



Carmel College, a Catholic Academy

The Headlands, Darlington, County Durham, DL3 8RW

School Unique Reference Number: **137622**

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| Inspection dates: | 12 – 13 December 2019 |
| Lead inspector: | Mrs Meg Baines |
| Team inspector: | Mrs Rachael Gundlach |

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| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Outstanding | 1 |
| | This inspection: | Outstanding | 1 |
| Catholic Life: | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Religious Education: | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Collective Worship: | | Outstanding | 1 |

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

Carmel College, a Catholic Academy is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- Strong leadership is ensuring that this is a college which witnesses to the Gospel and its values. It is an outward-facing college, humbly and effectively sharing excellent practice.
- Religious Education is outstanding. This is demonstrated by the joy of learning in the classroom and the outstanding attainment and progress of students. The leadership of the department is inspirational and provision is excellent.
- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. Students and staff are given many opportunities to take part in activities which show Catholic Life in action. This creates a genuine sense of pride and belonging and enriches life at Carmel. The community here thrives in an atmosphere of faith, love and support.
- Collective Worship is outstanding. It is well planned, relevant and inclusive. The chaplain inspires staff and students to high quality acts of Collective Worship. His enthusiasm facilitates wide ranging participation in profound, meaningful worship.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- Carmel College is a larger than average 11-18 Catholic academy in Darlington.
- Students attend from a wide range of feeder schools in Darlington, Newton Aycliffe, Sedgefield, Gainford and Barnard Castle. Students are from a broad social and economic background.
- 72% of students are baptised Catholic with a further 21% from other Christian denominations.
- The number of students from ethnic minorities is below the national average as is the number of students eligible for pupil premium. The percentage of students with additional needs is 11.9%.
- The Principal of the college is a National Leader in Education.
- The college leads the Carmel Teacher Training Partnership providing Initial Teacher Training (ITT) via the School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) programme.
- There are currently 1,313 students on roll with a planned admission number of 180.
- There are 86 fulltime teachers and 20 part time. Almost 60% of staff are Catholics. There are 5 full time members of the Religious Education department and 3 part time. 8 teachers hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS).

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Maintain standards in all areas by:
 - continuing to review practice, provide support and develop staff.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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

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The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- Students at Carmel College are committed to the college mission. The behaviour of students in and out of the classroom is outstanding.
- A culture of virtues drives the ethos. This ethos underpins everything the college does.
- Almost all students take an active role in activities and events which promote the Catholic Life of the college. They embrace what it means to be part of a caring, giving, loving community with Christ at its heart.
- Students show deep respect for themselves and others. Individual talents are nurtured and developed. This gives opportunities for students to recognise success and excellence in each other and to praise each other. A member of staff commented, 'All members of our community experience and find hope, joy and fulfilment and a sense of their worth and that of others'.
- The excellent chaplaincy provision is valued by the students. Students and staff enjoy their retreats and speak warmly of Catholic Life events including pilgrimages to Rome, Lourdes and Taizé. Strong connections to the charity Spirit of Africa have provided further opportunities for fundraising to help build an orphanage in South Africa.
- Pastoral support is a strength of the college. The Principal has created effective systems for supporting both staff and students. Staff say they appreciate the real sense of love and support created by the college. Students are confident in where to go to for support. They speak well of the support they have in college and in particular the support they find in the Emmaus Centre and the Religious Education department.
- Students know what it means to have a vocation. The college invites local priests in to talk about vocations. They understand what it means to give service to others and live this out in a variety of ways throughout the year.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- The college has a highly effective and clear mission statement. It applies Catholic virtues across all aspects of the curriculum. Leaders and governors are committed to the ambitions of the college. They support and challenge the principal in his desire to deliver a genuine ethos where Catholic Life is strong. Governors take a powerful role in scrutinising the Catholic Life of the college, ensuring high standards are maintained.

- Leaders provide a raft of opportunities for staff to take part in which highlights the Catholic Life of the college. Staff prayer, retreats, induction and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) on Catholic Life have the highest priority. The mantra of the CEO of the Trust is, 'God comes first'.
- Charitable giving is a priority and students raise money for the de Paul homeless young people, Handicapped Children's Pilgrimage Trust (HCPT), British Heart Foundation Santa Dash, Macmillan coffee morning, CAFOD and local food banks. The Saint Vincent de Paul (SVP) currently has 100 student members.
- A very strong sense of community is evident. Staff and students are able to articulate times when they have sought and found support and strength from the community at Carmel.
- Standards of behaviour are exemplary. Low rates of exclusion and a well-defined behaviour policy emphasise a commitment to forgive and a desire to support students on their journey back to work.
- Chaplaincy provision is excellent. The college provides many opportunities throughout the year for the moral and spiritual development of staff and students. A starting point is frequently the college's drive to embed virtues.
- The college demonstrates a commitment to the most vulnerable in its care through highly effective pastoral teams and special educational needs (SEN) provision. It is evident in terms of efficient personnel, appropriate policy and effective practice.
- Personal, social, health and enterprise education (PSHEE) programmes are well planned and effective and the college has an age appropriate relationship, sex education (RSE) programme.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- The college's governing body and the trust are excellent role models and key to the development of Catholic Life. They maintain a constant drive for excellence.
- Governors have a wide range of skills and expertise and are very supportive. They have an open and honest dialogue with the college. Their focus on the well-being of staff relies upon strong links with senior leaders.
- As Carmel is an outward facing college the leaders and governors ensure that key ethos events are in place and that planned improvements target this feature of college life. As a SCITT college, the standard of CPD is excellent and a model for other schools. CPD on Catholic Life is frequent, effective and welcomed by staff who share its purpose and are committed to its mission.
- Senior leaders are highly effective and supportive in their role which includes monitoring the Catholic Life of the college. They speak fondly of the opportunities created by the various teams such as the chaplaincy team, the St Vincent de Paul Society and the multi academy trust staff choir, all of which enhance the Catholic Life of the college.
- The college engages almost all parents and carers including those who are deemed to be hard to reach. Parents say that communications with the college are very good and they feel well informed of progress and events. In a recent parental questionnaire, 92% of parents and carers agreed that the Catholic ethos is central to the life of the college. They say, 'There is a strong commitment to developing moral responsibility and no child is left behind' and 'It is very inclusive of different faiths, Carmel allows people to be themselves in a safe and nurturing environment'. It is clear that parents have a thorough understanding

of the college's mission and are supportive of it.

- The college responds to the initiatives and policies created by the diocese and promotes the Bishop's vision for Catholic Life in schools.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is outstanding.

- From a wide range of starting points students make excellent progress. High levels of attainment in GCSE and A Level Religious Education this year show the department's dedication and expertise.
- Students are confident, religiously literate and demonstrate excellent subject knowledge. They are able to express their ideas and thoughts well. They can think ethically and in lessons showed excellent recall of previous work covered.
- In every lesson seen all students were engaged, showing a real commitment to improving and making progress. Students concentrate well. Students are all aware of what to do to improve and can articulate how they have made progress.
- Almost all students enjoy their Religious Education lessons, approaching the topics with interest and enthusiasm. Most impressive was their response to teacher directed parts of lessons. They also worked well in small groups or in quiet, individual work. They are eager to please their teachers, either by responding to questions or by working sensibly in groups.
- Behaviour in all lessons seen was outstanding and conducive to learning. Students were never off task and all appeared to enjoy their lessons. Students spoke of their enjoyment and their appreciation of their teachers. Relationships between students and staff are exemplary.
- Students are proud of their achievements in Religious Education. The department fosters attitudes of reflection, empathy and responsiveness. The quality of work in class across all the key stages reflects this. Work in books is of a very high standard. Staff use effective marking and feedback techniques. It is clear that students are proud of the work they do.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is outstanding.

- Teachers in the Religious Education department are very effective practitioners who work tirelessly for the benefit of their students. They know their students well and create an effective learning environment in which they can thrive and succeed. Almost without exception teaching is outstanding. This is to the credit of the subject lead who ensures a level of planning and preparation which is exemplary.
- Religious Education in key stage 3 is highly effective. The GCSE curriculum and A Level curriculum are both delivered by experts who understand the subtleties of the new specifications. The general Religious Education programme was a target from the previous

inspection and is now fully embedded.

- All teachers have a high level of subject expertise, consequently, students are inspired to learn and make rapid progress. The excellent GCSE and A Level results this summer are testimony to this.
- Teachers use a wide range of pedagogies. These include collaborative and individual work, effective use of IT and where needed support from skilled teaching assistants. The department has a strong focus on nurturing all students and as part of this liaises well with parents.
- Progress is apparent in lessons. Teachers use time efficiently, use questions to encourage recall of prior knowledge and build on this to make progress.
- Scrutiny of books showed high quality feedback, thus engaging students. Praise is a key feature of the Religious Education department. A genuine sense of love and care for their students is evident.
- Celebration of success was seen. Through class charts, praise and displaying of student work, the department takes this part of learning very seriously. This is ensuring high levels of motivation.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is outstanding.

- Leaders and managers ensure that the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in all key stages.
- Religious Education has full parity with other subjects for CPD, rooming and resources. The principal is a former head of Religious Education and holds the subject in high esteem, as do all leaders and managers. The subject lead is a member of the leadership team.
- Leaders and managers rigorously monitor all aspects of Religious Education. The department is seen as a high performing department, one which shares excellent practice throughout the college and the Trust.
- Carmel benefits from a Religious Education department which is well led and ably supported by a strong team of dedicated teachers. They are constantly striving for their own improvement as well as that of the students. The subject lead is inspiring her staff to a quality of teaching almost all of which is outstanding. It is never less than good.
- Relationships within the department amongst staff and students are outstanding. Staff model continually high standards and expectations. The Religious Education department at Carmel deserves the high reputation it has within the school community and beyond.
- Leaders and governors monitor planning in Religious Education. They ensure that Religious Education is effective, thoughtful and imaginative. The Religious Education lead aims to engage all groups through creative planning and by using TRIADS, a system which builds on prior knowledge in order to enhance learning. This is enabling students to enhance and develop their knowledge, skills and understanding.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.
- The quality of provision for Collective Worship.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

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How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship is outstanding.

- Students act with quiet reverence during acts of Collective Worship. They are interested and extremely well behaved. Almost all engage in community prayer with confidence. The year 7 whole year assembly observed was a joyful, reflective event. Weekly Mass is led by form classes and is well attended by staff and students.
- Students frequently prepare and take a lead role in Collective Worship. During the inspection, the Student Liturgy Group was observed preparing for the Advent service. Coordinated by the chaplain it was clear that much thought had been put into this planning. This included prayers they had written themselves and their own choice of music. In other acts of Collective Worship, the sessions were initially adult led with input from students. Sessions were moving and prayerful.
- Students, when questioned, were able to show an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons and feasts. They take part in and prepare liturgies which reflect the seasons.
- Chaplaincy records show a large variety of approaches to prayer including use of scripture, religious artefacts and liturgical music. The chaplain creates effective resources reflecting the season. All class teachers are able to access these electronically throughout the year. There is a well-planned calendar of events and support is offered if it is needed. Students are familiar with these resources and say they value them. There are many opportunities for voluntary worship throughout the week such as Stations of the Cross during Lent, Ash Wednesday and weekly Mass. During the inspection prayer before the Blessed Sacrament took place in the chapel.
- Students say that they are very happy to be attending a college which has a prayer life and say they enjoy living and working in a faithful, praying community. They spoke of how it was a different experience from friends who attend a non-Catholic school. They highlight the college's mission statement and college virtues. It is clearly having an impact on them.
- Students are respectful of those in the community from other faiths. When spoken to they said that in college they are both inclusive and welcoming to people from other faiths.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- Praying together is fundamental to the life of students and staff at Carmel. It is a daily experience. Staff briefings begin with a prayer and an act of Collective Worship begins the day for every student.
- The chaplain and his team have created a plan for worship which is purposeful and clear. There is flexibility built in so that staff and students can respond to current events and any crisis through prayer. Leaders continue to look for creative ways to involve as many students as possible.
- The principal ensures that Collective Worship is given a high priority within the college. As a result, such events are looked forward to by the whole college community. The college chapel is in the physical and spiritual heart of the college and is open for personal use throughout the day.
- Staff leading Collective Worship are both highly skilled and have a deep understanding of the Church's liturgical year. They are passionate about their faith and act as witness to it. The chaplain is well regarded by all of the college community. His enthusiasm and love of Christ are abundantly apparent. His skills are also engaged across the trust to great effect.
- Teachers are highly skilled at helping students prepare and deliver their own liturgies and acts of Collective Worship. They demonstrate a faith which is deep and personal. They are aware of the purpose of Collective Worship employing a range of prayers and methods.
- Worship is planned so that there are occasions when other adults associated with the college, governors and parents are invited to join the college in prayer and worship. Parents say they attend when they can and are always made to feel welcome.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- The CEO, principal, senior leaders and chaplain have expert knowledge in how to plan and deliver high quality Collective Worship. They are highly ambitious for Collective Worship at Carmel and all are devoted to their mission to put Christ at the centre.
- Senior leaders and the chaplain are impressive role models for faithful living. They encourage and promote students in leading Collective Worship. They are passionate about Collective Worship and approach their monitoring role both robustly and sensitively putting support in place when needed.
- Leaders liaise closely with local clergy, ensuring that planning for sacramental provision is well established. As part of Advent preparations, over 80 students received the sacrament of the reconciliation last week.
- Senior leaders attach great importance to the professional development of staff. They consider staff formation, liturgical formation and planning of Collective Worship to be a priority. They plan accordingly.
- Regular reviews of the college's Collective Worship form part of the regular college performance systems. Leaders and governors are adept at self-evaluation and their Diocesan self-evaluation form is both an accurate and informative document.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION:**1****CATHOLIC LIFE:****1**

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

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

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

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:**1**

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

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The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.

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How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:**1**

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

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The quality of provision for Collective Worship.

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

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SCHOOL DETAILS

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| School name | Carmel College, a Catholic Academy |
| Unique reference number | 137622 |
| Local authority | Darlington |
| This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt Reverend Robert Byrne CO the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle under canon 806 of Canon Law. For voluntary aided schools it also fulfils the responsibility the governing body has to inspect the school under s48 of the Education Act 2005. | |
| Chair of governors | Mr Kieran Sharp |
| Principal | Mr Mike Shorten |
| Date of previous school inspection | November 2014 |
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| Email address | admin@carmel.org.uk |