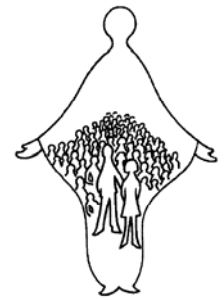


**SALFORD DIOCESE
INSPECTION REPORT**

**OUR LADY'S ROMAN CATHOLIC
SPORTS COLLEGE**

Alworth Road

Blackley Manchester M9 0RP



Inspection date April 2007

Reporting Inspector Mr. W. Ryan

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

Type of School	Catholic Secondary
URN	105576
Age range of pupils	11-16
Number on roll	745
Appropriate authority	the governing body
Chair of Governors	Mr. J. Lamb
Head teacher	Mrs. T. Dervin
Head of Religious Education	Mrs. N. Dewhurst
Date of previous inspection	April 2002

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades 1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3 = Satisfactory 4 = Inadequate
Overall effectiveness of the school	2	
Leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school	2	
The quality of Collective Worship	2	
Achievement and standards in Religious Education	2	
The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education	2	
The quality of the Religious Education curriculum	2	
Leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education	2	

The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Our Lady's is an 11-16 voluntary aided Roman Catholic co-educational comprehensive school. The school serves an area of significant social and economic disadvantage. It provides education for the pupils living in the associated parishes of St. Clare (Blackley), St. Patrick (Collyhurst), St. Anne (Crumpsall), St. Chad (Cheetham Hill) and St. Malachy (Collyhurst). Our Lady's school is located in Blackley within Manchester Local Education Authority. The indicative admission number is 150 and there are currently 745 learners on roll of whom 613 are baptised Roman Catholics. 45 % of learners are eligible for free school meals. The school has 151 learners who are identified as having special educational needs and of these 22 have a statutory statement of special educational need. The number of Catholic teachers in the school is 31 out of 46 and this represents 67 % of the total staff.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

Our Lady's is a good and improving Catholic school. The School Mission statement, recently reviewed, is central to its ethos. It is the foundation on which policies are built, relationships established and learning takes place. Its prominent display throughout the school, in the assembly hall, in classrooms and in documentation is a constant reminder to all "to know, love and serve God". The school is well served by an experienced governing body whose membership has recently been increased to improve its expertise. The link governor for Religious Education makes a significant and valued personal contribution to serving the spiritual needs of the community. Leadership by the headteacher is outstanding and she enjoys the enthusiastic support, not only of an experienced senior management team but of a dedicated and committed staff, who share her vision for the school and for serving the many and differing needs of its learners. Inclusion is a focus for Our Lady's and considerable efforts have been expended in improving attendance and in strategies designed to support the drive to raise achievement for all learners. Prayer and worship are every day features and liturgical celebrations are planned and evaluated. Increasingly learners are involved in this process and this trend is to be encouraged. The Religious Education faculty leads in supporting the development of the spiritual life of the school and in working with others to raise standards and attainment. Pastoral care provision is a distinctive feature of the school and year leaders make a significant contribution to the spiritual and moral development of their charges. Robust transition procedures are in place to welcome learners to the school and younger pupils recognise the efforts made to support them. Relationships in the school are good and teachers work hard to encourage good learning and progress. Learners for their part are happy in school. They recognise and value the care and support they receive. They respond well to the rewards offered to encourage progress and play their part in moving the school forward through their school council. Concern for others motivates the learners to give generously to a variety of charities. Funding for Religious Education is in line with other major departments and the time allocation of 10% fulfills the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

Improvement since the last inspection

Since the last inspection a number of staffing changes have taken place, notably a new headteacher has been appointed, as have a new assistant headteacher and head of Religious Education. There have also been staffing changes in the Religious Education faculty. The school Mission Statement has been reviewed. Personal, social and health education together with citizenship is now taught by the Religious Education faculty.

Capacity to improve

The school's capacity to evaluate itself and improve is good. Leadership continues to be committed to raising achievement and enriching the lives of the learners. Religious Education is an improving faculty and progress made thus far is very encouraging.

What the school should do to improve further

- Maintain development of the Re-connect group to further promote pupil participation in planning and presenting liturgies.
- Continue to develop strategies to improve boys' achievement at Key Stage 4.
- Improve information communication technology facilities in the Religious Education faculty.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The school deems the leadership and management of its Catholic life to be good. Evidence gathered during the inspection supports this view. The governing body, through its committee structure, monitors the school's progress. Faculty leaders keep it informed through presentations at governors' meetings while link governors are assigned to major departments. Membership of the governing body has recently been extended to increase its effectiveness. The vice-chair makes a major contribution to the spiritual lives of the community and as link governor to Religious Education monitors the faculty's work on a weekly basis. Members of the governing body attend, and participate in, major liturgical events celebrated in school. The headteacher provides outstanding and dynamic leadership and has the support of an experienced management team which shares her vision, enthusiasm and commitment. These in turn enjoy the support of a pastoral team who encourage the learners to "know, love and serve God" through excellent pastoral care, an inclusive agenda which supports and encourages achievement and through promoting high standards of behaviour. The recent review of the Mission Statement underpins all the school seeks to achieve and all stakeholders share in its ownership. Relationships with partner primary schools are well established and transition arrangements are comprehensive. Parents and carers are well informed of learners' progress through the school's review days and annual reports. Pupil attendance is improving and is kept under constant review.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The inspector agrees with the school's judgement that the quality of collective worship is good. The focus for prayer is to be found in assemblies, at form time and in opportunities for personal prayer as part of the Religious Education curriculum. The school chapel is an excellent and well used resource creating an atmosphere conducive to reflection and stimulating in appearance. Weekly voluntary Mass is celebrated here and learners respect it as a place of worship. Assemblies encourage communal prayer and provide opportunities for pastoral and senior managers to engage the learners in developing and enhancing their spiritual lives. These occasions are also used to celebrate success and encourage the learners to "know, love and serve God". Good use is made of audio-visual stimuli and learners are attentive and respond positively. Assemblies are well prepared, recorded and evaluated. Liturgies follow the pattern of the Church Year with appropriate celebrations during Advent in preparation for Christmas, in Lent in preparation for Holy Week and at Holy Days with liturgies for various year groups together with the opportunity to attend voluntary Mass during the day. Religious Education days conclude with liturgies prepared by the learners and delivered by them, thereby encouraging ownership. The establishment of the Re-connect group is a positive step in engaging learners in enhancing the school's prayer life and its development is to be encouraged. The Religious Education faculty leads in the developing liturgies and the school prayer book, together with the prayers on the staff bulletin, are valuable supports to form tutors in their daily act of worship. The vice-chair, as link governor, offers considerable support, encouragement and personal commitment in the delivery of collective worship.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The school considers achievement and standards in Religious Education to be good. The inspection evidence supports this judgement. Recent staff appointments are beginning to impact on achievement and a number of strategies put in place in the faculty are beginning to raise its status in the eyes of the learners. Progress in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory though intervention strategies and grouping arrangements are beginning to impact. Achievement in Key Stage 4 remains for the moment slightly below that of the school as a whole. Raising the achievement of boys remains one of the department's key areas for development and this should be further pursued. Learners demonstrate good knowledge of the subject in both key stages. They recognise its importance to the school and in their daily lives and are involved in the practical application of Christian values in their care and concern for others, both within the school and in the wider global communities. Learners behave well in class. They respect their teachers and value the contributions made by fellow learners to lesson development. Supportive pastoral care encourages good behaviour and incidents of misbehaviour are discouraged through rewards for positive action and through an electronic reporting system which facilitates the sharing of information. Good attendance is fostered and rewarded and learners enjoy their learning experience. Learners play their part in developing the school through membership of the school council, supporting younger learners through the "buddy" scheme and through membership of the Re-connect group.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The school considers the quality of teaching and learning to be good and the inspector agrees with this judgement. Members of the Religious Education faculty follow the diocesan guidelines at Key Stage 3 whilst adapting them to the needs of learners. These are well resourced and there is an ethos of sharing within the department whose members are well qualified and confident in their delivery of the subject. Sound planning encourages good lesson delivery and those observed during the inspection were indicative of the high standards members set themselves. Lessons are conducted at a pace appropriate to the learners and a variety of styles is used to engage them. Learners are treated with respect and good classroom management enables good learning. Materials used are well prepared and presented and learning is checked as a matter of course. The limited amount of information communication technology facilities improved the quality of the lessons observed but there is a need to further increase this provision. Learners enjoy their lessons and make valued contributions through active participation in their delivery. They maintain well marked work books. Assessment procedures are robust and the faculty plays a leading role in the Assessment for Learning initiative. Sound departmental analysis of assessment and learners work has enabled good planning and grouping arrangements. Learners play their part in the assessment procedures and are able to identify progress and set themselves meaningful targets. These are recorded in pupil planners and work books while through the school tracking system and review days parents are kept informed.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The inspector agrees with the school that the quality of the Religious Education curriculum is good. The school scheme of work for Key Stage 3 is in place. It broadly follows the Diocesan Guidelines and has been adapted to meet the needs of the learners. It is well supported with appropriate texts and teaching materials and incorporates the use of some information communication technology. The Religious Education faculty delivers the well constructed personal, social and health education strand together with citizenship without sacrificing any of the required 10% of its curriculum time. This has further raised the status of the subject and its valuable contribution to the learners' social and moral development. Adjustments to grouping arrangements and assessment procedures are beginning to impact at Key Stage 4. Consequently an improvement in achievement is anticipated. Development of varied teaching styles to better suit the needs of the learners is in place and their participation and interest in lessons is leading to improved learning. These efforts should be encouraged and further developed. Monitoring both within the department and by senior management is leading to rising standards and the raising of learners' expectations. The curriculum is further enriched by increasing use of Religious Education days whose inclusive nature adds to their appeal. Further opportunities for personal development exist through the school's prayer life.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The school considers leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education to be good. Evidence gathered during the inspection supports this judgement. Although the head of faculty in Religious Education is a comparatively recent appointment it has already led to significant improvement in the faculty. A number of initiatives have been introduced and setting procedures have been established and implemented. Working with the assistant headteacher responsible, the head of faculty has made a valuable contribution to enhancing the liturgical life of the school. She is committed to raising achievement and leads her colleagues with considerable ability and determination. The faculty benefits from a supportive link governor and from a membership, skilful in practice, who engage the interest and enthusiasm of the learners. Lesson observations by the head of faculty and senior management lead to a sharing of good practice and the development of teaching skills. The faculty development plan is comprehensive and realistic goals are set. Rooming is excellent. Religious Education is housed in a discrete block, together with the Chapel. Display throughout the area and in classrooms is informative and relevant.