

**INSPECTION REPORT**

**St Joseph's Roman Catholic High School and Sports College, Horwich, Bolton, BL6 6HW.**

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Inspection date 12 May 2015

Reporting Inspector Sister Judith Russi  
Mrs Donna Kiernan  
Mr Simon Smith

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

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Type of School Catholic High School

URN 105262

Age range of pupils 11-16 years

Number on roll 849

Appropriate authority The Governing Body

Chair of Governors Mr Bill Charnley

Head teacher Mr Richard Woods

Date of previous inspection April 2010

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<b>The Inspection judgements are:</b>	<b>Grade</b>	Explanation of the Grades  1 = Outstanding  2 = Good  3 = Requires Improvement
Overall effectiveness of the school	2	
The quality of Catholic Leadership	1	
The quality of the Word of God community	2	
The quality of the Welcome community	1	
The quality of Welfare	1	
The quality of Worship	2	
The quality of Witness	1	

*The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements*

## **CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL**

St. Joseph's is a smaller than average High School situated within the parish of St Mary's Horwich but serving a wide range of neighbouring parishes. The school is consistently oversubscribed for admission applications each year. 90% of the students attending school are baptised Roman Catholics. 63% of the teaching staff are baptised Roman Catholics (36 out of 57) and 62% of Support Staff are baptised Roman Catholic (24 out of 39). 9 members of staff currently hold the CCRS and 11 members of the teaching staff have completed the North West Catholic Leadership Programme. The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is 138 which is below average. The current number of PPG children on roll is 127 with the number of LAC currently standing at 7. The number of EAL and INA learners is small and 93% of the school population is white British. The number of disabled students and those who have a statement of Special Educational Needs is 19. The number supported by SEN Support is 67. There are 3 pupils who are currently receiving off site education. The NEET figure for 2014/2015 was 0. Attendance rates are in line with National figures at 95.3%. Levels of persistent absence are 4.4% compared to 5.8% nationally. Exclusion rates are below national averages. There have been no permanent exclusions in the past 2 years.

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

St Joseph's is a good Catholic High School with many outstanding features having significantly improved over the past two years. The mission statement places Christ at the centre of all aspects of the school *"Our School is a community where Jesus Christ is our role model and his message the guiding principle behind all we do"*. The option for those in the greatest need is a priority which informs the decisions of the governors and leadership of the school who have responded to significant challenges with courage, dedication and determination to ensure that every pupil receives the best possible education. Parents felt that St Joseph's was a highly effective school, a safe and secure learning environment where *"children flew"*. The high levels of staff dedication, often going well beyond the call of duty, have secured parental support for the school. Parents and pupils spoke of the strong family atmosphere where as one student pointed out *"No one is a stranger here"*. St Joseph's is a Gospel inspired and united place of learning providing a living testimony to the mission of the Church in education.

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

- The vision, commitment, courage and positive outlook of the governors, headteacher and his leadership team in taking St Joseph's forward is inspirational.
- Relationships, behaviours for learning and warmth of welcome throughout the school are outstanding.
- The option for those in the greatest need and the welfare of all within the school community was found to be outstanding.

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

The new appointments to the leadership of St Joseph's and subsequent restructuring of both the governing body and leadership team have enabled the school to carry out an in-depth evaluation of how to ensure that St Joseph's is at least good and striving to be outstanding in all areas. St Joseph's is led by an inspirational headteacher who is rapidly driving the school forward. Governors are attached to each of the areas of the 5W's and have a detailed knowledge and understanding of the rigorous, in-depth SEF. This has provided a detailed development plan in order to further develop the strengths of the school and address the leadership's desire for excellence in all areas. The clarity of vision and unity of

purpose recognises the dignity and value of every member of the community and sees that those in the greatest need receive outstanding care and support. Governors have ensured that they are carrying out their leadership responsibilities to a high level by undertaking the Governor Mark training and attending a wide variety of diocesan and Local Authority in-service days. The decision to develop St Anthony's as a centre for nurture has significantly impacted on the levels of learning and care for pupils needing specialised pastoral and learning support. A member of the senior leadership team has been appointed to ensure that those who are performing less well make rapid progress. The governors act as a very effective, reflective team who are not afraid to challenge and take risks in ensuring the promotion of Catholic education. Parents, staff and pupils spoke passionately about the progress of the school and their delight in its clarity of mission and purpose. Pupils were found to be enthusiastic about taking on responsibility and keen to act as role models for younger pupils. The School Council takes an active role in decision making within the school. Senior Leaders including the Chair of Governors attend meetings regularly and pupils are invited to make presentations at appropriate governor committees. Pupil panels are an integral part of appointment procedures. St Joseph's is a founder member and leading advocate for the Bolton Schools Catholic Education Partnership.

### **THE QUALITY OF WORD IS GOOD**

The Mission Statement which calls for all to *"develop our potential, celebrate our talents and go forward together in faith"* is lived and witnessed to throughout the school community and is highly visible in classrooms, pupil planners, assemblies, presentations to parents, and documentation. The RE department is well led under the guidance of a very experienced and reflective head of department. The recent appointment of a second in department and the distributive leadership style within the department, has enabled the RE team to develop their skills and particular strengths as a cohesive and effective team. RE staff are clearly striving for the very best for all pupils. RE is recognised and celebrated as the lead area of learning in the school and currently has the highest levels of attainment at Key Stage 4. Staff and pupils are rightly very proud of their achievements. Teaching and learning at Key Stage 3 has been identified as a key area for development in order to move standards from good to outstanding in line with attainment at the end of Key Stage 4. Pupils clearly enjoy RE and made particular reference to the fact that they are encouraged to be critical thinkers in a safe environment. Pupils remarked, *"St Joseph's is a great place to openly practice your faith, no one will judge you"* and *"RE has helped me grow as a person, I can just be myself."* Testimony to the effectiveness of the RE department is seen through the fact that 29 Year 11 pupils went on to do 'A' Level RE at key Stage 5 over the past 2 years. Religious Education is at the core of the curriculum and meets the RECD requirement for 10% at KS3 and KS4. Assessment for learning is informing planning. Pupils clearly knew what they needed to do to improve and in the main were responding to the introduction of green pen responses and challenges. The school is vigilant in its monitoring of any underachieving areas and groups of pupils through regular monitoring and action which is driving up pupil progress. The mapping, in-service training, monitoring, evaluation and delivery of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education across all key stages throughout the curriculum was found to be outstanding. Pupils were seen to be able to make in-depth connections and challenges to their learning which were drawing on the beliefs and values of Catholic teaching. Scripture underpins the focus and directions for learning across all departments. Pupils spoke of the relationships between staff and pupils as being warm, friendly and exceptionally supportive.

### **QUALITY OF WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING**

The culture of welcome in St Joseph's is a strength of the school. All pupils and staff demonstrate a very high level of confidence and outreach within the school community, recognising, valuing and celebrating diversity at all levels. Pupils spoke frequently of the sense of community, friendships and welcome for all exemplified by one student who pointed out that since coming to the school her confidence had really grown and she felt that *"I have real friends here, ones that are for life."* 96% of parents surveyed this year said that they would feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or a problem. The recently created post of Transition Coordinator is now embedded and an extensive transition plan to support pupils' journey to St Joseph's includes an extended 'nurture' programme for vulnerable pupils, a 'welcome' programme for pupils from non-associated primary schools and a Summer School for disadvantaged pupils. Parents, staff and pupils all spoke of the impact that this innovation is having on the life of pupils at St Joseph's. Parents gave evidence of how families are moving into the area so that their children could attend St Joseph's. Newly appointed members of staff spoke of how quickly they were made to feel at home and that their induction programme was personalised to meet any individual needs. A particular feature of the school is seen in the continuing links with past pupils and the fact that there are numerous opportunities for past pupils to remain connected and involved with the school through charity work and the performing and expressive arts. Governors have made a commitment to ensuring that those pupils living at a distance who might not be able to attend a Catholic school are not left out, by providing transport by coach to and from school.

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

The commitment of the governors and the senior leadership team to the welfare of all within the school is innovative, creative and inspirational. The governors have dedicated a significantly high level of the overall budget to supporting those in the greatest need. Relationships throughout are warm, friendly and respectful. Pupils go out of their way to help one another and engage with visitors. Behaviour for learning and safeguarding procedures are clearly known and tightly monitored. Pupils spoke of how they and staff respond swiftly to bullying or any inappropriate behaviour whilst at the same time pupils said that St Joseph's is a place where *"we all know the boundaries, but most all we know we will be forgiven."* SRE is delivered through RE and Science and enhanced through renewed Respect Days. In order to ensure the best possible provision and care for all staff and pupils the school is working closely with BOSCEP to deepen this provision through aligned Respect Days at KS4 involving staff from all 3 Bolton Catholic High Schools. Roles created for pupil progress coordinators, SENCo, lay chaplain, counsellor, intervention coordinators, literacy and numeracy coordinator alongside appropriate and targeted pupil premium spend, clearly demonstrate that budget, resourcing and staffing profiles offer a high level of support, particularly for those in the greatest need. This is further strengthened by the Pupil Welfare Fund alongside PSA support and a separate 'mission' funding stream to ensure that no pupil or family is left in need or isolated. Close links and pupil representation at the SVP District Council allow the school to support family holidays and any other individual requests such as Christmas goods.

### **THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS GOOD**

The school offers a wide range of prayer and worship experience. Classroom worship is reflective and contemporary. Prayer is clearly at the core of the life of the community and pupils demonstrated a natural desire to pray at the end of lessons and at the start of the day. Daily prayer for pupils has been renewed through 'Sacred Space' time each morning in registration supported by materials, images, candles and pupil prayer files for each form tutor. The senior leadership of the school have identified

that in order to move worship from good to outstanding they now need to invest in training pupils to lead and further develop the prayer life of the school through building on a systematic development programme which is age appropriate, innovative and creative. The adoption of form patrons offers a contemporary focus for reflection in each tutor group. Pupils were able to explain how they provided inspiration for them in their lives. The pupil chaplains have created the new St Joseph's school prayer which is said by all at the end of the day. Each year group has their own 'Mass of Welcome' at the start of the year and the school celebrates Mass together at the beginning of the year, Easter and the end of the academic year. Liturgy is organised and supported by many staff and departments including Music, Art, Drama, Technology, English and RE. Reconciliation Services have taken place in the school Chapel during Advent and Lent. Residential retreats are very popular and available to pupils each year. The school takes a leading role in involving all Catholic partner schools from across Bolton by organising and leading the music ministry at the BOSCEP yearly Carol Service. Weekly staff prayer has recently been developed during Advent and Lent and is now continuing each week and is very well attended. The school has invested in prayer and worship resources for all staff and pupils and new signage has been recently designed to display the departmental scripture verse choices.

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

Governors, staff and pupils are confident in their witness to the message of Christ through their actions, words and service as members of the St Joseph's community. Staff and pupils spoke confidently about the distinctive mission of the school as part of the transformation of the individual, for the transformation of society. The decision to invite each department to select the scripture verses which are to serve as the foundation and source of inspiration for all they do has proved to be an innovative development which has deepened their understanding of the importance of scripture for the community. The leadership team have reviewed staff appraisal objectives to ensure that Objective 1 focuses on staff development of the Catholic life of the school and their own personal witness to Christ. Pupil chaplaincy is developing well and now under the guidance of the newly appointed lay chaplain. The jointly planned activities for pupil chaplains from local primary partners include shared lunches, retreat days, and participating in monthly prayers at St Anthony's Chapel. The school council and prefects, participate in appointments and many varied opportunities for active discipleship across all key stages demonstrate ways in which the school witnesses to a living faith in action. The participation by staff and pupils in the extensive charity work is an impressive feature of St Joseph's. There is a strong commitment to active missionary discipleship throughout the school. The extensive and impressive work of the Junior SVP is evidenced through the many acts of fundraising including the Harvest collection for 'Revive' in Salford. The SVP also leads on the organisation of the senior parishioners Christmas party and monthly prayers, cakes and coffee in St Anthony's Chapel. Equally impressive are the school wide fundraising activities for Cafod Family Fast days (£400 October 2014), the Christmas Fair (£3500 December 2014), Local Food bank & homeless Shelter (£730 December 2014) and the Diocesan St Joseph's Penny Lenten charity (£4000 April 2015) all of which give testimony to St Joseph's commitment to those in the greatest need.

### **AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:**

- Continue to build on the good practice in prayer and worship through a systematic review and evaluation throughout the school in order to further develop staff formation and skills and foster a greater degree of pupil leadership during times of liturgical celebrations, prayer and worship.

- To continue the identified review of the Key Stage 3 RE curriculum so that it better meets the needs of the pupils with high levels of prior knowledge and the most able pupils.
- Build on the findings of the initial review and evaluation of SRE and PSHE to ensure that the needs of all pupils today are being met.

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2015

Dear Pupils

Thank you so much for the wonderful welcome you gave us when we came to visit you. Together with your teachers, support staff and helpers you are a good school with many outstanding features. This is because you are really striving to live up to your challenging mission statement and recognise that you are all one family.

Your work is of a good standard and we could clearly see that you take your learning very seriously and are proud of your achievements. Your RE teachers are clearly helping you to feel confident in your learning and ability to discuss complex religious and moral issues. We were particularly impressed by the ways in which you were able to discuss matters of belief and values outside of your RE lessons. The pupil chaplains and junior SVP pupils are making a significant contribution to the life of St Joseph's which we found to be very impressive.

Your governors and Mr Woods want to continue to take your knowledge and understanding of RE further and see how the school can offer all pupils greater levels of challenge and develop your critical thinking skills. We were very impressed with how seriously you take prayer and worship and can see that you are now ready to take on a great responsibility for leading prayer and worship times. We were very impressed by many aspects of your school.

God bless you all.

Yours sincerely

Sr Judith Russi

(Section 48 Inspector)

### **Summary Report to Parents**

On the 12<sup>th</sup> May 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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