DIOCESE OF SALFORD
Department for Education

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INSPECTION REPORT

Our Lady RC Sports College, Alworth Road, Higher Blackley, Manchester, M9 0RP.

Inspection date	Wednesday 29th June 2016
Reporting Inspectors	Mr Sheldon Logue Mr Simon Smith Mr Leo Conley

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

Type of School	Secondary
URN	105576
Age range of pupils	11-16
Number on roll	740
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Mr Mike Campbell
Headteacher	Mr Lee Ormsby
Leaders of Religious Education	Mrs N Dewhurst & Mrs N Buckley
Date of previous inspection	May 2010

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	1	
The quality of the Word	2	
The quality of the Welcome	1	
The quality of Welfare	1	
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

Our Lady's is an 11-16 voluntary aided Catholic school with 740 pupils on roll, of which 61% are baptised Catholics. It serves the Catholic communities of St Anne's, St Chad's, St Clare's, St Malachy's, St Patrick's and St Thomas of Canterbury. The Diocese of Salford are trustees of the school. Currently the school has a waiting list. The mission of the school is to 'educate the whole person with Jesus Christ as our model'. Attainment on entry is significantly below the national average, pupil premium eligibility is significantly above the national average at 65% and the proportion of students whose first language is not English is above average (20%). In the last Ofsted inspection, February 2015, the school was given 'Requires Improvement' as an overall grade, but 'good' for both leadership and personal development, behaviour and welfare. The last Section 48 inspection was in May 2010. The school is showing upward trends in all key areas of school improvement.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS GOOD

Our Lady's is a good Catholic school which has experienced an upward improvement in recent years. Actual results achieved and discussions with governors, headteacher and head of RE on predictions for outcomes in August 2016 show that this improvement will continue. The appointment of a new headteacher and more recently head of RE, alongside an established and committed senior leadership team has reinvigorated this Catholic community. Governors are increasingly proactive in monitoring the impact of new initiatives and regularly partake in learning walks and visit assemblies to see Our Lady's at 'first hand'. Governors suitably challenge all leaders, senior and middle, through a validation process and are confident that leadership at all levels is at least good. The effectiveness of Our Lady's is enhanced through the creation of a safe and secure environment, where pupils are given many opportunities to succeed and pupil voice clearly advocated this as a real strength of the school.

KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- A highly focussed and driven headteacher, who leads a committed and determined staff that share the same vision of providing at least a good quality of education for its pupils.
- Real and genuine care that is reflected in the quality of relationships that permeate all levels of the school.
- The development of the whole child through support, appropriate provision and guidance is a high priority for the school.

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

The leadership of the school clearly understand and are honest about the strengths and areas for development. They are united in improving Our Lady's for the community it serves and leadership from the headteacher, senior leaders and middle leaders demonstrates a strong passion to ensure the provision of at least a good quality of education. Collectively they have a vision for Our Lady's to become an outstanding Catholic school. There has been significant investment within the leadership of RE with the appointment of both a head of RE and a director of spirituality. These are two distinct posts which complement each other in ensuring that the Catholicity of the school continues to go from strength to strength both in terms of curriculum developments and in the liturgical life of the school. The head of RE has enrolled on the new Postgraduate Catholic Leadership Programme, which not only demonstrates commitment to Catholic education, but will further develop the Catholicity of Our Lady's. The head of RE has quickly put in rigour and purpose to the RE department. Analysis of RE outcomes was honest and the leadership clearly identified areas for development; plans are now in place to address these.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORD IS GOOD

There have been significant improvements in teaching and learning over time, which has been most evident in pupil outcomes at Key Stage Four. In 2015, Our Lady's was the highest achieving school in North Manchester in terms of 5A*-C grades, including English and maths. The new head of RE has undertaken an extensive review of RE documentation, for example, schemes of work, marking strategies and an induction policy for new staff. The vast majority of lessons taught in the RE department were delivered by RE specialists. In most of the lessons observed, teaching and learning was good or better. Pupils' engagement in most lessons was very good and reflected the fact that they enjoyed RE as a curriculum subject. Pupil voice undertaken during the lessons confirmed this. In one lesson spiritual development was characterised by pupils own beliefs in RE lessons, respect for one another and their positive attitudes to learning and curious questioning of their peers. In another lesson consisting of a small group of EAL/SEN pupils an excellent example of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education was demonstrated through positive relationships built on high levels of trust. However, some practice was observed that was ineffective. Resources, most notably shown by leadership roles and responsibilities are strong and the department meets the Religious Education Curriculum Directory requirement of 10% throughout all year groups. It has been acknowledged that curriculum changes, although happening, are not yet firmly established. Prominent displays on the wall clearly show scripture references that align with the values of Our Lady's. Recently, the leaders of RE have jointly led a training session on 'Word' and this has been followed up by the creation of a 'Word working party'. This has the potential to really develop religious literacy throughout the curriculum.

THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING

An authentic welcome was evidenced throughout the day. Procedures (including checking DBS) to welcome visitors ensure the safety of the pupils. The quality of relationships between pupils and staff was observed to be excellent and there was a real sense of being proud of Our Lady's from all the major stakeholders; pupils, staff, parents and governors. During a Year 7 RE lesson, a pupil said 'everyone is welcome and we all accept one another'. This acceptance in the Our Lady's community was typical. Pupil voice strongly reflected that acceptance was part of the culture at Our Lady's and that all forms of bullying were low, but when it did occur it was dealt with robustly. There was a clear consequence system of behaviour management that involved restorative justice processes. This procedure was underpinned by the values of Our Lady's where reconciliation was key. Strong and effective transition arrangements were evidenced and this was seen as a priority of both the Headteacher and governors. This, alongside the newly appointed Marketing Manager has ensured that Our Lady's is now a popular school. To further strengthen this area a real drive to embed the Parent Forum would be beneficial to further strengthen the links between the school and parents. It is abundantly evident that Our Lady's has a truly inclusive culture and that it makes a conscious effort to ensure that diversity among different cultures is not only recognised but also celebrated throughout the community. Respect, observed through interactions between pupils and staff, showed that everyone is valued and treated with dignity.

THE QUALITY OF WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING

Throughout the school there is a real strong ethos of support for the pupils. Our Lady's is a school where pupils come first. The school is proactive in working alongside a plethora of agencies and services to ensure that the needs of the pupils are met, especially those that are vulnerable or have complex needs. Developing the whole child through care, support and guidance alongside the provision of excellent opportunities to succeed is a high priority for the school. The chaplaincy team understand the importance of service to the wider community and lead on fundraising for a range of charities including CAFOD, St Joseph's Penny and MacMillan Cancer. Pupils were keen to list the range of opportunities they had to develop outside formally taught lessons including Caritas Ambassadors, Ethos Team, RE Ambassadors, Prefects, School Council and Duke of Edinburgh. Collectively these meet the school mission of educating the whole person and contributed to developing the leadership skills of the pupils. Furthermore, the pupils stressed that these were open to all pupils reflecting the inclusive nature of the school. Pupils were consulted on changes within the school through pupil voice; suggestion box and questionnaires and were involved throughout the recruitment process of new staff. These activities developed ownership and contributed significantly to their pride in Our Lady's. Exclusions are low and

analysis shows that there are no repeat offenders. Attendance is improving, which reflects that pupils enjoy attending Our Lady's.

THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS GOOD

Prayer is at the heart of the school community, and staff and students are confident in planning and leading worship. For instance, the assembly observed during the inspection celebrated the Feast of St Peter and Paul and it was wholly delivered by the student chaplaincy team, who performed a well-received, entertaining and confidently presented drama. The themes of the assembly were then pursued more deeply in the high quality Y7 RE lessons observed. The students in the chaplaincy team were clearly proud of and committed to their role. The school aims to ensure that this team is embedded and at the forefront of developing the school as a strong community of faith. Pupils pray and reflect together each morning with confidence. Form teachers are well supported by the RE department in the preparation of resources, which impacts on the way pupils conduct themselves around the school and how they treat one another. School leaders know the strengths and areas for development by evaluating worship in form time carefully. Students of all ages access a variety of other opportunities for worship, which are well supported by the Performing Arts Faculty and which are inclusive of all members of the school community whatever their background or tradition. These include days of reflection, voluntary retreats and RE days. The school chapel is well used by the RE department for student and staff reflection and meditation and is open each morning before school for prayer. The quality of display, artwork and scriptural messages, often produced by the students, which decorate the walls in the designated places of worship and the social spaces and the corridors of the school is impressive and admirably support the Catholic ethos of the school. Mass is celebrated for all age-groups both in school and at St Clare's at appropriate times during the school year and the aim is to develop this further and offer greater inclusion of parents in school Masses. The governors are extremely committed to the development of the school, especially to standards of achievement, and will need to continue to work closely with the senior team both in strengthening relationships with the parishes and in leading the spiritual life of the school.

THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS GOOD

Pupils bear witness to their Catholic faith and those pupils who are from other faiths or backgrounds apply the Gospel values to a full range of pastoral and learning situations, for example, charity events to raise money for vulnerable families and causes. Year 7 and 8 pupils share in the Eucharist regularly at St Clare's due to improving links with some local clergy and parishes. The school intends to develop this further in the coming years. Pupils bear witness to Christ in many practical ways. In discussion with the inspection team, pupils articulated how they live out the service for the common good. Prefects and a growing team of chaplains are beginning to make a difference in formulating school culture. Children feel valued and cared for as a result. Adults who work at Our Lady's describe very articulately how they feel valued and included in the school's witness to the life of Jesus Christ. For example, one adult commented that Our Lady's is similar to a flame: 'blow hard, and the flame may dim, but it never goes out'. This described what it is like to work at Our Lady's. Policies and procedures, in particular the excellent pastoral care, have clear meaning and are heavily rooted in the Gospel values. Governors praised the senior team, and the headteacher for their determination to ensure that prayer and reflection is witnessed at every opportunity. The headteacher is a wonderful role model for the whole community.

AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- To produce a clear and strategic plan of action for RE to ensure the gaps between boys and girls achievement, and between FSM and non-FSM achievement, is rapidly addressed.

- For governors and senior leaders to further develop the spiritual life of the school, including working at parish level, to ensure the Catholicity of the school develops at the same rate as standards of achievement.

- To embed the work of the chaplaincy team to ensure it is at the forefront in developing the school as a strong community of faith.

DIOCESE OF SALFORD
Department for Education

Date 4th July 2016

Dear Pupils

A massive thank you for the warm welcome that you gave us when we visited your school. As inspectors we were very impressed with how proud you all were of Our Lady's. Throughout the day you were very eager to express the many opportunities presented to yourselves to ensure that you develop into decent and caring young adults. It was clear that you belonged to the school and you all have played a part in making it a good Catholic school.

In the lessons observed, there was a great attitude to learning and we were impressed with how you engaged in your learning and were able to confidently articulate through presentations much of the RE content that you had learnt. You should be really proud!

This is clearly a school with a united and purposeful vision. Mr Ormsby, his staff and the governors are committed to ensuring that you receive at least a good quality of education and that the care you receive is exceptional.

We wish you well in the future and hope you all go on to achieve great things.

God bless you all

Sheldon Logue
Simon Smith
Leo Conley
(Section 48 Inspectors)

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Summary Report to Parents

On Wednesday 29th June 2016 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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