

INSPECTION REPORT

St Joseph the Worker RC Primary School, Cutnook Lane, Irlam, Manchester M44 6GX

Inspection date 5th July 2017
 Reporting Inspector M Mountcastle
 S Molloy

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

Type of School Primary
 URN 105961
 Age range of pupils 3-11
 Number on roll 229
 Appropriate authority The Governing Body
 Chair of Governors Rev Fr Devany
 Headteacher D Ridyard
 Religious Education Subject Leader A Willis
 Date of previous inspection March 2012

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades 1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3=Requires Improvement 4 = Inadequate
Overall effectiveness of the school	3	
The quality of Catholic Leadership	2	
The quality of Word	3	
The quality of Welcome	2	
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 Joseph the Worker RC Primary School is a voluntary aided Catholic school situated in Irlam Greater Manchester. It serves the parish of St Joseph's and is working towards amalgamation with St Teresa's as plans have been announced to merge the two parishes. The current head and deputy headteacher were appointed in 2012 and have seen a steadily growing population with the pupil admission number rising from 175 to 229. The governing body was reconstituted in 2015 and under the direction of the chair and parish priest Father Devany, positively support the senior leadership team. The church is next to the school and Father Devany is a constant and positive presence for the children and whole community. The area is mixed both socially and economically with some privately owned and local authority housing. There are 35% of children eligible for free school meals, 22% are classed as having a special educational need and 76% are Catholic. There are 11 teachers, 8 of whom are Catholic and there are 14 teaching assistants, 5 of whom are Catholic.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT

St Joseph the Worker has many good qualities and offers a warm welcome to all, based on love and inclusion. There are many positive examples of Welcome and Welfare throughout school, the most striking being the work undertaken to raise money for a fellow pupil who needs specialist treatment and the school rightly prides itself on being inclusive. On the whole children are positive about the school and their experiences; behaviour in lessons and around school is good. The parish priest who is the chair of governors gives selflessly of his time to the school and has forged excellent relationships that are considered a blessing to the school community. His constant presence and support are a key strength of the school. Worship is developing well in the school and plans are in place to include the children more in planning and delivering quality acts of worship which will include real opportunities for reflection and contemplation. However, the quality of Word requires improvement and therefore this is the school's overall judgement. There were some good classroom sessions observed but quality and quantity of RE work and opportunities throughout the school need improvement. The teachers are very hard working but should visit other schools to witness outstanding teaching and high expectations, so that their undoubted potential can be realised. The school would also benefit from more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the RE curriculum and work which, in turn, would assist the passionate and supportive governing body as they are not fully aware of the issues in respect of standards and progress in RE. The whole community are very supportive of their school and the parents speak very highly of the opportunities and welcome that their children receive.

KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- St Joseph's demonstrates a positive culture of welcome and the school is fully inclusive; they value and celebrate diversity.
- There is evidence of a real and lived parish school family link creating a strong sense of community.
- Recent training and resourcing of prayer and worship has increased its profile and has created a positive opportunity for development and growth.

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS GOOD

The senior leadership have grown positively together since their appointment in 2012 and have implemented many improvements, particularly with the environment and buildings. This in turn has led to an increase in the numbers in school which have grown considerably over the last few years from 175 to 227 pupils. They are rightly proud of their school and how inclusive it is. Leaders are passionate about serving their community and are held in high regard by the parents and governors of the school. One parent was very clear about her support for the headteacher whom she described as 'full of love.' Her child has health issues and the school ensure she is involved and included at every level. They talk of excellent communication and the constant presence of senior leaders, the parish priest and all the teachers who are all very approachable and will deal with any issue, however small. The governors were reconstituted in 2015 and welcomed 4 new foundation governors, 2 new parent governors, 1 new staff governor and 1 new LA

governor. The governors are well organised and have very specific roles, meeting regularly together and with key members of staff and are actively involved in many aspects of the school. However, by increasing their understanding and awareness of standards of attainment and achievement in RE, they will be better placed to provide greater challenge to school leaders and staff in ensuring that all children are challenged and are working appropriately within the guidelines of the RE Curriculum Directory. Regardless of which RE scheme the school is using governors and senior leaders need to be aware of the expected standards and whether or not these are being met. The school's self-evaluation, monitoring and evaluating procedures also need to be more robust as at present they contradict each other and do not reflect what is happening in lessons and work books.

THE QUALITY OF WORD IS REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT

St Joseph the Worker's school community often revisit the school's mission statement which is based on the Word of God and it is child friendly and accessible. There are positive examples of Scripture linked into some beautiful displays of the children's work around school undertaken by a visiting artist. However, the children's deeper understanding, particularly in upper Key Stage 2 was not developed enough. Of the 4 lessons observed only one could be judged as good and in the others no solid evidence could be provided that better teaching takes place on a more regular basis. Where the teaching was good the children were confident in using Scripture and could reference The Bible extremely well. They were also adept at relating Jesus' life to their own and how they could take the examples of Scripture and place it into a modern context. However higher up the school these skills were not seen. The older children were exposed to parables and bible stories but did not have the necessary skills or tools to explore the deeper meanings and relate them to their everyday community and experiences. For example, children in an upper Key Stage 2 class could explain how the Good Samaritan was a kind man but when given open questions to explore, for example 'What does mercy mean?' opportunities were missed to delve into the meaning. Big question books are in use throughout school but the chance was missed to deepen the children's understanding. Children would often respond with 'nothing' written in the book and this was not explored. Teachers should also consider, where appropriate, using the skills of teaching assistants more productively.

The quality and quantity of the children's work in their RE books was below the expected standard across the school and there were no other examples of work from across the curriculum which could support the school's own evaluation. The school are using a new scheme 'Come and See.' Inspectors did not agree that this is why the books were not up to standard. Across the school no reference was made to the Religious Curriculum Directory which should underpin all the RE taught and the expectations required. The school should use this as a starting point and not be too reliant on any one scheme.

THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS GOOD

St Joseph the Worker is a welcoming community where staff and children encourage and welcome all visitors. It is a friendly school where all are made to feel at ease. All are welcomed in a spirit of hospitality which acknowledges Christ's presence in one another. Clear systems ensure appropriate access for visitors and safeguards pupils. A distinctive faith ethos underpins the life and work of the school. All new members are welcomed in person through home visits for Nursery and Reception. High quality displays are evident throughout and offer a welcoming environment. Clear communication is provided through newsletters and diary dates for each term. The school website informs parents about the curriculum. Pupils take on responsibilities of school councillors and eco leaders. Parents and friends play a significant part in school life and are strongly supportive of the school. The school aims to meet the needs of all children and is fully inclusive. This was evident in a lower Key Stage 1 assembly when every child in the class had an important role that was accessible to their needs. Diversity and difference are respected and valued. Older children who had recently joined the school mid-year spoke positively of their welcome and how happy they were at St. Joseph's. Special arrangements are in place for pupils who arrive late at school at the start of the day and sensitive, supportive procedures are in place to support families. This is extended to individuals who are not collected on time to ensure they are safe and feel well cared for. Emotional well-being is a key focus. Many innovative building developments have created a welcoming environment for all.

THE QUALITY OF WELFARE IS GOOD

The school is very inclusive and the message is very clear in all policy, relationships and attitudes; all are welcome. Good procedures are in place and the school works with many agencies to support all its pupils for example Visual Impairment Team, Speech and Language Therapy Team, Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapist, School health, Educational Psychology, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, the Primary Inclusion Team and Learning Support Service. Parents spoke very highly of the school and its provision for all, citing all the staff as approachable, friendly and helpful. One parent of a child who is relatively new to the school in lower Key Stage 2 said that no issue was too small and even 'a minor hiccup' is dealt with quickly and positively. All stakeholders feel involved in the whole community, something that is driven passionately by the headteacher and the parish priest who is the chair of governors. Both are ever present and offer warmth and love to all. The majority of children speak positively about their school and there is a school council; pupil voice is present. The children and the school raise money for various good causes but do not celebrate their achievements enough. A lot happens that was not obvious to the visiting inspectors, although one area to highlight is the raising of funds for Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy and Cerebral Palsy, two causes that come from the needs of children at the school. The children speak very highly of one child they are raising funds for and they are obviously very proud of their achievements.

THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS GOOD

The children have many opportunities to pray and worship in class and bigger groups in assemblies and regular Masses. Prayer and worship is a strong feature and at the heart of the daily life of all that happens. There are a number of good examples of how this continues at home and the parents spoke positively about such initiatives as the 'Christingle' and the 'Flame' representing the Holy Spirit. This would be further enhanced by giving the pupils more responsibility in leading prayer and worship which has a tendency to be too reliant on the teachers and staff. The children, particularly the GIFT chaplaincy team, need to be given more responsibility for planning and leading liturgies in school. A good lower Key Stage 1 assembly was observed and the chaplains played a positive part but their role could have been enhanced with a little more responsibility and leadership. Plans were shared through a training video prepared by the RE leader regarding their future roles and when this comes to fruition it will enhance the quality of worship considerably. Two very good collective worship sessions were observed in the early years when forgiveness and friends were put into an everyday context that the children understood fully. The prayer opportunity became real for the children but there is little progression to upper Key Stage 2 as they were observed discussing similar themes without providing relevant depth and opportunity to contextualise.

THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS GOOD

The regularly visited mission statement is purposely child friendly. It was formed by the pupils to ensure it is meaningful to them. It is clearly evident around the school both indoors and outdoors. The GIFT chaplaincy team is well sourced and is having a positive impact on the school. Members lead events which support many charities including Wood Street mission, CAFOD and the Romanian Shoe Box Appeal. They work closely with the adult leaders and support the Sacramental Programme undertaking roles at celebration Masses. Members spoke of their plans to raise funds for treatments for a fellow pupil at St. Joseph's. Selected children have undertaken CARITAS ambassadors training at Salford Cathedral. From September they will plan and deliver one theme from 'Caritas in Action' for the whole school. Close links are in place with other Catholic primary schools and with schools in the geographical locality. Care for and good stewardship of creation are high priorities within the learning of all pupils. This is demonstrated by the youngest pupils tending their allotment, growing fruit and vegetables. They care for minibeasts in their bug kitchen. Recent funding from 'All Churches Trust' will create a small petting farm and allotment on site. Pupils will lead on caring for the animals. Staff demonstrate love and forgiveness in their relationships, teaching and learning.

AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- Develop religious literacy at all stages showing age appropriate progression, and to ensure challenge is evident in pupils' work across school.
- Pupils to engage more appropriately in the big questions and the purpose and meaning of life.
- Monitor and evaluate the RE curriculum more accurately and robustly to reflect the needs of the school and its development.
- To involve the children in delivering and planning a high level of creativity in prayer and worship that will have a beneficial impact on their spiritual development.

5th July 2017

Dear Pupils,

Thank you so much for the wonderful welcome you gave us when we came to visit you. We had a lovely day and really enjoyed listening to you telling us what you enjoy and are learning.

There are many very good things happening in St Joseph's because you are striving to live out your mission statement and letting your lights shine. We were very impressed with your efforts to support each other and welcome everyone regardless of differences and the way you clearly are so proud of your school.

To help you to improve further your teachers are going to keep RE as the main focus so that it is the leading area of learning and excellence across the school. They will help you to really deepen your understanding of the curriculum by encouraging your questions and they will challenge your thinking and give you further opportunities to lead prayer and worship.

To all at St Joseph's we would like to say 'Thank you' and keep up your very high standards of behaviour, respect and love for one another.

Yours sincerely

M Mountcastle
S Molloy
(Section 48 Inspectors)

Summary Report to Parents

On 5th July St Joseph the Worker RC Primary 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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