

**INSPECTION REPORT Mount Carmel RC High School**

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Inspection date 7<sup>th</sup> October 2014

Reporting Inspector Sister Judith Russi  
Mrs Alison Burrowes

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

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Type of School Catholic High School

URN 119804

Age range of pupils 11-16 years

Number on roll 705

Appropriate authority The Governing Body

Chair of Governors Mr Dennis Ford

Head teacher Mr Xavier Bowers

Date of previous inspection July 2009

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

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

Mount Carmel High School is a smaller than average-sized secondary school serving the parishes of St Mary's Oswaldtwistle, St Mary's Clayton, St Joseph's and St Anne's. Currently 40% of teaching staff are baptised Catholic and 34% of pupils are baptised Catholic. In September 2011 governors appointed a new Head teacher and Deputy Head teacher. Since then a significant number of new staff have been appointed to the school, including 2 Assistant Head teachers and 5 curriculum leaders. The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is higher than the national average. Approximately one third of students are from minority ethnic groups, of which the largest is Pakistani. Around one third of students, a proportion much higher than found nationally, is identified as disabled or with special educational needs and is supported through school action. Their needs relate mainly to moderate learning difficulties and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is similar to that found nationally. The school works hard to support students who struggle with mainstream education and have responded to their needs by developing excellent links with Accrington and Rossendale College, North Lancashire Training Services and the local Pupil Referral Unit. The school's performance is just above the government's current floor standard.

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

The Governing body and staff of Mount Carmel have made significant progress since the last inspection in building up a good Catholic learning community with some outstanding features and is now well posed to consolidate its improvements in order to move from good to outstanding across the board. The Mission Statement is clearly a driving force for the community. The Governors and leadership of the school recognise that it is time to review the mission statement in line with the known and appreciated motto "*A family of faith and learning*". The religious and cultural diversity of the school is celebrated in such a way that it provides a Catholic education with a global focus. The inspirational initiatives being introduced and developed by the Headteacher and developed by the leadership team have revitalised what was a disparate community into a truly united body who recognise their place in the world as future stewards who can influence, change and contribute to the common good for all people. The leadership team's passion for learning and personal development ensures that all pupils receive an integrated Gospel based formation and education. The leadership of the school are clearly aware of their next steps for improvement as they strive for outstanding. Parent questionnaires and discussion with students revealed a close working relationship between home and school. Students pointed out that they felt there had been significant improvements over the past two years especially in relationships, welcome and access to the school.

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

- The vision and commitment of the Headteacher in creating the climate for transformational education is inspirational.
- The behaviour for learning and warmth of welcome of the school is outstanding.
- The care and welfare of all within the school provides an oasis of hope and joy.

## **THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP IS GOOD**

The Governors and leadership team have transformed the learning environment since the last inspection. Their unity of purpose and focus is a great strength for the whole school. The Governing body are highly committed to taking the school forward and recognise the importance and necessity for all governors to be more rigorous in their monitoring and ongoing evaluation of the progress of the school. In order to consolidate their achievements and move the school leadership to outstanding governors need to further develop their understanding and knowledge of the distinctive

strategic direction of the school within the mission of the Church. Continuing professional development and mentoring/support at all levels has improved and developed since the previous inspection. Governors are now well placed to develop closer links with middle leaders in order to have a more in depth knowledge of teaching and learning. The school has identified that pupil leadership is much improved and will be further developed by pupil involvement at Governor and senior leadership levels through appropriate attendance at meetings. The Mission Statement is clearly a driving force for the community. The Governors and leadership of the school recognise that it is now time to review the mission statement in line with the known and appreciated motto "*A family of faith and learning*". The religious and cultural diversity of the school is celebrated in such a way that it provides a Catholic education with a global focus. The inspirational initiatives being introduced and developed by the leadership team have revitalised what was a disparate community into a truly united body who recognise their place in the world as future stewards who can influence, change and contribute to the common good for all people. Parent questionnaires and discussion with students revealed a close working relationship between home and school. Students pointed out that they felt there had been significant improvements over the past two years especially in relationships, welcome and access to the school. The leadership of the school are clearly aware of their next steps for improvement as they strive to be outstanding in all areas.

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

The development of the school logo/strapline "*A family of faith and learning*" has provided an important focal point for the whole community to better understand and witness to their mission statement. All staff and pupils new to the school are inducted into the meaning and message of the mission statement. The leadership of the school have ensured that RE receives 10% of taught curriculum time at both key stages. The leadership structures of RE are under review and the present arrangements are being evaluated to ensure RE continues to develop into the 'Flagship' Department and lead area for learning at both key stages. The RE curriculum and schemes of work are based on the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. The introduction of detailed planning and use of a wide range of teaching and learning strategies in order to raise standards is impacting on pupils learning. This would be further enhanced by allowing more time for reflection and independent learning. Higher order questioning was in use in some lessons and when used appropriately did produce more profound responses. A review of the use of assessment for learning, success criteria and diagnostic marking in RE linked to personalised targets would enable pupils to have a clearer understanding of how to achieve their next steps for learning. Behaviour for learning and relationships between pupils and teachers are of a high standard. The department is now ready to raise expectations particularly at Key Stage 3, to a significantly higher level. In the majority of cases teaching assistants were purposefully engaged in the teaching and learning of the class. The development of language in RE and higher order questioning skills would enable all pupils to achieve at a higher level. A greater degree of challenge for all pupils would also assist learning and enable progress from good to outstanding. Pupils learn about a range of other faiths through the RE scheme. Progress has been made in delivering spiritual, moral, social and cultural education across all key stages and was in evidence across the curriculum and would benefit from being led at a senior level. The Religious Education budget is set according to the needs of the curriculum and the Catholic life of the school.

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

Mount Carmel RC High school is outstanding in its welcome and care for one another and visitors. The school actively seeks to engage with and support members of the community. This is particularly appreciated by those new to the area, parents and friends of the school. The development of "*The Mount Carmel Way*" has initiated a clearly understood culture and ethos of inclusion and welcome. Great attention and care are given to detail to ensure that no one feels excluded, resulting in the raising of self-esteem, pride and wellbeing throughout the school. Pupils and staff new to the school

spoke of the ways in which their worries and fears had been quickly overcome as they were made to feel part of the community from the first day. Year II students spoke with pride about the changes and positive attitudes that they had seen and witnessed in the culture of the school. A large number of parents are actively involved in the life of the school through the school PTFA. Parent questionnaires revealed that families and carers felt well informed and very appreciative of the welcome that was being extended to them. They particularly appreciated the fact that the school was confident about its Catholicity and the way in which it celebrated inclusion and diversity. The pupils' sense of ownership and responsibility for what happens in their school was outstanding; they were clearly very proud of the changes and growth of the school. Pupils play a key role supporting the younger children and those newly arrived in the area. Members of staff at all levels were found to be proactive in ensuring a respectful and warm welcome. Frequent activities take place where Mount Carmel welcomes the local community into the school as well as supporting a wide range of activities in the local community.

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

Mount Carmel demonstrates a high level of respect and care for each person as being made in the image and likeness of God. The system of restorative justice and forgiveness was acknowledged as being instrumental in helping the school to reach its present level of success. The high level of diverse and complex needs of pupils makes significant demands on all staff. These are met with great sensitivity and expertise ensuring that every child feels safe and valued. The restructuring of the pastoral care system is having a positive impact and is well placed to drive up achievement and attainment. The provision for SRE is mainly through RE and science. Pupils spoke confidently about the transformation in the life of the school over the past three years. They said that Mount Carmel had become a place where gang mentality, racism and bullying were either rare or non-existent. Pupils felt confident that action against inappropriate behaviour was swift and effective. Pupils spoke readily of how they were confident to regulate not only their own behaviour but also the behaviour of others. The buddy system, prefects, school council and opportunities for membership of Police, Sea and Army Cadets all serve to develop pupil responsibility and service to the common good. Care for staff across the school was found to be of a very high standard. Staff spoke of the ways in which the Head teacher took a personal and immediate interest whenever they were under pressure or finding life difficult and was proactive in his support and assistance. The school actively reaches out to those in need at home and abroad, through a wide variety of charity work. The leadership team are now looking to further develop their high level of commitment to charitable activities through appointing a Charity Coordinator.

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

The Headteacher has invested considerably in the development of prayer and worship throughout the school. A beautiful chapel has been created and a part-time (one day a week) lay chaplain has been appointed. The governors and leadership team are reviewing the provision for prayer and worship and have identified that this is an area for further development as they strive for outstanding. The school is well supported by local clergy who celebrate a range of liturgies when requested. Fr Derek McCartney has recently begun to give one day a week to supporting the school and together with the lay chaplain, is looking to greatly increase the chaplaincy provision. Daily acts of worship take place for all pupils and assemblies and other para-liturgies are developing so that they are more pupil-led and contemporary. All year groups have the opportunity for retreat experiences either in school or at a retreat centre. Staff and pupils lead prayer and worship on a regular basis. Staff felt that they would benefit from further training for their own personal prayer life as well as increasing their confidence in supporting pupils as they plan, organise and lead a variety of meaningful and relevant prayer and worship opportunities in school. The further development of the chaplaincy provision will greatly help in moving the school worship from good to

outstanding through the introduction of a systematic and development programme of prayer and worship.

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

Staff and pupils are clearly very confident in witnessing to *"The Mount Carmel Way"* which is Christ centred and challenging. The confidence and background knowledge of the beliefs and values of the faith are seen as a priority for all staff development. The leadership of the school are actively seeking ways to build up staff confidence concerning the beliefs and values of the Church so that they are able to build on the already very good practice of inculcating their witness, beliefs and values in all aspects of school life. The outstanding relationships across the school, displays and children's work throughout, all give testimony to the fact that this is a Catholic learning community which celebrates, embraces and recognises a rich diversity of faiths and cultures. Pupils were found to be confident and willing to speak about their faith and why it was important to them. They were able to link home, school, parish with ease. This was clearly evident from pupils who were both Catholic and from other faiths. As one pupil said, *"Before we were divided by race and religion, but now we are family."* Others spoke of the growth in their understanding that whatever ones ethnicity or faith they looked for *"The same God that is in all our hearts"*. Mount Carmel clearly witnesses to Christ's love, justice, forgiveness and compassion. The Governing body and staff of Mount Carmel have made significant progress since the last inspection in building up a good Catholic learning community. The school has developed considerably since the previous inspection and is now well posed to consolidate its improvements in order to move the school from good to outstanding across the board.

October 22nd 2014

Dear Pupils

Thank you so much for the wonderful welcome you gave us when we came to visit you. Much of what is happening in your school is good and in some areas it is outstanding. This is because you are really striving to live up to your challenging mission statement.

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. To help you develop even further your teachers are going to help you with your RE targets and assessments making sure that everyone is being challenged to be the very best they can be.

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. Your governors and Mr Bowers would like you to have more responsibility in leading in the Catholic life of the school. So they are going to create a new pupil faith and community team to work with Fr McCartney and your School Lay Chaplain.

We were very impressed by many aspects of your school, by the wall displays in classrooms and on the corridors and especially your beautiful chapel and the way you care for the school buildings. However, we were most impressed by how you care for each other as a 'Family of Faith and Learning'.

God bless you all.

Yours sincerely

Sr Judith Russi

(Section 48 Inspector)

### **Summary Report to Parents**

On the 7<sup>th</sup> October 2014 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.

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

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### **AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:**

- In order to take the leadership from good to outstanding further develop the understanding of roles and responsibilities for all governors so that they are able to engage at a deeper strategic level in line with the mission of the Church in education.
- Continue the development of assessment in the RE programme, through a more accurate understanding of levels, the setting of personalised pupil targets for each topic, success criteria and greater challenge for all pupils.
- Continue to develop a model of Chaplaincy provision which recognises the diversity of the school and fosters pupil leadership in school, parish and the local community.