



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST FRANCIS XAVIER'S COLLEGE CATHOLIC ACADEMY

LIVERPOOL

Inspection Date: Thursday 9 June 2018

Inspectors: Dcn P. Mannings and Mrs E. Dolan

Unique Reference Number: 138463

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

Type of School: Catholic boys' academy with mixed Sixth Form

Age range of pupils: 11-18

Number on roll: 1,183

Chair of Governors: Dr A. Keeley

Executive Headteacher: Mr L. Rippon

Head of School: Mr G. Flowers

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Date of last inspection: Tuesday 11 June 2013

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

- St Francis Xavier's College is an 11-18 boys' academy with a mixed Sixth Form.
- The school is under the trusteeship of the Brothers of Christian Instruction (De La Mennais Brothers) and situated within the Archdiocese of Liverpool.
- There are 1,183 pupils on roll of whom 92% are baptised Catholics, with 2% from other Christian denominations and 0.51% from other world faith or religious traditions. There are 0.42% who express no religious affiliation.
- The school serves the associated parishes in the local pastoral area.
- The school has 73 teaching staff, 65% of whom are Catholic.
- The Religious Education Department has three full time members and five who are part time (in addition to other subjects and responsibilities).
- All are qualified in Religious Education.
- The Head of Religious Education (formerly an assistant in the department) has been appointed since the last inspection.
- Since the last inspection the school campus has undergone major building development and refurbishment.

Key for inspection grades

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

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OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

St Francis Xavier's College is good in its provision of Catholic Education. Catholic Life is outstanding.

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.
- Pupils participate with enthusiasm in the Catholic Life and mission of the school. Those interviewed understood the Mission Statement challenge to live life in all its fullness, which in their words, "Underpins the ideology and ethos of what the school stands for." They explained further how the Mission aims express clearly what they should be striving for, in this particular community, namely, "One family achieving the dream."
- The school has identified some behavioural issues that impede progress in a number of classes. However, on the day of inspection pupils' behaviour around the school was at least good, ranging to exemplary.
- Pupils listen to each other and are quick to congratulate the achievement of others. This is the result of personal confidence in their own worth.
- Pupils are proud of their Catholic school and seek to promote the justice and wellbeing of the wider community. This is evident in their wide ranging charitable outreach and involvement in projects that promote faith through action.
- Pupils highly regard chaplaincy provision because it encourages and enables their pro-activity and sharing. One group referred to the school's connection with the world-wide family of De La Mennais communities, which continues to result in international visits and exchanges. They regard this is a tangible expression of living out Gospel values through connectedness and selfless interaction.
- Relationships and Sex Education is a key contributor to the school's holistic approach to education. Its delivery ensures pupils have a secure understanding of loving relationships, sexual development and sexual love within the Christian context of personal responsibility and mutual respect.
- Pupils show great pride in the tradition of their school. As a result of its pastoral care, they have a strong sense of belonging and security. They appreciate the regular parish interaction with their school, provided consistently by a local member of clergy who is interested in their development and progress. Through the chaplaincy network they readily contribute to Archdiocesan events, which includes their musical contribution to Cathedral liturgies.
- They agree this school is inclusive because of its Catholic Life. In their view, the faith of believers is nurtured and developed. Those of other world faiths and religions are included. Pupils who express no particular belief or world view are encouraged to participate in all activities that serve the common good, regardless of faith.

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 a concise expression of the educational mission of the Church. This is highlighted in the supporting strands whereby the school continually strives to build a Christian community, founded on mutual love and respect, firm in its resolution to educate young people to confidently meet life's challenges, develop their unique talents and join with the whole community in living Christian values.
- The staff are committed to leading by example. They lead and take part in many projects for the needs of others. There is commitment to continued professional development in Catholic Leadership and the enrichment of Catholic Life.
- There is a very strong sense of community that is highly supportive in time of trial. At other times they are keen to joyfully celebrate the schools' strengths and achievements.
- The massively refurbished school campus expresses its Catholic distinctiveness through Christian signs and symbols that members can proudly relate to.
- The staff promotes the highest standards of behaviour. It stands against any pockets of potentially disruptive pupil behaviour. The staff is ready to correct, to forgive and encourage pupils to positively move forward.
- The whole curriculum has the required focus on maximising potential in a way that makes it relevant to living Catholic life in society. The staff encourage pupils to reflect spiritually on the meaning of what they learn and how to apply it. They ensure that pupils moral development is founded upon the highest expectations of right behaviour.
- Chaplaincy provision continues to develop and to restructure according to contemporary needs. The chaplain, a De La Mennais brother, ensures the charism of the school's trusteeship is owned, shared and understood. Chaplaincy is strategically shared amidst pupils and staff. This provision, together with a resident community of brothers is a powerful source of long established Catholic witness that is highly appreciated by the school.
- Pastoral policies provide pupils with safety, security and an overriding confidence that they are cared for.
- Members of staff referred to how well the school supports their own wellbeing and development.
- Relationships and Sex Education is delivered within the context of Personal, Social and Health Education. This cross curricular provision includes wide ranging staff and subject areas. The content is entirely according to Catholic Teaching. It is well supported by Religious Education.

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

- Leaders and governors are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- They understand and live the mission by example and interaction because they are inspired by the charism of the school's trusteeship. A number have a long association with the school. Several governors hold posts of responsibility in other Catholic schools. For this reason, their commitment to Catholic Life is given the highest priority, which is reflected in the content of the Section 48 Self-Evaluation Document. This informs and challenges all aspect of Catholic Life school improvement and enrichment. It prioritises aspects of continued professional development for staff that reinforces their commitment and participation.
- Leaders and governors make every effort to engage with home and parish so ensuring a robust and committed community. This is why parents and carers are so proud and supportive of the school's tradition. They are invited to numerous events throughout the year which include liturgical celebrations and pupils' academic reviews.
- The local parish too values its purposeful links with the school. This is why it has included the school within its *Listening Ear* project so as to assess pupils understanding of parish life and how they see their role and engagement.

- Continued professional development is well focused on the schools' mission. Staff readily support it, because of the content's accessibility and relevance to professional and pastoral life.
- All Archdiocesan policies and initiatives are readily taken up by the school and responded to in a spirit of co-operation.

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 good.
- Set in context, the need to address standards of achievement and attainment in a number subjects are areas that the school continues to address. GCSE performance in Religious Studies in recent years has trailed below the national average to the extent that it requires improvement, a factor further compounded by a period of temporary staffing arrangements. However, according to assessment data, pupil performance in class in Key Stages 3 and 4 has remained good in relation to their capabilities and starting points. In Key Stage 5 results for Advanced Level have remained high, with progress in General Religious Education remaining good or better.
- The current focus on further improvement in teaching and learning together with staffing stability in Year 11 has further secured these good rates of progress.
- Pupils are motivated to become religiously literate and engaged in using their Religious knowledge, understanding and skills to reflect spiritually and to think ethically and theologically. They are challenged to apply the demands of religious commitment to their cotemporary lives.
- The majority are actively focused during lessons and want to improve their work because they are given clear direction. This ensures their concentration and sense of purpose.
- During inspection pupils' behaviour in class was good or exemplary. The few instances of low-level disruption were effectively overcome. Pupils highly rate Religious Education, finding it enjoyable despite many difficult facts. They find GCSE demanding yet interesting and enjoyable because of, "decent teaching." Sixth Form General Religious Education enthuses them because the study of Ethics, "is all about the world and so develops the person."

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education

- The quality of teaching, learning in Religious Education is good. In some areas it is outstanding. Assessment requires some improvement.
- On the day of inspection outstanding teaching included thorough planning linked to pupils' current assessment needs. There was seamless differentiation. There were high levels of imaginative creativity and focus on delivery. Good lessons aspired to the above standards.
- In the very few areas requiring improvement the key weaknesses were the result of faulty time management and low levels of pupil challenge.
- Overall, there is confident expertise in subject delivery and an ability to maintain rapport with pupils. This enables wide ranging approaches to independent and collaborative learning.
- Teachers are particularly skilled in asking pupils challenging questions that enable thought provoking responses.

- Use is made the school's well formulated marking and assessment policy. Within the department this should be developed to formulate a specifically tailored process which will clearly defined the rationale, principles and strategies of Assessment for Learning. This will enable pupils to know where they are in their learning journey and how to progress.
- There are good quality resources that are used effectively to maintain pupils' engagement. The latter is further enhanced by teachers' high expectations and pursuit of completed learning outcomes.
- Good quality feedback in the course of lessons increases pupils' consolidation of prior learning. Furthermore, their opinions and beliefs are listened to and valued. Good progress in lessons is duly celebrated.
- Consequently, teaching and learning is making a significant contribution to increasing rates of achievement.

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

- Leaders and governors are good in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Religious Education.
- Leaders ensure Religious Education is the core subject that upholds Catholic Life. This is reflected in budgeting, staffing and accommodation. Departmental staff have access to continued professional development, which includes Archdiocesan training that focuses intensively on the priority of raising pupil achievement in GCSE.
- The head of department has made significant strides in facilitating the continued development of team spirited co-operation, shared leadership and management. All of this is the result of commitment to the task and an innate sense of care. Staffing includes three members of senior leadership, together with the Chaplain, all together offering many years of expertise in Religious Education.
- Planned improvement strategies are in place within the Section 48 Self Evaluation Document. Succession planning is well embedded to support the department as it moves into another new era.
- The content requirements of the Bishops' Curriculum Directory are met. Currently there is 8% curriculum time allocation in Years 7 and 8 which falls short of the 10% requirement due to timetable constraints, namely a twenty-five periods week. However, there is 12% in Years 9, 10 and 11. Sixth Form General Religious Education has the required one lesson per week. Some 20% is allocated to Advanced Level.
- The framework, *People of God – Called to Serve*, is subscribed to and directs studies in Key Stage 3. Catholic Christianity and Judaism are the two options undertaken for GCSE. There is a good uptake for A Level. Sixth Form General Religious Education is a verified course undertaken by all students. The entire content of the Religious Education curriculum is inclusive of other world faiths and religions. Gospel values inform the study and living of British Values. Consequently, Archdiocesan curriculum content requirements are in place.
- Leaders and Governors use departmental *Challenge* meetings to track curriculum planning and its effectiveness in providing for the needs of all pupils, together with the appraisal of pupil outcomes and performance. Here too there is a strong focus on raising standards at GCSE.

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 good. In some areas it is outstanding specifically though the informed and positive feedback from pupils.
- In fact, the pupils interviewed highly rated Collective Worship because the gathering element always ensures a sense of community and a meaningful message focus. They readily volunteer to assist at school masses as servers and readers. Some are happy to assist the chaplaincy with preparation during their break times.
- Pupils are reverent during worship. They respectfully listen and contribute.
- Over time they are continuing to acquire skills and confidence and enthusiasm in leading worship and in producing their own resources for prayer and worship.
- They refer to the wide variety of approaches which includes quality music and singing, use of Scripture and drama.
- Pupils confidently show knowledge and understanding of the Liturgical Year. This was evident during formal interview and during conversations around school. They correctly linked the religious celebrations held regularly to the Church's seasons. They spoke about Advent as a season of joyful preparation and why Christmas is a season in its own right. They readily gave examples of how the Easter Season is lived out and why each Sunday too is a celebration of the Resurrection. Furthermore, they were expressed how Religious Education is enriched by its amplification during Collective Worship. It provides them with the challenge to live out their Christian lives.
- Pupils particularly value Collective Worship as a time for personal reflection in their own private space. Some who don't necessarily regard themselves as believers regard it as relevant to living as responsible citizens, attentive to the needs of others. Certainly, the content stokes their desire to be involved in the school's projects for the needs of others.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is good. There are outstanding elements namely aspects of Collective Worship on the day of inspection.
- Praying together is part of the daily experience for pupils and staff. These times are well structured and planned with clear purpose and direction.
- Themes thoroughly underpin the Liturgical Year. They wholly support other world faiths and religions. Resourcing is creative and open to adaptation by staff. There is an enthusiastic drive in the further encouragement of pupils to prepare their own resources.
- Provision on the day was especially meaningful. It ensured pupils were engaged in leadership and presentation. They were given time for stillness and reflection. In one instance there was quality time. Pupils were encouraged to feedback and essentially to share their own experiences. At all times the worshipping communities were co-operative and keen to demonstrate that Collective Worship is team work and in no sense a show. It was clear that staff were skilled in helping pupils to plan and deliver quality worship.
- The entire package of provision also includes masses and services as appropriate. There is regular interaction with Archdiocesan celebrations, which are well supported by staff, parents and governors.
- There are occasions for retreats. Pupils are provided with quality worship opportunities during their interaction with other De La Mennais schools, one at home and several abroad.
- Provision is focused on Collective Worship as an exemplification of Catholic Life through prayer and by action. At all times it is wholly inclusive.

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

- Leaders and governors are good in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Collective Worship. The continued capacity for improvement is outstanding.
- There is effective line management from governors, senior leaders, chaplaincy and Religious Education. Equally management is a shared task that includes middle leaders, year heads and form groups.
- There is a clear and concise policy document containing aims of Collective Worship and how they impact upon provision.
- Leadership at all levels ensure that the content is relevant in offering the potential to develop pupils spiritual and moral development. They are equally as attentive in ensuring that the staff too has occasion for prayer, stillness and personal enrichment.
- There is a process for monitoring the quality of provision in terms of quality and consistency. The process provides evidence of best practice that can be shared. Clearly it also has the potential to identify any areas of need are addressed through practical training for staff.
- The Section 48 Self Evaluation Document contains practical starting points for continued improvement which in itself could become the prime development policy. It currently provides accurate and wholly positive commentary. This describes where the school is at in terms of its continued drive to ensure that pupils remain inspired by Collective Worship and have the confidence to continue participating in their own ways and using their own skills.
- Leadership understands that Catholic Life and Collective Worship is inextricably linked. As a group they have the necessary skills and experiences to guide its ongoing strength in amplifying how prayer is defined, celebrated and live-out in St Francis Xavier's College.

What the school needs to do to improve further

Continue to develop the useful Section 48 Self Evaluation Document by:

- maintaining focus on its noted areas for development;
- ensuring each section avoids any overlapping repetition.

Ongoing enhancement of the school's Catholic Life by:

- nurturing the *Faith in Action Award* to harness projects by which pupils can further forge links between home, school and parish.

Ongoing development of assessment in Religious Education by:

- establishing a process of assessment for learning that is diagnostic, formative, evaluative, summative and inclusive of self and peer support;
- effective use of target setting, which is critical to the above process;
- provision of a pro-forma or check sheet in pupils' work books that record their graded successes and pointers for improvement.

Improvement in GCSE Religious Studies performance by:

- efficient use of the revised assessment process;
- ongoing sharing best departmental practice;
- driving practice in the use of examination techniques that make use of the model past paper questions currently being developed;
- continued attendance at all Archdiocesan training and networking.

In Collective Worship, undertake the school's identified areas for action to further develop the many strengths already in place by:

- Maintaining and developing its leadership and management of monitoring, training and updating policy guidance;
- Ensuring materials produced by pupils in Religious Education can be used for school exhibition so enhancing the creative dimension of Collective Worship;
- Encouragement of pupils to develop their own resources for worship;
- Increasing the rate of participation from members of form groups toward their year group gatherings;
- Continued chaplaincy interaction with Archdiocesan Chaplains network for the sharing of best practice and resources.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	2
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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	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	2
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	2

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	2
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	2
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	2

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