

**INSPECTION REPORT**

**St. Joseph's RC Primary School**  
**Whalley Road, Hurst Green, Clitheroe, BB7 9QJ**

Inspection date 19<sup>th</sup> March 2015

Reporting Inspectors Mrs Jackie McNally  
 Mrs Diane Bohan

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

Type of School	Catholic Primary
URN	119641
Age range of pupils	4-11 years
Number on roll	63
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Mr Andrew Snape
Headteacher	Mrs Elizabeth Stevens
Religious Education Co-ordinator	Mrs Elizabeth Stevens
Date of previous inspection	April 2008

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 AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL**

St. Joseph's RC Primary School is a smaller than average primary school which serves the parish of St. Joseph's, Hurst Green and St. Peter's, Stonyhurst. The most significant faith group is Roman Catholic. The percentage of children entitled to free school meals is below the national average and the percentage of children supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. St. Joseph's is the oldest and smallest Jesuit school in the country.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

St. Joseph's is an outstanding Catholic school where the uniqueness of every child is valued and nurtured. The Headteacher provides inspirational leadership and together with a dedicated and committed staff and a supportive team of Governors she strives for excellence in all aspects of school life. The whole school is proud of their Jesuit identity and the Jesuit Pupil Profile is a living statement. A calm and positive atmosphere permeates every aspect of the school and this creates a secure and happy learning environment in which all members of the community feel welcomed. Children's behaviour is exemplary and at all times during the inspection the children were a credit to the school and their parents. The teaching of Religious Education is outstanding and the children demonstrate an excellent religious knowledge and faith commitment. Through their charity work children are encouraged to think of those less fortunate than themselves and they are keen to organise and participate in fund raising activities. The Governors, staff, parents and children all see themselves as belonging to a family and this is a strength of the school.

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

- The Jesuit pupil profile and school mission statement are living statements which underpin the whole ethos of the school.
- The school holds prayer and worship at the centre of school life.
- The school bears witness to the Catholic faith and the spiritual development of the children is outstanding.
- The children's behaviour is exemplary and pupils demonstrate care and respect for each other.

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

The quality of Catholic Leadership is outstanding. The Headteacher recognises the school's strengths and next steps and has worked hard in recent years to introduce and embed the Jesuit identity and this is recognised by parents and Governors. The leadership of the school clearly recognises that Christ is central to all aspects of school life and all staff are committed to creating a loving and nurturing learning environment for the children; this is a strength of the school. Governors are well informed about the Catholic life of the school through the Headteacher's reports and they are committed to deepening the children's faith. In order to improve further the Governors need to take a more active role in the monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education. The school successfully fulfils its mission to develop the potential of each individual by valuing their uniqueness and celebrating their talents. The mission of the Catholic Church in school is a priority and is clearly evident. The Jesuit Pupil Profile is understood by all children and underpins the work of the school.

Pupils have many opportunities to develop their leadership skills and they talk enthusiastically about charity events they have organised and how they are involved in planning collective worship. Pupils were found to be confident and enthusiastic about taking on responsibilities and they are excellent ambassadors for their school. Parents and Governors feel that the staff and Headteacher care about the children a great deal, and they value their hard work and dedication.

## **THE QUALITY OF THE WORD OF GOD IS OUTSTANDING**

Staff are enthusiastic and committed to teaching Religious Education and their excellent subject knowledge is clearly disseminated to the children. Lessons are based on the scheme, 'The Way, The Truth and The Life', and

teachers have developed a long term plan for mixed age classes to ensure all objectives are covered. The scheme is underpinned by learning about the school's Jesuit identity. The lessons observed show the children have a good knowledge of Religious Education, as well as knowing what it means to follow Jesus. During the inspection there was evidence of good questioning skills by teachers which challenged pupils to think more deeply; this was especially seen during the Godly Play sessions. Godly Play brings a powerful dimension to the Religious Education of the school and pupils demonstrated excellent subject knowledge in these sessions. It is very clear that the teaching of Religious Education is given a high prominence in the school. The children produced work of a good quality, shared their views and listened to each other with respect and interest.

Various samples of children's work from across the school were looked at during the inspection. Work set was at an appropriate level of pupil development and standards were broadly similar to those of literacy. Behaviour for learning in lessons is outstanding throughout the school. Pupils demonstrated their enthusiasm for developing their knowledge in the lessons observed and they could confidently communicate their 'wonderings' and knowledge.

The Headteacher, staff, Governing Body and Parish Priest have worked together to enable the school to develop a vision about how Religious Education should be taught in the school. The school's Jesuit identity is much in evidence and the school's commitment to developing the understanding of Jesuit education is bearing fruit. The Standards in Religious Education are monitored carefully and current tracking indicates that the children are working at or above expected levels. Links between home and school are strong and the parents, Governors and children are proud to be part of St. Joseph's family.

#### **THE QUALITY OF THE WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING**

The quality of welcome is a great strength of St. Joseph's and a warm, welcoming and inclusive atmosphere permeates the whole school. All members of the school community are proud of their school and it is clear from discussions with staff, parents and children that they feel they are valued members of the school family. The staff are a strong cohesive team and their support for each other is exemplified through their actions. As a result of the strong Catholic ethos the children show respect and consideration for each other and the importance of the dignity of the individual is clearly evident. Caring for the individual is part of the Jesuit vision of the school and this is clearly manifested in the relationships between the children and staff.

A calm, caring atmosphere pervades the school, yet children are excited about their learning and keen to share their knowledge with visitors. Children's behaviour is outstanding and they talked enthusiastically about both their faith and their academic activities in school. The spiritual and personal development of pupils is of paramount importance to the staff.

Parents are regularly invited to school assemblies and as such they feel that they play an integral role in the spiritual and academic life of their child. Other visitors such as CAFOD, local churches, Caritas and fairtrade are invited into the school to lead assemblies. This year St. Joseph's has co-hosted the Ignite Conference with St. Mary's Hall and has welcomed pupils from each Jesuit primary school.

#### **THE QUALITY OF THE WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING**

Staff and children demonstrate a very high level of care and respect for others. The school places a high priority on supporting vulnerable pupils and parents spoke very highly of the quality of the support they receive from the whole school staff. Parents told of adaptations for children with a special need e.g. the Sacramental Programme had been redesigned to accommodate a child with health difficulties. There is a genuine concern from all staff for the welfare of all pupils and every individual is valued and nurtured. Parents and governors provided positive feedback about a 'very welcoming, very supportive, really happy school' and that 'The head is a good communicator and makes it open, in keeping with our Jesuit background.' Parents are happy for their children to be at St. Joseph's.

The school's involvement in charity work is a strength of the school. The chaplaincy team plan for the children to engage in a wide range of social initiatives and to 'think globally and act locally'. They are an Eco School and

are advocates for Fairtrade, working with the community to become a Fairtrade village. The school has a companion school, St Joseph's, Chishawasha, Zimbabwe and staffs of both schools have had the opportunity to visit each other. Fundraising events have taken place to support the school along with other charities such as CAFOD, St. Joseph's Penny and the Jesuit Missions. The school has also developed links with other schools locally (St. John's C of E and St. Anne's, Blackburn). The Jesuit Pupil Profile is obviously embedded in this aspect of the life of the school. As one parent said 'This school is the experience of what life is like in the Catholic family; it is the embodiment of the Catholic faith in action.'

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

Prayer and worship is central to the life of the school. The Jesuit Pupil Profile and school Mission Statement are living statements and are a constant reminder to all of how Jesus wants us to live. The children's response to it has a significant impact upon their treatment of one another, their whole approach to school life and the overall ethos of our school. Prayer and worship form an integral part of school life and all members of the school community gather together to celebrate collective worship during assemblies and school masses. The Godly Play observed encouraged children to reflect upon the scriptures through open ended questions and their responses were thoughtful and enthusiastic. During the inspection the children prepared a collective worship incorporating music, prayer and reflection; this was an excellent example of the quality of worship within the school and demonstrated their skills and confidence in preparing acts of worship. The *Examen* has recently been introduced to enhance reflective prayer opportunities. The mass celebrated during the inspection provided many opportunities for pupil involvement but of particular note was the quality of children's singing.

Families are actively encouraged to share in worship and are welcomed to share in the masses and assemblies. More recently the parents have been invited to watch the Godly Play sessions and this has helped to enhance their understanding of the religious life of the school. The school encourages the children to develop their faith outside of school and provides activities for them to complete at home such as making a Lenten cross which is then displayed in the school hall.

### **THE QUALITY OF THE WITNESS IS OUTSTANDING**

Staff and pupils are confident and secure in their witness to Christ, the Gospel and the teachings of the Church. The school encourages and supports its pupils to be proactive citizens who contribute to the decision-making process; this was especially evident in discussions with the children who talked enthusiastically about how they contributed to the school and the decisions they had made. Staff training is given a high priority and over the last two years there has been a focus on strengthening the whole staffs' knowledge and understanding of the Jesuit identity. There is a comprehensive training programme in place that is provided for the Jesuit companion schools and this is seen as particular value to the school.

The impact of the Jesuit identity and the Jesuit pupil profile was clearly evident and tangible across the whole school community and guides everyday practices in school. Pupils can discuss its meaning with understanding and there is a definite pride in being a Jesuit school. The Governors and staff are passionate about the school and are committed to the high expectations of all and supporting the school's work.

An explicit Catholic culture permeates the whole school and is clearly identifiable through relationships, decision-making and actions. Staff and children demonstrate and witness to justice, compassion, reconciliation, love and forgiveness in their relationships.

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

- To ensure that the Governors have an intrinsic role in the strategic development of the religious life of the school.

St. Joseph's RC Primary School,  
Whalley Road,  
Hurst Green,  
Clitheroe,  
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Dear Children,

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school. We really enjoyed spending the day with you and I am pleased to be able to tell you that you have an outstanding school.

Throughout our visit you showed us that your Jesuit values are very important to you and you 'seek to find God in all things'.

We really enjoyed watching your lessons because your teachers planned such interesting activities for you. You have excellent teachers and teaching assistants who are helping you to achieve the highest standards in everything you do. We were really impressed by your religious knowledge and we hope that you continue to develop this knowledge as you move through the school. We particularly enjoyed participating in your collective worship and watching your Godly Play.

Your behaviour in lessons and around school is excellent and it is obvious that you all respect and care for each other. Through your charity work and links with St. Joseph's in Chishawasha you show that you care for others in the wider community.

We really enjoyed visiting your school and we were pleased that we could be part of your school family for the day. You should be very proud of yourselves and your school.

God bless.

Mrs McNally

Mrs Bohan

## **SUMMARY REPORT TO PARENTS**

On Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2015 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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