

St Michael's RC Primary School, Ribble Drive, Whitefield, Manchester, M45 8NJ

Inspection date 12th November 2015

Reporting Inspector Mr Andrew Sowerby
Mrs Diane Bohan

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

Type of School Primary
 URN 106252
 Age range of pupils 3-11 years
 Number on roll 240
 Appropriate authority The Governing Body
 Chair of Governors Mr M McManus
 Headteacher Mr Norman Duffin
 Religious Education Subject Leaders Mrs Mary McKenna & Mrs Hilary Dutch
 Date of previous inspection May 2010

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 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. Michael's R. C. Primary School is an average sized primary school, which serves the parish of St Bernadette's and St Michael's in Whitefield Manchester. There are currently 240 children on roll, including 26 in the nursery class, of whom, 99% are baptised Catholics. The pupils, who are aged 3-11 years, are arranged in single age classes. Most pupils are from white British backgrounds, with a small number of pupils which make up 10.8% of the school population for whom English is not their first language. Mobility is low with the vast majority of children who start school in Reception completing Year 6. The total percentage of pupils identified with SEND is 8.5%, which is below the national average. The school has a strong commitment to a range of successful accreditations including: Healthy Schools Award, Active Mark, Quality Mark for Basic Skills, Go Givers Award and the Eco Bronze and Silver Awards. There are 8 full time and 8 part time members of the teaching staff, all of whom are Catholic. 14 staff hold the Catholic Teacher's Certificate and one other is currently completing this.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St Michael's is an outstanding Catholic Primary school. From the minute you enter the building, an atmosphere of warmth and friendliness is evident to all. All children are offered a Catholic education in a caring and supportive environment where children's individual needs are fully met. The Word of God is central to the life of the school. The governing body and parish priest ensure the pastoral and spiritual needs of the learners and their families are very well met. The experienced headteacher, assistant headteachers and subject leaders have very high expectations of adults and children. Together with the hard working staff, they have created an ethos where everyone recognises the need to work together as a 'family', showing love and concern for all its members. This work is further enhanced by the support of an effective governing body. The children love coming to school. This was expressed clearly by all children, but especially the "Minnie Vinnies" who are tremendous ambassadors for the school. They all expressed how very proud they are of all the opportunities given to them. Pupils are friendly, polite and welcoming and their behaviour at all times is exemplary. They work hard to fulfil the high expectations of the adults who work with them. The children are enthusiastic learners who fully engage in the life of the school. The staff and pupils demonstrate a very high level of respect, care and service to others. The high quality teaching and learning, the creative and imaginative use of the learning environment, as well as the attractive and interactive displays which support the children's faith journey ensure that all children receive a vibrant Catholic Education. The high quality acts of collective worship enable all children to develop and embrace their own sense of spirituality on their personal faith journey.

THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- The high quality leadership and management at all levels across the school that ensures that the teaching of R.E. and the development of the Catholic Life at St. Michael's receives the highest priority.
- The excellent levels of care and guidance that are provided for all members of the school community so that the welfare of everyone is at the forefront of all the school provides.
- The school provides a wide range of activities that support children's awareness of Catholic Social Teaching and this is a real strength of the school.
- The outstanding behaviour of the children.
- The high quality leadership and guidance provided by the headteacher and R.E. subject leaders.

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

The quality of Catholic leadership is outstanding. There is very strong leadership at all levels of the school community, which contributes significantly to the outstanding provision for Catholic Education that the school currently provides. The headteacher, assistant headteachers and subject leaders provide an extremely clear vision for the school. They are outstanding role models for the whole school community and as a result the development of the Catholic life of the school is at the forefront of the school's work. They are supported by

a knowledgeable and challenging Governing Body. The school has a clear plan for developing RE across the school and this is reflected in the priority it is given. Evidence for this can be found in the school's clear self-evaluation plan, which is based on the 5Ws model. The school is aware of its next steps and has clear plans for implementing them. As a result, the inspectors can verify that this evaluation is both accurate and reflective. The effective governing body has a clear sense of vision for the school and is aware of the need to continue to improve the school's provision for R.E. so as to ensure that the school can continue to provide a high quality Catholic education.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORD OF GOD IS OUTSTANDING

The school's Mission Statement is clearly evident in all areas of the school. It is child centred and reflects the determination of all to ensure that the school provides the highest quality of Catholic education. The staffing and resources devoted to R.E. are of the highest standard, reflecting its significance and importance. The school has recently implemented the 'Come and See' RE programme and this is having a significant impact on the quality of teaching and learning that the school provides. The shared vision of all staff is evident throughout the school and especially in the way that expertise and ideas are shared. Evidence of this can be seen across the school in not only the bright and attractive classrooms, but also in the shared learning areas. The creative approach to teaching R.E. meets the needs of all children and caters for a variety of learning styles. Children clearly enjoy R.E. and were keen to express this to the inspection team during their stay in school. Pupils are challenged to engage with the Big Questions of the purpose and meaning of life throughout the curriculum. This could be seen particularly in those lessons where children were challenged to implement the gospel message in their own lives. Examples of this were seen, in the acts of collective worship and in many of the R.E lessons. There are also examples of this in the evidence files that the school presented to the team. Scripture is clearly known, understood and made relevant throughout the school. The staff and pupils demonstrate and can articulate the centrality and importance of the Word of God. There is evidence on the displays in the classrooms, corridors and halls of its importance. The home, school and parish links are inclusive, creative and effective. Pupils are actively trained in outreach to the local community. This can be seen in the vast number of charities that the school supports. These are not just the Catholic charities such as CAFOD and St Joseph's Penny, but also other local charities such as Cornerstones, local food banks and through the work of the school's "Mini Vinnies" group.

THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING

St. Michael's is a school where everyone feels welcome. Parents were keen to express their views by saying "All children and parents are made to feel welcome at the school". Others commented on the way that all families, especially those whose children did not attend St Michael's nursery, received a home visit prior to their commencement of the start of the reception year, so that everyone quickly felt part of the school family. The importance of the dignity of the individual is clearly evident at all levels. This could be seen in the way that all pupils and staff treated children with emotional and special educational needs with great respect and understanding. The school engages in impressive outreach work which meets the needs of the marginalised members of the school community, so that all children feel valued and appreciated. All members of the school community demonstrate a very high level of belonging and ownership of the school. Pupils are given a high level of responsibility in creating and sustaining the school's sense of welcome. The school's ambassadors and Mini Vinnies group provide an outstanding example of this. Parents are welcome into school and encouraged to engage in their child's learning. This could clearly be seen in the way that staff from the reception classes and Key Stage 1 met parents at the start of the school day and discussed with them any concerns that they had.

THE QUALITY OF WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING

The staff and pupils demonstrate a very high level of respect, care and service to others. This was witnessed in a reception class where a child who was upset was cared for with sensitivity and respect. The school's structures and procedures ensure that all pupils and staff feel safe and are treated with respect and dignity. Pupils are free to express their opinions and know that these will be valued. Importance and recognition is given equally to all. The parents and friends play a highly significant part in school life and their contributions are valued throughout the school. The physical, spiritual and mental well-being of each person is central to the school's mission. Children are caring and have a true sense of right and wrong. Children during lessons

listened respectfully to other pupils' ideas. Play partners and buddies look after and care for younger children. They encourage and pray for each other, for example, in the acts of collective worship that were observed. Calm support is offered by sensitive adults when children have difficulty remaining on task. Such role models ensure learning and loving friendships develop. Pupils felt problems are always resolved very quickly and that few incidents of bullying take place. The school stresses the importance of reaching out beyond its own community so that children feel part of God's world.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORSHIP COMMUNITY IS OUTSTANDING

The school provides a variety of worship opportunities for pupils throughout the school: prayer, reflection, liturgies, including small and large groups; which are appropriate to their backgrounds and faith experiences. The inclusive and reflective acts of worship help pupils to grow in confidence in prayer and develop their relationship with God. This could be seen in all the worship, where the children were provided with the opportunity to reflect quietly upon the meaning of the gospel message. All children are encouraged to develop their own individual prayer life. This is done through the provision of individual reflective prayer journals, shared prayer experiences and the provision of an outdoor prayer garden. Children feel confident in leading prayer services; evidence of this was seen in KS2 class where the children confidently and reflectively led worship. The school provides a variety of opportunities for prayer and reflection for all members of the staff. Examples of this were evident in the school's documentation and in the beautiful opportunity for quiet personal reflection prior to the start of the school day. The school, which is one of two catholic schools situated within the parish of St Bernadette's Whitefield, has developed strong and effective links with its sister school of St. Bernadette's, where they participate in a variety of joint masses and other celebrations connected with the provision of the sacramental programme for children in Year 3 and in assisting in the transition of children at the end of Year 6.

THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS OUTSTANDING

All staff act as excellent role models for the children and help them in recognising that God is with them in every aspect of school life. Adults and pupils witness to the mission statement of the school, which informs everything and is explicit in policies and the lived experience of the whole community. The staff and pupils feel confident and secure in their witness to Christ, the Gospel and the teachings of the Church. Pupils are confident in witnessing to the beliefs and values of a Catholic community and are actively encouraged and supported in being pro-active citizens, who participate in the decision-making processes at a local and national level. This is seen in the way the school promotes supports a various charities so as to support for the Common Good.

An explicit Catholic culture permeates the whole of school and is clearly identifiable through relationships, decision-making and actions. Relationships are outstanding at St Michael's and a strong sense of teamwork and belonging exist. The inspectors noted at all times that children's behaviour was outstanding. Children are respectful of each other. Adults working as a committed team, have high expectations of the children, and in this atmosphere the children thrive.

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- To embed the implementation of the new R.E. programme 'Come and See' across the school.
- To further develop appropriate assessment procedures in light of the implementation of the new R.E. programme.

Monday 16th November 2015

Dear Pupils,

Thank you for making our visit to St. Michael's so enjoyable when we came to inspect your school for the Bishop. We really enjoyed being with you. Thank you for looking after us so well and helping us to feel very welcome. St. Michael's is an outstanding Catholic school.

We enjoyed being part of your lessons and were sorry not to see everyone. Thank you for showing us so much of your work and activities. We could see that you are very proud of your school and all that you have achieved together. We were particularly impressed that you thought that the most important part of your learning and life together was that you *'felt connected to one another as all part of God's family'*. We know the Bishop will be delighted to hear this.

Your teachers are really helping you to learn very well and we were very impressed by your excellent relationships and behaviour. It was good to see so much of your mission statement coming through everything you are learning; your relationships and the special way you make everyone feel valued. It is wonderful to see a school made up of pupils and adults who get on so well together so that everyone is cared for as a member of God's family. This is a true reflection of being part of a Catholic community where everyone is welcome and has a place.

You are using your new RE programme very well. Your teachers have found many interesting and creative ways to enhance the Religious Education they teach you. You are a very creative school and we were most impressed by the way you work together so co-operatively in your lessons. The prayer services we saw were very good and uplifting experiences. We have asked your teachers to continue to develop the way they teach and assess your knowledge of R.E.

God bless you all and have a really happy Advent and Christmas.

Yours sincerely,

Mr A.J Sowerby
Mrs D. Bohan
(Section 48 Inspectors)

Summary Report to Parents

On Thursday 12th November 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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