

INSPECTION REPORT

St. John the Baptist RC Primary School, Thames Avenue, Burnley BB10 2PZ

Inspection date 23rd of June 2017

Reporting Inspector Mrs Anne Heard
 Mrs Pam Macro

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

Type of School Primary
 URN 131683
 Age range of pupils 4-11
 Number on roll 269
 Appropriate authority The Governing Body
 Chair of Governors Mr Michael Mulrooney
 Headteacher Mrs Sarah Price
 Religious Education Subject Leader Mrs Carna Wilkinson
 Date of previous inspection July 2012

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 Word	1	
The quality of Welcome	1	
The quality of Welfare	1	
The quality of Worship	2	
The quality of Witness	1	

The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

St. John the Baptist Catholic Primary School is a larger than average sized primary school. The school promotes a strong Catholic ethos in all that it does. The school serves the parish of St. John the Baptist, Burnley. There are 269 pupils on roll, 177 of whom are baptised Catholics (67%). Attainment on entry to the school is slightly below average. 29% of children are eligible for pupil premium funding. There are 33 children currently on the special educational needs and disability (SEND) register. 20% of children are from a range of ethnic minority backgrounds. The school has a deprivation factor of D. It has a very low mobility level and the school population is very stable. There are 9 Catholic teachers, and 2 members of churches together.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS OUTSTANDING

St. John the Baptist is an outstanding Catholic School which offers a warm, positive and welcoming environment for all. Children are offered a wide range of faith experiences and all are encouraged to reach their full potential. The dynamic headteacher, support by the deputy headteacher and RE subject leader, provide strong leadership in driving the school forward and over the last 18 months there has been a rapid and sustained improvement in the religious life of the school. This has been driven by both the senior leaders and the governors, whose shared vision for the school has enabled this rapid development to take place. The governors are very well informed and proactive in their roles. The headteacher has high aspirations for all children and this is followed through by all staff who show compassion and respect for the children in their care. Children enter the school slightly below national average but are encouraged through effective teaching to reach their potential and beyond. The Beehive nurture group provides a positive environment for children to be supported in achieving success by overcoming the difficulties they encounter. The parish priest is a welcome and regular visitor to the school, he plays a pivotal role in developing the links between parish, school and parents. The gospel values are clearly witnessed to at this school.

KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- Leadership at all levels is very strong. The headteacher, deputy headteacher, RE subject leader and governors have a clear vision for the Catholic education of all who attend the school
- The parish priest (vice chair of governors) plays a significant role in the Catholic life of the school, and staff, children and parents value his contributions
- Pupil voice is very strong. Children take on their roles of responsibility very seriously and are proud to belong to the family of St. John the Baptist
- Relationships within the school community and parish are strong
- The pastoral care and support provided to all children has a significant impact in creating a caring and nurturing school

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

Leadership at all levels is outstanding. The dynamic headteacher, supported by the deputy headteacher and religious education coordinator, have a clear vision for developing the Catholic ethos and spirituality of the school. The headteacher has aspirational ideas for further developing the school in order to benefit the whole school community. Whilst the management team is relatively new, they have worked tirelessly in a short period of time to truly establish a school community where gospel values are adopted and used as the foundations for how to live their lives in witness to God's teachings. The governing body is very well informed and works closely with the school leaders in a shared vision for developing the Catholic life of the school. They are regular visitors to the school and take part in learning walks, observations and act as critical friends to the headteacher. The parish priest and vice chairman of governors is a familiar face in the school. There are numerous opportunities for assemblies, Masses and acts of collective worship where he offers blessings and imparts knowledge to the children. He is well respected by parents, staff and children who

acknowledge the vital role he plays in supporting the school and its community in developing their spirituality and love of God. Older children are encouraged to take responsibility and this is evidenced in the range of roles they take on which include the GIFT chaplaincy team, mini vinnies, eco warriors, buddies, etc. The children enjoy their roles and are proud to talk about how they influence others and bring about change.

THE QUALITY OF WORD IS OUTSTANDING

The school has recently adopted the 'Come and See' RE scheme and this is being used effectively across the school to enrich and enhance the children's knowledge of the word of God. On the day of the inspection, five lessons were observed, the quality of which were of a very high standard. The school strives to promote excellence in all areas and this is particularly true in religious education. The book samples provided demonstrated similarly high expectations as for the literacy subject area. Children demonstrated a significant knowledge of the Bible, the Gospels and the lives of the Saints. They used bibles confidently for reference in a Key Stage 2 lesson, whilst appropriate aged bibles were found to be present in all classrooms. Quotes from Sacred Scripture adorn the walls around the school and teachers use quotes in the classroom to further familiarise children with the word of God. Children were often witnessed referring to these as well as the school's mission statement. In lessons, they refer to examples of prior learning to enhance and consolidate their religious education knowledge and understanding; they use these to make links with their current learning. They speak confidently about their knowledge of other faiths and creative displays relating to these are found in the corridors around the school. Caritas in Action is used effectively to further develop the children's understanding of the need to evangelize and set examples to others of the gospel values. Pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is outstanding and is reflected in all aspects of school life. All year groups provide at least 10% curriculum time to the teaching of religious education. The subject leader has ensured that RE materials and resources are a priority. This year all pupils in Year 3 were presented with a Bible following their First Holy Communion. This Catholic school has religious education at the core of its purpose and as such is outstanding in its practice and delivery.

THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING

The welcome given to all at St John the Baptist is outstanding. There is a feeling of warmth and acceptance in all areas of the school. Children and parents are welcomed into the school family; they feel valued and respected. Parents talked about how they are listened to and that they know their opinions matter and are used to shape changes in school. The school reaches out to ensure there is a true sense of inclusivity and a strong recognition of the uniqueness of each person made in God's likeness. Parents were very positive about how the school supports children with individual needs in a safe and caring environment. Children thrive in the knowledge that they are all respected and valued for the contribution they bring to making the school a special place. They take on roles of responsibility with pride and dedication. Sensitive care, guidance and support given to families and children at difficult times ensure that they are guided to the appropriate support and expertise during these difficulties. Parents talked about how the school reaches out in a variety of ways to engage all parents. For those who find it difficult to get to school for events, children's books are sent home twice a term at weekends, so the parents have an opportunity to understand what their child is learning in school. The school welcomes people of other faiths and beliefs, children and staff are given opportunities to learn how others within their community show witness to their differing beliefs and values. The school has established a close bond with other local Catholic primary schools and have formed strong links with the Catholic high school to ensure that transition is a seamless journey from primary to secondary school. On the day of the inspection, pupils from the high school performed a dramatic representation of the story of John the Baptist.

THE QUALITY OF WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING

The welfare of all is of paramount importance at St. John the Baptist. The staff are very proactive in getting to know the children and their families, and to ensure that their welfare is at the forefront of everything. It is truly a Christ-centred school. Vulnerable families are offered support from all, including intervention from the family support worker and learning mentor. Children experiencing a range of difficulties are supported in a Christ-centred way through the work carried out with them in the Beehive nurture room; a positive response to improve things for these pupils and their families. Parents spoke very positively about how their children have been

supported with any difficulties they were experiencing. Safeguarding is a high priority. Children feel safe and confident that if they have any issues they are listened to and supported. All procedures and structures are regularly monitored and appropriate training is offered, including for governors, in order to fulfil their roles and responsibilities. The school offers a sex education programme which has a developing programme from reception to Year 6 and is recognised by the Diocese of Salford. Children are happy and confident, they show respect for themselves and others and recognise the role that they all play in creating this caring school. Senior leaders are committed to reaching out to families exhibiting personal difficulties by living out The Gospel values. Pupil voice and parent voice (through the Parent Council) are given priority; parents feel confident in expressing their views and the school for its part encourages this relationship. Equally, the school seeks out opportunities for pupil voice to be further developed; a variety of roles and responsibilities for children are provided in order to encourage them to feel valued and to develop their experiences by influencing others through gospel values.

THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS GOOD

The school seeks to explore every way of deepening a relationship with Jesus through a variety of prayer opportunities. Daily acts of worship are led by staff or children. The inspectors were welcomed to the school by the GIFT chaplaincy team who presented them with a prayer card: 'We welcome you into our school with open arms. May Christ be always with you as you live and learn.' This further evidences the school's belief that prayer is inclusive and designed to welcome all. During the day inspectors witnessed a variety of prayer and worship opportunities. The Sacred space outside provides a beautiful area conducive to prayer and worship: an example of a teacher-led act of collective worship was observed in this area when children were encouraged to reflect upon 'how much Jesus loves us and wants us to love others.' There is a programme in place for Masses and services throughout the year which provide for acts of collective worship to bring together all within the school community. These include Masses in school and at the parish church. Parents are invited to attend all of these. The Sacramental programme further develops opportunities for parents to be active participants in supporting their children on their faith journey. Children are encouraged to write their own prayers and are supported by staff to develop their spirituality and relationship with God. Staff are becoming increasingly confident in planning and leading prayer and worship. They are continuing to develop opportunities for children to feel confident in initiating, planning and delivering prayer and worship opportunities for their peers and for younger groups of children. The GIFT chaplaincy team are driving these opportunities but this could be further developed as the whole school community develops their confidence in delivering high levels of creative acts of worship. Appropriate training and resources are being provided in order to address staff and children's needs in this area.

THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS OUTSTANDING

An explicit Catholic culture is evident in all aspects of school life. The school's mission statement is truly lived by staff and children. The staff are excellent role models and they have positive relationships with the children in their care. This nurturing school encourages all to live life to the full. It is part of the school's ethos that nobody should be marginalised or treated differently and this was clearly evident on the day of the inspection when the excellent work carried out in the Beehive nurture room was witnessed as a positive experience in overcoming and supporting children's diverse needs. Pupil voice is very strong, the GIFT chaplaincy team, mini vinnie's, eco warriors, school council and buddies are just some examples of how children are encouraged to take responsibility to live out the gospel values. They are encouraged to be proactive citizens and to express their opinions for the good of others. They are given a range of opportunities to learn about others less fortunate, and have raised money and supported families in crisis, including support for CAFOD. Relationships between adults and children are based on respect. The children's own relationships are based on the message of the Scriptures. They talk about using these to resolve conflict, and as ways to live their lives. This was further evidenced in displays of Scripture used as prompts in the classrooms and in various areas around the school. Staff are very confident in securing witness to the beliefs and values of this Catholic community and all are active in shaping a truly Catholic school. The GIFT chaplaincy team are playing a growing role in developing prayer and worship across the school; they are confident in their roles and are very keen to take on further responsibility in the development of the Catholic life of the school and its wider community. All within the school are very clear of their role to evangelise by spreading the word of God through their actions and words.

AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- To continue to develop opportunities for creative and reflective acts of worship
- To continue to provide appropriate training for all staff to further enhance opportunities for child-initiated, creative and relevant prayer opportunities
- To ensure that outstanding practice is shared across the school in order to develop a high level of consistency for all learners

Date 23rd June 2017

Dear Pupils,

Thank you so much for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school for the bishop. You made us feel very welcome with your happy smiling faces. Mrs Heard and Mrs Macro really enjoyed learning about all the great things that you do at St. John the Baptist. Your mission statement is clearly lived by everyone at your school.

We know from talking to you and watching you that you are very proud of your school and take great care of it and each other. We really enjoyed listening to you talk about your Sacred space and witnessing how reverent and prayerful you are. Continue to look after each other and help those in need just like Pope Francis asked us to do.

You will be happy to know that we think you have an outstanding school. You work very hard to be the best you can. We enjoyed being part of your lessons. Your teachers work very hard to give you exciting and challenging lessons and we would like to say thank you to them and all who help them in making your school so special.

Your headteacher, with the support of the other school leaders and governors, has worked really hard to make your school a special place. Mrs Price is a very dedicated headteacher, and along with all the other teachers and support staff they have made your school a caring and happy place. You are very lucky to have so many people who think the world of you and keep you safe.

Your beautiful singing and your participation in the assemblies and during acts of collective worship show that you enjoy living in Jesus.

We have asked your teachers to continue to develop opportunities for creative and reflective acts of worship, and to help you take on a bigger role in this area. We have also asked them to share their outstanding work with others in the school.

God bless you all.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Anne Heard
Mrs Pam Macro

(Section 48 Inspectors)

Summary Report to Parents

On 23rd of June 2017 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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