



Archdiocese of
Liverpool



Diocese of Liverpool

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

THE ACADEMY OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI JOINT ANGLICAN AND CATHOLIC SCHOOL

The Academy of St. Francis of Assisi,
Gardners Drive,
Liverpool,
L6 7UR.

Inspection date:	Monday/Tuesday 18 th /19 th March 2013
Date of previous inspection:	Thursday 13 th January 2011
URN	101857
Inspectors:	Miss Elizabeth Collins Rev. Deacon Paul Mannings

Type of School:	Academy (Non-maintained)
Age range of pupils:	11 – 16 (mixed)
Number on roll:	862
Chair of Governors:	Peter Alcock
Principal:	Dermot McNiffe
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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

St. Francis of Assisi is a joint Anglican and Catholic Academy slightly smaller than average. Students known to be eligible for the pupil premium are considerably higher than average as is the number needing school action plus support or having a statement of special educational need. Ethnic minority students are slightly above average and 165 have English as an additional language. Significant changes in staffing have occurred since the last inspection including restructuring the leadership team.

Key for inspection grades

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

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The distinctiveness and effectiveness of The Academy of St. Francis of Assisi Joint Anglican/Catholic school as a Christian school are outstanding

The impetus and effort put into proclaiming the Academy's Christian foundation and values is tangible. Care, compassion, peace and respect pervade its life. High aspirations are set for all. Collective Worship enhances spiritual and moral development. Religious Education has an excellent impact on students' academic and personal development. The commitment of the school to developing the Christian life and the environment has an outstanding influence on students and the wider community.

Grade: 1

Improvement since the last inspection

There has been an impressive move to address issues raised by the last inspection and to engage the whole school community more positively in recognising and working towards outstanding outcomes.

Grade 1

Capacity to improve

The capacity to maintain and improve on what has already been achieved is outstanding.

Grade: 1

Focus for development

To explore the wider implications of spiritual development as a 'whole school' responsibility by:

- identifying aspects of all curriculum areas that can be used to interpret and encourage spiritual development.

Consider carefully how continuity and progression in learning can be implemented more appropriately in the Key Stage 3 programme of study by:

- better effective and strategic use of prior learning;
- the use of well selected material appropriate to students' age and aptitude and integral to the topics being taught.

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

Staff and students recognise clearly how Christian values underpin the life of the Academy. Through interaction with each other and being able to learn and grow in an exceptionally secure and collaborative environment they celebrate Christian values daily. An atmosphere of care, compassion, peace and respect pervades all areas. High aspirations are set and many find school a safe haven where they want to be. Attendance, levels of progress and attainment, as well as behaviour have improved significantly over the last three years. Students in the Assisi Centre experience new and exciting opportunities which enable them to adapt more easily and confidently to learning. Very strong working relationships across all age groups are exhibited in classrooms and in movement about the building. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at a very advanced level. Students' response to helping regenerate the local park enhanced the reputation of the Academy and raised its profile as a hub of the local community enormously. This positive response also raised students' self-perception and confidence. Opportunities to be engaged in social and cultural activities are considerable. They range from the Duke of Edinburgh Award to a film club, musical and drama events as well as engagement with outside agencies: these help develop moral as well as social awareness. All are taken-up by a significant number of students. Intrinsic spiritual development, as opposed to that related to collective worship and religious education is still to be understood and implemented fully, however. The Academy continues to maintain and enhance its dual focus as a Christian community and an environmentally friendly campus. This reflects very successfully the vision of its patron, St Francis.

Grade 1:

The effectiveness of the provision for Collective Worship is outstanding

A new confidence and obvious clarity to the centrality of worship is evident in the Academy's calendar. This enhances spiritual and moral development for all members of the community. Awareness of the liturgical year is much improved and greater opportunity taken for sharing common festivals. An exciting and well developed celebration for the feast day of St Francis was much enjoyed by all involved. The carol service liturgy takes on an ecumenical flavour with the inclusion of traditions from the local Polish community. The majority of students see the importance of worship as part of the Academy's identity: even those with no faith commitment would not undermine this. Considerable effort has gone into involving as many of the community as possible in planning and presenting worship. Students on the chaplaincy team speak enthusiastically about their involvement and the use of materials suggested and designed by them. The daily class worship was commented on by all those interviewed as an excellent way to explore Christian values in the context of their own lives and wider world issues. Participation on these occasions is very high and gives considerable scope for moral development. Students' contribution to year group worship is also planned to effect. A well-presented and sensitively selected choral piece by younger pupils for Key Stage 4 students was received reflectively. Opportunity for all students to be actively involved on these occasions is, however, less positive than in the form setting. A bi-annual monitoring exercise involving students is shared with governors and a newly formed

group of local clergy. This successfully evaluates current practice and identifies ways to improve.

Grade: 1

The effectiveness of Religious Education is outstanding

Religious Education has significantly better outcomes in levels of progress and attainment than all other subjects in the Academy. The A* to C grades in the GCSE summer 2012 full course examination were the best in the year and just above the national average. Key Stage 3 outcomes overall were slightly below target, but careful planning to address this shows students at all levels of ability now making good or outstanding progress. Teaching is at least good and in many instances outstanding. Work with students in lower sets – even when dealing with challenging topics - gives excellent opportunity to achieve exceptionally well. Many express thoughtful arguments to support opinions and speak confidently and clearly about their ideas. Considerable effort is made to see materials are suitable for all levels of ability and need, including texts translated into a number of languages to support students at an early stage of English language acquisition. Imaginative teaching strategies engage students with religious questions within a context familiar to their own lives and experiences. This makes for very effective learning and a desire to do well. A Year 11 student expressed delight at being able to return next year to the new sixth form to do the subject at advanced level. All students take the full GCSE course at the end of Year 11 and much of the work in years 8 and 9 incorporate skills and knowledge in preparation for the Key Stage 4 work. There are still issues concerning continuity and progression and the integrity of some of the material suggested in the Year 7 and 8 curriculum review.

Grade: 1

The effectiveness of the Leadership and Management is outstanding

Considerable progress has been made in this area. The review of the mission statement – involving a range of personnel - has given a new momentum to recognising and embracing the specific Christian values embodied in the statement. Very well managed improvements have been implemented in all aspects of the school's Christian life. These are reflected significantly in attitudes and students' attainment and progress overall. The formation of an ethos and leadership team, which includes two senior students, ensures regular monitoring and evaluation takes place as well as reporting back to governors. Students' responses to questionnaires are honest and open. They reflect personal stances and understanding of the Academy's mission. Even when an individual saw no personal benefit for a particular activity they acknowledged and respected its purpose in the community as a whole. Outstanding collaborative partnerships are in place between the Academy and the local neighbourhood, including clergy. The Academy has become a hub of local activity and is used for a wide range of activities which support and enhance the locality they serve.

Grade 1

