

## INSPECTION REPORT St Patrick's RC High School

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Inspection date Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2013

Reporting Inspectors Sister Judith Russi  
Mrs Alison Burrows  
Mrs Donna Kiernan

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

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Type of School Catholic High School

URN 105986

Age range of pupils 11-16 years

Number on roll 914

Appropriate authority The Governing Body

Chair of Governors Rev. Fr. Devaney

Head teacher Mrs Barbara Rogers

Date of previous inspection June 2008

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The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades  1 = Outstanding  2 = Good  3 = Requires Improvement
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	
<i>The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements</i>		

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

St Patrick's is an 11-16 fully comprehensive Catholic High School with 914 pupils on roll. The school has been awarded Teaching School status. The Head teacher is a National Leader of Education. The school serves the Catholic community across a large number of parishes. It is heavily oversubscribed. The school relocated to a new building in April 2013 providing an excellent learning environment for all. 68.6% of pupils are baptised Catholics. 50.4% of staff are Catholics. The last five years have seen significant oversubscription for places in Year 7. 28.9% pupils are designated as Pupil Premium. 17.1% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. 9.4% of pupils are on the SEN School Action. 6% of pupils are School Action Plus. 15 pupils have a statement of SEN. 12 are Looked After Children. Prior attainment of pupils is broadly in line with the national average. Attendance is above the national average .

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

St Patrick's RC High School is an outstanding school offering the students a rich faith experience which permeates all aspects of school life. The inspirational leadership of the Head teacher inspires and unifies the leadership of governors and staff. Together they have dedicated themselves to the building up of a Catholic learning community which sees as its primary mission the search for '*true wisdom*' through ensuring that every pupil has the best possible education, striving for excellence at all times. The impact of the school's commitment to excellence throughout has raised standards to an exceptionally high level. The students receive a Catholic education which demonstrates Gospel values throughout. This is clearly evidenced on entry to the school where the words *love, forgiveness, reconciliation, justice, integrity, humility and truth*, enshrine the entrance. The decor throughout the school echoes these values and comments from staff and pupils illustrate the living commitment of the community to that which is held to be of the utmost importance.

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

- The Catholic life of the school which is manifested as a seamless all inclusive dedication to excellence is outstanding.
- The all embracing pastoral care and student services are outstanding.
- The quality of the welcome to all, relationships, behaviour and care for those in the greatest need is outstanding.

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

The Governors and the leadership team, clearly demonstrate their commitment to the mission of the Church in education. The needs of the pupils are paramount as seen in the brave decision to seek early entry for Year 11 GCSE in order to relieve exam pressure on students. This is something which was much appreciated by the students themselves who said '*They really care about how we feel here. We come first.*' The extensive pastoral care system, the option for the poor and the marginalised as seen through the inclusion policy and welcome across the school, are all testimony to a leadership decision which gives priority to being a Christ centred learning community. The Head teacher's commitment to distributive leadership is having a significant impact on empowering staff and pupils to take responsibility and aim high. The motto '*Amazing things happen here*' is a living expression of what pupils and staff feel about their school. The senior leadership team plays to the strength of each individual resulting in a dynamic force for growth, innovation and development.

The Head teacher, as a National Leader of Education, continually strives to support other Catholic schools as a top priority. Head teachers of partner schools spoke of the excellent links and support received from St Patrick's. Staff and pupils demonstrated a common vision and understanding and

were confident in articulating their distinctiveness as a Catholic school. The recently appointed deputy head teacher has taken up the responsibility of ensuring the further development of the entitlement of all pupils to spiritual, moral, social and cultural education and is in the process of being tracked across the whole curriculum. Rapid progress has been made across all areas of the curriculum and will significantly inform pupils learning. The leadership of RE is recognised as being of the utmost importance and fully supported by the leadership of the school. The Head of department has made significant progress in driving up standards since the last inspection and has set the department on track to be the lead area of learning. Pupil leadership has been further enhanced by the appointment of Pupil Chaplains who along with the School Council and prefects make an active contribution to the leadership of the school.

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

Over time the standards of attainment and achievement of pupils was found to be outstanding. Significant progress has been made in the raising of standards as the RE department strives to be the lead department in the school. The recent development of the SMSC provision throughout the curriculum gives testimony to the centrality of the Word of God throughout pupils learning. Observations in other areas of the curriculum clearly evidenced SMSC education as having a significant impact on the curriculum. An excellent example was seen in music where the very soul of the community was beautifully expressed by the Harmony music group. Clear Gospel values relating to justice and the dignity of the person were seen in Spanish. Where teaching and learning in RE was found to be outstanding, pupils were animated, enthused and keen to question and explore their topics. Objectives were clear and learning was very well differentiated. Pupils were challenged to think deeply and engage with differing perspectives. Teachers frequently challenged pupils during the lesson to draw on prior learning. Pupils had a clear understanding of next steps for learning and were able to select the appropriate activity level from a range of levelled tasks. A member of the RE department is part of the whole school teaching and learning team developing best practice across the curriculum. Independent learning is being developed and at its best pupils were carrying out their own research, working with others and sharing their findings. Funding for RE as a core subject stands at £3,209. Resources for Chaplaincy, prayer and worship have dedicated separate budgets.

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

The welcome extended to all at St Patrick's is outstanding. The levels of hospitality to the stranger and warmth extended to all is inspirational. Pupils spoke with pride about the number of visitors they welcomed from all over the country. As a National Teaching School, St Patrick's welcomes a wide variety of visitors on a daily basis. The school hosts weekly training for trainee teachers and organise visits for schools wanting to observe best practice. Friends, family and members of the community regularly come to see the school in action. In particular they enjoyed being with and the newly arrived to the school and helping the younger pupils feel at home. Pupils saw the strengths and the challenges of the vertical tutor groups as a way of being close to all year groups and acting as role models when needed. As one student reared. *'I like it because I have friends in other years. This would not happen if we were not in vertical groups.'* They also felt free to pose interesting and thought provoking questions which challenged the initiative. Partner Primary Heads spoke of the very supportive transition work making a significant impact on their year 5 and 6 pupils. The prefects spoke enthusiastically of their experience of life at St Patrick's being that of a united family where everyone matters.

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

The safety of all at St Patrick's is paramount. The safeguarding processes and procedures are highly developed, known and followed closely. Pupils and staff were very clear about where and to whom they should go if in difficulty. The school is rightly proud of its excellent pastoral care system which provides extensive care and outreach for pupils and their families. The most vulnerable are their first priority. Behaviour both in lessons and around the school was outstanding. Pupils were found to be proactive in offering to help and were very keen to ensure that the visitors felt welcome and at ease. Observing the pupils in a variety of situations it was clear that they not only felt safe, but were happy at St Patrick's. Working to alleviate poverty and injustice is high on the agenda at St Patrick's. Pupils lead fundraising and in their extra-curricular activities such as SVP. Sex and Relationships Education conforms to Catholic teaching and Diocesan advice and is delivered through Science, RE and PSHE. The leadership of the school are keen to ensure they are fully in tune with the wider staff and student body and this is made possible through surveys, questionnaires, Student Council, Staff Welfare Representatives as well as the open door policy of SLT. These 'voices' are taken seriously and impact on all decision making.

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

Prayer and worship is central to the Catholic life of St. Patrick's. The school fulfills the legal requirement of a daily act of worship and provides a wide variety of experiences and events throughout the liturgical calendar. Every tutor group begins the day with the 'Morning Offering' and a time of reflection on the weekly theme provided in the weekly bulletin and staff briefing and further developed through assemblies. Pupils take a lead, with the support of the Just Youth Chaplaincy Team, in preparing assemblies, Masses and other services. Prayer opportunities are extensive; there is a programme of themed days and weeks throughout the year for each year group. The very active pupil liturgy group really contribute to the prayer and worship of the school. The beautiful chapel offers an opportunity for all for personal prayer and reflection. The stained glass windows and Stations of the Cross have all been inspired and created by the pupils. Funding and resources to support the development of opportunities for prayer and worship are high. The leadership team has dedicated funding of £2,025 to the development of liturgy, prayer and worship, and £13,250 for Just Youth Chaplaincy support across the school. This is in addition to the significant commitment and daily presence in the school of the Chair of Governors, Fr Devaney.

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

Teachers and pupils are confident and joyful in their commitment to the centrality of Jesus Christ and the Gospel. Pupils were keen and excited to share the good news about their school. They were clearly proud of their identity as a Catholic school which has very strong belief and value base. Pupils take their responsibility and leadership roles seriously. The prefects spoke of the responsibility they felt of being a role model for the younger children and how they needed to be seen as people who believe '*Amazing things happen here*'. The Mission Statement, based on the words of St Patrick and translated into contemporary terms is known and acts as a key reference point for the mission of the school. It is clear that the school stands as a witness to Christ's love, justice, forgiveness and compassion. The many inspirational quotes painted in large letters on the walls of the corridors and communal spaces serve to remind all of the sacredness and gift of life and learning. There is a very clear Catholic culture permeating the whole school. Pupils and staff were at ease in identifying their distinctiveness as a Catholic learning community. The Chaplaincy provision is extensive throughout the school and is in the process of being further developed and enriched through more leadership training for students.

**AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:**

- Continue and further develop the outreach work with partner Catholic schools across the diocese in order to develop pupil's progress in RE with particular reference to the transition years.
- Ensure that the good independent learning, and high levels of creative teaching and learning for pupils, which is evident in much of the teaching in the RE department, is consistent across the department.
- Continue the development of SMSC across the curriculum to ensure it is fully embedded throughout all areas of learning.

18<sup>th</sup> December 2013

Dear Pupils

Thank you so much for the wonderful welcome you gave us when we came to visit you. Your behaviour and courtesy are a great credit to you all. A special word of thanks to the prefects who so kindly showed us around and shared so much about the life of the school.

St Patrick's you told me is an outstanding school and we agree with you. This is because everyone is focused on your Mission Statement and motto which states 'Amazing things happen here'. We saw that you were indeed striving to always be the very best you can be.

We could clearly see that you take your learning very seriously and are proud of your achievements. To help you develop even further your teachers are going to work with you further to become high level independent learners and researchers.

A group of you said how much you enjoyed your RE. Because '*Of the way it is taught and it is fun in a relaxed way*'. We could see that you can make connections between what you are learning in RE with other areas of the curriculum and your daily lives. Thank you for letting us share so much of what you are doing.

Thank you for inviting us to be part of the day. The Liturgy and Chaplaincy teams have grown enormously. You are doing great work of which you are rightly proud. This is something we feel you can really share with other schools.

God bless you all and have a really happy Christmas and New Year

Yours sincerely

Sr Judith Russi

(Section 48 Inspector)

### **Summary Report to Parents**

On 9<sup>th</sup> December 2013 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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