

Inspection date 3rd December 2015

Reporting Inspectors Brendan Hennessy
Susan Molloy

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

Type of School Primary
 URN 105543
 Age range of pupils 3 - 11
 Number on roll 227
 Appropriate authority The Governing Body
 Chair of Governors Wiktor Daron
 Executive Headteacher Catherine Gordon
 Head of School Anna Ward
 Religious Education Subject Leader Maurice Fernandes
 Date of previous inspection December 2010

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades 1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3=Requires Improvement 4 = Inadequate
Overall effectiveness of the school	1	
The quality of Catholic Leadership	1	
The quality of Word	1	
The quality of Welcome	1	
The quality of Welfare	1	
The quality of Worship	1	
The quality of Witness	1	
The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements		

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

Our Lady's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School serves the parish of Our Lady's and Saint Alphonsus and the parish of English Martyrs. This is an average sized primary school with 227 pupils on roll, including a 30 place nursery; 62% are baptised Roman Catholic. The school is situated in a culturally diverse urban area, which helps to make the school vibrant and enriches the learning experiences of the whole school community. Currently in school 33.2% of pupils are entitled to Free School Meals. 16.6% have been identified with Special Educational Needs and 31.1% speak English as an additional language. On entry to the nursery the attainment of the majority of pupils is slightly lower than the national average. Most pupils have made good or better progress in their learning by the time they leave at the end of KS2. There are 10 teachers in school, 8 of whom are Catholic; 4 teachers have the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. School provides extended provision for children both before and after school. The school holds the Inclusion Award and the International Schools Award.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS OUTSTANDING

Our Lady's is an outstanding Catholic primary school, where making Jesus known and loved is at the centre of everything it does. The strong Catholic ethos that is so evident throughout the school has helped to create a vibrant, lively, diverse and highly inclusive community where the happy, confident children thrive as they learn and play together. Prayer and worship are very much at the heart of this school, enriching everyone's experience of God's presence and enhancing their individual faith journeys. The mission statement is visible, understood and lived by all in the school family; all do their best 'to know God, love God and serve God'. The inspirational executive headteacher and head of school, supported by the dedicated RE subject leader, talented leadership team and enthusiastic staff, do all they can to ensure that the spiritual and pastoral needs of all are met. All staff do indeed 'share a vision of living the faith' as they make every effort to live out the gospel values. The parish priest, priest from English Martyrs and governors are very supportive, cohesive and committed to ensuring that Catholic education; of the highest standard is provided for all. The quality of teaching in Religious Education is always at least good and more often better, which ensures high standards are achieved across the school; as evidenced in the children's books and work around school. The friendly and well-mannered children are very proud of their school, their behaviour and attitude to learning is excellent. School takes every opportunity to build on the excellent links with the parish and home. Parents feel very welcome, included and valued. They state that school "has a real family feel...is very open... gives a great feeling of community" and that their children are very happy and enthusiastic about all that they do in school. Effective monitoring, assessment and evaluation of Religious Education has ensured that the school has continued to develop since the last inspection.

THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- The inspirational leadership and dedication of the executive headteacher, head of school and RE subject leader; a talented leadership team, an enthusiastic staff and committed governors.
- High quality teaching challenges and empowers the children to be creative, resilient and reflective learners. The happy and confident children have high aspirations for themselves and for each other.
- A true Catholic ethos permeates every aspect of school life and is lived out by everyone in school.
- The quality of the relationships between all members of the school community that gives the school a real family feel.

- Staff and children’s impressive knowledge and understanding of Scripture that underpins all that happens in school.

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

Our Lady’s school is extremely well led by an inspirational executive headteacher and head of school who share a clear vision for Catholic education and a sense of purpose for the education of the whole child. They demonstrate a strong, spiritual commitment and clearly value the individual worth of every member of the school community. Both seek to provide as many opportunities as possible for reflection and consideration so that each member of the school community may have a deeper awareness of this vision for Catholic education. They are supported by an innovative and dedicated RE subject leader, a talented leadership team and an enthusiastic staff team. The governors have a clear, strategic plan for the school and are deeply committed to the success of the school. They are proactive in providing support and challenge. Together with all of the staff, they do all that they can to ensure that RE and the development of the Catholic life of the school is at the core of the school’s thinking and practice. The supportive parish priest and the priest from English Martyrs are regular visitors to school and all in school value their contribution to and impact on the spiritual life of the school. Pupil leadership has been established through the school council and pupil voice it has been strengthened by the recent commissioning of the school chaplaincy team. Self-evaluation is rigorous and robust, honest and accurate, this, combined with relevant professional development for staff, has made a positive impact on the quality of provision in RE. It has also ensured that the leadership team is clear about the strengths of the school and what needs to be done to develop even further. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education was found to be outstanding and permeates all aspects of school life. All school leaders set the example as role models, demonstrate a strong commitment to the Church’s mission in education and make a significant contribution to the outstanding provision for Catholic education in Our Lady’s.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORD OF GOD IS OUTSTANDING

The importance of the Word of God was clearly demonstrated throughout the school in many creative, enriching and thoughtful displays; enhanced by delightful and perceptive contributions from the children. Sacred Scripture is clearly known and understood, it is without doubt a great strength of the school and is “engrained in everythingconnecting the Bible to our everyday lives”. It is made relevant and shared in many vibrant, joyful ways including music, hymns and drama. The school mission statement is visible, understood, lived and witnessed by all in school where everyone does indeed strive “to know God, love God and serve God”. All staff place a high priority on the teaching of Religious Education, which was demonstrated in their knowledge and understanding of RE, and evident in the high standards of children’s work and in their contributions to lessons. RE is at the core of the school’s curriculum with examples of inspirational teaching and engaging learning observed throughout the school. All lessons had common features i.e. thorough teacher subject knowledge; clear evidence of consistently high expectations, challenge, good pace, engaging learning, role play and practical concepts, which all helped the children’s understanding the concepts. Thoughtful and effective questioning challenged the children and move the learning on, including the use of the ‘big questions’. This ensured that the learning was productive and the children were secure in expressing their thoughts. Constructive marking and feedback was evident and consistent across the school, which ensured that children knew how to improve their work and enabled them to reflect on their learning and understanding of RE. Teaching Assistants and other members of staff have a very good understanding of the teaching of RE, they effectively interacted with pupils to support their learning and pastoral needs. The children have an excellent attitude to learning and were happy and confident to share their understanding of their faith. They learn about other faiths through religious education and assemblies, and this helps them to understand and respect the beliefs and cultures of others.

THE QUALITY OF THE WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING

Our Lady's is an exceptionally welcoming community where everyone feels valued and respected. Cultural diversity is celebrated; parents and friends feel a strong sense of belonging. They have great confidence in the school and were keen to express how everyone feels included. Families show great loyalty to Our Lady's. The annual review of the school's mission statement includes all stakeholders and strongly demonstrates how well the school makes everyone feel welcome. Families recognise that their children will be cared for in a safe and emotionally supportive environment. Any concerns are dealt with quickly and sensitively. Children love coming to school and readily support and help each other. The love shown to pupils on entry to school creates confident and reflective learners. The 'Gallery' area displays at the entrance are enhanced by members of the school family. High quality displays are evident throughout and offer a welcoming environment across the school. Clear communication is provided in weekly newsletters, its website and the school blog so that everyone feels very well informed about the life of the school. The pupils are happy and secure in their surroundings and are proud ambassadors of their school. They take a leading role in showing visitors around. Parents are very supportive of school events and a high attendance was clearly visible at the Reception class assembly. The pupils' sense of ownership and responsibility for what happens in their school is outstanding. Pupil buddying of younger children is exemplary. Our Lady's has a very strong link to the local youth club. The children in the school have a sense of outreach to the community and undertake local and international charity work. The school has been awarded the International and Inclusion awards and welcome all families in their home languages.

THE QUALITY OF THE WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING

The mission statement is central to all aspects of school life and clearly reflects the deeply embedded ethos of the school. Gospel values are at the heart of Our Lady's - lived out by all on a daily basis. Pupils try to 'live like Jesus every day' and 'care about the welfare of others, especially those in need'. Forgiveness and empathy are central to the school's values. Our Lady's shows compassion towards others and supports Mother Mary Feeding Centre in Malawi, St. Lawrence School in Zambia and Father Pat Clarke's work with street children in Brazil. Relationships between adults and children are based on respect and dignity. All in the community genuinely care for each other. This is demonstrated in the extensive provision of support delivered by members of staff to each other, to children, to parents, families and the wider community. The school is a 'strong family' where all celebrate joys and successes and support each during sufferings and pain. Behaviour is exemplary in the classrooms and around the school. Pupils are confident that adults can quickly resolve any issues or concerns they have. The quality of outreach support provided by the school is outstanding. Teachers are approachable and parents feel able to talk with them. The school works closely with external agencies to facilitate and implement additional support. The pastoral support leader is integral in forging links between the parish and school and is inspirational, welcoming children of all faiths to become active participants in parish life. Many children attend the well-established parish youth group, which has a clear faith focus. Pupil voice is a strength of the school. Many take on responsibilities of Chaplains, Prefects and Special Friends. Pupil Premium allocation ensures equality of provision for all and vulnerable pupils are recognised as a priority.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

Prayer is very much at the heart of the school. Children are encouraged to take opportunities for prayer and worship in its many forms through the arts, sport, the way they work together and through their charitable work, which has enhanced the individual faith journeys of all. School values the range of languages and cultural experiences that the children bring as observed in the hymns sung, the prayers written and said in Spanish. The importance of prayer and worship is expressed and witnessed through classroom acts of reflection and meditation, spontaneous prayer, assemblies, Mass and

liturgies. Each classroom has an age appropriate and relevant focal point for prayer and these are clearly valued by the children. Additional focal points for prayer, display and reflection are situated at key areas in the school, not least the Prayer Garden, memorial tree and Prayer Room, helping the children to understand that prayer can take place in many situations and in many ways. The children pray together as a school, in classes, small groups and individually, with great reverence and respect. They are comfortable with their feelings and confident to write and share their own prayers; many examples of which were seen all around school. The older children are paired with the youngest as “Special Friends” supporting them with responses and guidance throughout the year. The wonderful school assembly, classroom act of worship and reflections within the lessons observed, provided opportunities for participation, joyful singing and reflection. They were uplifting, inclusive, creative and thoughtful spiritual experiences for all present. These special moments of prayer and reflection were beautifully respected by the children. The recent introduction of pupil chaplains has already had a positive impact on prayer and worship across the school. The chaplains stated that they want to help teach other children about God and “you can’t have deep faith without knowing God”. The parish priest and priest from English Martyrs regularly visits the school to help the staff and children deepen their faith and understanding. Parents were very positive about the range of opportunities the school offers for prayer and worship. They really appreciate the input from the pupil chaplaincy team and the impact this has on the prayer lives of all the children. Parents were very positive about the sacramental programme, the support from school and the parish.

THE QUALITY OF THE WITNESS IS OUTSTANDING

Children and staff confidently and proudly express their Catholic faith, they do indeed “share a vision of living the faith”. High priority is given within the school curriculum to RE, prayer and worship, the teaching of social justice and the dignity of human life. The school clearly demonstrates outstanding witness to the church’s mission in education and does all it can to meet the challenges involved in this witness. All staff are positive role models for the children, promoting the ethos and values of the school and helping them to recognise that Jesus is with them in all aspects of school life. The Mission Statement is at the heart of the school. It is a powerful declaration of how all in the school give witness to the beliefs and values of the Catholic faith as they look for God in their own lives and the lives of others. The children have a clear understanding of the statement “We want to know God, love God and serve God.” and are confident in witnessing the Catholic beliefs which underpin this statement. Children feel that the adults in school really care about what they think and listen to them. Relationships are excellent between all members of the school community and all are able to talk openly and confidently about their faith. There is a great sense of teamwork, enthusiasm, joy and celebration of successes as well as sufferings, at all levels among the staff, children and parents giving the school a tangible family feel. An atmosphere of calm and a sense of belonging permeates the whole school which helps to create a happy and purposeful working environment for everyone in school. There are strong home, school and parish links which are enriched by the regular visits of both priests. The children have a great understanding of social justice and fairness, they are proud that their school responds to international disasters and how it cares for people within the local community. They are encouraged to reach out to those in need and give witness to Catholic values by fund raising for local and global charities. The children put the welfare of others at the heart of what they do. School fosters a spirit of awe and wonder through religious education and the broader curriculum and initiatives like the de-forestation campaign. Children are encouraged to hold God’s world as sacred and look after it as they develop a love of nature.

AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- To further develop assessment practices in RE across the school in line with the new “Come and See” programme.
- To strengthen pupil leadership in RE by developing the role of the chaplaincy team.

Summary Report to Parents

On 3rd December 2015 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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3rd December 2015

Dear Children,

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us and for making our visit to Our Lady's RC Primary School such a joyful occasion. We really enjoyed our time with you. You and all the adults in school are indeed living your Mission Statement and do try your best "to know God, love God and serve God" and because of this your school is an outstanding Catholic school.

We really enjoyed seeing your lessons and learning about all the wonderful things you do in Our Lady's. We saw as many of you as we could and we are sorry if we didn't see you in your class. Thank you for sharing your work with us, we were very impressed with the standard of work in your RE books and in your wonderful displays around school. It was clear to us that you have a very good knowledge and understanding of our Catholic faith and that you all really try your best in all of your lessons.

It was lovely to see so many happy, smiling faces. You are clearly very proud of your school and all that you have achieved together. We were also very impressed by the way you all really want to succeed in school and how well you look out for each other. You were so well behaved, and your politeness and manners were simply superb.

It was so pleasing to see how attentive and confident you were in the acts of worship and the wonderful class assembly we saw. Everyone showed great respect and reverence, your behaviour was excellent, your singing and prayers, in both English and Spanish, were uplifting.

The staff, the school governors and your parents are extremely proud of all of you and of what you have achieved over the years, well done and keep it up!

All the adults in school want to work with you to build the Catholic life of your school even further so that together you can continue "to know God, love God and serve God" and share what you are doing so well with others.

God bless you all, enjoy Christmas and the rest of the school year.

Yours sincerely,

Brendan Hennessy and Susan Molloy
(RE Inspectors)