a profound sense of loyalty to the school and feel a sense of belonging. There are many riches in the special and distinctive features of St. Boniface and the school is well placed for a most positive future.

AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- **To deepen and broaden the school's self-evaluation using the emerging materials from the Diocese.**
- **Ensure the school's Mission Statement becomes an outstanding and powerful influence on the school's journey as a Catholic school in Salford and to involve the children in the formulation of a Children's Mission Statement**
- **To model outstanding teaching so that excellent practice is more widely shared**
- **To build and extend on the outstanding leadership of the Headteacher so that the school develops a resilient and focused determination at all levels to face the challenges of the future.**
- **Further improve the assessment of children's work and the guidance they need for the next steps in learning.**