



## ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

MARICOURT HIGH SCHOOL

MAGHULL

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Inspection Date 3 February 2015

Inspectors Dcn. Paul Mannings Mrs Barbara Melia

Unique Reference Number 104960

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Acts 2005 and 2011

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Type of School Catholic, voluntary aided, mixed comprehensive

Age range of pupils 11-18

Number on roll 1, 388

Chair of Governors Sister Mary Teresa

Headteacher Mr. Brendan McLoughlin

College address  
Hall Lane  
Maghull  
Merseyside  
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Date of last inspection Tuesday 17 November 2009

# Introduction

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Acts 2005 and 2011

The report of the inspection is produced for the Archbishop of Liverpool (Code of Canon Law 804 and 806) and for the governors of the school.

The inspectors are members of the Christian Education Department and their associates approved by the Archbishop of Liverpool for this purpose.

## Information about this college

- Maricourt is a Catholic 11-18, co-educational high school situated within the Archdiocese of Liverpool.
- Maricourt is under the trusteeship of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy.
- There are 1,388 pupils on roll of whom 92.5% are baptised Catholics, with 5% from other Christian denominations and 0.5% from other world faith or religious traditions.
- Pupils from several parishes in the local area account for 45% of the roll. The significant remainder are drawn from schools in the wider community.
- The school has 106 teaching staff, 62% of whom are Catholic.
- The Head of Religious Education has been appointed since the last inspection.
- The Religious Education Department has seven members. Of these, five are full time, another is part-time and a further member teaches Religious Education in addition to other responsibilities. All are qualified in Religious Education.

### Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires Improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

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## **Overall effectiveness:**

Maricourt provides good Catholic Education.

## **Inspection Judgements**

### **The extent to which the pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school**

- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school is outstanding.
- Pupils clearly understand the aims of the Mission Statement. They cite numerous community projects based at home and abroad that fulfil the school's commitment to the wellbeing of all people.
- They readily connect Religious Education as the core stimulus to their involvement in serving the needs of others.
- Equally, pupils articulate the relevance of the whole curriculum to the development of their academic potential.
- They are keenly supportive of the school's pastoral systems, which direct their care, wellbeing and personal development.
- Pupils are able to identify how Catholic life is based upon commitment to the Gospel challenge to live as good and caring citizens.
- They regard the study of other world faiths and religions as necessary to living in understanding and harmony with others.
- Pupils are proud of their school because it gives them a clear sense of belonging. They regard its rules and regulations as relevant and based upon mutual respect.
- They understand how quality Catholic life is the responsibility of everyone. Evidence to support this came from a recent and highly testing event. Governors, parents, teachers and pupils came together in a unique way to support those directly affected and to strengthen the resolve of each other.
- Pupils appreciate that Maricourt is a celebratory community. They regard this as essential in building the worth of individuals and breaking down the barriers of envy and selfishness.
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### **How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education**

- Pupils' achievements and enjoyment in Religious Education is good.
- There are a number of outstanding features.
- These include achievement in Key Stage 3 and consistency in attainment by those selected for pupil premium matched to the performance of other pupils. In Key Stage 4 GCSE performance has increased significantly.
- In Key Stage 3 rising numbers of pupils continue over time to reach and to exceed expected levels of progress. Figures for this currently stand at 92% or higher.
- This rate of progress is impacting on GCSE. Performance for A\*-C has risen from 47% in 2012 to 85% in 2014. The latter figure reflects performance by the number of candidates entered. These numbers too, continue to rise significantly.
- In Key Stage 5 achievement at A Level remains as good. The most recent cohort at AS gained 89% A-C, which is consistent with previous performance.
- Achievement and attainment is rising over time due to the increased emphasis on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- In lessons most pupils want to achieve because they are challenged to produce their personal best.

- This in turn results in a sense of purpose for pupils. For the most part they are highly motivated. Behaviour in class is outstanding.
- Successful performance is breeding further success. Pupils are justifiably proud of their achievements and increasingly want to build on their strengths. They recognise and appreciate the extent to which this is being facilitated in class.

### **How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship**

- Pupils' response to and participation in Collective Worship is good.
- Pupils are encouraged to take part in planning and leading form time Collective Worship. However the extent to which this takes place varies from class to class.
- Pupils particularly benefit from their participation in the planning and organising of the larger liturgical celebrations. They regard this as teamwork in the name of prayer.
- They feel that prayer and worship is relevant to their lives. This is because the themes are link to current affairs and needs. They appreciate how the same themes can be hard-hitting, so leaving them in no doubt about the need to rise to the challenge of serving others.
- Pupils connect Collective Worship as a core element to the schools' Catholic life. They see it as prayer leading to action.
- Pupils identify the wide variety of styles prayer and worship. They appreciate these as opportunities for their own personal stillness and reflection. They suggest that prayer is not all about talking. They are offered time to think and to consider their actions.
- Pupils appreciate the extent to which prayer and worship clarifies their understanding of reconciliation and repentance.
- They also state how the celebratory aspect of prayer and thanksgiving encourages a sense of community achievement and pride.
- Certainly Collective Worship reinforces pupils' knowledge and understanding of the Liturgical Calendar. They can describe its progression throughout the year. Pupils can also identify the key elements of each liturgical season and how they link to personal faith development.

### **The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education**

- The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education is good.
- There are no areas requiring improvement.
- There are a number of outstanding elements. These can be readily identified by the high levels of lesson planning and organisation. Clearly defined and differentiated tasks enable all pupils to remain engaged and on task. Pupil progress is maintained throughout the lesson. There is effective use of technology. Pupils have wide and varied opportunities for both collaborative and independent learning.
- Lessons that are good aspire toward these standards. Teachers are creative in their varying approaches. They are encouraged to personalise their individual styles. Prior learning is well used. Extension tasks are on hand. Differentiation is good and effectively matched to pupils' needs, ages and stages. Pupils appreciate this.
- Marking and annotation of pupils work is a key contributor to continued improvement in pupil performance. The school policy is well used. There are target grades. Formative and milestone assessments are in place. For the most part teachers' comments are constructive, diagnostic and encouraging. Some books did however indicate a need for greater consistency. Marking and assessment overall requires more focus on the use of clearly identified criteria for reaching each level of attainment. This will enable pupils to use the same criteria to judge their own work and that of their peers. They will also acquire even greater confidence in setting their own targets.

- Good and outstanding teaching is making a significant impact on the raising of achievement.

### **The extent to which the Religious Education Curriculum promotes pupils' learning**

- The extent to which the content of the Religious Education Curriculum promotes pupils' learning is good.
- The outstanding elements are twofold. Firstly there is thorough and continued development of all programmes and schemes. Secondly, in Key Stage 4, significant strides are being made to ensure near total provision of GCSE for all pupils.
- In Key Stage 3 the scheme is efficiently based upon the process of Research, Revelation and Response.
- In Key Stage 4 the current specification remains popular and accessible.
- In Key Stage 5 the A level course is effective and popular amidst its own small cohort. It would further benefit from widespread marketing amongst potential candidates in Year 11. The post 16 course in General Religious Education is nationally accredited and undertaken by all students.
- In each key stage the curriculum content is well administered.
- The content overall is rooted in Scripture and Tradition. It focuses upon enriching pupils faith informed values. Catholic Social Teaching is well founded and linked to contemporary society.
- Other world faiths and religions are studied in each stage. This is undertaken thoroughly and without any sense of comparison. The key elements of belief are matched to practice. This practice is in turn linked to the life of the believer. There is significant emphasis upon how faiths and religions can work together.
- Citizenship is explored directly within the context of living the Gospel within the lives of the believers.
- Consequently the curriculum is wholly supportive of the 2012 Religious Education Curriculum Directory.

### **The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school**

- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is good.
- The resources and themes provided for Collective Worship are outstanding.
- The opportunities provided for wide and varying forms of prayer and worship are outstanding.
- There is comprehensive provision for inclusion of other world faiths and religions.
- The school has noted two areas for continued improvement. Firstly, there should be more provision for pupil leadership and involvement in form group worship. It should be noted that whilst many pupils are involved, there is a need to increase this breadth to include all form and class groups.
- The second area concerns the monitoring of the quality of the overall delivery of Collective Worship. There is an effective system for monitoring already in place. This is carried out by senior and year group leaders. The process is good. Evaluation informs the training provision for new staff. This training could occasionally be extended to include all staff, perhaps in year group sessions. Here, examples of best practice could be shared. The themes and resources could be presented in ways that maximise their creative use. The school might also consider regular training for pupils in public reading and guidance that would further enrich their confident presentation of prayer and worship.
- The strength of the current provision is, however, the focus upon content that encourages a worshipping community, in many forms, throughout the liturgical year.

- The strength, quality and challenge of the content, continues to make a strong impact upon the spiritual and moral development of the whole worshipping community, which includes governors and parents.
- The provision is a pivotal strand that upholds the Catholic life of the school.

**How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils**

- Leaders, governors and managers are outstanding in promoting monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Catholic life of the school and in the way they plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.
- Governors are exemplary in their stewardship of the charism of the Sisters of Mercy, which is at the core of the tradition of the school.
- The headteacher is clear about how the charism should be lived, by the promotion of personal development and service to each other by all members of the school.
- This is well expressed in the Mission Statement and its supporting aims. The statement is reviewed as necessary.
- Senior leadership has a well defined role in the process for monitoring Catholic life. Regular reports are received from all staff. Senior leadership contributes generously in promoting wide ranging involvement in Catholic life at local, national and international level.
- The Section 48 Self Evaluation Document expresses the strengths of Catholic life and strategies for development. This document is a shared response by all strands of leadership.
- The lay chaplain remains as a strength of Catholic life. The role includes facilitation of the strands of Catholic outreach and the availability for the community in numerous ways.
- The expression of Catholic life, whilst focused on the whole community, is founded in assisting the pupils to have life to the full.
- A poignant example of Catholic life is the recently refurbished Oratory. This is a quiet space for reflection and prayer, a place to spiritually recharge and to live faith through action in times of community trial and of happiness.

**How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Religious Education of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils**

- Leaders, governors and managers are good in promoting monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Religious Education of the school and in the way they plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.
- Governance is highly effective in its support for Religious Education. This is best expressed through its commitment to the subject and by the provision of quality and appropriate line management.. The strengths of the department are well defined and areas for development identified and challenged.
- This is a task shared equally by the Head of Religious Education. Leadership and management of the department whilst good in terms of current outcomes is safe and secure in the pursuit of becoming outstanding. Documentation is concise and comprehensive. This in turn supports the overall accuracy and effectiveness of the content of the Section 48 Self Evaluation Document, which continues to be updated at least annually. There is, however, some scope for grading to be more in line with stages of development actually reached.

- Here again, the completion of the document is a task shared between governors and senior leadership.
- Accountability is well defined. Pupil achievement and attainment is tracked. There is good monitoring of teaching and learning.
- Teachers share in the success of departmental development by contributing their professional standards, commitment and enthusiasm.
- The Headteacher ensures accurate feedback from all areas of leadership, so that decisive and productive decisions are made about development, budget and continued professional development. There is a specific focus on continued development of pupils' achievement.
- Consequently parents are highly positive in their support of Religious Education. Pupils are confident that Religious Education is a core subject that is academically rigorous and pastorally in tune with supporting the development of their faith-informed values in and beyond school.

## **What the school needs to do to improve further?**

- Continue to ensure the Section 48 Self Evaluation Document remains a quality expression of clearly identified strengths and areas for improvement by:
  - Undertaking the areas for improvement already identified by the department and referred to within the body of this report.
- Maintain the successful development in the quality of marking and annotation of pupils work by:
  - Ensuring constructive, diagnostic and encouraging commentary that is consistent with the practice of the majority of teachers in the department;
  - Provision of more focus on clearly identified criteria to assist pupils in their individual progress through levels of attainment.

# INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	2
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## **OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS**

<b>How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils</b>	
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	1
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	2
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	2

## **PROVISION**

<b>How effective the provision is for Catholic Education</b>	
The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education	2
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning	2
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	2

## **LEADERS AND MANAGERS**

<b>How effective leaders, governors and managers are in developing the Catholic Life of the School</b>	
How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	1
How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	2

<b>Key to judgements: Grade 1 is outstanding, Grade 2 good, Grade 3 requires improvement and Grade 4 inadequate</b>
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