



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

URN: 105576

Carried out on behalf of the **Right Rev. Bishop John Arnold, Bishop of Salford** on:
5-6 October 2023

Date:

Overall effectiveness The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....	1
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.....	1
Collective worship (p.7) The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.....	1
The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference	✓
The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop	✓
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- Leaders in the school have created a faith filled community that is fully inclusive, welcoming and ambitious for all, where staff are strong role models for students.
- Pastoral care for everyone, but especially those that are most vulnerable is exceptional ensuring the school is a 'Beacon of Hope' for the community.
- There is an environment where behaviour is exemplary underpinned by a climate of mutual respect.
- Outcomes in Religious Education are strong.
- The school is committed to creating a meaningful and accessible sacramental and liturgical experience to develop the faith lives of the whole school.

What the school needs to improve:

- Ensure that the *Religious Education Directory* is implemented fully providing a wide range of tasks and experiences for students that lead to deep religious knowledge and understanding.
- Continue to engage with the local deanery to support the Confirmation programme.
- Continue to engage parents in all aspects of the spiritual life of the school.

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



Students at Our Lady’s know that they are valued because they are made in the image of God. Students completely embrace its Catholic life and mission. They fully appreciate the opportunities that they are given and are enthusiastic about seizing leadership opportunities such as Growing in Faith Together (GIFT) chaplains, Youth SVP, and Caritas ambassadors. Students told inspectors that the school ‘leads them to sainthood’. They are deeply appreciative of their teachers, the chaplain and other adults and recognise that they are loved by them. Students told us that ‘the staff in this school are inspirational and they are who I aspire to be’. They are proud of how diverse their school is and acknowledge that it is fully inclusive in its approach. They spoke proudly of ‘Culture Day’ and the ‘Tour of the World’ event. As a result of the care they receive students flourish as responsible young people who are committed to Catholic social teaching. Student behaviour is exemplary, showing respect for themselves, their peers and staff. A student told us, “It is a privilege to be a student here”. All students in Year 7 complete the Faith in Action Award instilling a commitment to living out their faith from the start of their journey in school.

The mission statement ‘To know, love and serve God’ is lived out at Our Lady’s. The Catholic life and mission of the school is its bedrock. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Staff feel valued, cared for and supported so they are best equipped to serve the students and in many cases their families. The sense that this is a Catholic community is palpable and the staff serve the students with joy. The community extends beyond the school into the parish communities through organisations such as Youth SVP; they give generously both in terms of charity and time through events such as ‘Young at Heart’ and parish picnics. Pastoral care in the school is strong and is built on principles of forgiveness, the school make an explicit and concrete commitment to the most vulnerable; this is exemplified through high levels of attendance and an exceptional special

educational needs and social, emotional and mental health provision on site. The school environment is a living sign of its identity; classroom environments and corridors are vibrant and reflect the catholicity of the school. Provision for relationships, sex and health education is strong with policies in line with Catholic teaching. As a result, students demonstrate a clear understanding of what they have learnt.

Leaders in the school have created a truly Catholic school that embodies Catholic social teaching. The Headteacher is passionate about creating a school where there is 'no poverty of ambition'. Leaders at all levels ensure that Christ is at the centre. Governors are committed and active in the school, they execute their duties with fastidious care. Leaders and governors ensure that self-evaluation is frequent and accurate leading to well targeted strategic development plans to enhance the school's high performance. Students also contribute to this process, regularly presenting at governors' meetings. Leaders work with the diocese to support other schools. Partnerships with local parishes and primary schools are increasingly strong. Induction of new staff to the profession and to the school is robust; these staff feel well supported by leaders. Parents are very supportive; they appreciate the values that are instilled in their children and they are particularly happy with the religious education that their children receive. The school is continuing to develop this partnership through their current initiatives for engagement with families.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

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

1

Provision

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

1

Leadership

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

1



Students at Our Lady's achieve exceptionally well in religious education. It is a high performing core subject. Students enjoy lessons and are fully engaged in their learning. In lessons students make good progress, demonstrating excellent subject knowledge and religious literacy. They make very good connections in their thinking and are aware of the impact of their learning on their daily lives. Students concentrate very well in class and are able to work independently. The quality of written work in students' books is of a consistently high standard irrespective of their ability. Students ask incisive and high-quality questions which is a result of deep learning in their lessons. Assessment is used frequently both in terms of self-assessment and by the teacher which means students are very clear about what they need to do to progress further. Students talk enthusiastically about their religious education lessons, they told us that it is one of their favourite subject in school because the teachers care so much.

Teaching in religious education is strong, this is as a result of excellent professional development that is driven by the subject leader who has transformed the department since her appointment. The curriculum is carefully planned and sequenced so that teachers can deliver effectively and consistently. Teachers subject knowledge is deep and secure enabling them to answer students' questions and correct misconceptions confidently and competently. This was demonstrated in Key Stage 4 lessons exceptionally well where complex concepts were explained well and understood with clarity by students. Collaborative planning is strong within the department ensuring workload is managed well and there is a consistency of approach across all classes. Retrieval practice was observed in every lesson which allows students to 'know more and remember more' in their religious education lessons. Questioning in the department is a strength leading to high levels of understanding for students. Staff in the department have, along with supportive leaders, identified the continued further development of rich tasks particularly in Key Stage 3 as a priority in their

planning and delivery of the *Religious Education Directory* creating tasks that will continue to enthuse and engage students in their learning.

Leaders in the school have made rapid progress in the implementation of the *Religious Education Directory* which has been underpinned by a robust training programme for all staff. The subject leader is fully committed to the continued professional development of the team and the monthly newsletter is a model of good practice. Her vision for improvement for the department is inspirational and she is to be commended for the progress that has been made. The religious education team's impact across the school is clear and staff in all departments respect the high-quality work that they lead; the leadership, care and support provided result in extremely high standards. The subject leader is committed to sharing her work across the diocese. The religious education department is ably line managed by a fully committed deputy head teacher who works closely with the subject leader to ensure pedagogy, resourcing, self-evaluation, and delivery are of the highest standard. Leaders continue to develop the enrichment programme that supports learning and understanding for students. There is full parity with other core curriculum areas and religious education really is the 'core of the core' in this school. Governors are well informed about the work of the department and are rightly proud of the achievements that have been secured, they are fully committed to the continuing improvement of this area of their school.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

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

1

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

1

Leadership

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

1

The quality of collective worship at Our Lady's is exceptional. Students engage willingly in prayer and liturgy, they behave respectfully when they are in Mass, assembly and when they are praying. Students appreciate the range of opportunities that they have to develop their spiritual lives. Students described their lives at school as 'faith-filled'. They embrace popular piety such as the rosary and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament with maturity and they reflect on their spiritual lives deeply. The GIFT chaplains are pro-active in leading liturgy and they take pride in this area of school. They speak highly about their chaplain and they appreciate opportunities such as 'Breakfast with Jesus' and rosary walks as well as the sacramental experiences that they have, including Reconciliation and weekly Eucharist. There is clear evidence that students understand the liturgical year and that the Eucharist is the 'source and summit' of Christian life. Students make the connection between prayer and action and the experiences that they have lead them to live meaningful and full lives. Students recognise the value of prayer in their lives and said that their voice was reflected in the prayers that they used in form time as these are written by students.

The prayer life of the school is central for the whole community. All members of the school community pray together every day. There is an established school prayer which is said daily and this is enhanced by reflections and creative liturgy. The word of God is central in school and students are confident in talking about scripture. The headteacher uses the Gospel as his reflection with staff each week. Staff truly are role models in living their faith with students and their confidence in praying with them is evident. Staff in assemblies prayed with authenticity and conviction and led students to an understanding of how the scripture they were using was relevant to the daily lives of both students and staff. The liturgical year forms the basis of the school year and the richness of the church is reflected in the practices of the school. The school provides appropriate prayer spaces and religious icons, symbols and statues are present throughout the school. The chapel is at the

heart of the school and Mass is celebrated there twice weekly. The quality of liturgical music in these celebrations is strong and students sing confidently. Parents receive the 'prayer of the week' and are invited into the school to participate in liturgical celebrations such as the Year 7 Welcome Mass - some parents have indicated they would like even more of this.

Leaders in the school have a living collective worship policy which is enacted consistently across the school. Leaders and governors are explicit in their determination that students are at the heart of collective worship and the impact of this commitment is seen in the high level of participation in the school. Leaders and governors invest in training for staff formation so that they can fully understand their role as spiritual leaders of the students. GIFT leaders in the school at Key Stage 4 deliver training in partner primary schools, ensuring there is sustainable student led liturgical leadership in the future. Leaders and the chaplain provide a broad range of experiences for students so that they can fully become the people that God has called them to be, students told us that at Our Lady's their faith is inspired. Leaders have ensured that this is a school where Christ is known and where students can live their lives to the full.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Our Lady's Roman Catholic High School
School unique reference number (URN)	105576
Full postal address of the school	Alworth Road, Manchester M9 0RP
School phone number	01615079640
Name of head teacher or principal	Mr Lee Ormsby
Chair of governing board	Mr M Campbell
School Website	https://www.olhs-manchester.org.uk/
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age-range of pupils	11-16
Trustees	Diocese of Salford
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	29 June 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Andrea O'Callaghan	Lead inspector
Xavier Bowers	Team inspector
Edward Allanson	Trainee inspector
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