

INSPECTION REPORT

Our Lady Of Lourdes RC Primary School, Beech Av, Bolton BL4 0BP

Inspection date 29th March 2017
 Reporting Inspector Mr Dennis Harrison
 Mr Andy Sowerby

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

Type of School Primary
 URN 105245
 Age range of pupils 3-11
 Number on roll 241
 Appropriate authority The Governing Body
 Chair of Governors Mrs Kath Morris
 Headteacher Mrs Linda Chadwick
 Religious Education Subject Leader Ms Helen Dennehy
 Date of previous inspection 28th February 2012

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

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

Our Lady of Lourdes RC Primary School is situated in the Farnworth area of Bolton. It is a one form entry school with a 15 FTE nursery class. 81% per cent of children are baptised Roman Catholic. Approximately two thirds of the staff are Catholic and 6 have the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies. The children come from mixed socio-economic backgrounds, and the school population is relatively stable. 15% of children are eligible for free school meals. A significant proportion of these children are in upper Key Stage 2. Attendance is above the national average. 15% of children are on the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) register, whilst 28% have English as an additional language (EAL). The parish priest is new to the school having arrived in January of this year. The headteacher has been in post for 12 years and is supported by an experienced deputy headteacher and RE coordinator. Only 2 governors have served the school for more than 2 years, so many governors are new to their role. The school is an active participant in the local Catholic schools cluster – Bolton Catholic Schools' Education Partnership (BOSCEP).

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS GOOD:

Our Lady of Lourdes is a popular and successful Catholic school, providing a good standard of Catholic education with outstanding elements in welfare and welcome. The Headteacher is passionately committed to the school having devoted many years service to ensure the school is strong and secure for the future. Her senior leaders and the RE coordinator share this sense of determination. Hence a most positive team ethic exists at Our Lady of Lourdes whereby everyone contributes to the calm and purposeful atmosphere. This is clearly recognised and treasured by parents who have considerable confidence in all that the school does. The school receives heartfelt support from the chair of governors, who regularly visits the school and offers excellent counsel to senior leaders. She is determined to build up the strength of governance so that the school can witness a greater level of challenge and support from governors as they grow in confidence and skill. This will set the path for leaders and governors to share accurate self-evaluation so that the school can celebrate its achievements. The parish priest has been welcomed warmly in to the community and is already very highly regarded by all.

The children are delightful, and share their lives, hopes and dreams confidently. They behave very well, love coming to school and are rightly proud to be a part of the Our Lady of Lourdes family. They get off to a flying start in the EYFS where purposeful teaching and care is afforded to them. They benefit from good teaching in religious education in all Key Stages as the school embeds the scheme, 'Come and See'. Very strong provision is evident at the top of the school whereby the older children demonstrate maturity, calmness and determination that is fostered by thoughtful teaching and high expectations. This equips them very well for the next stages of their education. Where teaching is at its strongest, the progress the children make is impressive. It is now for the school to ensure progress and the outcome of children's work is consistent in all age groups. Prayerful and spiritually uplifting worship is a strength of the school and the children will benefit from more opportunities to prepare, lead and evaluate their own times of worship that include quiet times of reflection and meditation to further enhance the good quality of worship. This very caring school reaches out to every child and family so that no one is alone or feels vulnerable. Hence the school has a warm, family atmosphere that allows the children to feel loved and cherished.

KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- The passionate commitment of the headteacher and senior leaders that drives the school forward.
- The warm welcome afforded to every person that enters the school.
- Outstanding welfare that allows every child to feel loved and cherished.
- The excellent behaviour and attitudes of the children.
- The impressive team spirit that invites all staff to share in the direction, the strengths and the successes of Our Lady of Lourdes.

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS GOOD

Overall the quality of Catholic leadership is good. The governing body, which is undergoing many changes, is right to identify the need for deep training of new governors. The experienced and skillful chair of governors has taken on many responsibilities that will undoubtedly be more easily managed as other governors gain the attributes to challenge and support the school rigorously. The headteacher is totally committed to the school and has taken the school from a difficult and challenging past to its current successes. She has the respect of the school community and has appointed a team of like minded leaders and teachers who are devoted to the school and its current positive direction of travel. They effectively lead the strong, traditional Catholic education that one witnesses at Our Lady of Lourdes. The school has clearly moved forward over time and is a joyful and happy place for children to enjoy their Catholic education. Religious education is well led by the subject leader who is an open minded and reflective leader. Governors and leaders should now articulate the qualities of the school so that parents and the community can easily see what makes the school special. This can be grounded in a deeper, celebratory self evaluation that is ambitious and challenging, witnessing the uniqueness of Our Lady of Lourdes in a challenging and affirming manner.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORD IS GOOD

The Word of God at our Lady of Lourdes is good. It is enhanced by strong teaching across the school, especially in the Nursery and in upper Key Stage 2. All lessons observed during the inspection were at least good and many had outstanding elements. The provision is not yet outstanding because the school is still on a journey to fully embed the 5Ws and to ensure the school's mission statement is clearly and unequivocally at the heart of every policy and procedure. There is some uncertainty as to how the mission review cycle has and will unfold. An opportunity exists for the school to fine tune the centrality of the statement and audit its effectiveness and how it can powerfully influence decisions and set the tone for the way the school is witnessed in its community. Religious education is given high status at Our Lady of Lourdes and is at the core of the curriculum. The standards of the children's work is at least as good as in other key areas. Progress is very strong in the EYFS and towards the end of the school ensuring the children are succeeding very well by the time they are ready to leave the school. The next step for the school is to ensure progress is consistently strong in all areas and that the very high expectations seen in some classes are mirrored elsewhere. In the Nursery class the children engaged with highly effective teaching, listened intently and showed exceptional independence in an activity all about love. Their special stickers were worn with pride as they played so very well together. In an upper Key Stage 2 class a calm and prayerful atmosphere prevailed as the children spoke with depth and maturity to respond to challenging questions. They studied Sacred Scripture about death and new life under the careful guidance of exceptionally supportive teaching. Hence learning was deep and lasting. Assessment in RE is evident and the school plans to develop this further for the 'Come and See' scheme. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision is of the highest order.

THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING

Our Lady of Lourdes is a school where everyone feels welcome. Parents were keen to express their views by saying, 'All children and parents are quickly made to feel part of the school community from the moment they enter'. The importance of the dignity of the individual is clear at all levels. This could be seen not only in the way that staff meet the children with a warm smile at the start of the day but also in the way they sensitively ensure that all children irrespective of their backgrounds quickly settle in. One foster parent of a child who had recently started at the school commented on the additional support provided to her foster child when they moved schools. She said, that the school went out of its way to make her child feel very safe and welcome when the child was quite vulnerable. This quality of welcome is promoted by parents, children and staff. The children in particular provided both inspectors with a genuinely warm welcome at every opportunity throughout the school day. As one child put it, 'I love Our Lady's as everyone looks after each other and no one is left out'. Parents also spoke very clearly about the high-quality communication that is provided so that they all feel very well informed about the life of the school.

THE QUALITY OF WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING

The children who attend Our Lady of Lourdes are provided with outstanding care and attention. This was witnessed throughout the day by the additional support provided to those vulnerable members of the school community. Inspectors witnessed at first hand the calm support offered by teaching assistants in lessons which helped to ensure that all children stayed on task and learning wasn't interrupted. Parents spoke most highly of the way that the school staff ensure that individual health issues of children such as eczema and asthma were managed so that all children were treated with dignity and respect. They also stated that the headteacher and all staff were always available to discuss any concerns that parents had about the well-being of their children. This was witnessed both at the beginning and the end of the school day. The school successfully use 'Journey in Love' in partnership with local Catholic schools as a resource for the teaching of Sex and Relationships Education (SRE). The Christ-centred ethos is loving, creative, highly positive and fosters understanding, empathy and forgiveness. The school council discussed with the inspectors the need to reach out with kindness to others, for example, those less fortunate in the world. Thus, the school stresses the importance of reaching out beyond its own community so that children really feel part of God's world. Their charity work is a living example of this as children support CAFOD, St Joseph's Penny, Urban Outreach and many chosen by the children in special circumstances, on their own initiative.

THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS GOOD

Every classroom at Our Lady of Lourdes has a prominent prayer focus area. This is complimented by an attractive prayer room where anyone can go for a moment of quiet reflection. Staff plan confidently and lead prayer in a way that ensures the children easily place themselves into the presence of God. Respectful behaviour allows all to contribute and speak openly from the heart about the needs and hopes to be prayed for. Worship takes place in a variety of formats, all reverently observed and often in the presence of parents, who enjoy attending assemblies in large numbers. A higher level of creativity is planned to enhance worship and spiritual development. The school uses 'Ten Ten' assemblies as a useful resource. Resources have been focussed on the school's RE development plan and have impacted on the lovely displays, artefacts and Scriptural messages that adorn the school. This leaves no doubt about the central message of the school's Catholic mission. The GIFT team have worked hard in their role and the school is rightly extending the team so that other children have the special responsibility of leading prayer and worship. Inspectors observed prayer and worship that was over reliant on the teacher. The children are certainly ready to take a leading role in planning, delivering and evaluating prayer and worship in all its genres. A collective act of worship in lower Key Stage 2 nicely involved every child, with beautiful singing and moments of quiet reflection as each child placed their little crosses at the foot of the cross in the focus area. A school assembly brought the entire community together, as the class confidently sang, read and prayed in a calm and spiritually uplifting atmosphere.

THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS GOOD

Our Lady of Lourdes is a community where the Catholic life of the school is fully evaluated. The children are steeped in the beliefs and values that are precious in the Catholic faith. Across the school children act out their faith in kind deeds, caring for younger pupils and playing nicely together. The school must articulate these strengths so that the broader community has a clear perspective about the special and distinctive nature of the school. Not enough is made of the school's mission and how successful it is in witnessing to the values of the Gospel. The true picture is only partially evident on the school's website and in the school's documentation. However the newsletters to parents do reveal the school's mission - for example when a recent CAFOD assembly demonstrated the school's outreach and the links with Africa. The important work the school does for the common good should be clear for all to see. The GIFT team are increasingly influencing day to day life at Our Lady of Lourdes and offer collective worship with small groups. The children are keen to join the group as they use the special prayer area – a place of peace and quiet that lends itself to personal reflection. The banner headline 'I can do great things with God's love' is known to be the school's mission statement and appears on some policies. The children know it well. The vision statement gives a more complete picture of what the school strives for.

AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- Ensure new members of the governing body have access to high quality induction and training to enable them to skilfully challenge and support the Catholic leadership of the school.
- Provide further opportunities for pupils to plan, deliver and evaluate times of meditative and contemplative prayer.
- To further embed the 5Ws into the celebration and evaluation of the school's mission in education.
- Ensure the school's mission statement is more visible in and around school so that there is a deepening clarity of its centrality to the school's purpose.

Date 3rd April 2017

Dear Children,

We enjoyed a lovely day at Our Lady of Lourdes when we came to inspect your school. We think your school is a good school and that some of things you do are outstanding. We appreciate the hard work that Mrs Chadwick and the team put in to making Our Lady of Lourdes a special Catholic school. We also noticed your outstanding behaviour and how kind you are to one another. You should be very proud of this!

We think you should now spend some time making sure the 5Ws are really important in everyday school life and for you as children to plan and share quiet times of prayer. We think you will enjoy this very much.

You come to a great school so wear your uniform with pride, do great things with God's love and be happy!

Yours sincerely

Mr Harrison and Mr Sowerby
Section 48 inspectors

Summary Report to Parents - Our lady of Lourdes, Farnworth

On 29th March 2017 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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