

**INSPECTION REPORT**

Mount Carmel RC Primary School, Blackley, Manchester, M9 8BG.

Inspection date: Friday, 27 March 2015

Reporting Inspectors: Dennis Harrison, Anne Heard and Mark Mountcastle

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

Type of School	Primary
URN	105555
Age range of pupils	3-11
Number on roll	485
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Catherine Anderson
Headteacher	Patricia Ganley
Religious Education Co-ordinator	Marie Hart
Date of previous inspection	2010

<b>The Inspection judgements are:</b>	<b>Grade</b>	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 the Word of God community	1	
The quality of the Welcome community	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**

Mount Carmel is much larger than most primary schools and the number of pupils has grown since the last Section 48 inspection. There are 485 pupils on roll including a 65 place nursery. The school is on two sites, 300m apart approximately. The area the school serves covers parts of Blackley, Moston and Harpurhey. 40% of pupils are known to be eligible for Free School Meals. Over the past few years there has been a distinct growth in the number of non-white British pupils. 42% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. Significant groups in the school are Black African as well as White European such as Polish. There is 16% mobility in the school population. 15.6% of pupils have English as their second language. The school is situated in the Parish of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. The parish is twinned with St. John Bosco's R.C. Church with Rev Fr Philip Brady as parish priest of both churches. A good number of the staff are practising Catholics within the parish. The headteacher is a parishioner at Our Lady of Mount Carmel, as is the Chair of Governors.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

Mount Carmel is an outstanding Catholic school. The exceptional and focussed leadership of the headteacher sets the tone for leaders at all levels to contribute resoundingly well to the direction and purpose of this impressive Catholic school. Astute and rigorous support and challenge from governors means a culture of reflective and honest dialogue exists. There is a superb team ethic whereby all adults go about their work with dedication to reach out to every child and meet their needs exceptionally well. When you sign up for Mount Carmel, you sign up to do your absolute best to make sure each child has 'life to the full' as they go through the school.

Many of the children start their journey at the school from below average starting points, although representing the full ability range. Immediately the school gets to work and with excellent partnerships with parents and carers, the children get off to a flying start. The children continue to make impressive progress in all Key Stages. The quality of teaching in RE is always good and more often better as children experience imaginative and ambitious lessons. They develop pride in their work and hence the children's books show both quality and quantity in equal measure. Self-evaluation is accurate and honest, setting a meaningful path for the future.

The school is rightly proud of the children as they become articulate, friendly and thinking young people. Led by the school Chaplain and staff, the school offers a huge array of opportunities for the children to grow in faith. Chaplaincy, Mini- Vinnies, Children of Galilee and altar servers / Marian Apostles to name but a few examples. The school's mission statement is a living testament to what occurs every day. It is beautifully worded and accessible for children. Mount Carmel is a beacon of outstanding Catholic education, facing its joys and challenges with passion and energy.

## **THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:**

- The outstanding and passionate leadership of the headteacher.
- The impressive team ethic that is evident throughout the school.
- The sense of calmness and prayerful witness in each room.
- The fact that everyone is important and has a voice in the school's vision and mission.
- The engaging and confident children who are full of life and who are thoroughly enjoying their time at Mount Carmel.

## **THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS OUTSTANDING**

At the heart of this successful school is the passionate and determined leadership of the headteacher. She is held in high regard and enormously respected, not only by the entire community of Mount Carmel, but within her locality and in all corners of the Diocese. To her, every child is precious and deserves the very best the school can offer. She has established an excellent shared vision with the Chair of Governors, and both take formative roles in serving the Parish. They have bridged impressively the qualities of mutual friendship and respect with a fierce determination for the good of the school. This means challenge and support is witnessed in the context of constantly striving for improvement within a refreshingly honest and trusting

dialogue. The headteacher is supported by the Deputy Headteacher in an excellent manner. Middle leaders are exceptional role models and are correspondingly meeting their roles with increasing effectiveness. The school invests in their professional development, so that they are very well prepared to move forward in their varying roles.

The exceptional RE coordinator offers superb support for all staff and ensures that RE sits at the centre of the school curriculum. She is meticulous in ensuring the school's successes are evidenced in portfolios of work and information. The school Chaplain plays a pivotal role in providing the children with numerous opportunities to do special jobs both in school and at Church. The vibrant and exciting experiences offered to all the children is down to a community where every person is invited to lead, to belong and to share in the school's undoubted successes as an outstanding Catholic primary school. Everyone steps up to the mark to do their bit. Therefore the children see their teachers and other adults as people to help them to 'walk in the ways of the Lord'.

### **THE QUALITY OF THE WORD OF GOD COMMUNITY IS OUTSTANDING**

The Word of God is visible and tangible in every room in this excellent school. No effort is spared to cover the walls with beautiful displays, murals, prayers and child centred work. Teaching is of the highest standard. Throughout the school the children's knowledge is exemplary. From Nursery the children can articulate about their faith and the relevant themes and always do so with patience, consideration and great enthusiasm. The quality of discussion is outstanding and the children are obviously used to sharing ideas and developing thinking. In Key Stage One the children can explain the differences between the Old and New Testament and these skills develop rapidly, so that by the end of Key Stage Two the children have an adroit knowledge of scripture and recall biblical stories with confidence.

In one KS2 RE lesson the children learned about Palm Sunday. They listened intently, with respect for one another. The lesson was enhanced by the excellent questioning of the teacher, the calm and purposeful atmosphere within the room and the superb use of resources. As one child commented, 'It is a dream come true to be one of Jesus' disciples'.

The standard of work in the children's books gives firm evidence that RE is of paramount importance throughout the school. It is at least in line with standards in English books, if not better. Great pride is taken with presentation and considerable thought and detail goes in to the planning of the wide ranging and exciting opportunities afforded to the children.

In another lesson the children discussed reconciliation with references to 'sin damaging our relationship with God' and through sin your soul can become 'rough and need attention.'

In a particularly prayerful lesson in KS2 the children considered the scriptural links of Mary's passion by discussing the Pieta. Children responded with a depth of thought and reverence beyond their years, demonstrating outstanding understanding of scripture. The exceptional questioning by the teacher and the evidence of supportive relationships led to a memorable spiritual experience for the class.

Thoughtful displays and artwork around the entire school are witness to the central importance of Catholic education.

### **THE QUALITY OF THE WELCOME COMMUNITY IS OUTSTANDING**

It is a very special feeling to enter Mount Carmel RC Primary School. Smiling faces greet you around every corner and one cannot help but feel totally at home within minutes of arriving. Everyone wants to help, everyone looks out for each other and everyone is willing to lend an ear to anyone who needs to be heard. It is little wonder that the children feel so safe and secure as they know that at their school they are 'grateful to welcome each child as loved by God'.

New families arriving at the school, sometimes from far-away places, have settled in very well due to the outstanding welcome given to all. This is particularly valued by the parents, who are delighted with everything that the school offers. They feel that everyone in school is approachable, typically saying, 'In our school every child and every family matters, nothing is too much trouble'. Another parent expressed the impact of Mount Carmel's welcoming family atmosphere, stating; 'Everyone is lovely – I refuse to move out of the area because my children are so happy'.

It is especially impressive how the children warmly welcome visitors to their school. They talk confidently about how brilliant it is to be a part of the Mount Carmel family and are rightly proud of their school. They

are joyful about one another's successes and wear their uniform with pride. Many families have been involved with the school for many generations, feeling a close sense of belonging to this thriving Catholic community in North Manchester.

The valued presence of the parish priest is a key feature of Mount Carmel. His humorous warmth allows everyone to feel at ease around the school and the parish. The school and parish share many activities and are seen as entwined by the families of Mount Carmel school.

### **THE QUALITY OF THE WELFARE COMMUNITY IS OUTSTANDING**

The Christ-centred ethos is present everywhere throughout the school. The excellent, caring relationship between staff and pupils is an important feature of Mount Carmel. The atmosphere around the school is calm and nurturing. Gospel values are witnessed in all parts of the school and thrive within this community. Every child is loved and valued. The children speak warmly about their friendships and the important role of caring adults in their lives. Adults intervene calmly in situations, showing respect for all. Their service to the children is outstanding because they are sensitive to their needs and meet them in a thoughtful and caring manner. Safeguarding is a high priority. Children are provided with a safe and secure learning environment where all procedures to safeguard and protect are fully endorsed.

Children with specific and special needs are hugely valued and afforded the highest possible level of care. Their parents speak highly of the school's superb support for families and the joy of knowing their children are genuinely precious in the eyes of all who care for them. It is wonderful how the children naturally treat each other with love and respect and thoroughly enjoy the consolation of knowing their caring actions are pleasing to God.

The school reaches out to support those in need, both near and far. The children articulate beautifully their love of being kind and helpful, speaking of their joy at helping to clothe the homeless in warm coats or sending nice underwear to children overseas. The younger children have sent toothbrushes over to Cambodia. They are always thinking of their next special project. To witness this enthusiasm is truly heart-warming as, indeed, some of the children come from homes where life can be difficult at times, yet they still reach out. This is true charity.

### **THE QUALITY OF THE WORSHIP COMMUNITY IS OUTSTANDING**

Examples of 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 and assemblies. The children, supported excellently by staff, are clearly comfortable expressing themselves through prayer and the processes throughout school are clearly embedded. The reverence and respect shown by the children is particularly outstanding as was their behaviour to, from and during sessions.

Children are also encouraged to write their own prayers, a process that many do naturally and with excellent results. The Stations of the Cross assembly is an outstanding example encapsulating all of the above as it was a very prayerful and reverent service delivered excellently by the oldest children. The celebration assembly continued this theme and one outstanding aspect was how genuinely happy the children were for each other as they received awards or won prizes. The staff were also quality participants in this; they are all such great role models for the children and their high expectations are evident.

A lovely assembly in Nursery saw over 60 children sit calmly and celebrate one another's successes.

Every room has a central prayer focus area and these are very often brought alive by the children's own little prayers and thoughts. Prayer is at the heart of the school's spiritual life and brings many blessings for the children. Inspectors agree that it is a natural step for the school to further its outstanding quality of worship by considering enhancing prayer to incorporate more Christian meditation and mindfulness. Under the careful guidance of the school Chaplain the children are asked to serve the school and parish community by taking on many special responsibilities.

The impressive maturity of the older children and how they reflect on stories from Scripture and events from their own lives means they are exceptionally prepared for the next steps in their Catholic education.

### **THE QUALITY OF THE WITNESS COMMUNITY IS OUTSTANDING**

Mount Carmel is a very special place! It is an outstanding school that is held in high regard within its locality and especially with the families that it serves. The warm and caring feel of the school is epitomised by the friendly faces that greet you in every corner of the school. The children's journey as children of God begins on their very first day and continues with every step through the school. The outcome is that the children, under the passionate guidance of all adults, become profoundly caring and joyful. They bestow an abundance of tolerance, compassion and friendship on one another meaning their days at Mount Carmel are full of great memories. Recent sad events have been dealt with sensitively and compassionately and, indeed, the school has been graced by a special togetherness as it grows through the difficult times.

Parents and families are keen for their children to attend the school. It is oversubscribed and has grown significantly since the last inspection. The changing social dynamics of the school has seen the school become a diverse community, with families from all around the world and from different social backgrounds. An outstanding feature of the school is how every child is important and seen as precious as a unique and heavenly creation. The caring adults ensure each child is bestowed with the best the school can give. Nothing will stand in their way as their work at Mount Carmel is their vocation and their life's purpose. The school reaches out to other schools that are facing difficulties because they see themselves as part of a broader family of schools and this should rightly be applauded. Key leaders have been nurtured at Mount Carmel and are now leading and managing in other schools. It is right that this school community is preparing thoughtfully for the future to ensure the marvellous qualities of the school can be protected and developed in the light of impending change.

**AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:**

- To build on the outstanding provision in Worship and Word by offering regular planned opportunities for the children to experience Christian Meditation and mindfulness in a way that is unique and appropriate to Mount Carmel.

**MOUNT CARMEL RC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Monday, 30 March 2015

Dear Children,

Thank you so much for making us so welcome when we visited Mount Carmel last week. We will never forget your kindness and your smiling faces. You made us feel very welcome.

Mr Harrison remembers all the words you chose to describe your school like amazing, special, fantastic, loving and joyful. All of these are true!

You will be very happy to know that we, too, think you have an outstanding school. This is because you make everyone feel so welcome, you work very hard to be the best you can be and you look after one another in a very special way. You pray beautifully and you have created a lovely school for everyone to be happy and to learn. And wow - there is so much to do at Mount Carmel!

This is what is expected in the best Catholic schools and therefore we are very proud of you and so is the Bishop.

We also think that the teachers and all who help them are doing a super job too. They care for you so well and they want every one of you to do well. Mrs. Ganley is amazing and we think you are very lucky to have her.

We know your parents are very proud of you too! They know your excellent behaviour and your hard work help Mount Carmel to be a very happy school.

So well done to you all and please make sure to keep smiling – you have lots to be proud of!

God Bless

Mr Harrison, Mrs Heard and Mr Mountcastle  
(Section 48 Inspectors)

## **Summary Report to Parents**

On 27<sup>th</sup> March 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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