

**INSPECTION REPORT**

**St. Sebastian's RC Primary School**

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Inspection date 5th December 2013

Reporting Inspectors Sr Judith Russi  
Mr Gerard Keane

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

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Type of School	Catholic Primary
URN	105936
Age range of pupils	3-11 years
Number on roll	203
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Acting Chair - Mrs Angela Walker
Head teacher	Mrs Rita Bourke
Religious Education Co-ordinator	Miss Monica Wright
Date of previous inspection	October 2007

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The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades  1 = Outstanding  2 = Good  3=Requires Improvement  4 = Inadequate
Overall effectiveness of the school	2	
The Quality of catholic leadership	2	
The quality of the Word of God community	2	
The quality of the Welcome community	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**

The inspection was carried out at a time of great loss for the whole community due the death of the Chair of Governors who was also the parish priest. Both the Church and the school are a pivotal point of support for the area. St Sebastian's is a smaller than average size primary school serving families from the parish of St Sebastian's which is an economically and socially challenging area. Pupil mobility is higher than average. Just over half of the pupils are White British and other pupils belong to a wide range of minority ethnic and other backgrounds, including Black African. The proportion of pupils, who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language is high. The proportion of pupils whose learning needs are supported at the levels known as school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are below average.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL – GOOD**

The Governing body and staff of St Sebastian's, ably lead by an inspirational head teacher, have dedicated themselves to the building up of a Catholic learning community which is good with many outstanding features. The overall Catholic life of the school provides a secure foundation and a safe environment on which the faith and well being of the whole school community can grow and flourish. The emphasis on *'forgiveness, trust and respect for others in their uniqueness'*, underpins everything the school strives for. The Mission Statement, *'We believe that all people matter'*, is clearly a driving force for the community. The option for those in the greatest need is considerable and a strength of the school. The children receive a Catholic education which enables them to see their role as future stewards who can influence, change and contribute to the common good for all people. The Governors and Head teacher are coming to terms with the loss of their parish priest and Chair of governors and have recognised that they now need to reformulate the governing body for the way ahead. The leadership of the school have a clear understanding of their next steps as the school strives for excellence. Parents were keen to point out that the school was *'part of every family'* especially in the very good relationships at all levels. Parents felt that they were valued and their contributions to the children's learning were taken seriously. As one parent said, *'I want my children to have what I had here, the best'*.

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

- The Catholic life of the school, and the focus on Christ at the centre is inspirational
- The welcome and outreach to families and the local community are outstanding
- Relationships, behaviour and care for all within the school are outstanding.

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

The leadership of the school is good with many outstanding features. The mission of the school is clearly lived as part of the Church's mission in education. Priority is given to those in the greatest need. The Governing body are fully aware of the need to continue to lead the school into its next stage of development and are actively planning the next steps with the Head teacher and staff. Governors are beginning to be part of the more rigorous monitoring and ongoing evaluation of the progress of the school. The Acting Chair of Governors clearly recognised the need for further training and support from the diocese for governors to help them in their task of moving the school from good to outstanding in all areas. Pupil leadership is working well through the School Council and school prefects and being further developed through the introduction of pupil chaplains.

RE is jointly led by a coordinator and the senior leadership team. The Head teacher seeks out talent and potential at all levels in the school and actively encourages initiative, innovation and risk taking throughout. The Head teacher and her deputy are leading the development of processes and procedures for assessment for learning to ensure the levels of learning are as high as possible.

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

Teaching and learning was found to be good overall and in some cases outstanding. The school is developing the RE scheme, The Way, The Truth and The Life through a high level of creativity and independent learning. The whole school has recently focused on a theme around the story of Noah resulting in a very high level of cross curricular activity which has resulted in an outstanding series of displays, encompassing the whole curriculum. Where learning was found to be outstanding pupils were highly motivated, engaged and clearly enjoying their learning. Teachers were using a wide range of teaching and learning methods which were well matched to the often complex and differing needs of the class. The school is working towards a more consistent use of assessment for learning, success criteria and diagnostic making in RE to enable pupils in all classes to have a clearer understanding of how to achieve their next steps for learning. Further development of more challenging tasks and an increase in independent learning in all classes would enable the most able pupils to excel. Pupils had a good understanding of scripture and were often able to make the links between the scripture passage they were using and their own personal lives. Pupils learn about a range of other faiths through the RE scheme. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) education across all key stages is developing and enhancing the already good and outstanding learning across the curriculum. Pupils were readily able to talk about the beliefs and values of the Catholic community and were proud to talk about their school as a Catholic learning community. Behaviour for learning was found to be good and often outstanding. The Religious Education budget is in line with other core subjects and set according to the needs of the curriculum and the Catholic life of the school. All classes receive a minimum of 10% RE curriculum time.

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

The welcome extended to all visitors and all members of the school is outstanding and underpinned by a common vision built on Gospel values and the Mission Statement. The core values of *'faith, compassion, empathy, respect for all, diversity and being proud of who you are underpins all that we do'*, are displayed throughout the school and lived. Parents spoke of their love for St Sebastian's and being actively encouraged and invited to play a key role where ever possible. Parents spoke of the great respect that is shown to everyone and as one said *'even when some ones not happy, nothing gets swept under the carpet.'* *'The Head wants to know and we are not afraid to come in and talk'*. Pupil turnover is higher than the national average, however this challenge is embraced by all as the school reaches out to the newly arrived. The pupil's sense of ownership and responsibility for what happens in their school was remarkable. Pupils were keen to share their views with pride. At lunch time Year 6 pupils took responsibility for the younger children very seriously and made sure that everyone felt at ease and at home. Visitors were quickly helped and pupils made hospitality their priority. Pupils and staff play a key role in hosting events with friends and families and ensure that hospitality is always outstanding. Children, parents and staff are proud of their school and do all they can to enhance the environment and the decor.

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

The dignity of and respect for each person *'At St Sebastian's we believe all people matter'* is rooted in the common belief across the school that the values of love, forgiveness and reconciliation are central to the growth and development for the whole community. Specialist support is brought into the school to assist families in any particular need. Parents spoke of the high levels of well being, care and safety for all in the school. When asked about bullying, pupils stated that it was not an issue as everyone knew exactly what to do if there were any problems. Year 5 and 6 pupils spoke about the strategies that they use to try and stop any unacceptable behaviour before they refer to an adult. The school's provision for safe-guarding and keeping children safe is outstanding. The provision for SRE and PSHE is set within the context of the sanctity of life and the dignity of the person made in the image and likeness of God. Quality before and after school care is provide for families needing this support. The school actively reaches out to those in need at home and abroad, through a wide variety of charity work such as working with and fund raising for local charities including CAFOD, Cornerstones- homeless charity, the Poppy Appeal, St Joseph's Penny, St Sebastian's Parish Summer and Christmas Fairs, Fair trade events and responding to worldwide natural disasters like the earthquake in Haiti and the severe storms in the Philippines.

### **THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS GOOD**

The whole school policy for prayer and worship is creative, offering a wide range of opportunities to develop and enrich the prayer life of the community. The prayer and reflection areas in classrooms highlight the centrality of prayer in the daily life of the community. Times of prayer and reflection during RE lessons, the lunch time Rosary club and the whole school assembly, offered good opportunities for prayer and worship. Staff and pupils are confident in leading prayer and worship. All year groups have a clear understanding of the liturgical life of the school. The active involvement and leadership of the parish priest has had a lasting impact on worship and prayer in the school. The plans to further the training of pupils in these areas will serve to build on all that has gone before. The close proximity of the Church has enabled the school to make use of this facility in a regular and meaningful way. Pupils, staff and parents expressed their commitment to the school especially in the outreach to families through experiences such as the sacramental programme and creative liturgical celebrations at key points of the year. Prayer and worship are well resourced and training and support is ongoing for both pupils and staff. The further development of pupil led prayer and worship will further enhance the skills, knowledge and understanding for all pupils.

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

The quality of the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. All staff are involved in shaping and evaluating their effectiveness as a Catholic community. The school's commitment to those in the greatest need both at home and abroad was evident throughout. Pupils demonstrated a keen awareness of their responsibility to others and were confident in being able to express their views in how they can help to readdress the many injustices that they see at home and further afield. Christian values are not only inculcated throughout displays and celebrations of children's work but actively witnessed to throughout the school, in relationships, behaviour and choices. The Chaplaincy provision has been led by the recently deceased parish priest, Fr Liam Houlihan which has not only left the community feeling bereft, but also even more committed to build on all he witnessed to. As one pupil put it *'We can't let him down now, we must carry on and do what he wanted us to do'*. The school witness to reconciliation permeates all their relationships and behaviours. Pupils clearly understand the difference between just saying sorry and being a reconciling community. St Sebastian's is a joyful, happy school that strives to find what is good in all things.

### **AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:**

- Continue the ongoing training and development of the Governing Body in order to move the school from good to outstanding in all areas
- Share the outstanding practice of teaching across all Key Stages to ensure a greater consistency of standards
- Continue to develop the leadership potential of pupils through the Pupil Chaplaincy programme

December 18<sup>th</sup> 2013

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making my visit to St Sebastian's so enjoyable when I came to inspect your school for the Bishop. I really enjoyed being with you. Thank you for looking after us so well Year 6 at lunch time and helping us to feel very welcome. St Sebastian's is a good school and some areas of what you do individually and together are outstanding.

I enjoyed being part of your lessons and was sorry not to see everyone. Thank you for showing us so much of your work and activities. I could see that you are very proud of your school and all that you have achieved together. I was particularly impressed that you thought that the most important part of your learning and life together was when some of you said that the most important thing for you was that *'We are family...one big family!'* I know the Bishop will be delighted to hear this.

Your teachers are really helping you to learn very well and I was 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 particularly as so many of you are new to school and even new to the country.

You are doing well in you RE and we were very impressed with all the Noah work. You are a very creative school and I was most impressed by displays of your work around the school as well as in your books. Your website really shows everyone what you can do. Well done! The teachers are going to help you to do even better by working with you on your personal targets and religious literacy. Many of you have a very good knowledge and understanding of your faith so this should help you to do even better.

God bless you all and have a really happy Christmas and New Year.

Yours sincerely

Sr Judith Russi

(Section 48 Inspector)

## Summary Report to Parents

On Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2013 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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