

INSPECTION REPORT

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**Inspection carried out Under Canon 806
and in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005**

Name of School **Our Lady of Mount Carmel RC Primary School, Ashton-under-Lyne, OL6 9JJ**

Inspection date Tuesday 23rd January 2018

Reporting Inspectors Mark Mountcastle
Marie Kwiatkowski

Type of school	Primary
URN	131285
Age range of pupils	3-11
Number on roll	223
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Elizabeth Aspin
Headteacher	Helen Hayes
Religious Education Co-ordinator	Geraldine Kirkup
Date of previous inspection	November 2012

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

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

Our Lady of Mount Carmel RC Primary School is a Roman Catholic school located very close to the town centre of Ashton under Lyne in Tameside serving the Parish of St Ann's. It is a one form entry nursery and primary school consisting of 223 pupils, 61% of which are Roman Catholic. Of these pupils 58% are white British, 18% are Asian or Asian British Pakistani with the remaining 24% being Polish, Romanian, Filipino, and Chinese. The school is a popular choice for Asylum Seekers and Fair Access pupils and the proportion of disadvantaged pupils remains higher than the national average which reflects the changing nature of the school catchment area. For the last 3 years the school has been led by an executive headteacher but from February 2018 the executive will become the permanent headteacher with responsibility for just Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- **Governance of the school and its impact on the Catholic life of the school**
- **The GIFT Team and children who are excellent witnesses to the Faith**
- **The exceptional welcome received by all members of the school community**
- **The quality of the relationships and partnerships between, school, parish and home which greatly enhances the Catholic life of the school**

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL is OUTSTANDING

The school have made outstanding progress since the last inspection and this is a truly outstanding Catholic school providing excellent Catholic provision for the children and community of our Lady of Mount Carmel and the Parish of St Ann. This is a great testament to all within the community as it has been a challenging time which has been responded to sensitively and with faith at heart. The future is extremely bright. Since the last inspection the points highlighted for development have been responded to and the areas have since become real strengths of the school, particularly the GIFT Team. The leadership of RE has had a real and tangible impact on the school community and the Catholic life of the school is at the heart of everything. The GIFT Team are an outstanding example of living Witness and the impact they have had on Worship is tremendous. The link between home, school and parish is extremely strong and evident throughout. The strong Catholic ethos, that is so evident throughout the school, has helped to create a vibrant and inclusive community where happy, confident children thrive as they learn, play and pray together. The children, staff and skilled governors are members of a Catholic family that encompasses the true meaning of community, reaching out to and including everyone. They live the Word of God in an exemplary manner.

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP is OUTSTANDING

For the last three years the school have been led by an executive headteacher who has split her time between two schools. From February 2018 she will take up the post of headteacher at Our Lady of Mount Carmel on a permanent basis and the community, children, governors and parents are enthused by the future. During her time as executive headteacher she has made many improvements and, although not fully reflected in the school's self-evaluation, she is very knowledgeable about the school, its relevant history and more importantly the exciting future that lies ahead. The headteacher is supported extremely well by an experienced deputy and very hard working, well informed and challenging governors. The governing body know their school very well and understand the need to celebrate themselves and the excellent work taking place more rigorously in the self-evaluation process. The parish priest is an asset to the school community and the governing body. He is tireless in his efforts to 'get these children to heaven' and he is a constant support and challenge for the senior leadership team. In the absence of the headteacher (to attend an OFSTED inspection at her other school) he gave a very detailed and knowledgeable account of the school; its strengths and its areas for development. The whole of the senior leadership team and the governing body are dedicated to their mission. The school is fully inclusive and they pride themselves on reaching out to vulnerable groups – 'we don't need to value difference, because we don't see it.'

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL (incorporating Welcome, Welfare and Witness) is OUTSTANDING

The welcome from every member of staff, the parents and, of course, the happy, smiling children is so very warm and genuine. Behaviour observed in lessons and throughout the day was excellent. The children cooperate very well in lessons and when issues arise they told inspectors they were always dealt with appropriately and 'fairly to both sides.' They told us that they are treated with respect by everyone and they feel valued. The parents reinforced this view and talk about the wonderful staff who live out the values of the school and where every child is valued as an individual, regardless of need. Staff are always accessible, there is an open door policy and when issues arise they are always dealt with appropriately. Parents talk about a strong faith life within school and one parent particularly told inspectors that her daughter had a real sense of belonging to the Catholic family in school, despite not being a Catholic herself. The school is rightly proud to be fully inclusive and ensures all the children are involved and included in all activities. The children lead on many and varied initiatives to help them become good and cooperative members of the school and wider community. The CARITAS team are extremely proactive and their work shows a deepening understanding of service to the common good. The children are passionate about the rights of individuals and showing respect to each other is engrained in the school's culture. Their welcome to new children is very warm and they are fully included. One example stated is when, 'Miss changes the names in the register to make sure everyone plays with the new children.' The children are heavily involved in the life of the parish and as a result the school /parish link is very strong. The parish priest is known and loved by everyone and the work between the two is entwined and seamless.

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (incorporating Word) is OUTSTANDING

The mission at Our Lady of Mount Carmel is clear throughout the school; not just on walls written on displays but lived and embedded into every aspect of school life – to enjoy, excel and grow in God's family. The school is clearly one big, happy Catholic family and as the parish priest put it so succinctly, 'word is useless if not made flesh and active.' The Word of God is clearly evident throughout school most notably through the children whose knowledge of Sacred Scripture is excellent and so obviously embedded. The children in Year 6 were involved in a very challenging lesson to find Bible quotes and events and excelled in telling the inspector about the Book of Exodus, not just its content but the meaning. The children throughout were very confident in their learning in Religious Education and were obviously used to clear routines and quality lessons. All lessons observed were at least good, showing good progression in skills, content and knowledge. The children's reverence and behaviour in lessons is also exemplary. In Early Years Foundation Stage the children were completely engaged in their learning as they accepted the invitation to become one of Jesus' special followers and in Lower Key Stage 2 the children became completely engrossed in prayer, responding powerfully to the atmosphere created in class. In addition, they had a very detailed knowledge of the Liturgical Year, themes and meaning. The children throughout school are using big questions confidently to consolidate and extend their learning, for example the children in Key Stage 1 put the Bible into a modern day perspective – 'Does the Christian Bible help people today?'

THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP is OUTSTANDING

Examples of high quality prayer and worship are evident throughout school and it is clear it is a very important aspect of school life. Examples are seen everywhere, from quality displays encouraging thought or inspiration to reverent and thoughtful services, lessons and assembly. The children, supported in an excellent way by staff, are clearly comfortable expressing themselves through prayer and the processes throughout the school are clearly embedded. The reverence and respect shown by the children is particularly outstanding, as was their behaviour to, from and during sessions. The GIFT and CARITAS Teams are a real strength of the school. The knowledge, enthusiasm and genuine love the children had for their role was outstanding. The children are heavily involved in the prayer life of the whole community, not just in school and they were very keen to celebrate their work, the displays and their achievements. Pupils eulogised about the importance of their faith and are rightly proud of the impact they are having. They lead a weekly prayer group, plan and deliver assemblies and coordinate displays, the newest being favourite quotes from the last three Popes, about whom they are very knowledgeable and the very effective 'Angel Bombing.' They are all regulars at weekly Mass and deliver and pick up the special intentions book that is completed by parishioners and forms part of the prayer within school. Their next initiative is a Bible trolley. They are also very knowledgeable about the RE lessons they are part of and are very confident discussing their learning and its role in their all-round faith journey. They work very closely with the parish priest and the RE subject leader, adding much value to the outstanding quality of Worship throughout the school.

AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- **Further develop big questioning skills across the curriculum**
- **To continue to develop a more creative approach to understanding scripture and the wider RE curriculum (Building the Kingdom)**
- **Further develop rigorous systems for self-evaluation and celebration**