

**INSPECTION REPORT**

SCHOOL Our Lady and St. Anselm's RC Primary School

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Inspection date  
 Reporting Inspectors Mr. Dennis Harrison and Mr Jim Graves  
 Inspection carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Catholic Primary
URN	119697
Age range of pupils	3-11 years
Number on roll	132
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of Governors	Nadine Carey-Whitehead
Headteacher	Mr John Cunningham
Religious Education Co-ordinator	Mr John Cunningham
Date of previous inspection	March 2009

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades  1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3 = Satisfactory 4 = Inadequate
Overall effectiveness of the school	1	
Spirituality	Statement	
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 OF THE SCHOOL**

Our Lady & St. Anselm's RC Primary School serves the Parish of St. Mary & St. Anselm set in the Rossendale Valley. It is in semi rural setting. Numbers continue to grow from a minimum of 104 children four years ago to a current 132 children on roll all of which are white indigenous.

The building which was erected in 1874 has seen many changes over the last 140 years. The school log books which are still used to this day are a valuable resource and contain many memories of school life.

The school, which is held in high esteem by the local community, is linked very closely to the Parish which likewise is central to the life of Whitworth. The Parish Priest works closely with the school providing colleagues with advice regarding religious issues. He also supports the children in their religious faith development. The successful Sacramental programme is ably supported by the Parish Sacramental group and complimented by the Parish Priest and the class teacher.

The catchment area is a broad social mix where pockets of deprivation stand alongside traditional terraced housing and some new developments. An increasing number of children come from single parent homes reflecting in a recent increase of boys and girls eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. Over the years the religious profile of the school has been changing with the number of Roman Catholic children decreasing to 56% currently on roll. It looks as though present trends will continue with a growing demand for places at the school.

Most of the other children are baptised Christians and all families are extremely supportive of the school's religious ethos.

The school has benefited from a long period of stability where the Headteacher has been in post since January 1996. All staff are 100% committed Christians with 50% of the teaching staff practising Roman Catholics who have undertaken or are in the process of following the CCRS qualification. Our Lady & St. Anselm's have very close links with the Rossendale and Rochdale Catholic Cluster of schools who support each other in staff and faith development and other issues related to their religious background. The local community schools within Whitworth, two of which are C of E, also work closely together providing valuable mutual support for each other.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

This is an outstanding Catholic school. The experienced Headteacher leads the school with determination and passion, ably supported by the Senior Leadership Team. He is supported by a devoted staff, supportive families and excellent parish links. Great effort is taken to ensure that RE is at the heart of all that happens at the school and that the learning experiences created in RE are imaginative and enjoyable. The children's behaviour, their attitudes to learning and their relationships with one another are of the highest standard. The school is very successful in its mission where all children are recognised as unique individuals and nurtured in a caring family environment with Christ at its centre. Tolerance and compassion feature significantly across the school.

Parents hold the school in high regard typically commenting, 'The school cares so much for my child, nothing is too much trouble and my child simply loves coming to school!'

### **Improvement since the last inspection.**

The school has made impressive progress since the last inspection and is now an outstanding Catholic primary school.

What the school are to do to improve further.

1. Further develop the 5Ws of Word, Welcome. Worship, Welfare and Witness as a method of whole school self evaluation.
2. Increase the visibility of the school's mission statement around the school and strengthen its centrality for forging the school's future direction and as a base for future school improvement.

### **SPIRITUALITY IN Our Lady and St Anselm's RC Primary School**

As children enter the school they are nurtured and guided in the ways of God with sensitivity and care. They see their place in God's world and develop a growing respect and kindness over the years so that by the time they enter the older classes they feel a genuine sense of belonging and pride in their school and bestow a special kindness on all others. The school has a calmness and purpose that encourages the children to feel extremely safe. Problems are easily solved and there is pride in taking action to reach out to others. The many quiet moments of reflection and deep understanding of themselves, their community and the wider world enhances the spirituality of each person. Hence the school is honest and true to its purpose.

### **THE QUALITY OF THE WORD OF GOD COMMUNITY is outstanding because:**

Our Lady and St Anselm's RC Primary School provides a Catholic education of the highest order. The Word of God is central to the life of the school and permeates into every activity. Leadership and Management of the school as a Catholic community are strong and purposeful. The Headteacher is supported and challenged by a committed and supportive governing body. The parish priest is a welcome and appreciated regular visitor to the school and his support is highly regarded by the school community. Building on the school's recent improvements and successes the Headteacher has skilfully embraced new concepts to ensure outstanding provision within this inclusive Catholic school. He rightly has confidence in his staff to find exciting new ways of placing RE as the core of the core of an outstanding curriculum. Enormous care and thought is given so that Christ is placed at the centre. Hence the quality of the learning opportunities in RE are outstanding and is accessed by every child. Overall the vast majority of teaching and learning in RE is outstanding and always has outstanding features. Children ask the big questions. In The Reception class the teacher created outstanding opportunities for learning as the children celebrated the hatching of new chicks and enthused about the wonder of God's creation. Teachers find creative ways to help to raise a fuller understanding of scripture and the life of Christ. This was evident when children considered and compared how famous people are greeted today and how Jesus entered Jerusalem to the waving of palms. The older children benefitted from the resourcefulness of the teacher using a range of powerful media to stimulate enthusiastic discussion about the trial of Jesus. The religious needs of the disadvantaged and from a diversity of faith experiences and backgrounds are particularly well met.

### **THE QUALITY OF THE WELCOME COMMUNITY is outstanding because:**

Immediately on entering Our Lady and St Anselm RC Primary school one can sense the profound welcome that is afforded to every person. There is a warm supportive family atmosphere where the love of God is shared and acknowledged by every person. The children are delightful, and willingly share their stories and experiences. They provide, along with everyone present in the school, a genuine warm welcome reflecting Christ's love and concern for each and everyone. Local groups are welcomed within the school and this enriches school life and promotes excellent partnerships. From each child's early days in school every effort is made to establish positive partnerships with parents and carers and home visits are made ensuring children make a flying start on entering school. Children from other faith backgrounds feel completely at home as the school ensures every child receives exceptional care and encouragement. The school is popular and the number on roll is increasing. They settle well and benefit from the extremely positive atmosphere that prevails. The attractive displays and cleverly organised layout of the school assist in creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Close and productive relationships with parents, the open door policy and the school's efforts to reach out to all parents are positive features of Our Lady and St Anselm's RC Primary School. Older children give special care to the younger ones ensuring every child feels safe, cared for and listened to. Hence the children have a strong sense of belonging and thrive amid relationships of the highest quality.

### **THE QUALITY OF THE WELFARE COMMUNITY is outstanding because:**

The school is inclusive to all, and in all lessons observed provision was made for vulnerable children to be fully involved in the life of the school. The Headteacher is held in high esteem by parents who comment on how he has strived to help them and their child settle in: He has fostered a school where all are treated with dignity.

Children report that any disagreements between them are solved quickly and fairly by the staff, and that when someone gets hurt, they can go to members of staff who will care for them. Thus staff and pupils demonstrate a high level of care and respect for others.

Parents of the school feel that there is a "family" atmosphere at the school which allows their child to grow in a safe environment. Many are sad when their child has to leave to transfer to high school. Parents value the open relationship with staff, saying that they felt they could approach anyone in the school. This was evident at home time on the yard, with a warm interaction between staff and parents, discussing their child's day. Parents support the school through the "Friends" and their fund raising is much appreciated.

The school reaches out to support children in need both locally in partnership with other schools and internationally through a charity in Uganda. The school is true to its Catholic Mission that has created an environment that values all children and all adults as God's creations.

### **THE QUALITY OF THE WORSHIP COMMUNITY is outstanding because:**

Our Lady and St Anselm's School uses Scripture as a basis for nurturing the spirituality of its children. During times of prayer, children have learnt respect and reverence, and the school gives many worthwhile opportunities for children to grow closer to God. Worship gives the children a chance to celebrate their lives to the full, and permeates across the school. Staff are able to plan high quality reflective experiences for the children, who also plan and lead prayer and worship in the school. Reflective sessions are very still, and there are a wide range of resources that are well used to support and develop the prayer life of the school.

A Key Stage 2 class, praying about their own personal journeys was a profoundly spiritual experience where behaviour was outstanding and thought provoking use of resources ensured the high quality outcomes.

Children pray in assembly, at Mass, in class and reflect before lessons with prayers written by the children. There are instances where celebrations are shared with the sister school of the parish.

All members of the school community are invited to pray. Parents and parishioners take part in School Mass and in class assemblies. Pupils are involved in readings at Mass, doing so with reverence and respect. The children in Key Stage 2 take the opportunity to make personal reflections in private journals.

The schools assists the Parish with the sacramental programme, alongside the parish's sister school of St Mary's in Bacup. The two schools also come together for celebrations during the year.

**THE QUALITY OF THE WITNESS COMMUNITY is outstanding because:**

The children and staff of Our Lady's and St Anselm's give witness to a loving God who is central to the school's way of life. Relationships between members of the community are very caring and forgiveness, reconciliation and acceptance are key aspects of children's behaviour. The living tradition of Jesus Christ is visible in the school in lessons, playtimes and when the school arrives together in assembly or at Mass. Children are very proud of their school, and model the ethos that the school promotes in its Mission Statement. Pupils are challenged to follow Gospel Values in their everyday experience of school life.

Pupils are actively encouraged to be pro-active as witnesses of Christ, and they do so through fund raising and through their actions.

Behaviour management by staff show that love is at the centre of all their dealings with the school community. All children are valued, both as part of their worth, and with their contributions.

There is a regular review of the spiritual life of the school by the RE co-ordinator to the governors, and the subject is a standing item on the governors' agenda.

There is a strong sense of togetherness on the staff team, who work towards the shared vision that the Mission Statement sets out.

The school is well valued by parents. They talk of the family atmosphere they and their children have experienced, and how the Headteacher is ready to help out any of the families in the school community. They feel that the school has high expectations and teaches their children values. It was summed up by a group of parents who said that their children thrive at the school.