

INSPECTION REPORT

Blessed John Henry Newman Roman Catholic College, Oldham, OL9 9QY

Inspection date 18th September 2015

Reporting Inspector Mr Colin Mason
 Mr Michael Wright

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

Type of School Catholic High School
 URN 136432
 Age range of pupils 11-16 years
 Number on roll 1402
 Appropriate authority The Governing Body
 Chair of Governors Rev Canon Eugene Dolan
 Head teacher Mr Michael McGhee
 Head of RE Department Ms Laura Finley
 Date of previous inspection First S48 Inspection

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades 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	2	

The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

Blessed John Henry Newman College is the Catholic Secondary School serving the children of Oldham. The college has been on an improvement journey since first opening in September 2012. The focus for improvement strategies since opening has been based predominantly on establishing the college as a credible provider of education in Oldham. Being placed in a category of 'serious weaknesses' in February 2013 mandated a 'standards' improvement agenda. There are currently 1402 students on roll. The college serves all areas of Oldham. 42% of pupils are registered to be Baptised Catholics. 40% of staff are Baptised Catholics. 35% of pupils are classed as disadvantaged. 39% of pupils are from ethnic minorities other than white English, the highest minority being pupils of Pakistani heritage, which is 14%. 69 students are entitled to SEN support and 25 pupils currently have SEN Statements.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS GOOD

Newman College is a Good Catholic High School with a number of outstanding features. The very positive culture, growing confidence and self-belief has enabled the college to be true to its mission. The college's mission statement calls upon all members of the school community to "*.....strive to have the courage to live our Christian faith in love and service to others, to achieve dignity and excellence.*" Throughout the inspection it was clear that these words are turned into actions on a daily basis and provide motivation and direction across all aspects of college life. The college thrives on the diversity of the community it serves and is a beacon for social and cultural cohesion. As one student so passionately shared, "*the problems reported in Oldham are just not evident here at Newman College.*" Impressively positive relationships exist across all aspects of college life. All members of the college community are committed and share a common purpose inspired by the word of Pope Francis, "*dare to have fabulous plans..... and do not be afraid to dream*".

KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- The vision and commitment of the governors, headteacher, leadership team and staff in creating the climate for transformational education.
- The relationships, behaviours for learning and warmth of welcome of the school is outstanding.
- Creating, in a relatively short period of time a single, strong, cohesive college community with a clear focus on cooperation and aspiration.
- Improving, in a relatively short period of time, pupil achievement in RE to a level well in excess of Diocesan average.

THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP IS GOOD

Newman College is very well led by a team of governors, headteacher and senior leaders whose actions are clearly guided by the college mission statement and most specifically, "*Dignity and Excellence*". All leaders are clear in recognising where the college is on the journey to outstanding and understand their own particular roles and responsibilities. Very high levels of mutual trust and respect epitomise relationships between school leaders and governors as they all strive to ensure that "*every child leaves Newman College with the things they need to be the person they want to be.*" Such aspirations are most evident through the range of resources and provision put in to place specifically to support those students with the greatest needs. Appropriate and effective systems are in place and create a safe and secure environment in which everyone is able to flourish. The quality of relationships, based upon mutual respect and trust is a real strength across all aspects of college life. The same collaborative and

cooperative relationships are evident whether in a classroom, a social space or an extra-curricular activity. Governors are actively involved in many aspects of college life and have a real sense of belonging. They have played an active part in the creation of the school mission statement, working alongside staff and students and have an equally active engagement in all aspects of the college's self-evaluation processes. Governors have an acute awareness of the role that the school plays in bringing elements of the local community together and are proud of the progress the school has made in this area. Students articulate a real sense of belonging. They are proud of their school, recognise the hard work and dedication of staff and value the range of opportunities offered to them to take on positions of responsibility and service as Student Chaplains, Caritas Ambassadors, Faith and Peace Group, Amnesty International Action Group. All leaders recognise the improvement journey they are on, celebrate the progress made but are clear on the essential next steps to build upon what now exists. They are resolute in their determination to build a credible, robust Catholic college which meets the diverse needs of all learners.

THE QUALITY OF WORD IS GOOD

The mission of *Dignity and Excellence* is known, lived and developed at all levels and alongside the explicit proclamation of scripture around the college building provides a motivational drive for the educational endeavours of the whole college community. This can also be seen through the college focus on standards of achievement across all subjects, and the ongoing improvements in the quality of teaching, which the college now regards as a strength. The teaching that was observed was very strong. Increasingly RE is seen as the Core of the Core, and its academic rigour is increasing. Planning for revised qualifications and use of the RECD has ensured much teaching within RE is outstanding and pupils make good progress, as evidenced in the 2014 and 2015 outcomes in the subject. Key Catholic texts are used regularly and pupils' religious literacy is improving. The RE department is well staffed and has a good balance of specialist teachers with varying levels of experience. Leadership of RE is outstanding. The Head of Department has achieved much in a relatively short period of time. Major reviews of the curriculum, continuing professional development strategies and revising approaches to assessment support subject teachers and ensure that the department is well placed in meeting the needs of a hugely diverse student population. A proactive approach to transition and the introduction of a baseline assessment in RE also supports the learning of the significant number of Year 7 pupils who join the school with low levels of religious literacy. The subject is well resourced and although close to the RECD requirement it does not yet meet the 10% requirement for each key stage. The Head of Department values the level of engagement with the Diocese and is currently working alongside two other schools in trialling a revised Key Stage 3 curriculum. Students spoke very positively about how much they enjoyed RE and in particular the relationships between staff and students as being in their eyes, exceptionally supportive. The school has through its own self-evaluation recognised that the broader contribution of subjects to the Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural development (SMSC) of all learners requires further development.

THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING

Visitors, parents and external review teams consistently comment on the warm welcome given by staff and students. Students play an active role in welcoming visitors and take great pride in showcasing the college. The college takes all appropriate steps that it can to support all students and parents, particularly those who struggle to engage with the college. Due to its context the college employs a Community Engagement Officer. Staff recognise the God given talents and skills of all students, and there is a clear sense of belonging within the school. The college is pro-active in spreading its Catholic mission in the wider community by engaging with families, parents, and partner primary schools. The college is proactively involved in the recent formation of the Federation of Oldham Deanery Catholic Schools. The college demonstrates outstanding commitment to meeting the needs of the most vulnerable and challenging young people, whether they began secondary school at

the college or have arrived through any form of in year transfer. Parents value highly the effective transition programme that ensures children are very well prepared for the transition to high school. The Year 7 schools is highly regarded, providing a nurturing environment, which ensures children new to the school enjoy a smooth transition. This level of commitment also extends to new members of a staff who spoke to inspectors very positively about the extent and quality of the induction programme they experience when joining the college, whatever the stage in their teaching career. Transition strategies for such a large and diverse intake are well-planned and students spoke enthusiastically about the range of opportunities throughout Year 5 and 6 which enabled them to become more familiar with the college prior to their September start.

THE QUALITY OF WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING

The commitment of governors and senior leaders to the welfare of all members of the college community is excellent. Staff and students demonstrate high levels of respect at all times, feel safe and cared for. During the inspection, staff and students were keen to demonstrate how they felt cared for, respected and valued. Students receive Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) within RE and science which is in line with the teachings of the Church. The school identified that this particular aspect of provision is under review. The college is inclusive, loving and compassionate towards all. The college looks to personalise any care to individuals based on their particular circumstances. Provision for the disadvantaged or those with additional needs is a strength; pupil well-being meetings take place on a weekly basis to meet the needs of key pupils. External agency support is embraced for the good of the pupils, despite the expense. Students indicated that incidents of bullying are rare and that any cases are dealt with quickly and sensitively. One of the students who met with the inspectors could not speak highly enough about the work of the Key Workers who *“help us with absolutely everything.”* The manner with which the Behaviour for Learning policy is used flexibly, with reasonable adjustments, reinforces the college’s commitment to inclusivity. Targeted curriculum provision is well planned for pupils at the risk of permanent exclusion and exclusions are low compared to local and national norms. Pupil voice is a valued contribution to college self-evaluation and is taken into account when planning next steps. Parents are also encouraged to contribute to planning for the future of the college and to engage with their child’s education in a variety of ways. Parent Consultation Evenings capture the views of parents, which are very positive on Ofsted’s online ‘Parent View’, and help leaders to shape improvement strategy.

THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS GOOD

The college responds effectively to the spiritual needs of staff and students, though it recognises there is still work to be done in this area. Students and staff take an active role in the planning and delivery of Mass, Liturgies, services of Reconciliation, retreats and prayer in accordance to the Liturgical calendar. All of these activities are supported and strengthened through the much valued involvement of number of local priests. In addition, there are a variety of opportunities for staff and pupils to develop their own spirituality. Every class celebrates a Mass for their own intentions; all form groups have an opportunity to plan a Para-Liturgy with the college Chaplain and spiritual days are built into the college year. School masses involve primary partners and parish priests. Links to each Catholic partner Primary schools’ wider Catholic community are strengthening though college leaders and primary colleagues see this aspect of their mission as an area for ongoing development. The school chapel is a beautiful sacred space situated at the very heart of the school. The highly valued college Chaplain ensures that students feel welcome and comfortable in accessing the chapel at different times throughout the college day. During Form Time for example, form teachers can schedule their class to go into the chapel and this creates an excellent opportunity for meaningful collective prayer and reflection. A more consistent approach to prayer during Form Time would further enhance each student’s personal experience of worship. The students who have recently been trained and

commissioned as Pupil Chaplains are great advocates for the college. They are enormously proud in being part of the first cohort of student chaplains and spoke with real passion about being able to contribute in different ways to bringing people together.

THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS GOOD

As staff join the college and through regular CPD and briefings, all staff are aware of the expectation that they are leaders of the faith. Staff and students have a growing awareness of and are confident in witnessing the beliefs and values of the Catholic Church. Students and staff are actively encouraged to engage as citizens of the world, on a local and national and global level through engaging with key Catholic charities throughout the year. St. Joseph's Penny, Caritas, CAFOD, Cornerstones and many other good causes benefit from the generosity and sense of service of so many members of the college community. Catholic values and teachings are promoted by all members of our community in their actions and words recognising that, "*Christ has no hands and feet on earth but ours.*" Students spoke with varying degrees of confidence about their faith and how it impacts on their lives. Pupils of other faiths felt at home as part of the "*Newman Family*" and felt both valued and respected. The outreach to other faiths and denominations is a growing strength as is the impact of chaplaincy on the life of the school.

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- Further build the confidence of all members of staff to consistently lead meaningful worship within the college day.
- Strengthen the contribution of all subject areas in relation to the colleges approach to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education.
- As the direction of Chaplaincy develops, ensure increased student ownership and participation in this important aspect of college life.

Monday 21 September 2015

Dear Pupils

Thank you so much for the wonderful welcome you gave us when we came to visit you. It is clear that you are all very proud to be part of the Blessed John Henry Newman College community. This is because you are really striving to live up to your challenging mission statement and recognise that you are all one family.

In RE, in particular, your work is of a high standard and we could clearly see that you take your learning very seriously and are proud of your achievements. You have outstanding RE teachers who are helping you to feel confident in your learning and ability to discuss complex religious and moral issues. We were particularly impressed by the ways in which you could discuss what it means to belong, whether at school level or globally.

Your governors and Mr McGhee want to further develop the many ways in which you can experience and participate in the various acts of worship and prayer so that your faith and service to God may be strengthened.

We were very impressed by many aspects of your school. The wall displays in classrooms and on the corridors and especially your beautiful chapel all seem to stimulate your thirst for knowledge and understanding and we were really impressed in the way you care for the school buildings.

There is a true sense of 'Family' within your school and the quality of relationships between students and staff were outstanding.

God bless you all.

Yours sincerely

Colin Mason & Michael Wright

(Section 48 Inspectors)

Summary Report to Parents

On the 18th September 2015 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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