

**INSPECTION REPORT**

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**Inspection carried out Under Canon 806  
 and in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005**

**Name of School**      **St Patrick's RC High School & Arts College,  
56 New Lane, Eccles, Manchester M30 7JJ**

Inspection date      4<sup>th</sup> December 2018

Reporting Inspectors      Sheldon Logue and Mike McGhee

|                                    |                               |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Type of school                     | Secondary                     |
| URN                                | 105986                        |
| Age range of pupils                | 11-16 years                   |
| Number on roll                     | 924                           |
| Appropriate authority              | The Governing Board           |
| Chair of Governors                 | Rev. Fr. Devany               |
| Executive Principal                | Patrick Murden                |
| Headteacher                        | Alison Byrne                  |
| Religious Education Subject Leader | John Lowrie                   |
| Date of previous inspection        | 9 <sup>th</sup> December 2013 |

| The Inspection judgements are:  | Grade | Explanation of the Grades   |
|---|-------|---|
| Overall effectiveness of the school   | 1     | 1 = Outstanding<br>2 = Good<br>3=Requires Improvement<br>4 = Inadequate |
| Catholic Leadership   | 1     |   |
| The Catholic Life of the school<br>(incorporating Welcome, Welfare and Witness) | 1     |   |
| Religious Education<br>(incorporating Word)                                     | 1     |   |
| Collective Worship  | 2     |   |
| The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements                 |       |   |

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

St Patrick's RC High School is an 11-16 fully comprehensive Catholic High School with 924 pupils on roll. The school serves the Catholic community across a large number of parishes. It is heavily oversubscribed. 83% of pupils are baptised Catholics and 42% of staff are Catholics. The school has been over-subscribed for a significant period of time. A breakdown of pupils shows 27% are disadvantaged, 15% receive support for Special Educational Needs and 15% are from minority ethnic groups. 35% of pupils are White British males, 20 pupils have an EHCP and 13 are Looked After Children. Prior attainment of pupils is broadly in line with the national average. Attendance is significantly above the national average. Pupils who attend St. Patrick's are, on average, more deprived than nationally according to IDACI. The progress made by pupils has been consistently above average for many years. St Patrick's has been awarded Teaching School status and is currently supporting 2 Diocesan schools, seconding the equivalent of 7 FTE SLT and middle leaders to schools in need. 11 members of staff have obtained the CCRS certificate and 4 senior leaders have completed the Diocesan Catholic Leadership Programme [CLP] with a further 2 senior leaders completing the Post-Graduate CLP.

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

- **Senior Leaders call upon the Mission Statement as a means to inform and drive forward school improvement so that St Patrick's provides a Catholic education for the twenty-first century.**
- **The quality of teaching in Religious Education, as evidenced in observations, pupil outcomes and pupil voice, is excellent.**
- **Positive relationships permeate throughout the school and bear witness to the school's values of integrity, reconciliation, humility, love, forgiveness, truth and justice.**
- **The opportunities for celebration are an integral part of the school community and is not only recognised but also appreciated by all major stakeholders; pupils, staff, parents and governors.**
- **The pastoral care and welfare for all pupils, especially those who are most vulnerable, is of a very high standard. The St Patrick's community is a place of inclusion, hope and stability.**

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

St Patrick's is an outstanding Catholic Secondary School where the Leadership's continuous drive for ongoing school improvement is driven by the determination and desire to become a beacon of 'Catholic excellence'. The school's mission statement underpins all that the school strives to achieve which at its heart is the development of the whole child. The commitment to the mission was passionately articulated by senior leaders, school staff and governors. The governors likened St Patrick's to a 'large family' where everyone is nurtured and valued. The exceptional pastoral care is enhanced by a safe, supportive and secure environment where pupils are given every opportunity to flourish and achieve. Positive relationships form the basis on which pupils are encouraged and loved to grow in their faith. Pastoral care is also prominent in terms of staff well-being and staff viewed it as an excellent place to work. The effectiveness of the school is further enhanced by the appreciation of the parents who were strong advocates of the school. It is abundantly evident that everyone is treated with dignity and respect and this is reflected in positive relationships. Undoubtedly, a strength of St Patrick's, these genuine relationships and interactions bear witness to the school's values of integrity, reconciliation, humility, love, forgiveness, truth and justice. Significant resources, including staffing, ensure that pupil progress in Religious Education is strong. The school motto, '*amazing things happen here*' epitomises all that is great about this thriving community. Clearly, celebration of success is integral to the mission of the school. The last Section 48 inspection was in December 2013. The school continues to shine as an outstanding Catholic school and serves the community well.

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

The executive principal and headteacher have established a clear vision and work together in harmony. Together they have made a conscious decision that Gospel values are the key drivers for school improvement. Consequently, governors and senior leaders are fully committed to the Church's mission in education. They show a strong determination to provide a holistic approach to education, underpinned by great care and genuine love for the pupils. A staff governor eloquently said "No child gets left behind". They are resolute in their quest to continue to provide an excellent Catholic education and to serve the community. An experienced teacher was appointed as a senior leader for Catholic mission with a clear remit of faith development, further embedding the evangelising process. The proactive governors are very proud of the school's achievements yet are head-strong in ensuring robust and appropriate challenge. Self-evaluation, although lengthy, accurately articulates the strengths and weaknesses of the school. In an increasing secular society, the school, to further develop the mission, has formed an Ethos Committee which seeks to energise the community in bearing witness to Christ. Leaders bear witness to gospel values and ensure that high quality provision is given to support all pupils, especially the vulnerable and disadvantaged. Leaders have created a safe and supportive environment where pupils strive to do their best. Pupils were the biggest advocate of this secure environment. A significant number of leaders have completed the CCRS and the Diocesan Catholic Leadership Programme.

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

St Patrick's is a vibrant, confident Catholic community that celebrates success, acts in unison with a very strong sense of pride. When asked to encapsulate the ethos, a member of staff stated, "St Patrick's is about being tangibly welcoming, inclusive and recognising Christ in every person we meet". Extremely low incidences of bullying are testament to this. Comprehensive transition arrangements identify pupils who are inducted into a nurture group. A highly effective pastoral structure based on vertical tutoring and house system ensures exceptional care. Pupils state it builds a stronger community and enriches their experiences through helping others. This service to others, through acts of simple compassion, is highly powerful. Pupil leadership opportunities include Lead Mentors, choirs, Young Carer group, senior citizens party, Prefects, Anti-Bullying ambassadors, Peer Mentors and School Council. Collectively these 'develop the whole child'. Opportunities are open to all, encapsulating St Patrick's inclusive nature. The Sex and Relationship programme embraces Gospel values and aims to ensure pupils can make informed decisions. Safeguarding was highly effective, training extensive and new staff induction processes rigorous. Data shows improved attendance and fewer fixed term exclusions. The 'Peer Mentoring' initiative has led to disclosures enhancing safeguarding. Values are evident in policies and, importantly, practices in school. A great example is the embedded restorative justice system that reflects the value of reconciliation. Anti-bullying ambassadors promote a 'culture of kindness' and are highly regarded due to the impact on everyday activities and routines. The Religious Education subject leader talked about nurturing children, taking a 'fruits of the vine' approach. The centrality of ensuring all pupils 'live life to the full' allows 'amazing things to happen'. The involvement of the clergy is prominent and this fosters links with local parishes. There is a tradition of charitable fund-raising events which includes CAFOD, Cornerstone and 'around the corner, across the world'. A stewardship group, focusing on promoting and protecting God's world, is established and having impact, eg: the introduction of recycling bins. Pupils said that a recent trip to Auschwitz reinvigorated their faith as it made them reflect and be sympathetic to others.

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

The mission statement, which is clear, is well-understood with prominent scripture displayed on corridors. This mission manifests itself in exceptional pastoral support both for pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged, and for staff through comprehensive induction and continuous professional development. Furthermore, staff well-being is enhanced through reducing work-load initiatives such as 'late start/early start'. St Patrick's has a highly experienced team of Religious Education teachers and the quality of teaching is strong as evidenced through observations and work scrutiny which showed appropriate challenge. Furthermore, without exception pupils' enjoyment and engagement in most lessons was excellent and reflected that they enjoyed Religious Education; one pupil said "it helps us realise how important God is". This comment epitomised the positivity stemming from Religious Education. The outcome of this teaching is very positive progress and attainment outcomes which are comparable with other core subjects. It is evident that the department is ambitious and strives for excellence. Challenge was appropriate and there is currently a review of the curriculum. The development of knowledge, skills and understanding are integral to faith development at St

Patrick's. However, there needs to be a focus on the correction of the mis-spelling of key Religious Education vocabulary. In a Religious Education lesson observed, an example of a bigger question, *'Would the death penalty reduce crime?'* facilitated great dialogue and debate allowing pupils to develop a greater depth of understanding. In science pupils were able to articulate *'What created the earth and the universe?'*. SMSC was evidenced within Religious Education. For example, one lesson, cultural differences were discussed in debates regarding the 'death penalty' or where 'equality' was debated in another. However, it may be beneficial to conduct a review or audit of SMSC across the curriculum to ensure it is current and able to broaden pupils' learning experiences. In key stage four pupil voice could quote scripture, including from other religions.

### **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IS GOOD**

Prayer is prominent at St Patrick's. For instance, in an assembly the season of Advent was being celebrated. This was delivered by senior staff and a group of confident pupils who clearly gave out relevant key messages based on scripture in a pupil-centered manner. Pupils were reverent throughout and the assembly was underpinned with prayer and reflection, enabling pupils to start the day in a reflective manner. One pupil said assemblies "inspire us to put our Catholic faith into action". The newly appointed Catholic Lead has already begun building confidence in leading worship through, for example, modelling good practice and ensuring appropriate continuous professional development. During staff briefing there was a whole staff prayer, pertinent to the theme of Advent. Focus was on both personal reflection and a time of celebration. The positive energy was palpable. An Ethos Committee has been formed to ensure more prayerful and reflective opportunities to support collective spiritual development and formation. An early sign of its success is the number of staff volunteers. Although in its infancy, it has already ensured a more coherent approach to developing worship and has re-energised the mission being at the heart of the school. At form times, prayer meetings take place. There are weekly celebrations of Mass and pupil voice acknowledges that this is well attended. The chapel was also used by the Religious Education department as an opportunity to support their teaching of the faith to pupils. Staff voice was full of praise for the liturgy group and their messages of 'spreading love throughout the school'. This ripple of kindness has had a knock-on effect further ensuring the values of the school are realised. The liturgy group meets on a weekly basis and takes pride in giving witness through prayer planning and liturgical activities, including drama and poetry for liturgies and Masses. Collectively these opportunities for worship strengthen pupils' faith journey and relationship with God. It has been acknowledged that although there has been a focus on worship, changes are not yet firmly established.

### **AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT**

- **Further develop Acts of collective Worship to ensure there is a coherent programme that leads to spiritual development and formation.**
- **Review SMSC provision across the curriculum to ensure children are routinely challenged by 'Big Questions' across all departments to provide opportunities to deepen the mission.**
- **To expand the work of the chaplaincy so that the school continues to be a strong community of faith.**