



Inspection carried out Under Canon 804 and 806  
and in accordance with Section 48 of the Education  
Acts 2005 and 2011

DIOCESE OF SALFORD

Name of School Mount Carmel R. C. High School, Wordsworth Rd, Accrington, Lancashire,  
BB5 0LU  
Inspection date Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2020  
Reporting Inspectors Sheldon Logue, Andy Bridson, Janet Burns and Martin Reynolds

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Type of school	Secondary
URN	119804
Age range of pupils	11-16
Number on roll	790
Appropriate authority	The Governing Board
Chair of Governors	Andrew Dabrowski
Headteacher	Xavier Bowers
Religious Education Subject Leader	Laura Rushton
Date of previous inspection	October 2014
Grade of previous inspection	Good

Explanation of the Grades - 1 = Outstanding, 2 = Good, 3=Requires Improvement, 4 = Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of Mount Carmel School	Overall grade	2
The Catholic Life of the school (incorporating Welcome, Welfare and Witness)	Grade	2
Religious Education (incorporating Word)	Grade	2
Collective Worship	Grade	2

## CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

Mount Carmel is an 11-16 Secondary Catholic School located in Accrington and serving the local communities of Accrington and Oswaldtwistle. The Pupil Premium cohort is 37% which is above average. The SEND cohort is 9.5% and 24% of children have English as an additional language. A significant number of pupils on roll are of Pakistani origin (38%). The percentage of children who are Catholic is 25% and the percentage of Catholic staff is 20%. Currently three teachers have the CCRS qualification. Prior attainment on entry to the school is significantly below NA, particularly in reading. The curriculum leader in Religious Education has completed the Catholic Middle Leader National Qualification delivered by the Diocese of Salford.

## OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Mount Carmel is a good Catholic school. The strap line, 'a Family of Faith and Learning' is lived out daily throughout the school and permeates all aspects of school life. Throughout all levels of leadership there is a determination to recognise and celebrate improvement but also focus on how the school can improve further. The Religious Education department is at the core of the curriculum. Pastoral systems and structures ensure that the most vulnerable get timely support. Mount Carmel is a community that thrives on diversity and social cohesion and is a beacon of success. All stakeholders; pupils, staff, parents, governors and Primary partners work together in a coherent manner for the common good of the community.

## THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- This is a highly inclusive Catholic school where social cohesion permeates all aspects of school life.
- The headteacher is highly respected by all stakeholders and is clearly committed to the wider Catholic community which has Mount Carmel at its heart.
- Teaching and assessment within the Religious Education department is of a consistently high standard.
- The quality of pastoral care continues to be a strength of the school and fully exemplifies the values and virtues of Mount Carmel.

## AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- Review the school's mission statement so that it has ownership by all stakeholders.
- Provide appropriate and sustained training for all staff to enable them to further develop the Catholic life of the school.
- Embed school procedures to monitor and evaluate the quality of provision of the religious life of the school so that Governors can hold school leaders to account.
- Re-establish the work of the chaplaincy team to enhance opportunities for pupils to lead on the planning, preparation and delivery of high-quality prayer and worship.

## THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL (incorporating Welcome, Welfare and Witness)

The Catholic Life of the school (incorporating Welcome, Welfare and Witness)	Overall grade	2
Outcomes - The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school		2
Provision - The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school		2
Leadership - How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school		2

Pupils at Mount Carmel understand they are part of a Catholic family whose values come from Jesus Christ. The school strap-line, 'A Family of Faith and Learning' is embedded and this is reflected in pupil participation in the Catholic life of the school. Pupils behave well in lessons, around school and in assemblies. They show care and respect in their relationships with each other and with staff and are proud to be pupils of Mount Carmel. They feel safe and well-cared for by staff and they show responsibility for addressing the needs of vulnerable groups locally and globally. For example, in the past 2 years pupils have supported a school in Kenya building a new kitchen. Social cohesion of this multi-faith school is a strength, reflected in a harmonious environment.

Mount Carmel is a school with a warm and genuine welcome. The school Mission with ‘Christ at the heart of the community’ is embedded across school. The school operates an inclusive family in which staff go the extra mile to celebrate the talents of each individual child. Staff at all levels model values of forgiveness and justice and these are often reflected in policies and procedures. Pastoral care and support is a key strength of the school and pupil voice indicated that pupils were cared for. Engagement with parents/carers is positive and is reflected in high attendance at parents’ evenings. A thriving PFTA plays a valued role in supporting the headteacher in building up the Mount Carmel family. Staff speak enthusiastically and with one voice about the Catholic values of the school ‘which come from the top’ and which inspire them to model forgiveness and justice in their daily work. Staff feel very cared for by leaders who exercise judicious care over all staff ensuring their welfare is a priority. However, opportunities for reflecting on SMSC issues outside the formal Religious Education curriculum are not being fully exploited but this is currently being reviewed.

Leadership at all levels, including governance, is committed to Catholic education. The GB has been restructured and is well placed to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation of provision. All SLT have completed the Catholic Leadership Program. The Headteacher is highly regarded by all of Mount Carmel’s stakeholders. The Religious Education subject leader works closely with Diocesan initiatives, including CONVIVIO and FLAME. There is a concerted effort to further develop Catholic life at Mount Carmel through Music, particularly the choir who participate at every liturgy. Mount Carmel has formed strong partnerships with local Catholic feeder schools for the common good. This partnership works both ways and benefits the wider Catholic community. As one Primary headteacher stated, ‘the pupils really flourish here’. Leaders are honest in their analysis of the Catholic life and evaluate the impact of decisions through the work of the ‘Every Child Matters’ Governors committee. Leaders understand that developing more rigorous systems for monitoring the quality of provision for the Catholic life of the school so that Governors have a sharper insight into the impact of policies and procedures is important.

#### **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (incorporating Word)**

<b>Religious Education (incorporating Word)</b>	<b>Overall grade</b>	<b>2</b>
Outcomes - How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education		<b>2</b>
Provision - The Quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education		<b>2</b>
Leadership - How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education		<b>2</b>

Pupil outcomes show an improving trend and are in line with Salford Diocese averages. In 2019, Religious Education GCSE outcomes were the highest performing core subject. In 2019, the subject progress indicator was positive and demonstrates that pupils make above average progress based on their starting points. The department was proud of this achievement. Work scrutiny shows that pupils are literate in Religious Education and there are opportunities for pupils to discuss ‘big’ questions. For example, in a lesson studying Genesis 1 and creation, pupils discussed this in great depth, deepening their understanding. Lessons observed showed good pupil-teacher relationships and this led to an environment that was conducive to learning.

Teaching within the Religious Education department is high quality and subject knowledge is very good. Questioning, in particular, was very strong and used effectively to support learning. Two of the Religious Education teachers are ‘Teaching and Learning Practitioners’ who support and develop teachers in other curriculum areas. Pupils enjoy their Religious Education lessons and this is reflected in their engagement and willingness to participate in lessons. Assessment within the department is well structured and pupils respond positively to feedback to improve their work. Curriculum requirements at both Key Stages are met and leaders are committed to ensuring that the Religious Education curriculum is of a high quality. Curriculum overviews show what pupils are expected to know and that it is well sequenced and meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. Provision is enhanced by ‘visiting’ speakers, for example, a seminarian who spoke about vocation and visits to places of worship, including local mosques and different Christian churches. The department is well supported by the headteacher and governors in ensuring that resources are at least good.

The leadership of the department is strong. The Religious Education subject leader has a clear vision for Teaching and Learning and has effective plans to ensure that this is consistently good or better. As part of this vision, the few non-specialists teaching Religious Education are well supported and feel valued as part of the department. Self-evaluation shows a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the department. A focused action plan is in place to ensure that recent improvements in outcomes can be sustained. This leadership at departmental level is enhanced by the Senior Line Manager who was a previous curriculum leader in Religious Education and the appointment of a link governor who provides balanced challenge to the department. The Religious Education subject leader works closely with the Diocese, for example, in training of the GIFT team and has works closely with the Salford Diocese Religious Education Advisor to ensure the smooth transition towards the new GCSE specification for implementation in September 2020.

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Collective Worship	Overall grade	2
Outcomes - How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship		2
Provision - The quality of Collective Worship provided by the School		2
Leadership - How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship		2

Pupils are given regular opportunities to become involved in Collective Worship throughout the liturgical year. This is facilitated by the 'school chaplaincy schedule' and the GIFT team. Pupils increasingly take the lead in preparing acts of collective worship and have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year. For example, the chaplaincy representative, ensures that pupils in each form attend 'First Friday Mass'. The GIFT team regularly prepare and lead worship with enthusiasm and confidence and demonstrate good leadership skills. Pupils who are Altar Servers at the local churches serve at school Mass. Pupils in the YSVP group are regularly involved in outreach work with the elderly in the community. Throughout these periods of Collective Worship pupils are respectful and respond with reverence. Leaders are currently reviewing their provision of retreats to ensure that pupils experience appropriate reflection time.

Collective Worship is an integral part of the life of the school. For example, a daily pattern of prayer is embedded in school life where pupils participate in prayers at the start and end of each school day. A prayer book is provided to all staff. In form times, strong relationships exist within the classroom which enables prayer to be a supportive and uplifting experience. Year group assemblies take place weekly and the themes chosen for Collective Worship reflect a good understanding of the liturgical season. An observed Year 10 assembly (prepared by the GIFT team) was characterised by respectful student participation and enhanced by a moving song performed by two pupil volunteers. The Eucharist is celebrated at First Friday Mass and this is attended by a significant number of pupils who are practising Muslims. At Mount Carmel, the 'faith and community' schedule is extensive and outlines the celebration of Holy Days of Obligation and other important dates, such as Our Lady of Mount Carmel feast day. Leaders ensure opportunities to celebrate the church's liturgical year are accessible and relevant to all pupils. Monitoring of collective worship is undertaken by both the headteacher and senior leadership team who are all practising Catholics. For example, the 'faith and community' group meet half termly to evaluate the effectiveness of planned events and to plan forthcoming chaplaincy events. This group also promotes the inclusion of pupils in planning and leading collective worship. The headteacher is a role model for best practice. An example of an assembly he delivered, 'build bridges not walls', was in direct response to the needs of the school community. The Religious Education subject leader is up to date with professional development opportunities provided by the Diocese. Relevant staff, for example, pastoral leaders or form tutors are skilled in helping pupils to plan and lead quality worship.