



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for Our Lady's RC Primary School

URN:105543

Carried out on behalf of the Right Rev. John Arnold, Bishop of Salford on:

Date: 23rd -24th November 2023

Overall effectiveness The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....	2
Catholic life and mission (p.3) How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.....	1
Religious education (p.5) The quality of curriculum religious education.....	2
Collective worship (p.7) The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.....	2
The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference	Yes
The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop	Yes
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- The strong leadership of the dynamic executive head teacher and her passionate and enthusiastic head of school enables the school to thrive as a truly inclusive Catholic community.
- The care and compassion by the dedicated staff ensures that the pupils at Our Lady's feel loved and cared for.
- Pupils have a deep understanding of and have responded with great enthusiasm to the call to care for the common home.
- The recently reviewed mission statement is a clear and accurate expression of the unique identity of the school and is known and lived by the whole community.

This Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection was carried out under canons 804 & 806 of the code of canon law. For maintained schools and academies in England it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.48 of the Education Act 2005. For maintained schools and academies in Wales it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.50 of the Education Act 2005.

What the school needs to improve:

- The subject lead to use her expertise to provide further professional development for staff less confident in helping pupils to lead prayer and liturgy.
- Use the talent within the school to share best practice, to improve the consistency of the teaching of religious education.

Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church’s educational mission.

Catholic life and mission key judgement grade:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1



Pupils enthusiastically contribute to the Catholic mission of their school. Pupils know that they are loved by the dedicated staff team. They feel trusted and as a result, are happy and confident to express their views. Pupils are excellent advocates for the care of our common home and rise to this challenge embracing their responsibilities with great passion. There is a strong focus on Catholic social teaching and as such, pupils are proactive in finding ways of responding locally, nationally and globally. Pupils have a highly developed sense of respect for those of other faiths and cultures. For example, when preparing rosary bags to be sent home in October, prayer beads in addition to rosary beads were included for families to pray in fidelity to their own commitments. The pastoral team which includes the Growing in Faith Together team and Special Friends in Year 5 and Year 6 are proud of their roles and recognise the impact it has on other pupils. Indeed, one pupil was able to clearly articulate the ‘strong relationship’ a Year 6 Special Friend has with her little brother in the Reception class.

The recently reviewed mission statement accurately reflects the school’s unique identity. It is known, talked about and lived by both pupils and staff. It is the heartbeat of the school. The staff at this school know their pupils and families well, clearly going the extra mile to support all members of the community, especially those who are most vulnerable. For example, the school business manager has implemented several initiatives to assist families with issues such as poor attendance and punctuality whilst liaising with local businesses to organise food parcels and a holiday club to provide support during a cost of living crisis. This is a highly inclusive school with a strong sense of community and Christ is at the centre of it. Staff are exemplary role models for the pupils. Many pupils join the school at different points in the year and as stated, ‘everyone is made to feel wanted and welcomed as a gift’. A high level of pastoral care is provided for all pupils with sensitive

adjustments made for those with complex needs. The vibrant physical environment reflects the importance placed upon the visibility of the Catholic character of the school. The provision for relationship and health education meets both statutory and diocesan requirements. The school consulted with parents before adopting the *Ten:Ten 'Life to the Full'* scheme of work.

The tangible mission statement of the school is lived out joyously through the dynamic leadership of the executive head teacher, ably supported by the head of school, senior leadership team and governors. Collectively, they have a deep sense of ministry and purpose. The parish priest, Fr Pat, is a regular visitor to the school. His pastoral support is highly valued by the staff, pupils and families. Leaders and governors recognise parents as first educators and have developed highly successful strategies for engaging and supporting them. For example, in the weekly newsletter the Sunday Gospel is interpreted with thoughtful questions to provoke discussion and each week, ideas for themed prayer and liturgy are sent out for families to pray together at home. Parents are extremely supportive and appreciative of the work of the school with one parent commenting, 'The school has a family feel in a big city'. The head of school has been inspirational in her witness to Catholic social teaching and has demonstrated an exemplary commitment to care for our common home. Governors are ambitious with high levels of expertise and are dedicated to the continual development of Our Lady's. They have accurate first-hand knowledge of all aspects of the Catholic life and mission of the school.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.....

2

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education.....

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for religious education.....

2



The Early Years Foundation Stage provides an excellent start for the children joining Our Lady's school. The children settle quickly and thrive in the quality of care and nurturing relationships. As a result, they achieve well and develop secure knowledge preparing them for the next stage in their learning. As pupils progress through school, they secure knowledge, understanding and skills demonstrating that they know and remember more. Pupils clearly enjoy their lessons and are eager to share their learning with adults. Pupils can speak with confidence using subject specific vocabulary. In Upper Key Stage 2 pupils engage in discussions that demonstrate a desire to deepen their learning. In the best lessons pupils were asked challenging questions and given the opportunity to work in pairs to reflect upon them. For example, in a lesson where pupils were considering how God calls all in love and service, pupils were discussing loyalty within friendships and how this can at times be tested. One pupil conceded that it can be hard sometimes to show love but explained 'that two wrongs don't make a right'. To further improve ensure all lesson provide an opportunity for deeper thinking to challenge all pupils.

Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and know where to seek support if required. Teachers have high expectations of pupils in lessons using sacred scripture as a starting point. Pupils reflect on the impact of this in their own lives and as a result learn well. In the most effective lessons, teachers use questions skillfully to determine pupils' prior knowledge in order to build on this to deepen their learning. Teachers plan carefully to offer a wide range of opportunities for pupils to present their work. Good quality resources are used effectively within lessons. For example, in a lesson in the early years, the class teacher used her own Baptism robe and white garments to help the children to understand the symbols used during the Sacrament of Baptism. Well-planned adaptations are made, including the use of other adults, to support the learning for pupils who have special educational need and/or disabilities. To further improve teaching and

learning in religious education, focus needs to be on using the talent within school to share best practice in order to improve consistency.

Leaders and governors ensure that the school curriculum is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* (RECD). Leaders have planned the curriculum sequentially. They have supplemented their chosen scheme with opportunities to explore Catholic social teaching at various points in the year. Leaders and governors have ensured it is comparable to other core subjects in terms of professional development, resourcing, timetabling, and staffing. The committed subject leader has a strong vision for the teaching and learning of religious education and demonstrates a high level of expertise. Through delivering regular high quality professional development, she has had a significant impact on the further development of teaching of religious education in the school. Careful monitoring of the implementation of professional development will ensure consistency across key stages and lead to further improvements. She is effectively supported by the head of school to develop the subject further. The quality of her leadership was recognised beyond the school when she worked with the diocesan team supporting schools during national lockdowns. Leaders' and governors' self-evaluation is well informed through frequent visits to the school including learning walks and opportunities to look at books and talk to the pupils. This results in effective strategic actions being taken by the school.

Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

2



Pupils respond well to prayer and liturgy at Our Lady's. In the whole school gathering they willingly participated in roles prepared for them by the Growing in Faith Together team. They reflected in silence, said prayers reverently and sang joyfully with great enthusiasm. Prayer and liturgy is appropriate to the age and capacity of the pupils and they understand a rich variety of ways of praying that are part of the Catholic tradition. For example, in the Reception class the children responded with great joy during prayer and liturgy whilst in Year 6, pupils willingly and confidently led a discussion of the meaning of virtues rooted in sacred scripture independently of the adults in the room. Pupils work well with others to plan and prepare a range of engaging experiences of prayer and liturgy which are recorded in beautiful class liturgy books. To further improve, all pupils need to experience the same opportunity to participate in high quality prayer and liturgy as observed in most classes across school. Pupils have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year and how it influences the prayer life of the school. The Growing in Faith Together team was already thinking ahead to the season of Advent as to how they could best support the spiritual life of the school.

There is a daily pattern for prayer linked to the plans for the liturgical year which is a central part of everyday life at Our Lady's. Well chosen scripture is used to enhance prayer and liturgy. Less experienced staff use the subject leader's expertise to support them with this when necessary. Most staff are skilled in helping pupils plan and lead prayer and liturgy. In order to further improve the provision for all children, staff who are less confident in helping pupils to lead prayer and liturgy should be offered further professional development opportunities to work with existing skilled staff and observe some of the excellent practice that already exists in school. Prayer and liturgy is enhanced when staff and pupils are encouraged to use their gifts. This was observed when a Year 5 pupil played the piano during a whole school liturgy. All rooms have a class altar reflecting the

liturgical year creating a focus for prayer. The subject leader has worked hard to include families and support them in the prayer life of the school. Weekly themed prayer and liturgy suggestions are sent out to encourage families to pray together at home.

Leaders and governors have shown a strong commitment to further develop the impact of prayer and liturgy in school with the recently reviewed prayer and liturgy policy which identifies clear progression as pupils move through the key stages. This was clearly evidenced during the inspection. The subject leader regularly attends diocesan professional development and disseminates this with staff. Focus now needs to be on the monitoring of the implementation of the policy and sharing existing good practice so that all staff are well supported to ensure consistency across the school. The school calendar has been planned to provide opportunities for children to celebrate the Eucharist at the church of St Alphonsus. Leaders and governors have ensured the appropriate use of resources to support the development of high quality experiences of prayer and liturgy. Careful consideration has been given to the choosing of statues and pictures which reflect the diverse community ensuring they are meaningful and relevant to all pupils. Leaders and governors regularly review the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy as part of the school's monitoring cycle.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Our Lady's RC Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	105543
Full postal address of the school	Whalley Road, Whalley Range, Manchester, M16 8AW
School phone number	0161 226 2767
Name of head teacher or principal	Executive Head Catherine Gordon
Chair of governing board	Charles Flannery
School Website	www.ourladys-pri.manchester.sch.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Trustees	Diocese of Salford
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	3 rd December 2015
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Mary Garvey	Lead inspector
Danielle Ellison	Team inspector
Name of inspector	Lead/team
Name of inspector	Lead/team

Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement

