



Archdiocese of  
Liverpool



Diocese of Liverpool

Report on the Denominational Inspection  
carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 of

HOPE ACADEMY  
JOINT ANGLICAN AND CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Ashton Road, Newton-le-Willows  
Merseyside  
WA12 0AQ

---

Inspection date:	Tuesday/Wednesday 9 <sup>th</sup> /10 <sup>th</sup> July 2013
Date of previous inspection:	

URN	136421
-----	--------

Inspectors:	Miss Elizabeth Collins Rev. Deacon Paul Mannings
-------------	---

---

Type of School:	Academy (Non-maintained)
Age range of pupils:	11 – 18 (mixed)
Number on roll:	1360
Chair of Governors:	Prof. Bart McGettrick
Principal:	Mr. John K Gannon
Telephone number:	01744 671930
E-mail address:	julie.hobson@sthelens.org.uk

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

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

## Description of the school

Hope Academy was opened in 2011 following the amalgamation of the local Community and Catholic high schools. There are 1,360 pupils on roll, which is above average in size. The number of students needing school action and school action plus, or having a statement of special educational needs is lower than average. Those eligible for the pupil premium is higher than average. Most of the staff came from the two predecessor high schools, although the principal is a new appointment.

### Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

---

© 2013 copyright – Archdiocese and Diocese of Liverpool. This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school.

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Hope Academy Joint Anglican/Catholic school as a Christian school are good.**

Following considerable foundation building and forming of relationships across the two predecessor school communities the Academy has clearly established its Christian vision and intention. There is a genuine respect and care for the other and the common good among the student body. The commitment of staff is tangible and responded to positively by the whole community.

**Grade: 2**

**Improvement since the last inspection**

N/A

**Capacity to improve**

The capacity to maintain and improve on what has already been achieved is good. The difficult transition from two very distinct schools has been made and there are sound plans for the future.

**Grade: 2**

**Focus for development**

To engage more closely with local church communities by:-

- Creating positive openings for different Christian groups in the locality so they can have an active role in the life of the school;
- Making creative use of personnel from parish teams to contribute to collective worship and Religious Education.

Establish within the Religious Education programme of study materials relevant for developing children's learning and understanding of the Anglican tradition alongside that of the Catholic tradition by:-

- Ensuring material reflects the full breadth of the Anglican Communion;
- Enabling traditions and teachings shared with the Catholic Church are recognised and understood.

**The development of the school's distinctive Christian nature is good at meeting the needs of all learners.**

The Academy prospectus sets the scene for how a distinctive Christian approach is woven through the life of the school. An excellent context for community living and opportunity for increasing self-esteem and confidence is provided by the 'house setting' of different student groupings. All are able to flourish personally and academically within this structure. Younger pupils sit comfortably with older ones in a secure and shared environment enabling them to mature within a family context. Behaviour in all contexts is good: even when the whole school met in the sports hall on an exceptionally hot day! Representatives of the school senate were exceptionally supportive of the ethos and opportunities the school offers. They understood the value of the Christian context and welcomed those opportunities to explore the spiritual life through regular prayer and the work of the chaplaincy. They enjoy occasions when issues of social justice and moral responsibility are explored. Some felt, however, that opportunity to be challenged by opinions other than the given norm would be good. This would more openly also embrace those who were of no faith background. The school's ethos and values are reinforced effectively though good resources for worship and displays around the building. The chapel, clearly evident at the main entrance, is used well for those needing a quiet space. It is also used regularly for smaller groups and religious education lessons. Otherwise, the dimensions of the school overall, do not lend themselves easily to creating small reflective areas, although there are good spaces in the school grounds.

**Grade 2:**

**The effectiveness of the provision for Collective Worship is good.**

The regular pattern of prayer, collective worship and the place of the chaplaincy are seen by students as identifying the school as a Christian establishment. They appreciate and understand the time spent daily to consider different questions in their world from a faith perspective. Responses to a house group worship on the value of different items and individual people elicited a wide range of answers. In one group this included the recognition that they themselves were of value to their teachers. A well-constructed literary 'montage' allowed students to explore their own thinking within the context of a range of Biblical verses. Form worship also lends itself well to creating an atmosphere conducive to personal reflection. Staff and students are involved in planning and implementing worship with the chaplain. This was demonstrated well on the 'Day of Hope'. Pupils showed their appreciation as fellow students 'show-cased' their skills in the liturgy celebrating the life of the academy. Such liturgies help to cement the community, just as the worship themes offer opportunity to reflect on the responsibilities implied by the school's vision and values. This is beginning to be understood by some as the challenge of being at Hope. A small chaplaincy team of staff and pupils is emerging and there is some input from local clergy. Direct links need to be made with a wider range of personnel to enable the school to embrace all shades of the community it serves.

**Grade: 2**

## **The effectiveness of Religious Education is good**

Level of attainment in Religious Education is at least good overall. The 2012 GCSE results show an above national average of A\* to C grades and no significant variations between different student cohorts. The AS entry produced 100% A\* to C grades and of the smaller group entered at A Level all but one gained an A\* to C grade. Eighteen students are currently following the AS course demonstrating the enthusiasm instilled for the subject. Achievement in Key Stage 3 is also at least in line with expectations depending on individual starting points. More able pupils express themselves with clarity and have obvious interest in and understanding of issues raised. Some exercises set, however, do not always give opportunity for oral work to be translated into higher levels of written work. The quality of teaching is good overall with some examples of outstanding practice. The vast majority of pupils listen carefully and use time effectively. Clear structures to lessons enable them to engage in intricate reasoning of cause and effect when examining moral questions. Staff support is given judiciously so the less able can progress successfully and the more able be challenged. Well selected materials, as well as engaging specific techniques make lessons interesting and age appropriate. Mixed ability teaching in Key Stage 3 contributes well in developing pupils' learning and social skills. All students are prepared for the full GCSE course at the end of Year 11. An inclusive programme of study is in place. It addresses the needs of a fully comprehensive intake, representing the two main Christian traditions as well as those of other traditions and none. Well informed work is still needed, however, to embed a balanced picture of the Anglican tradition and its historic - as well as current - relationship with the Catholic Church.

**Grade: 2**

## **The effectiveness of the Leadership and Management is good**

The Principal and Sponsors have a clear vision for the Academy as a community of faith based on relationships. Prior to the official opening the question of a mission statement and values, suitable to bring very disparate communities together without acrimony, was explored with care. Members of all communities affected were involved in creating embryonic statements of aims and expectations. A considerable number of joint events between the two communities also took place, so the vision and community spirit were tentatively established for the opening. The mission statement is evident on documentation, although the vision is not always articulated so well in the content of policy documents related to the school's Christian distinctiveness. Governors receive termly reviews of work linked to the Christian life of the school and recognise the gains made in these areas. Both dioceses are used effectively for individual and corporate support, particularly in Religious Education and worship. Governors and senior managers worked hard to drive the early plans into fruition and recognise that now is the time to review and move on as an established community.

**Grade: 2**

# INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

## OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in developing its distinctive Christian nature	2
The school's capacity for sustained improvement	2

## OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS

<b>How good are outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils?</b>	
How well pupils achieve and make progress in Religious Education	2
How well pupils attain in Religious Education	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Christian life of the school	2
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	2

## PROVISION

<b>How effective is the Religious Education?</b>	
The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education	2
The effectiveness of assessment in Religious Education	2
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
<b>How effective is the provision for Collective Worship?</b>	
How well Collective Worship supports spiritual and moral development	2

## LEADERS AND MANAGERS

<b>How effective is the leadership and management of the Christian life of the school?</b>	
How well leaders and managers use the Mission Statement to promote, a distinctive Christian vision for the school.	2
The extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for all aspects of its distinctive Christian nature so areas needing development are tackled decisively and responsibilities met.	2
How effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion	2

<b>Key to judgements: Grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>Grades</b>
---	---------------