



## **INSPECTION REPORT**

School: **St. Mary's RCP School**  
Address: **Watt Street, Sabden, Clitheroe, BB7 9ED**  
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URN: **119651**

Headteacher: **Miss Claire Halstead**  
Chair of Governors: **Mr. Mike Firth**

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Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Diocese of Salford  
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Date of inspection: **29<sup>th</sup> September 2011**  
Date of previous inspection: **February 2008**  
Reporting Inspector: **Mrs. Pauline Leatherbarrow**

## **Information about the school**

**St. Mary's is situated in the village of Sabden, which is part of the Ribble Valley and is an area of relative social advantage. St. Mary's is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school serving the parishes of Lady of our Valley, English Martyrs', Whalley and St. Philip's Padiham. There are presently 62 pupils on roll who are grouped into three classes comprising a Rec/Y1/Y2 class, a Y3/Y4 class and a Y5/Y6 class. The admission number is 12. All pupils are of white English heritage. 1.6% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. There are 9 children who have SEN including 3 with statements.**

**There are 3 full-time and 1 part-time teachers, including the Head teacher. Three of the four teachers are Roman Catholic and the Headteacher is a committed Christian who attends a Churches Together Parish. Two teachers hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies.**

## **Overall Effectiveness**

**Grade 2**

**The overall effectiveness of St. Mary's is good. The Head teacher and staff work hard to ensure that there is a good Religious Education for pupils. Mass is celebrated every Friday in church. Assemblies are held three times a week and are well planned and generally linked to the Liturgical year. Behaviour around school and in classes is very good. Children care for each other and are very well mannered and polite.**

**Religious Education is well planned by staff. All staff are excellent role models and form very good relationships with children in their care. Technology is used to enhance provision including interactive whiteboards. The prayer life of the school is very good. Children are actively engaged in producing their own prayers for class use and bidding prayers for weekly Mass.**

**The Christian Head teacher is very committed to developing the religious life of the school along with the RE co-ordinator and teaching staff. Governors are supportive in many ways including attending weekly Mass and a member of the Governing Body is the lead Catechist directing the Sacramental programme.**

## **Capacity for sustained improvement**

**Grade 2**

The capacity for sustained improvement is good. The Head teacher, staff and Governors are committed to the continuous development of the faith life of the school.

The school has been pro-active in purchasing and attending training for the new RE scheme, 'The Way, the Truth and the Life'. The scheme is now being fully taught with effect from September 2011. Governors have supported the cost involved in the purchase of the new Religious Education scheme.

Links with the parish and local community are very good. The Mission Statement has been reviewed since the last inspection. The Section 48 SEF is an accurate record of where the school is now and honest in what the school needs to do to improve further.

### **What the school needs to do to improve further**

- 1. The school needs to develop RE assessment and to monitor and evaluate pupil attainment and progress linked to the new RE scheme.**
- 2. Undertake planning / pupil work scrutinies on a regular basis.**

## **PUPILS**

**How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups**

**Grade 2**

St. Mary's is a good Catholic school with some outstanding features. Liaison with the High school is good, all children leaving Year 6 attend St. Augustine's Roman Catholic High school. Pupils are invited to attend celebration Masses with the local High school. Children also take part in Retreat Days and a transition Mass at St. Augustine's. In addition, a Leavers' Mass is held at St.

Mary's church where a member of staff from St. Augustine's High School attends and receives Year 6 pupils into their school family.

Attainment on entry is broadly average and results at the end of Year 6 are broadly in line. Special Needs pupils are well supported by competent support staff in all three classes. Children enjoy their lessons and were fully engaged and motivated during lesson observations.

Leadership qualities are developed in older pupils by them taking on specific responsibilities. As the school is so small, pupils are aware of the needs of each other across the whole age range. Members of the School Council hold regular meetings with staff to discuss how to make their school a better place. A number of fund raising activities are organised for a variety of charities such as; Shelter, St. Joseph's Penny, Cafod and Alzheimer's charities. Children enjoy attending St. Mary's school.

The prayer life of the school is very good. All pupils attend Mass every Friday and on Holy Days. Children from school act as altar servers, give readings and prepare and read their own bidding prayers. Parents, grandparents, parishioners, governors and friends attend this weekly Mass which serves as an excellent link between the parish and school. Behaviour observed during the inspection was very good. There are opportunities to celebrate children's achievements at Celebration assembly every Friday afternoon. Parents, grandparents and carers are invited to share in children's achievements. The 'Wednesday Word' held each week is also popular with children and parents. The Gospel is read and explored accompanied by hymns. During the inspection a whole school assembly was well led by the Head Teacher based on the gospel reading of Jesus calling his apostles to become 'Fishers of men'. Prayers and song reflected this theme.

The Sacramental Programme is primarily run by the parish with a Governor being the lead Catechist. The school fully supports the programme by staff attending celebrations and children providing the bidding prayers at Mass. Year 4 children provide a mentor role for Year 3 currently undertaking the programme. School also provide administrative support to the programme in whatever way is needed.

## **How effective the provision is for Catholic Education**

**Grade 3**

Children's work display different genres and styles and differentiation were evident. Marking generally informs children how well they have understood lesson content with some indication of how to improve further. Pupil progress and attainment was difficult to assess due to the amount of work available at the start of the academic year.

Teaching observed during the inspection was good. Teachers plan effectively and give children good learning opportunities. Teachers have high expectations and act as good role models. All classes have an area identified as a prayer focal point and displays reflect the curriculum and what is being taught.

In KS1 class the focus of the lesson observed was 'God's wonderful world'. Effective use was made by the teacher using a large puppet to discuss feelings. Excellent questioning skills were used throughout the lesson. Good use of support staff during independent work to work with the three different age groups and for children with special needs.

In KS2 class the teacher engaged pupils at the outset by a mysterious letter that had arrived inviting the class to 'join God's family. Effective use of talk partners was evident to explore questions put by the teacher. Children showed a good understanding of symbols used in baptism such as water and chrism. Independent work involved drama, art and written work. The lesson concluded with the school's 'circle time' song with several children signing the words.

In upper KS2 lesson, the pace was brisk throughout. Again excellent use of questioning skills and Talking Partners was used. Very good feedback from pupils were given when identifying values of a friend such as; forgiving, trust, kind, sharing, honesty and loyal. The lesson concluded with a hymn chosen by the class to show 'trust'.

In all classes, behaviour was very good.

The Head Teacher and RE co-ordinator however, have clearly identified that the school is not currently monitoring children appropriately enough to recognise the achievement and standards of pupils. In addition work scrutinies need to become part of the monitoring process. This was clearly identified in the self evaluation and is an area for future development.

## **LEADERS AND MANAGERS**

### **How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the School**

**Grade 2**

The school is very well led by a very committed Head Teacher and supported by the RE Co-ordinator. The Head Teacher reports to Governors on the religious life of the school at each Governing Body meeting. Religious Education forms part of the School Improvement Plan and objectives are clearly set and reviewed each year.

**The Religious Education Governor is very supportive and holds regular meetings with the RE Co-ordinator and is keen to further improve aspects of Religious education. The parish priest is a welcome visitor in the school and works with the head teachers of St. Mary's school, Sabden and St. Michael and St. John's, Clitheroe in the parish of Our Lady of our Valley, to ensure that the Sacramental Programme is appropriate and welcoming for parents and children. Friday Mass takes place in St. Mary's church every Friday morning with the school providing the bidding prayers. This is a great opportunity for parishioners, family, governors and friends of the school to share in the religious aspect of school.**

**A school Governor is now the new Sacramental programme lead Catechist and she provides a crucial link between parish and school. Sacramental programme meetings are held on Saturday mornings. A newly formed Parish Forum has also been formed and meets every six months and provides a forum for any school issues.**

**Objectives relating to Religious Education are identified for the Head Teacher and RE Co-ordinator within the Performance Management cycle to further develop the faith life of the school and to raise teaching and attainment for pupils.**

**Parents are kept well informed through newsletters and the school website. The Wednesday Word newsletter is also sent home via pupils to inform about the Liturgy of the week. Parents are invited to Mass every Friday and to the Celebration assembly each week.**