



# ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

## INSPECTION REPORT

### HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

#### CHORLEY

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Inspection Date: Thursday 28 March 2019

Inspectors: Deacon Paul Mannings and Mrs Barbara Melia

Unique Reference Number: 119803

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- 16

Number on roll: 869

Chair of Governors: Mr Steven Sands

Headteacher: Mr Ivan Gaughan

School address: Myles Standish Way,  
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Date of last inspection: Tuesday 11 March 2014

## 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 school

- Holy Cross is an 11-16, Catholic voluntary aided, mixed comprehensive.
- The school is under the trusteeship of the Archdiocese of Liverpool.
- There are 869 pupils on roll of whom 609 (70%) are baptised Catholics, with 149 (17%) from other Christian denominations and 17 (2%) from other world faith or religious traditions. There are 94 pupils (11%) who express no religious affiliation.
- The school draws 75% of pupils the associated parishes in the local pastoral area, with a number from schools in the wider community.
- The school has 54 teaching staff, 50% of whom are Catholic.
- The Religious Education Department has four full time members, together with two who teach part-time in addition to other full-time responsibilities. Five are qualified in Religious Education.
- The Chair of Governors, Headteacher, Head of Religious Education, Second in Religious Education, and the Enrichment Leader for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education have all been appointed since the last inspection.

### Key for inspection grades

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

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## OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Holy Cross is outstanding in its provision of Catholic Education.

## CATHOLIC LIFE

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

- The extent to which the pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.
- They do so in a planned and systematic way through their own involvement in the Mission Statement review process and in the year-long preparation for the forthcoming Mission Week.
- Pupils respect themselves and each other because they are valued and encouraged to belong. They regard the staff as their role models because in their own words, “they are always willing to go the extra mile” in ensuring school is a happy place in which everyone can thrive.
- They have the highest regard for school chaplaincy because it is pivotal to their being involved in community life within and beyond the campus. Pupils select the charities they are going to support by fundraising. Furthermore, they are clear that serving the needs of others is as much about giving their time to be with people and personally assisting in catering for their needs. *Food Bank, Young Leaders, Society of St Vincent de Paul, Faith in Action* and *Columban Outreach* are representative of the wide and lively extent of their involvement in a life of service.
- Pupils cite Collective Worship and Religious Education as prime motivators for their spiritual and moral development. This is because these areas of worship and study provide the infrastructure for their spontaneous interaction with each other in living the Catholic Life, which is inclusive, regardless of faiths or beliefs.
- Pupils have an increasing understanding of loving relationships and sexual development within the context of Catholic teaching about the purpose of sexual love.
- There is well established and strong interaction between home, school and parish. Here too *Faith in Action* is being used as a means of increased enrichment. Archdiocesan links are just as strong and best expressed by pupils’ preparation for *Synod 2020*.

### The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school

- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.
- The Mission Statement is rooted in John 10:10 and expressed through aims that focus upon a community that aims at all times to love God in thought and action, through mutual kindness and by hard work. There is meticulous reflection on these aims through annual continued professional development about the meaning and living of Catholic Life within all areas of the curriculum, thereby achieving a holistic realisation of mission together.
- The school provides a real sense of community identity through Home and School Partnership evenings held on campus. There are strong links with neighbouring parishes, and this is a specific area in which the school avoids complacency by ensuring it remains a work in progress.

- The lay chaplain is experienced, pro-active and above all committed to facilitating Catholic Life. This ministry is well founded upon the twofold aim of meaningful prayer and liturgy that enriches strong pastoral support for pupils, staff and parents. The provision of a school counsellor has been significant because the two can both interact yet focus on the specific fulfilment of their own roles.
- Concise and practical policies are in place for community pastoral care. The content reveals the extent to which school is inclusive. This community expresses and lives its faith through each other, in belonging, caring and wholly supporting the concept of one body of people united in mission and purpose.
- One of many strands of school care is expressed within the *Nurture Group*, through its support for pupils who need that extra re-assurance and space in which they can grow in confidence to interact with each other.
- Good progress has been made in further strengthening the provision of Relationships and Sex Education (coordinated by the Enrichment Leader for Spiritual, Moral and Social Education), within the remit for Personal Health and Social Education. This has included cross curricular content provision that is undergoing continued diocesan training and support.

### **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school**

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- This is expressed within the collaborative content of the Section 48 Self-Evaluation document that highlights strengths and areas for ongoing improvement.
- Catholic Life is entirely accountable to governors and leadership through its prioritised placement within the documents for governors' evaluation and school development. A link governor has specific responsibility for monitoring progress. The *Mission and Ethos* group meets regularly to formalise outcomes and provide funding for ongoing training.
- Commitment to Catholic Life is underpinned by governors' and leaders' own knowledge, understanding and experience of the meaning of Catholic Life as lived within a community of believers and also amongst those who want to make the maximum contribution, regardless of faith and belief. This is why they are single-minded in ensuring that all new staff receive induction through which they are equipped to contribute their own gifts and skills.
- There has been a wholesale focus on using the school's *Year of Mission*, to revitalise the living of its mission statement in the true holistic sense.
- Consequently, the majority of parents are highly satisfied with the quality of provision not least because they are valued contributors. This fact was further endorsed by two local clergy, present on the day of inspection, who highlighted strengths and works in progress.
- The school ably fulfils the requirements of Archdiocesan policies. As a member of *Catholic School Direct* the school has an interactive role within its area network. Governors and leaders are the informed and driving force in the school's progress toward *Synod 2020*.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

### **How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education**

- The extent to which pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is outstanding overall.

- Achievement for GCSE in 2018 was good and in some areas better than good. In previous years, pupils' performance at GCSE has been consistently higher. It is clear that the 2018 dip was caused by the rigours of an entirely new and more demanding specification that impacted detrimentally, especially amongst the lower achievers.
- In all other areas of Religious Education achievement and attainment, the department has maintained and improved upon extremely positive rates of progress, in relation to pupils starting points and capabilities. The majority secure personal standards of attainment that exceed their set targets. This includes pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, whose progress is continually reinforced by high standards of differentiation.
- Pupils enjoy Religious Education because the content is challenging and teachers maintain the effective balance between work and "fun", which according to pupils is all based on good relationships. Consequently, they are motivated in class. A clear sense of purpose ensures best standards of behaviour and resultant progress. Pupils understand their work and the accompanying clear study pathways toward personal improvement, provided by their teachers.
- Pupils' achievement and enjoyment is the result of high-quality teaching, learning and assessments, together with the structured process for planned intervention.
- This all ensures that pupils develop in their ability to remain engaged, to become more religiously literate, to reflect spiritually, and increasingly think more ethically and theologically. This is clear from pupils' contributions in class, within written work and by their overall knowledge, understanding and awareness of how to rise to the challenge of living-out the demands of Religious Education in everyday life.

## **The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education**

- The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding overall.
- In outstanding lessons, content is thoroughly planned with efficient use of time. There are creative and stimulating tasks that are well-paced to enable maximum participation. Teachers are skilled at asking searching questions that trigger enthusiastic responses from pupils. There is constant reinforcement and continuous monitoring. Lessons that are good aspire to these standards.
- In two of the observed lessons, learning support assistants were very well deployed with individual pupils. At appropriate stages they assisted other pupils and so made a positive and productive contribution to the whole learning process.
- Pupils learn well both independently and collaboratively. They are confident and supportive in their use of peer assessment. They are highly engaged in working towards learning outcomes.
- The assessment process is well established and efficient. Assessment questions are accompanied by model answers. End of unit test proformas provide clear commentary about progress and structured guidance for improvement.
- Pupils' written work is well annotated. The selection provided for scrutiny included some examples of Year 11 books accompanied by their books from previous years, which demonstrated quality achievement and attainment over time. Their books contain a wide range of differentiated tasks. Knowledge and understanding is checked in a variety of ways. Here too there is clear diagnostic guidance for improvement. This enables pupils to judge their own work and that of their peers against set criteria, and to join with the teacher in negotiating targets for improvement. The whole assessment process clearly follows school and departmental guidelines. Teachers regularly standardise outcomes for purposes of quality assurance and to provide strategic intervention where appropriate.

## **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education**

- Leaders, governors, line and departmental managers are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Religious Education.
- There is 10% curriculum time. In Key Stage 3 *People of God – Called to Serve* is well established and resourced. At the end of Year 11 all pupils are entered for GCSE *Catholic Christianity with Judaism* as the second faith study. Consequently, Bishops Curriculum Directory (2012) and Archdiocesan requirements are met.
- Religious Education has full parity with other core subjects in staffing, finance and accommodation. The latter provides a departmental identity, with classrooms that are well organised and include some quality displays.
- The Religious Education team is a well led group of committed and professional teachers. Both the head of department and the second in department share a practical vision for collaborative leadership that is clearly defined, purposeful and conducive to confident support from staff.
- There is a cohesive unity between the Section 48 Self-Evaluation Document and the departmental development plan in identifying strengths and areas for improvement. There is absolute consistency in the quality use of regular meeting time. Outcomes are pursued, monitored and evaluated.
- The whole curriculum is well designed and totally inclusive. Programmes of study are rooted in Scripture, Catholic Teaching and faith informed values, which underpin the school's commitment to *British Values*. There is maximum coverage of other world faiths and religions. All quality resources have been prepared by members of the department. GCSE styled questions and techniques have been implemented in Key Stage 3 to enrich rates of achievement and attainment therein and to increase pupils' practise and expertise on their pathway toward GCSE.
- Continued professional development includes active networking with other schools, GCSE examination marking, attendance at all Archdiocesan training and the seeking of advisory guidance as appropriate.

## **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

### **How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship**

- Pupils response to and participation in the school's Collective Worship is outstanding.
- Inspectors joined the community in two acts of Collective Worship. Pupils were engaged and reverent. They were encouraged to reflect in silence. Both occasions included time for discussion, feedback, personal and shared prayer. They confirmed pupils' comments made during interview. They spoke about Collective Worship providing them with time at the beginning of the day to be still and calm, to shake off the cares of the day and to participate with each other.
- They respond well to the invitation from staff to take the initiative to lead Collective Worship confidently and with enthusiasm.
- Pupils understand the Liturgical Year because it is clearly and carefully unfolded, using a variety of different approaches to prayer and to Scripture.
- Pupils appreciate the challenge aspect whereby a theme is presented, and they are encouraged to make a positive response for the good of their neighbour. In equal measures the themes are as much about their own personal development; content that helps them consider what contributes to right and just behaviour; that provides opportunities for them to

think about their own place in the world as a unique creation. This is how Collective Worship contributes toward their spiritual and moral development.

- Pupils are clear that Collective Worship has something for each of them. Faith and world views are aired and respected. The whole community, regardless of belief, is invited to respond, to share and so make the most of each gathering. This supports pupils understanding of the beliefs they have in common, together with an appreciation of the differences that can be celebrated, which includes the traditions of other world faiths and religions.

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

- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding.
- Highly organised coordination ensures that the Collective Worship policy is well implemented in daily provision.
- There is regular staff training, with a focus on the sharing of best practice for new staff.
- Themes are matched to the Liturgical year and to other faiths and religions. These themes are shared weekly and constitute a resource that can be readily adapted by staff and pupils to suit form and year group needs. Themes include prayer and quality video-clip resources which have inspired tutor groups to create their own books of individually composed prayers and reflections.
- Music ministry is well established with planned further enrichment. Pupils can and indeed want to sing joyfully by using their own songs and musical skills.
- Collective Worship takes place daily either in year or form groups. The community is invited to attend Mass each week.
- There are daily occasions for staff to share prayer within briefings, with form groups and once each week through the celebration of *Breakfast with God*.
- One of the key resources is the inspiring Chapel. This is available for public and private prayer. It is artistically appointed to provide a tangible expression of the school's Catholicity as well as a place of serenity for spiritual reflection.
- There are frequent occasions when the wider community is encouraged to join in with school, united in prayer and purpose.
- Collective Worship is best provided for, by the willingness of so many to share their skills in bringing alive the whole spirit of prayer and meaningful reflection, that in turn enriches those who participate.

### **How well leaders, governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship**

- Leaders and governors are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Collective Worship.
- This is because of their knowledge and understanding of how and why prayer and worship is integral to wholesome Catholic Life. Their understanding of the Liturgical Year is based on personal experience and commitment.
- Their priority is for Collective Worship to be accessible to the whole worshipping community. They have confidence in the quality of its coordination because they are kept well informed of practice and development. They frequently participate in Collective Worship in a variety of contexts, because they are committed to being part of the school's prayer life.
- Leaders and governors prioritise training for staff and pupils. Here too they invest confidence in the work of the coordinator knowing that such training occurs regularly. They require that areas of best practice are harnessed both to inform training and to further enrich existing

practice. Furthermore, leaders, governors and the coordinator accurately define how quality Collective Worship is identified.

- The school undertakes thorough and regular monitoring and evaluation of provision. This involves senior and year group leadership. The process includes the views of pupils, which are seriously listened to and acted upon. Leadership is prepared to challenge standards when this is appropriate. Outcomes inform strategies for areas requiring improvement. Regular reports are submitted to governors and the findings are used to populate the Section 48 Self Evaluation Document and school development plans.
- Consequently, leaders, governors and the coordinator aim for every strand of practice to contribute incisively to prayer, worship and reflection that is shared, inclusive and therefore truly collective.

## What the school needs to do to improve further

In the last inspection the single area for improvement was to provide a main coordinator for Collective Worship, who would provide appropriate training for staff and to maximise the use of supporting resources. This has been undertaken. At the subsequent monitoring visit the key area for development was to embed *People of God – Called to Serve* into Year 9. This too has been undertaken. The school should now:

Maintain the quality of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship by:

- Ensuring the Section 48 Self-Evaluation Document remains pivotal to informing whole school and departmental development plans.

Continue to develop Relationships and Sex Education by:

- Comparing and renewing as necessary the content of the existing school policy document to match that of the model policy document produced jointly by the Catholic Education Service and the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers;
- Carry on attending Archdiocesan training to further ensure compliance of school content with Catholic Teaching.

Further enrich achievement in GCSE Religious Studies by:

- Sustained practice in examination style techniques and questions;
- Maintained levels of networking with the examination board and with other schools through continued attendance at Archdiocesan training.

## INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	1
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### CATHOLIC LIFE

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	1
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school	1

### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	1
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	1

### COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	1
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	1

***Key to judgements: Grade 1 is Outstanding, Grade 2 Good, Grade 3 Requires Improvement and Grade 4 Inadequate***