

**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. Vincent's RC Primary School, Edenfield Road, Norden, Rochdale, OL12 7QL**

**Inspection date**      14<sup>th</sup> March 2019

**Reporting Inspectors**      Anne Heard, Fiona Robinson, Louise Frize

Type of school	Primary
URN	105831
Age range of pupils	4-11
Number on roll	414
Appropriate authority	The Governing Board
Chair of Governors	Joanne Harding
Headteacher	Stephen Callaghan
Religious Education Subject Leader	Tracy McGrail
Date of previous inspection	8 <sup>th</sup> April 2014

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

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

St Vincent's Roman Catholic primary school was built in 1969 to serve the growing Catholic population in Rochdale. Over the years the school has been the subject of a considerable number of building programmes to accommodate the increasing pupil numbers from a one-form entry school to the current status of a two-form entry school with 414 pupils on roll. The school serves mainly the Catholic children from St. Vincent's parish with increasing numbers of children attending from outside the catchment area. 78% of the children are baptised Roman Catholics. Currently 11% of children have English as an additional language. 14% are classified as disadvantaged, with 9% of pupils entitled to free school meals (below the national average). 23 children are identified on the SEN register (below the national average). There are 19 teachers of which 16 are Catholic - 12 hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies or the Catholic Teaching Certificate, with two teachers currently undertaking the CCRS course. There are 23 teaching assistants, of which 15 are Catholic. Attainment on entry is broadly average and represents a wide range of abilities.

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

- **The welcome offered to all within the school community which is truly inclusive**
- **Polite, happy, well-behaved children who undertake their many roles in the school with pride and enthusiasm**
- **Leadership at all levels demonstrates a deep commitment to the Church's mission in education. In particular, recognition has to be given to the Religious Education subject leader**
- **The loyalty of all staff members. All members of staff demonstrate a high level of respect, care and compassion and are united in their commitment to the success of the school**

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS OUTSTANDING**

The success of this outstanding school is the shared vision, pride and expectations of all staff in delivering the highest quality provision. Further to this, a true sense of care, respect and nurture for children and their families is found in abundance. Since the previous inspection, leaders have addressed the area identified for development. A sense of teamwork from the dedicated and hard-working staff plays an integral part in what makes this school successful. Generations of families have chosen the school because of its reputation. One parent commented: "I love the school. They are so supportive". Parents spoke very warmly about how all staff are welcoming and when families require support the school reaches out, witnessing to Gospel values by ensuring the needs of parents and children are met. The Rainbows group is just one example of this. Children are confident, articulate and able to express their ideas eloquently. Pupil leadership in many forms provides a range of opportunities for pupil voice. Succession planning from year 6 and year 5 provides continuity and training for the GIFT chaplaincy team, who undertake their roles with dedication and pride. Religious Education is embedded in the life of St. Vincent's. School leaders ensure that their vision and mission are clearly cascaded through all levels of staffing, resulting in a shared approach in delivering the highest quality provision. Governors are knowledgeable about all aspects of school life. They are regular visitors to school, alongside the parish priest who together support and challenge leaders at all levels, including pupil leadership, to be the best they can be. This is a remarkable school where the love of Christ and his teachings are at the heart of all decision making. The school's witness to this is clearly evident in the charitable work and fundraising the school supports each year.

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

Leaders at all levels take seriously their responsibility in their mission to provide the best Catholic education possible. The headteacher and deputy headteacher (who is also the SENco) share a determination and dedication to succeed in delivering their vision for a truly inclusive Catholic education. Governors are very proactive in their roles; they know the school well and are regular visitors who offer support and challenge. They are well informed about the Catholic life of the school and ensure appropriate spending is allocated to the Religious Education budget. Senior leadership of the school are determined in their pursuit of excellence. Numerous examples were witnessed during the inspection of how all leaders share a common goal in ensuring that those vulnerable and marginalised are welcomed and valued for their uniqueness in the eyes of God. Effective use of staff and additional funding to meet the needs of these pupils ensures that Gospel values are embedded within the school and are clearly followed through in day to day relationships. The Religious Education subject leader is the catalyst for change within the school. She has the support of the senior leadership team in further developing the Catholic life of the school. She acts as an excellent role model for others and is committed to ensuring that children at St. Vincent's grow in their relationship with God.

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

The welfare of the children and their families is of paramount importance at St. Vincent's. From the little acts of kindness witnessed throughout the day, to the children's own expressions of concern for others, welfare is part of all decisions that are made. Excellent relationships are fostered in all aspects of school life. The staff team are wholly united in supporting everyone who has a connection with the school. Parents feel confident to approach the school and are met with the warmth of welcome and understanding even in difficult circumstances. Staff go the extra mile to pre-empt any difficulties and are on hand to provide practical, professional and empathetic support where Gospel values are truly witnessed. Children from a young age are encouraged to know about and support others in vulnerable circumstances, whether that be locally nationally or internationally. The Mini-Vinnies, GIFT chaplains and other pupil groups act as role models to other pupils to live their lives following Gospel values. As children progress through the school the regular use of big questions develops their sense of citizenship. "What would Jesus do?" is used to enhance the children's awareness that they are change makers in whose hand's stewardship of the earth and its people will be their growing responsibility. The school is a truly inclusive school, ensuring that marginalized and vulnerable pupils are embraced within the school community. A Christ-led commitment to witness is fully embedded in all aspects of the Catholic life of the school.

### **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (incorporating Word) IS OUTSTANDING**

All aspects of school life are founded on Sacred Scripture and the Word of God. The school's mission statement is relevant and contemporary. It is known by all stakeholders and the strapline "Hand in hand with Jesus" acts as a focus for the way to lead their lives. Appropriate time is given to the teaching of Religious Education. The pupil's books are well-presented showing the pride children take in their lessons. Workbooks also show the variety of learning experiences and opportunities for discussing big questions. On the day of the inspection, inspectors witnessed a Key Stage 2 class tackling the question "Can any good come out of loss and death?" Inspectors witnessed some outstanding teaching where children were immersed in their learning. Challenging themes and questions are used effectively to ensure progression in lessons. Monitoring of teaching and learning also confirmed that children were receiving an outstanding Religious Education. The Weekly Word, children's homework books and newsletters contain references to Sacred Scripture providing opportunities to reinforce the Word of God at home. The school encourages staff members to develop their knowledge and understanding of Religious Education by attending relevant courses provided by the diocese. The Religious Education subject leader has been a member of several diocesan working parties developing assessment material and revisiting the 5W's. Whole school displays and weekly assemblies are also used to share the Word of God. Curriculum boards for subjects other than Religious Education also contain appropriate Bible quotes. Teachers plan creative and stimulating lessons to deliver the curriculum scheme "Come and See". From an early age evidence was gained of how children's Religious Education is fostered and developed. Key

Stage 1 children were able to talk about the person who wrote most of the Psalms. Conversations with pupils further validated how the Word of God is both known and witnessed to at St. Vincent's.

### **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IS OUTSTANDING**

Worship in all forms is an integral part of daily life at St. Vincent's. The quality and quantity of experiences provided for the whole school community are central to the school's commitment to bringing all to have a closer and deeper relationship with God. Meticulous planning, creative approaches and appropriateness of all aspects of prayer and worship clearly identify that the school's mission to "walk hand in hand with Jesus" has an authentic and embedded status. Children joyfully and confidently express their feelings and thoughts. They address difficult issues with a sensitivity and respect for one another that reflects a maturity beyond their years. Children and adults work together promoting a strong sense of community. The whole school assembly was an outstanding example of Prayer and Worship of the highest standard. The Word of God in Scripture is proclaimed and witnessed to in the acts of daily prayer, liturgy and celebrations of the liturgical year. On the day of the inspection forgiveness was a theme followed through from the whole school assembly to classroom teaching and discussion about forgiveness. All staff are encouraged to join the prayer and reflection opportunities provided for themselves each month. Staff take it in turn to plan and deliver these acts and once again this reflects the strong sense of a praying and worshipping community. The parish priest is a regular visitor to the school. Class Masses are celebrated throughout the year in the parish church and are well attended by parents and the wider parish community. Parents spoke about how attending these celebrations had reawakened their relationship with God. The GIFT chaplaincy team are enthusiastic in undertaking their roles and are confident in planning and leading prayer and worship. A further point of development for the team could be to plan for prayer and worship across all the school. The school prayer book contains appropriate traditional and modern prayers which are relevant and inclusive to meet the needs of all pupils and the wider school community.

### **AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT**

- **To develop further the assessment for learning strategies already in place in order to enhance the teaching and learning of Religious Education**
- **The GIFT chaplaincy team to develop further their leadership in prayer and worship across the school**