



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Monitoring Visit

CARDINAL NEWMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Sandpits Lane, Keresley, Coventry, CV6 2FR

Inspection date	17 th March 2016
Reporting Inspector	Janet Mellor
Assisting Inspector	Toni Ellis

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11-18 years
Number on roll	1234
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Mr Chris Smith
Telephone number	024 76 332382
E-mail address	admin@cardinalnewman.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	November 2011
DFE School Number	331/4707
Unique Reference Number	103743
Headteacher	Mrs Marina Kelly
Previous inspection:	1
This inspection:	1

DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE





March 2016

Diocesan Education Service,
Don Bosco House,
Coventry Road,
Coleshill,
B46 3EA

Mrs Marina Kelly
Cardinal Newman Catholic School
Sandpits Lane
Keresley
Coventry CV6 2FR

Dear Mrs Kelly,

Section 48 Monitoring inspection: Thursday 17th March 2016

Thank you for the warm welcome which you, your staff and students gave to the Assistant Inspector, Miss Toni Ellis, and to me, when we inspected your school on 17th March. We want to thank you too for the efficient way in which the pre-inspection information was sent to us, for the documentation made available during the inspection, and for time given by staff, the chaplains, pupils and governors.

The inspection was a “light touch” monitoring inspection because religious education (RE) and the Catholic life of your school were judged at the last inspection to be outstanding and because it is now five years since the last section 48 inspection.

The purpose of the inspection was to assess the quality of the school’s self-evaluation and improvement planning for RE and Catholic life. In order to be able to make this judgement we read your self-evaluation documentation, interviewed senior leaders, chaplains, governors, parents and groups of pupils. We studied your evidence folders and examples of the pupils’ work. We completed seven observations of parts of RE lessons, and attended two assemblies and a service of reconciliation.

As a result of your own evaluations, you made the judgement that your school is outstanding in the quality of its Catholic life, good with outstanding features in RE, and overall has outstanding effectiveness in these two areas. We are pleased to confirm that this judgement is accurate.

Evaluation of the Catholic life of the school is meticulous and totally transparent. That is because those working in the school in leading positions, including the lay chaplain and the priest chaplain, constantly wish to know how they can plan for improvement. Having ascertained, for example, that the school mission statement was not firmly embedded, a review was planned which could then form a firm basis for subsequent work, such as the school prayer, the awards and the pastoral curriculum. Fundamental values are summarised in the word ‘aspire’ which not only alerts the students to the key phrase of the mission held at the school in November 2013, ‘made for greatness’, but it also serves as an acronym for values such as service and respect. Conscious of the words of Pope St John Paul II the school aims to provide an all-round education, and holds fast to its motto ‘Knowledge through the light of faith’, words of Blessed Cardinal John Henry Newman. The school is therefore totally clear about its roots and purpose, and this was evident throughout the inspection. The headteacher assures the prime place for Catholic life in the annual school improvement plan, a document which is under regular scrutiny as tasks are completed and their impact assessed. Governors evaluate planning through their Catholic life and pastoral sub-committee and they offer challenge and support, based on a wide skill set.

The Catholic life of Cardinal Newman School stands out because of the creative ways in which it plans to put faith into action concentrating on each of the corporal acts of mercy. This includes highlighting news items about the plight of refugees in Calais and lead to the collection and delivery of items of clothing to the refugee camp. More locally the school has outreach in the city to care homes and food banks, and students are conscious of the history of Coventry in World War II, praying regularly for peace in the area designated



as a peace garden. Students respond to homelessness through fund raising for the Cyrenians, one of the many charities which receive help from the school. Planning is highly effective for maintaining and strengthening links with parishes, for instance through youth groups and primary schools through retreat programmes. This is because staff learn from previous experience and draw on a range of feedback in order to improve. The school is constantly seeking ways of responding to papal teachings, for example in provision for 24 hours with the Lord. Staff are well supported for the pastoral programme which is guided by well planned themes in collective worship and monitored effectively by senior leaders. Students are made aware of the issues of our time, including British values and the responsibility to respect others and to keep safe. Students can vouch for their own spiritual and moral development and awareness of a sense of vocation. They have opportunities to lead assemblies, prayer and liturgies, to take part in planning the frequent Masses and to receive the sacrament of reconciliation. Staff training following an audit is beginning to impact on opening up faith issues across the curriculum. The wide range of surveys and feedback has begun to be completed also by parents, and this is an area for further development for the school.

Following the dip in outcomes at A*-C GCSE RE in 2014 and 2015 from diocesan average to below, the school has engaged in robust evaluation of its work. This has resulted in curriculum and assessment changes, and new strategies for tracking the progress of students from their entry to the school. Predictions for 2016 indicate a rise to well above national and diocesan levels. Given the present accuracy of judgements of the quality of teaching and assessment, the engagement of the students and the real focus on examination requirements, the judgement of this aspect of RE as good over a three year period is justified. A level courses have however shown consistently outstanding outcomes and the new assessment procedures beginning in Year 7 with 'flight paths' towards GCSE grades have proved to be motivating to students and encouraged excellent rapid progress. Students know their target grades, their current grades and how to improve. Written dialogue between student and teacher following marked work was seen to be developing well. The school has sound planning for the narrowing of the gap between those for whom it receives extra funding and other students and this seems to be successful. Student surveys show that lessons are enjoyed and sixth form students speak highly of the quality of debate which develops skills useful in other areas.

The last inspection proposed a target for the school to create a centre of excellence for the promotion of high quality RE. That has been achieved in the outstanding leader of the department who plays an important role in diocesan and local RE training and also in the witness of the school in general to importance of knowledge of the Catholic faith and of outreach. The head of department's reflective and purposeful approach is highly evident. The school judges teaching in RE to be good with some outstanding work, and this is confirmed. Lessons follow a clear routine for students with a settling activity, clearly stated objectives and short activities facilitating good progress, including targeted and searching questioning. The department works as a team, planning lessons and sharing resources. Feedback enables adjustments to be discussed and implemented. Planning includes ambitious targets for literacy and presentation which were seen to be of a very high standard, confirming the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures which indicate sound potential for further improvement. Inspectors were unable to observe sixth form lessons on the inspection day, but the standard of work in folders was seen to be excellent. Sixth form students benefit from the outstanding commitment of staff to provide excellent resources and detailed assessment of their work. They are well supported for the transition from GCSE style work because the teachers have reflected upon this and are supportive. During the inspection evidence was ascertained about General RE in the sixth form. Although it is clear that it is a wider skills course with a Catholic focus, there was a lack of formal approach in documentation. The school has made some headway in this respect by the considered decision to move to a weekly timetabled lesson from the occasional whole day provision.

A second target from the 2011 inspection referred to developing the students' experience of other faiths and cultures. In the revised curriculum the RE department includes other faiths in Year 7 and 8, and is preparing for GCSE work on Judaism. There is an awareness of the growing number of students with English as an additional language and their potential for inter-faith dialogue and the sharing of cultural experiences.



In order to assist the school in its excellent work, the following targets are proposed:

- Embed thoroughly and monitor carefully the recently introduced tracking system in order to secure improved outcomes for all learners at GCSE
- Ensure a more formalised sixth form General RE course as a structured part of provision
- Empower parents to contribute to evaluation of the Catholic life and RE of the school

Yours sincerely

Janet Mellor
Diocesan inspector