

**INSPECTION REPORT**

**Our Lady of Grace RC Primary School**

Inspection date: Friday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2012  
 Reporting Inspectors : Julie Frazer (Lead Inspector)  
 Susan Gedzielewski (Additional Inspector)

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

Type of School Primary  
 URN 105345  
 Age range of pupils 3-11 years  
 Number on roll 425  
 Appropriate authority Bury  
 Chair of Governors Mrs. Caroline Gibb  
 Headteacher Miss P. J. Jones  
 Religious Education Co-ordinators Miss L Doyle, Mrs U Harrington, Miss P J Jones,  
 Mrs M Parnell-Sinclair  
 Date of previous inspection December 2010

<b>The Inspection judgements are:</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Explanation of the Grades</b>  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**

Our Lady of Grace is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic Primary School within the Salford Diocese and is maintained by Bury Local Authority. The governors admit baptized Roman Catholic children into the school and there are currently 425 pupils on roll. The school is a feeder school for St. Monica's Specialist Language College and the school is heavily oversubscribed. It is anticipated that the school will admit 60 children in September 2013; the school admission number is 45. The school has a nursery within its Foundation Stage and all the classes are arranged in single age range. The school has a lower than average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals and is situated in an area of average social and economic circumstances. There are no looked after children currently on roll. There are 6 pupils with statements of special educational needs and there are a total of 57 pupils on the SEND register. 3.57% of pupils have English as an additional language. Attendance is good.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS OUTSTANDING**

Our Lady of Grace is an outstanding Catholic school; it places Catholic education at the heart of all that it does. It is very successful in offering its learners a holistic Catholic education in a warm, friendly and supportive environment. The school community, very well supported by the governing body and the deeply committed Parish Priest works very hard to ensure the pastoral and spiritual needs of all learners are met. The school is firmly at the heart of the parish it serves. Positive relationships are evident throughout the whole school community.

The strong spiritual commitment of the Headteacher, together with the hard work and dedication of the staff, has created a culture in which Gospel values are clearly evident. Pupils and staff are proud to belong to Our Lady of Grace School community; pupils say that they enjoy coming to school and have high expectations of themselves and others. They are friendly, polite and welcoming and the behaviour of pupils at all times is very good.

The Sacramental Programme is a particular strength of the school; it sits very clearly within the parish community

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

- The clear leadership and vision of the Head Teacher, supported by senior members of staff and the governing body.
- The school environment which reflects Our Lady of Grace as being a school which bears witness to the Catholic faith for the benefit of all its pupils.
- The high quality provision for the children who are undertaking the sacramental programme.
- The 5Ws model has been embedded very effectively in Our Lady of Grace

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

The Headteacher is clearly, deeply dedicated to the Catholic life of Our Lady of Grace School.

There is explicit evidence that she places Catholic faith at the heart of the school and everything that she does in the school. The senior leadership team, the R.E. co-ordinators and staff support her well in promoting her vision for this Roman Catholic School.

Members of staff have worked hard to implement the 5Ws model within the school and there is a wealth of evidence to support the positive impact that this is having within the school. The children understand the concept of the 5Ws in a meaningful way and, through clear leadership and guidance, are able to embed these principles as part of their daily lives. The Chair of Governors meets with the Head Teacher on a weekly basis and the school benefits from the open and productive conversations that this facilitates. Governors, as well as staff, share the vision of the Head Teacher and work hard to support her in ensuring the highest quality of provision for the children of Our Lady of Grace; they make a significant contribution to the

Catholic life of the school. Parish Priest is a regular visitor to school and Mass is celebrated throughout the year in Our Lady of Grace Parish for the whole school and year groups as well as Holy Days. He knows where the school is in its faith journey, and he works hard to support the children and their families as part of the home, school, parish community.

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

The school's Mission Statement is known, lived and witnessed throughout the school; all children are encouraged to learn a child friendly version of the Mission Statement and the key words 'work, worship and witness' are on the school uniform. One of the school aims is 'To foster the spiritual development of our children by experiencing the love of God and leading them to a greater understanding of our faith through worship, witness and work'. To this end the children are able to speak confidently about their beliefs and values as part of their lives and learning.

Teaching in Religious Education lessons is consistently outstanding and this was evidenced in all lessons and particularly when children were observed engaging in learning some difficult concepts of faith. Teachers are confident in guiding children, at their own level and pace, in understanding these more complex issues. Children are happy to engage with the 'Big Questions' in their lessons, within an atmosphere that promotes developmental discussions. Standards of attainment in Religious Education are at least the same as in other subjects and expectations are high. Books are marked to a consistently high level and clear feedback and targets are set to enable children to understand their next steps in learning.

There is clear evidence that the school places a high priority on working alongside home and the parish and this is particularly the case for the children undertaking the sacramental programme. This is led by a member of the parish who is held in very high regard by the children, their parents and the staff within school.

She works closely with the Parish Priest to ensure that the highest quality of provision is afforded these children.

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

Our Lady of Grace places Christ at the centre of its community and of its welcoming ethos through its school prayer 'This is our school, let it be full of love, love of one another, love of life itself, but most of all the love of Jesus Christ, Our Lord, Amen'. This prayer is said by the children on a daily basis.

The welcome from staff to all visitors is outstanding and is underpinned by Gospel Values and the Mission Statement. Our Lady of Grace actively seeks to engage with and support members of the school community and this is particularly appreciated by the parents. New parents and children meet the EYFS Key Workers prior to starting school to ensure they feel welcome and to offer support if necessary. Parents are particularly appreciative of the Welcome Assembly at the beginning of the year where Foundation Stage Reception pupils receive a badge from their Y6 buddy, who will remain as their buddy until the Y6 children leave to go to their secondary school. They also receive a letter from their teacher and buddy prior to arriving at Nursery or Reception and parents say that the children cherish this when they arrive in school.

Their photographs are also on display waiting for them so that they feel extremely settled into school life very quickly. There are a number of long standing staff at the school, as well as a newly qualified member of staff and they all feel equally welcomed and valued as part of the school community.

The children understand that there are some pupils who have special educational needs in their school but they say that they are happy for them to be part of a school where they can be helped and supported by everyone else.

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

Parents spoke highly of the pastoral support their child receives in school. As well as the very effective induction programme, they say that all the teachers and support staff know about their children and greet parent helpers as though they were 'long lost friends'. Parental concerns are dealt with effectively by the class teachers. If parents ring or call into school, they are seen as soon as possible and teachers will resolve any issues quickly and effectively and thereby assuaging any minor concerns before they grow into bigger problems. Parents say that the community within the school is phenomenal and that it's not just a school.

The quality of transition is such that all children quickly feel part of the school community. Children feel safe within the familial setting of school life. They know that they are loved and valued and they both show and

are shown high levels of respect by other children as well as adults within school. Adults were observed being very patient with the children and in one class a pupil came into the lesson a few minutes after it had begun. The teacher guided her to where she should be sitting and briefly recapped on the lesson so far. The other children were similarly patient in waiting for this to be done and were clearly sympathetic to the needs of the latecomer. Pupils within the school clearly have a voice and are listened to; they make decisions about ways in which the children can raise money for the school's chosen charities and are very enthusiastic about this. They understand that they have a great deal more than many other children and their generosity to others is overwhelming.

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

Worship is an integral part of the whole school community and pupils are extremely respectful and reverent when taking part or listening to acts of worship. The children are actively involved in planning for assemblies and acts of worship, which are holistic, pupil centred and entirely relevant to their lives. Pupils are confident in leading meaningful prayer in order to further develop their relationship with God. The Advent assembly which was observed was led by the Year 6 pupils who took control of the entire event; from writing and reading their research and prayers to running the computer for the accompanying slide show.

Parents say that they welcome the more traditional elements of worship and there is evidence that the children were engaging in learning some of the more traditional prayers as a way of helping them in their faith journey. Throughout the school there is evidence of high quality resources in all areas. Prayer tables in classrooms, display materials and artefacts demonstrate creativity and relevance to the children and their witness to faith.

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

As visitors to the school walk along corridors and in classrooms there are many displays, prayer tables and focuses for worship which reflect the pupils and staff in their witness of the Catholic faith. The 'Doors of Faith' welcome the whole school community into the Year of Faith which is being lived by everyone. Throughout the inspection, observations showed that children treated each other with respect, care, patience, concern and with dignity and there is an emphasis on creating a pleasant working environment for everyone in school.

Teachers are confident in engaging pupils with the more challenging concepts of the Catholic faith and deal with questions sensitively and with compassion.

Parents appreciate that school continues to celebrate many of the Church traditions i.e. May Processions and the children are encouraged to learn traditional prayers, which is also welcomed by parents.

The school places children at the centre of its Mission of placing Jesus Christ at the heart of their lives. They prepare children well to be the builders of the Kingdom of God and an explicitly Catholic culture permeates throughout the whole of the school.

### **AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT**

The Head Teacher and governors have a very clear vision of where the school needs to develop further and this is evident within their Self Evaluation and Development Plans.

4<sup>th</sup> December 2012

Dear Pupils,

Thank you for making our visit to Our Lady of Grace School so enjoyable when we came to inspect your school for the Bishop. Thank you for making us feel so welcome. We really enjoyed our time with you. Your school is an outstanding Catholic school.

We really enjoyed seeing your lessons and we were sorry we didn't see all the classes. It was lovely to see your activities; your work, your prayer and worship sessions and your very polite manners. Thank you. You have a very sensible attitude to life and to school, and we could see very strongly that you are proud of your school. We could see that you all believe that every child is special and is valued as part of your school community.

We were made to feel very welcome by all the children that we met. You treat each other with dignity and respect – you treat each other the way you wish to be treated, and it was great to see. Every child has a part to play at Our Lady of Grace.

Your teachers and head teacher work very hard and they make sure that you all enjoy coming to school and are eager to learn. . They have a high opinion of you and they care a great deal for every child in the school. It was a privilege for us to come into your school.

Your teachers help you to be the best you can be. From class to class, the teachers try to help you to learn about and learn from the Catholic faith so that you can grow in the love of Jesus Christ. You are super children who made us smile with the love you show for all in your school. Your teachers go far beyond what they are asked to do, because they believe in you so much.

God bless all in your school,

Mrs. J. Frazer and Mrs. S. Gedzielewski

(Section 48 Inspectors)

## **Our Lady of Grace RC Primary School**

### **Summary Report to Parents**

On 30<sup>th</sup> November 2012 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.

#### **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

Our Lady of Grace is an outstanding Catholic School. There is a genuinely warm and caring welcome given to all. All children are offered a Catholic education in a friendly and supportive environment, which is richly enhanced by the very high quality displays and focuses for worship. The word of God is central to the life of the school. There are outstanding parish links; especially with regard to the arrangements for the sacramental programme. Our Lady of Grace is very well supported by the parish priest and the school is firmly at the heart of the parish. This ensures that the pastoral and spiritual needs of the children and their families are met well. The dedicated Head Teacher and her staff have high expectations of both adults and children and have created a positive learning environment in which all members are accepted and valued as individuals. The children enjoy coming to school and they are friendly, polite and welcoming; their behaviour is impeccable. The staff and pupils demonstrate a very high level of respect, care and service to others. The support of the parish, including the sacramental programme, is a great strength of the school.

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

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