

INSPECTION REPORT

Mount St Joseph’s RC High School, Greenland Road, Farnworth, Bolton, BL4 0HU

Inspection date 21 April 2016

Reporting Inspectors Mr S A Smith
 Mr S Logue
 Mr M Reynolds

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

Type of School Voluntary Aided

URN 105263

Age range of pupils 11-16

Number on roll 890

Appropriate authority The Governing Body

Chair of Governors Mr Bernard Waldron MBE

Headteacher Mr P Roach

Head of Religious Education Mrs S Doughty

Date of previous inspection June 2011

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

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

Mount St Joseph's is an average size High School situated in Farnworth, Bolton. The school serves the parishes of Our Lady of Lourdes, St Gregory's, St Williams, St Ethelbert's, Saints Peter and Paul and St Teresa's. Around 40% of the pupils attending the school are baptised Roman Catholics and the majority of other pupils are Muslim. A number of staff hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies and three senior leaders have followed the Catholic Leadership Programme. The current headteacher is the executive headteacher of another community High School close by. The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is 37% of pupils. The proportion of students with English as an additional language is above the national average. 23 students have an education health and care plan. The percentage of the school population who have identified needs is 25%. Exclusion rates are below national average.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

Mount St Joseph's is an outstanding Catholic school, where the mission statement of 'believers, learners and friends' is central to work of the school. Governors and school leaders are clear in their mission for all pupils and inclusive to the most vulnerable, challenged and needy. Partnerships with parents are very strong. Tolerance, respect, reconciliation and love for all are qualities exhibited and nurtured at all times in every situation. Positive relationships form the basis on which pupils are encouraged and loved to grow in their faith. This is supported by the adult community, who display a strong commitment to their work, unified in a common purpose to celebrate and build upon the successes of this rich, dynamic and positive community. Pupils make progress above the national average in religious education. Significant resources underpin the valued outreach work that takes place with other networks and partners across parishes, which is supported by varied opportunities for outstanding work in the formation and development of pupils and adults.

KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- A strong pastoral system that bears witness to Jesus Christ through a well lived out mission statement that celebrates diversity and inclusivity.
- Excellent outcomes as a result of consistently good or outstanding teaching in religious education.
- Strong purposeful leadership at all levels, including pupils, ensures the school's mission as a Catholic school is made known to all.

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

Through an Ethos Committee, the outstanding governing body and senior leadership team have sought to influence the Catholic mission of their school from the core outwards. This committee comprises of many key people, including the school chaplain, and seeks to energise the whole community in bearing witness to the Catholic faith and other faiths as a spiritual community. A recent review of the mission statement has provided a catalyst for empowering everyone connected with the school to be re-energised in its quest for excellence. There is firm evidence that the mission statement is permeating every policy and practice across the school. The governing body and school leadership team fully understand the mission for Catholic education for all its pupils, parents and parishes, whilst clearly promoting the role of Catholic education within a secular society. Evaluation is central to the school's work and improvements; development areas are quickly addressed. Decisions that are key to the school's future bears witness to Gospel values. For example, the school has spent significant resources on the religious education department and chapel and investment in professional development and formation of adults; large numbers of staff hold the CCRS and have followed the Catholic Leadership Programme. Last year, all staff had training in spiritual, moral, social and cultural education and how it can be integrated more effectively into the curriculum. This was evidenced during the inspection in a number of lessons, where planning for SMSC was integrated seamlessly and had a significant impact on the pupils' understanding.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORD IS OUTSTANDING

The religious education department and chapel are purposely at the heart of the school. There is a wonderful ethos throughout the classroom area and it is recognised as being 'different' by pupils. Governors

and senior leaders have ensured RE receives the 10% of curriculum time instructed within the RE curriculum directory. Effective links with parents and parish means that ongoing formation supplements the very high quality of religious education teaching. No pupil chooses to be self-excluded and outcomes in the last few years are above the national average for GCSE. This is because the RE department is a well led and standards are outstanding. Contributing to this is dynamic teaching and learning; the department is a place for creativity, joy and innovation. In some lessons observed, team teaching between pupils enabled many of them to consider new ideas and to take risks. Pupils look after one another and support each other in their learning. RE lessons observed were at least good, with the majority outstanding. A culture has been fostered that invests in staff, professional development, resources and most importantly time for the young people in their care. SMSC and its context were made explicit across the curriculum and carefully linked; this broadens pupils' experience and makes it relevant. The school participates in a wide range of diocesan activities, for example, Los Posados and the ongoing work for the Year of Mercy. Pupils are actively involved in the wider Catholic community of Bolton and Salford and see themselves as young disciples of Christ. Working with Convivo for a number of years has enabled students to develop an outstanding confidence in their own faith. Catechesis is evident in faith and community activities. Witness to their faith is evident through a variety of charitable events such as the strong sponsored links established recently with an international school in The Gambia. Pupils see themselves as being pro-active in spreading the joy of the Gospel.

THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING

All members of the school's community take every opportunity to play an active role in welcoming visitors and take great pride in showcasing the school. The inclusive nature of the school is lived out and can be seen in relationships and behaviour. Excellent systems ensure that all visitors are carefully provided for and looked after. There is a clear sense of belonging within the school. The school's motto 'a community of learners, believers and friends' is displayed prominently and work undertaken by the pupils showcases this around the site. Visitors are in no doubt that this is a Catholic school. The school is pro-active in spreading its Catholic mission in the wider community by engaging with families, parents, and partner primary schools. The school demonstrates outstanding commitment to meeting the needs of the most vulnerable and challenging young people and this often starts in primary school with outreach work and meetings undertaken by school staff. For example, a welcome mass is prepared by chaplains in conjunction with Year 6 teachers and pupils, so every new pupil is known and engages with the school before they arrive in September of Year 7. Younger students, some of whom have high social and academic needs, are inducted into school through a nurture group. These arrangements ensure that they do not become overwhelmed early in their secondary school life. Many staff spoke to the inspectors informally about their positive experience of induction to the school.

THE QUALITY OF WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING

Mount St Joseph's is a school where all pupils show respect for each other and undertake frequent, acts of compassion and kindness to others. In form time, pupils watch a weekly edition of 'newsround'. It was clearly evident that teachers are skilled at questioning students, developing their understanding of the issues and empathy. Pupils were able to describe some of the beatitudes such as 'love thy neighbour' as part of their response. This school is inclusive to all faiths. Significant investment has taken place to create a system that supports pupils' academic development and personal formation. Parents of pupils who are vulnerable are invited to school for coffee mornings, where informal support has led to excellent relationships being formed with the child at the centre. This complements the more structured termly review meetings. There is a comprehensive and holistic sex and relationship education policy, which is integral to the curriculum and supports parents in the education and formation of their child. Peer-mentoring is highly regarded by all due to the impact it makes on everyday activities and routines. Partnering older and younger pupils enables staff to subtly direct and target their support. Pupils value this strategy because it links clearly into the house system through enrichment and community activities; it provides continuity for them as they progress through the school. The peer-support offered through

academic subjects is equally valued and the way pupils' respond showing well developed emotional intelligence. These systems are well led by a committed team.

THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

Prayer is at the heart of the school's community. A 'theme of the week', delivered in form time, brings together pupils and adults as 'one body' to reflect and engage in activities that promote spiritual growth using the school's motto: 'a community of learners, believers and friends' as a context. During the inspection, 'education' was the theme. Resources were used creatively, giving a prominence to aspects of SMSC. It is a beautifully coordinated programme that is valued. Form teachers are encouraged to personalise these activities to suit the groups' needs. They are trained and well supported by key staff. The leadership team have introduced a vertical house system of three houses to enable pupils of all ages (Years 7 to 11) to be self-supportive in their own formation. Pupils feel comfortable in praying in the presence of each other. The school's GIFT team, plan and contribute to acts of worship and para-liturgies, often at lunchtime. The GIFT team welcomes new volunteers who work together to shape ideas. For example in Advent, parents were invited to school to share in a para-liturgy that drew on scripture, music and reflections. This shows the school's commitment to engaging with all families spiritually as well as academically, creating worship opportunities that 'reach out' to the community. Regular masses demonstrate the inclusive nature of the school, because all pupils contribute to aspects of the mass. Pupils described masses as 'innovative', especially in the Liturgy of the Word and how it impacts on their lives and actions. Local clergy also make themselves known in a pastoral way to all. There are numerous opportunities for pupils to develop their outreach work. Recently, the GIFT team worked on a video about CAFOD and its place as one of the school's adopted charities.

THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS OUTSTANDING

The 'community of learners, believers and friends' have great affection for all and daily events demonstrate this is the case. Pupils were actively involved in the review of the school mission statement in order to ensure that they have ownership. Pupils have been vital to the development of the house system through participation in designing the different house shields and mottos. This enabled the pupils to understand and develop an awareness of the three different role models chosen. Continuing development of the prefect system and GIFT team is quickly permeating through all aspects of school and parish life. Members of the GIFT team, i.e. pupil chaplains, are being trained by older pupils, who act in every way as ambassadors and role models for others and a visit to the Schoenstatt Shrine has been part of this. Visiting clergy describe how pupils' faith journey is touched by the quality of pupil leadership. The involvement of clergy is much appreciated and helps to nurture and foster strengthening links with the parish and primary school communities. Staff and pupils are able to talk about their faith comfortably, including those of other faiths, who value the gospel messages to shape their everyday life and their futures. The chaplaincy team said they are proud of their school and the place of religious education within it. This was frequently evidenced during the inspection, for example, when reflecting upon the place and role of the family in the context of marriage. The nurture group supports more vulnerable pupils. The mission statement is lived out: supporting CAFOD as a school charity and planning and event for the 'Year of Mercy', for example.

AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- Continue to improve the quality of prayer and worship by ensuring greater opportunity for silent, meditative and spontaneous prayer.
- For governors and staff to work towards developing a dedicated sacred space that is multi-functional and can serve as a focal point for worship and witness.

May 2016

Dear Pupils

Thank you for welcoming us to your school during our visit. You have a wonderful school that reflects well on all your community and, of course, yourselves! All the staff in your school continually strive for excellence and it is clear that your school motto 'a community of learners, believers and friends' is lived out in each and every one of you, every day.

During our visit, we observed lessons in RE, art and history. We also listened to the beautiful reflections in assembly and form time, and spent time with the GIFT team. The quality of what you have is outstanding and you should be proud to be a part of it. We were especially impressed with how you support and look after members of your school community and how your faith spurs you on to make a difference in other people's lives by living out your faith in practice. You should be congratulated for your fundraising for CAFOD.

The governors and senior leadership team have very high aspirations for you all. They will work together with you to develop a sacred space that can be used in many ways. Your teachers will guide you in order to deepen your personal prayer life.

You should be proud of your school, an outstanding 'community of learners, believers and friends'.

Yours sincerely

Mr S A Smith, Mr S Logue, Mr M Reynolds
Section 48 Inspectors

Summary Report to Parents

On 21 April 2016 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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