



DIOCESE OF SHREWSBURY

REPORT ON THE MONITORING INSPECTION OF OUTSTANDING SCHOOLS

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

School:	Loreto Convent Preparatory School
Address:	Dunham Road Altrincham WA4 4GZ
Tel No:	0161 928 3703
DfE No:	358 6014
Headteacher:	Mrs H Norwood
Chair of Governors:	Sr Jacinta Davenport IBVM
Date of Inspection:	25 June 2015
Inspector:	Mrs E Robb

Loreto Preparatory continues to provide an outstanding Catholic education.

The underpinning philosophy of Loreto principles is rooted in the Gospels of Jesus Christ, and the vision and the values of Mary Ward permeate throughout this school. The children are immersed in a culture which strives for their academic and personal achievement.

The Headteacher is clearly focussed and motivated and ensures the education and care for the children in Loreto Preparatory School are of the highest standards. She is ably supported by an excellent Senior Management Team, an effective and enthusiastic Religious Education Co-ordinator, hardworking dedicated staff, a supportive Parish Priest and a proactive Governing Body. All are committed to providing the best opportunities for the children in their care. By working together as a team, and supporting each other, they set a living model for the children to emulate. This level of commitment can clearly be seen in the way the previous Religious Education Co-ordinator delivered training and developed resources for the introduction of the Diocesan Religious Education curriculum 'The Way, The Truth and The Life'. This guaranteed a seamless transition to the new Religious Education Co-ordinator and has ensured the curriculum is alive, exciting and delivered in a way that meets the needs of all children.

The outstanding quality of teaching is monitored closely and staff are guided towards providing the highest possible standards in Religious Education. Rigorous assessments and work scrutiny enable staff to set goals which challenge and support children. Across the key stages children achieve high standards in knowledge, understanding and skills in Religious Education, including those children with additional needs. All children benefit from activities which are varied and suit different ability groups. Teaching Assistants and other members of staff are deployed to support the overall development of children. The children enjoy their Religious Education lessons.

The Senior Management Team has access to Loreto England Education Network, which provides an expertise and understanding to further enrich the curriculum. Teachers have a strong faith background which brings a breadth and fullness to teaching and learning. This is a significant factor in the way all children are taught and supported.

The governors are proud of their school and rightly so. They know their school well and several of the governors have long associations with the school. Expectations are high. Governors provide challenge and support, willingly sharing their knowledge and expertise and actively shaping improvement. Several governors visit the school regularly overseeing their areas of responsibility and providing support and help when needed.

A 'Learning Walk' provided the Inspector with the opportunity to visit all classrooms where there was a range of challenging and exciting examples of outstanding practice. Topics, involving scripture, mission, service and other faiths, were set in stimulating learning environments, promoting quality work and providing opportunities and challenge for all children. The high standard of work in class displays and in children's work books, the variety of teaching styles, the excellent productive use of resources and the passion with which lessons were delivered, indicate the commitment to the promotion of the high standards expected of all. The children enjoy and celebrate other faiths and are curious and respectful in their questions and discussions relating to the beliefs of others.

There are numerous opportunities available to the children which enable them to develop spiritually and morally. These include prayers throughout the day, hymns, access to Collective Worship boxes and prayer focuses in each classroom. The children also have access to the Prayer Room where they learn, in an atmosphere of gentleness and calm, to respond to readings and discussions respecting and accepting each other's place on their faith journey.

Collective Worship is outstanding. All children are encouraged to be proactive in preparing, leading and celebrating the various aspects of Collective Worship from an early age. They contribute to, and participate in, Collective Worship with great reverence and respect. This was apparent in the assembly observed during the Inspector's visit. The time, resources and energy used to produce

such an outstanding assembly are to be commended. There were many relevant and appropriate aspects used to deliver God's message of love, helping others and making a difference; *'no matter how small we are we can make a difference'*. The subtleties used in the drama, the contribution of the school liturgy group of instrumentalists, clear speaking and singing, and selective use of ICT brought a moving, reflective and reverent dimension to this act of worship. The children are obviously used to experiencing Collective Worship of this calibre.

Relationships at all levels are a strength of the school. They lead to pastoral care which is of the highest standard and contribute to an atmosphere of mutual respect and support within the whole school community. Within this environment children feel safe and valued. The children have a clear understanding of the Mission of the school and are encouraged to express this in their own words, which forms the basis of class rules. One class representative told the Inspector that *'the Mission Statement states the goals we want to achieve'* and went on to make reference to the values of Mary Ward. The Catholic life and ethos are at the heart of everything the school does and are lived out on a daily basis. Gifts and talents of all are celebrated affirming personal worth and dignity.

The children are happy and friendly and their behaviour is excellent. They are enthusiastic learners and enjoy school. A younger class representative told the Inspector that *'this school is just like a family, and the older children look after us, just like a family'*. They have a strong sense of justice, both in and out of school, and confidently express their views knowing that they will be listened to. The children respond very positively and generously to all fundraising activities, locally and globally, and they are fully aware of what they are raising money for and why. Examples include, Cafod, Children in Albania, as well as local needs such as Wythenshawe Hospital and Henshaw's Society for the Blind.

There is overwhelming support from parents for the school. One parent commented, *'We are extremely happy with the values of Loreto Prep, and the way in which Religious Education is taught and portrayed'*. Another parent said, *'The school provides a warm and nurturing environment where the Catholic faith is paramount'*. Parents recognise and appreciate that quiet prayer and Collective Worship are significant elements in this school.

In conclusion, this school continues to be outstanding as a result of the commitment of the whole Loreto Preparatory School community to ensuring that all children achieve the best they can achieve, encapsulated in the principles of Mary Ward and enshrined in the Gospel values.

Areas of outstanding practice

Outcomes for pupils

The children have a clear understanding of the spirit of the Mission Statement and aim to live these values in their daily lives. Relationships at all levels are one of the many strengths of this school.

Leaders and Managers

Leaders and managers have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They continually strive for academic and personal achievement for all children within an environment underpinned by Gospel values.

Provision

Collective Worship is central to the life of Loreto Preparatory School, together with many opportunities to celebrate the outstanding achievements of all children.