

INSPECTION REPORT
ST STEPHEN'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL
CHAPPELL RD, DROYLSDEN. M43 7NA

Inspection date 4th July 2013

Reporting Inspector Sister Judith Russi
 Mr John McHugh

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

Type of School Catholic Primary

URN 106253

Age range of pupils 3-11 years

Number on roll 420

Appropriate authority The Governing Body

Chair of Governors Mrs Bernadette Mattison

Head teacher Mr Brendan Marley

Date of previous inspection November 2009

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades 1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3 = Requires Improvement
Overall effectiveness of the school	2	
The quality of Catholic Leadership	2	
The quality of the Word of God community	2	
The quality of the Welcome community	1	
The quality of Welfare	2	
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 Stephen's is a large Catholic Primary School. There are at present 420 children on roll including 52 part time nursery children. Most of the children come from the parish of St Stephen's. Mobility is low, with 95% of pupils who start the school completing Y6. The percentage of pupils in receipt of FSM is below the national average. Although the school's deprivation indicator is broadly in line with that seen nationally, the socio economic base of the school is declining. Attainment on entry is below national average point score. Although the school has an increasing number of pupils on the SEN register, numbers are below the national average. The percentage of pupils identified as being from ethnic minority groups is low however there has been an upward trend in the last three years. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is average. The school meets the government's current floor standards. The school has on-site before and after school care, which is managed by the governing body.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS GOOD

The Governing body and staff of St Stephen's have dedicated themselves to the building up of a Catholic learning community which has made significant progress in the past year. The overall Catholic life of the school has developed considerably since the previous inspection, offering the children a faith experience which permeates all aspects of school life. The recently revised Mission Statement; 'Follow the footsteps of Jesus' and the schools core values; believe, trust, learn, respect, work together and care, are clearly a driving force for the community. The option for those in the greatest need is considerable and a strength of the school. The children receive a Catholic education which enables them to understand their place in the world as future stewards who can influence, change and contribute to the common good for all people. The governors, headteacher and leadership team lead the school with a vision and sense of purpose recognising the dignity and value of every member of the community. The leadership of the school has been reinforced by the establishment of an Interim Strategic Group (ISG) made up of governors and the senior leadership team. This is having a clear impact on driving standards up across the school. Parents pointed out that they felt that the school was very welcoming, accessible and communication with parents was excellent. They were particularly impressed with the spiritual and moral teaching throughout.

KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- **'Welcome' and the inclusion of all are outstanding.**
- **Relationships, behaviour and care for those in the greatest need are a strength of the school.**
- **The environment and the extensive outside learning opportunities for the pupils greatly enhance the life of the school.**

THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP IS GOOD

The mission of the school is clearly lived as part of the Church's mission in education. The leadership team have made a significant option for those on the margins of society and in the greatest need. The recently formed ISG have a clear understanding and knowledge of all aspects of the school and are highly committed to taking the school forward. The full Governing Body are beginning to be part of the more rigorous monitoring and ongoing evaluation of the progress of the school which is led by the ISG. The newly appointed Chair of Governors clearly recognised the need for further training and support from the diocese for governors to help in their task of moving the school forward in all areas. Continuing professional development, mentoring and support at all levels has improved and

developed significantly since the previous inspection. The new Mission Statement is known and lived throughout the school. Pupil leadership is set to develop further through the appointment and training of the Chaplaincy team. The school has identified that pupil leadership will increase through pupil involvement at Governor and senior leadership levels through appropriate attendance at meetings. The leadership of RE is recognised as being of the utmost importance and a new RE coordinator has just been appointed.

THE QUALITY OF WORD IS GOOD

The school is developing the RE scheme, The Way, The Truth and The Life. Teaching and learning was found to be good over time with some outstanding features. A review of the use of assessment for learning, success criteria and diagnostic marking in RE would enable pupils to have a clearer understanding of how to achieve their next steps for learning. In the best lessons creative teaching and learning strategies and higher order questioning skills enabled many pupils to achieve at a good and in some lessons, very high level. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of scripture is a key focus for the school and progress is being made. The school now needs to develop this further by placing a greater emphasis on the use of scripture in discussion and written work, displays and collective acts of worship throughout school. The use of 'Wednesday Word' is serving to support pupils' and their families' knowledge and understanding of scripture. The school has embraced the Year of Faith themes. Pupils learn about a range of other faiths through the RE scheme and opportunities for meeting people of other faiths and learning from them are actively planned into the RE scheme of work. The proposed mapping and evaluation of spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) education across all key stages will further develop and enhance the present provision. Pupils were readily able to talk about the beliefs and values of the Catholic community and were proud to explain why they were at a Catholic school. Outstanding evidence of deep thinking and questioning was seen in a joint Year 3 and 6 lesson reflecting on their recent experience of the Sacramental Programme. Behaviour for learning was found to be very good in all lessons and around the school.

The Religious Education budget is set according to the needs of the curriculum and the Catholic life of the school. All classes receive a minimum of 10% RE curriculum time.

THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING

The welcome extended to all visitors is underpinned by a common vision built on Gospel values and the Mission Statement. The school actively seeks to engage with and support members of the community and this is particularly appreciated by the parents. Great appreciation was expressed by parents, staff and children of the relationships between school and families, particularly the open door policy. Parents, staff and children said that any concerns were dealt with on the day they were raised and people *'never felt they were not welcome or being a nuisance'*. *'When you come here you are listened to, respected and valued'*. Communication with parents is through a wide range of channels and always positive. The pupils' sense of ownership and responsibility for what happens in their school was remarkable. Pupils play a key role in hosting events with friends and families and ensure that hospitality is always outstanding. Members of staff demonstrate a keen sense of community affiliation and the strength and quality of relationships exemplifies respect for the dignity of all members of the school community. The impact of the many support staff in St Stephen's is inspirational. Children, parents and staff are rightly proud of their school.

THE QUALITY OF WELFARE IS GOOD

St Stephen's staff and pupils demonstrate a high level of respect and care for each other and give priority to those in the greatest need. This provision is deeply embedded and spans a wide range of

support services for children in school and their families. Of particular note is the creation of the Peace Garden which provides the community with a reflective area. Year 6 pupils are trained to be 'Peace Mediators' by the Warrington Peace Centre. Pupil support has recently been strengthened further by the appointment of a Learning Mentor. When asked about bullying, pupils stated that it was not an issue as everyone knew exactly what to do if there were any problems. The school's provision for safeguarding and keeping children safe is very good. The provision for SRE has been reviewed and the school is introducing the 'In the Beginning' programme. Pupils and parents spoke highly of the pastoral support for all and the open attitude of the school to listening to one another's needs. Quality before and after school care is provided for families needing extra support. The school actively reaches out to those in need at home and abroad, through a wide variety of charity work such as Cornerstones, St. Josephs Penny (Caritas), CAFOD, Willow Wood Hospice, and Macmillan nurses. Pupils across school raised money recently for The Christie Hospital.

THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS GOOD

The whole school provision for prayer and worship is creative and ensures a wide range of opportunities to develop and enrich the prayer life of the community. Music plays an important part in prayer and worship throughout the school and is enriched by the singing assembly and Gospel Choir. Some prayer times open with the first prayer being in French. The Peace Garden and classroom prayer focus areas highlight the centrality of prayer in the daily life of the community. Staff and pupils are confident in leading prayer and worship. All year groups have a clear understanding of the liturgical life of the school which has provided the structure for special focus days at key times of the year. The active involvement of the parish priest is much appreciated by the school. Pupils, staff and parents expressed their commitment to the school especially in the outreach to families through experiences such as the Sacramental Programme and creative liturgical celebrations at key points of the year. Prayer and worship are well resourced and training and support is ongoing for both pupils and staff.

THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS GOOD

Witnessing to Christ and the values of the Gospel are central to the life of St Stephen's. The confidence and background knowledge of staff concerning the beliefs and values of St Stephen's as a Catholic school was good and in some cases outstanding. The identification of key core Gospel values for the school community to focus on, clearly reflect the leadership's priority of ensuring all staff are supported and trained as educators in Catholic education. Staff would benefit from continuing faith formation at a higher level in order to respond to the many exceptionally deep thinking pupils. The beliefs and values of the community were clearly evident in the very good relationships across the school, in displays and in children's work throughout. Children were found to be confident and willing to speak about their faith and why it was important to them. Some Year 6 pupils demonstrated an exceptionally high level of understanding and the ability to engage with difficult higher order questions. Pupils were able to link home, school and parish with ease. Year 3 pupils were clearly benefitting from sharing their experiences of the Sacramental Programme with older pupils. The outside area provides the school with a wide variety of activities to witness to an Earth care ethic. The allotments, garden areas, chickens and use of the grounds by families as a safe place after school is witness to the community's commitment to recognising the gift of creation for all. The School Council were keen to point out that *'Looking after the hens teaches us responsibility.'* Displays of the children's work and discussions with pupils demonstrated that the values of the school have a very definite impact which extends beyond the school into the global Church community. It is clear that the school stands as a witness to Christ's love, justice, forgiveness and compassion.

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- **In order to raise standards further continue the development of differentiated teaching and learning for all pupils, assessment for learning, setting of personalised pupil targets for each topic, clear success criteria and end of topic challenges.**
- **Further develop marking in RE to ensure that it is diagnostic enabling all pupils to identify next steps and incorporating greater use of Assessment for Learning and self and peer marking techniques.**
- **Continue to develop the Pupil Chaplaincy team to enhance the Catholic life of the school and pupil leadership.**

July 10th 2013

Dear Pupils

Thank you so much for the wonderful welcome you gave us when we came to visit you. You made us feel very much at home. Thank you for showing us around your school and making sure we had everything we needed. Your school is a good school with some outstanding features. This is because you and your teachers are working so hard to always do your very best and you look after one another so well.

Congratulations on the beautiful art work showing the life of your school. Your work is of a good standard and we could clearly see that you take your learning very seriously and are proud of your achievements. To help you develop even further your teachers are going to help you with your RE targets and assessments.

You are working hard in your RE lessons and your families told us how seriously you take your learning. We could see that you can make connections between what you are learning in RE with other areas of the curriculum and your daily lives. Thank you for letting us share so much of what you are doing. We were very impressed by your beautiful Peace Garden, art work, music and the way you help each other to 'Follow in the footsteps of Jesus'.

Your teachers and Governors are very keen to build on your leadership skills and courage. Therefore they are going to invite some of you to be part of a new initiative and become part of a Chaplaincy team.

God bless you all

Yours sincerely

Sr Judith Russi

(Section 48 Inspector)

ST STEPHEN'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL, DROYLSDEN

Summary Report to Parents

On 4th July 20`3, 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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