



Diocese of Westminster

INSPECTION REPORT

Newman Catholic College

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Headteacher: Mr R Kolka

Chair of Governors: Mrs T Outred

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Date of inspection: 9th March 2012
Date of previous inspection: 22nd May 2009

Reporting Inspector: Mr D Scott

Description of School

Newman Catholic College is a four form entry secondary school for boys situated in the London Borough of Brent in the locality of Willesden. The school predominantly serves the local parish of The Shrine of Our Lady of Willesden, but many pupils are drawn from other local parishes, most notably St Mary Magdalene. Of the 547 pupils on roll, 65% are baptised Catholics, with 19% being from other Christian denominations, and 16% being from other faith backgrounds. There are 42 teachers in the school of whom 22 are Catholic. Two teachers hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS) qualification. The proportion of families known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is over four times that found nationally. The largest group are of White British heritage. Just under two thirds of students speak English as an additional language, which is well above average. The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is higher than the national average. There are 14 students with a statement of special educational need. Attainment on entry to Year 7 is well below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Newman Catholic College provides a good education. The college's self-evaluation proclaims its Catholic identity and gospel values which manifests itself through its central mission, built on a bedrock of tolerance and respect for all individuals. It is a college where great efforts have been made to ensure that there is a culture of high levels of achievement, care and behaviour. The college is very well led by the principal, who leads by example and is ably supported by the senior leadership team who work tirelessly to turn the college's mission into a living faith. Governors are committed to supporting a Catholic community that promotes the growth of faith through prayer, liturgy and religious education. Gospel values are very evident in lessons and there are many opportunities to promote respect, equality and justice. Staff provide good role models for students which promotes a conducive and calm learning environment.

Grade 2

Improvement since the last inspection

Progress since the last inspection has been good. In September 2010, a student liturgy group was established and has given valuable feedback in the planning of liturgies and the spiritual life of the college, in particular the recent 'Mission Week'. As a result, the variety of prayer and reflection styles has been enhanced in form time, religious education lessons and assemblies. The college is working closely with a local university in finding ways to strengthen the Chaplaincy still further. Nevertheless, the college recognises the need to introduce more formal systems for monitoring Collective worship and the Catholic Life of the School.

Grade 2

The capacity of the school community to improve and develop

The college has excellent capacity to continue to improve and develop. There is a clear vision and direction from the principal, leadership team and governors to secure the very best education whilst maintaining the highest level of care, respect and support for its students. With a stable religious education department and Chaplaincy, the college is well placed to meet the exciting developments that lie ahead. The college's self-evaluation has accurately identified its

strengths and areas for development and drawn up detailed plans for improvement. Senior leaders have embraced the new procedures and protocols for the completion of the Diocesan Self-Evaluation Form (DSEF). They have attended Diocesan training and briefing sessions and are currently working on a document that will be shared with all staff and governors by June 2012.

Grade 1

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching in order to raise attainment in Religious Education to bring it in line with national average by:
 - ensuring that tracking and monitoring information is analysed robustly by groups of students to evaluate success and to deploy interventions swiftly
 - asking more probing questions in order to develop students' thinking skills, particularly for the more able
 - ensuring that 'next-steps' are grounded securely in level and examination grade descriptors.
- Introduce more formal systems for monitoring Collective worship and the Catholic Life of the School.

The Catholic Life of the School

Leadership and Management

The leadership and management of the college are outstanding. The principal communicates a very strong sense of Catholic commitment and provides a good role model for staff and pupils. He has a clear vision for the Catholic life of the college and is well supported by the senior leadership team. Members of the governing body are fully involved in the life of the college and care deeply about its well-being. They are increasingly confident in challenging and holding the college to account. There is a strong sense of order and calm which provides a very conducive atmosphere for learning which pervades all aspects of college life. As a Catholic community it promotes the growth of faith through prayer and liturgy and religious education. It incorporates a philosophy which acknowledges that its population may be drawn from a variety of different faith backgrounds but is united in humanity. Dignity and respect are hallmarks of the college, where Catholic and non-Catholic students and staff are afforded the opportunity to develop and thrive.

Grade 1

The Prayer Life of the School

A real strength of the college is the provision for prayer and collective worship which is good. Prayer and the sacrifice of the Mass are at the heart of the Catholic life of the college. There is a well-considered programme of liturgies throughout the Church calendar. The Sacrament of Reconciliation, for all year groups, is held during Advent and Lent with a large number of priests in attendance from the Brent Deanery.

Students respond well to prayer and appreciate time for quiet reflection as observed in religious education lessons during the inspection. The retreat programme is well established and students speak very enthusiastically of their experiences and particularly how it helped them gain a greater understanding of their peers. The whole community benefits from the work of the Chaplain who provides many opportunities to enhance the religious life of the college. For example, he played a leading role, together with the senior team, in organising the college's recent and highly successful, 'Mission Week'. Here, the timetable was suspended for a week to enable the entire college to be totally devoted to a spiritual mission led by 'The Ten Ten Theatre Company'. As one pupil described, 'It was the best school week any of us have ever had'. The school has its own chapel which is regularly used for reflection and prayer. It is a resource that is appreciated and respected by students. The liturgy group regularly meets to discuss the format and content of worship in the college. The use of music supports liturgy and provides greater opportunities for spiritual nourishment.

Grade 2

How effectively does the school promote community cohesion?

The school is outstanding in its promotion of community cohesion. It works hard to ensure that there is a welcoming atmosphere, where students' respect for those less privileged than themselves is clearly evident in the high levels of personal commitment to working together for the common good. Fund-raising activities support a number of charities including CAFOD, Great Ormond Street and Macmillan Cancer Relief – where students raise money through their Advent and Lenten alms-giving. Students from a diverse range of backgrounds, difficulties and challenges are able to integrate successfully which fully supports the college's philosophy on inclusion. This has been demonstrated through its mathematics and computers specialism outreach programme which has cultivated successful partnerships with four primary and one secondary school in the borough, together with the St Charles Sixth Form College. Students have participated in a range of innovative projects in preparation for the Olympics and are encouraged to gain a global perspective as part of their spiritual journey. This has made a significant contribution to their understanding and tolerance of cultural differences. The college is developing links with schools overseas for example by raising funds for a school in Uganda for underprivileged children. Nevertheless, the college acknowledges that it needs to expand this area of its work.

Grade 1

Religious Education

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education

The achievement in religious education is good. Most learners make good progress given their prior attainment. There is a generally improving trend at Key Stage 3 and 4 with results broadly comparable to those in English. The achievement of students who are disabled or have special educational needs is similarly to their peers. Although more able pupils achieve in line with that of their peers of similar ability, more challenge in lessons would ensure that they achieve their very best. The school's information on students' current attainment and progress indicates that half of Year 11 students are on target to gain grade C or better in their GCSE examinations. In the Sixth Form the uptake for AS and A2 courses is steady. In 2011 there was some pleasing individual student performance at A2, but results at AS were more variable. All Post 16 students

follow the NOCN General Religious Education course and receive accreditation at Levels 1 and 2. This is now being extended to a group in Year 11.

Grade 2

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

The quality of teaching and learning in religious education is good. Teachers display a strong commitment to teaching Catholic belief and religious literacy. They use praise well to motivate and stimulate students and this leads to positive attitudes to learning. The skilful use of topical religious issues encourages students to think for themselves and to develop their own ideas. Where teaching is good, activities are varied, relationships are excellent and students' enjoyment is evident. Nevertheless, the quality of questioning in lessons, although well considered, does not always probe students' understanding of issues deeply enough. This, in turn, prevents learners from making consistently fast progress, particularly in the case of the more able. There are aspects of good assessment practice. For example, marking is regular and provides positive and affirming feedback on students' work. Nevertheless, 'next-steps' showing students how they can improve their work are not always founded on level or examination grade descriptors. Students with diverse learning needs are well supported. As a group of students commented, 'Religious Education teachers always make lessons fun and enjoyable. They connect with the pupils because they know how we learn best'.

Grade 2

Quality of the Curriculum

The religious education curriculum is appropriately resourced and meets the requirements of the *Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools*, and is supplemented by assemblies and prayer. All sixth formers follow the innovative NOCN general course in religious education. This has been designed for students from different faiths and backgrounds, has been a real success and provides a valuable opportunity for learners to reflect on contemporary moral and ethical issues. Schemes of work for Key Stage 3 follow, 'The Way, the Truth and the Life' programme, and have been recently revised. The department's use of ICT is becoming increasingly effective to engage and harness students' interest and enthusiasm. For example, Year 11 students recently designed and produced the official logo for 'Mission Week'. Nevertheless, the interactive potential of this resource has as yet, not been fully realised. All students are taught to respect other faiths and cultures and study the teachings of Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. This has made a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development and has enabled them to respect other faiths and cultures in order that all members of the school can live side-by-side in a harmonious community. This made a significant contribution to their understanding of the different religious perspectives.

Grade 2

Leadership and management of Religious Education

The leadership and management of the subject are good, and are improving under the positive leadership of the head of department. The department is fully staffed with experienced religious education teachers. The head of department has developed a good team ethos amongst religious education staff. Colleagues are supportive of one another and create and share resources freely. At the heart of the subject leader's vision for religious education is to enable all pupils and staff to 'Live life to the full' by maintaining positive working relationships which permeates not only the department and but also across the college. This has been achieved

through well considered professional development opportunities, such as the 'Triad' coaching programme which enables teachers to reflect, share and improve their practice. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly and there are clear priorities for improvement. A culture of sharing good practice has been established within the department and extends outwards for example by supporting trainee teachers from a local university. The Religious Education department has cultivated good links with other areas of the school including art, drama, English, mathematics, music, PE and science. Nevertheless, the department acknowledges that monitoring information on learners' progress needs to be analysed by groups of students in order for any underachievement to be quickly identified and interventions swiftly implemented.

Grade 2