

**INSPECTION REPORT**

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**Inspection carried out Under Canon 806  
and in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005**

**Name of School**      **St John’s Roman Catholic Primary School, Ann St, Rochdale OL11 1EZ**

Inspection date      Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2018

Reporting Inspectors      Mark Mountcastle and Lesley Pemberton

Type of school	Primary
URN	105826
Age range of pupils	3-11
Number on roll	259
Appropriate authority	The Governing Board
Chair of Governors	Elizabeth Skilling
Headteacher	Michael Unsworth
Religious Education Subject Leader	Kelly Whitton
Date of previous inspection	March 29 <sup>th</sup> 2012

<b>The Inspection judgements are:</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Explanation of the Grades</b>
Overall effectiveness of the school	1	1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3=Requires Improvement 4 = Inadequate
The quality of Catholic Leadership	1	
The Catholic Life of the school (incorporating Welcome, Welfare and Witness)	1	
The quality of Religious Education (incorporating Word)	1	
The quality of Worship	1	
The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements		

## **CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL**

St John's is an average sized primary school serving the Parish of St John the Baptist in Rochdale. The school is fully inclusive and welcomes children and families from a richly diverse range of ethnic backgrounds and of the 259 pupils who are currently on roll, 63% are pupils whose first language is not English. In addition 57% of children are entitled to pupil premium but the number of children on the SEND register is below the national average at 8.6%. The school rightly sees itself as a leading light in inclusive Faith practice, 52% of the children are baptised Catholic, and they embrace and celebrate the many other cultures and religions within the school community. Few families attend church but links with the Parish are very strong due to regular visits from the Parish Priest.

## **THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE: (5 max)**

- **Infectiously positive children who clearly love the school**
- **The pastoral care and support for children and their families**
- **Quality of collective worship particularly in Key Stages 1 and 2**
- **Outstanding Catholic Leadership at all levels**

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

St John's is a shining example of an outstanding Catholic school providing outstanding care and education for the children in its community. From the moment you enter the school the love, friendship and happiness are so clearly evident as the enthusiastic and friendly children and staff clearly live their mission; one family in Christ. The school's mission statement is a living testament to what occurs every day. It is beautifully worded and accessible for children. All the children are so eager to celebrate their school and they are so comfortable talking about its strengths and why they are so happy. They feel valued and as a result give so much to school knowing they are loved, supported and cared for by everyone – equality is clear and diversity celebrated. The opportunities the children receive are outstanding, planned and resourced by an exceptional staff team who not only care passionately about the children but also their mission. They understand the importance faith plays in all the children's lives and enrich the curriculum effortlessly to ensure it is fit not just for purpose but for the community it serves. The quality of work and experiences for the children are outstanding and everyone should be proud of the school and the all-round education they are providing. The lessons and sessions observed were always at least good and often outstanding. In addition, the Governing Body are committed to ensuring that Catholic education of the highest standard is provided for all in this inclusive and happy school.

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

St John's is extremely well led by an enthusiastic and inspirational headteacher who is supported very well by an acting deputy headteacher and very knowledgeable and supportive governing board. Over the last 4 years the leadership team have implemented systems of school improvement that are having a significant impact on the school and the children. The real strength of this school are the children who obviously love school and feel safe and happy, which is a direct result of strong leadership steeped in the values of the Gospel. The headteacher's passion and commitment for the children of this community ensure the school is a true example of the church's mission. All the quality experiences begin with the leadership of the school and the Religious Education subject leader has had a significant impact on the subject in the school. The quality of work and collective worship particularly have been led and managed expertly and they are a major factor as to why this is such an outstanding Catholic school. All the staff share the vision for Catholic education, ensuring that the development of the Catholic life of the school is at the forefront of their thinking and practice. The governors are very committed and proactive in providing support and challenge. They see Religious Education as the centre of

the school curriculum and have worked with staff to help shape the vision for the school. In addition, the very supportive parish priest is a regular visitor to school and is fully involved in the religious life of the school; the children look forward to his visits.

### **THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL (incorporating Welcome, Welfare and Witness) IS OUTSTANDING**

Children at St John's clearly love their school and from the moment you enter the building you are met by huge smiles and an extremely warm and loving welcome from everybody. At any opportunity the friendly children swamped inspectors, in lessons, on the corridor and outside at play, as they were all so keen to share their experiences of school. The children feel valued and as a result are enthusiastic about setting a good example to others. They obviously live the mantra of treating others as you would want to be treated and they clearly value the different cultures and backgrounds in their community. The parents talk glowingly about their 'amazing, happy and loving' school. They praised the hard working and dedicated staff who are always approachable and helpful. New families and parents receive extremely warm welcomes and when a new child starts at school mid-year, the planning in class begins early and the children take the initiative to help new arrivals. The behaviour around school was observed to be excellent and the children feel safe knowing that the positive behaviour mechanisms in place are followed and understood by everyone from senior leaders to the lunchtime staff. They are rightly proud of their school and talk very positively about all the opportunities they are offered. From the GIFT team to playground pals, School Council, ECO team, Sports Leaders and i-Leaders. The children enjoy taking responsibility, knowing they are supported by staff and the community at every level and they develop the skill and knowledge of giving service to others. As a result, they are involved in many initiatives with charities, food bank collections, hospice project and St Joseph's Penny but talk most fondly about the project 'Harar', helping children with facial issues smile.

### **THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (incorporating Word) IS OUTSTANDING**

The mission statement with the central message of 'family' is evident everywhere, on walls in books and it is clearly lived and owned. The children are the most striking example of this as their kindness, love and happiness are abundantly clear throughout school. There are the formal roles and membership of the school council etc but all the children live the values of school, everyone met is so willing to celebrate their school and how they 'love, play and help each other' every day. Throughout Key Stage 1 and 2 it is clearly evident that the children are receiving real quality and regular Religious Education lessons. The children's knowledge, attitudes and participation in lessons is excellent and the standard of work in the children's books gives firm evidence that Religious Education is of paramount importance throughout the school. The children are engaged by quality teaching throughout and well planned and resourced lessons result in high quality experiences. Children in Key Stage 1 were observed unpicking the meaning of good news, taking elements from scripture and being led expertly putting it into their own daily context while children in upper Key Stage 2 tackled very difficult concepts with ease and confidence, showing a high level of debate and discussion around the gifts of the Holy Spirit and how they can show and see these elements. The staff embrace other cultures and religions within the school and use it to enrich the Religious Education lessons. Many children and parents from different faiths eulogise about the experiences the curriculum brings and how they feel completely included and part of the Christian teachings. A class where the majority of the children are non-Catholic were very respectful when their teacher explored the mass and roles within it, brilliantly using the church and resources through role play, involving all the children.

### **THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS OUTSTANDING**

From the first assembly it is absolutely clear that the children take a very active role in the planning and delivery of collective worship throughout school. They are rightly very proud of their achievements and collective worship is seen as a very important part of school life. The children, supported in an excellent way by staff, are clearly comfortable expressing themselves through prayer and the processes throughout the school are clearly embedded. The reverence and respect shown by the children is particularly outstanding, as was their behaviour to, from and during sessions. The children clearly enjoy their peers leading them in thoughtful prayer and their contributions were excellent. One session observed in the prayer room was a particularly good example of this; the older children were very confident not only

sharing their own ideas and answering questions but when sharing kind observations of each other. The quality and regularity of sessions is obvious not only in the skill of the children but in the collective worship books which show excellent evidence of the weekly child led liturgies. The GIFT Team are a brilliant example of how children can lead worship within a school. They are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and talk passionately about their role and the role of prayer within the school. They are great ambassadors for the school's mission statement and told inspectors that although there are lots of different religions in school they are 'all one family in Christ.' All the children are treated with respect and they feel valued for their talents and contributions. No one is judged or judges, treating all how they expect to be treated which in turn creates a harmonious, loving, friendly atmosphere throughout the school and community.

#### **AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT**

- **To develop big questions, ensuring that it is child led and accessible**
- **To increase the effectiveness of monitoring the teaching and learning of Religious Education in the Foundation Stage**