

Notre Dame Catholic College

URN: 104706

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Liverpool

25–26 April 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

Catholic life and mission (p.3)

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

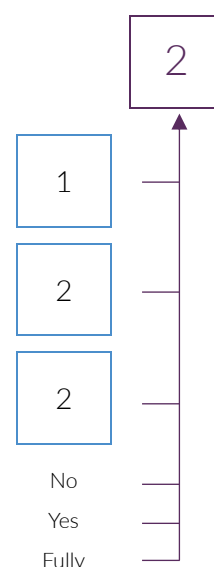
Collective worship (p.7)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection



What the school does well

- The school is a shining example of a Catholic community that lives and breathes its mission 'to open hearts, minds and doors.'. All members of the school community buy into and exemplify their core values of Charity, Courtesy, Courage and Confidence.
- This is a fully inclusive school with a strong focus on living out the gospel messages of care for all, particularly those who may be considered more vulnerable.
- There is a strong sense of family and community in this school. Staff are proud to work here and students feel safe and are happy.
- Chaplaincy provision is strong; it is an integral part of the school and is highly valued by all members of the community.

- In a period of flux, the acting headteachers and the senior leadership team are providing stability and support to their community.

What the school needs to improve

- Improve outcomes in religious education in all key stages.
- In religious education ensure that assessment systematically and consistently informs teaching so that adaptations can be made to enable all students to make progress.
- Provide training and support to encourage a wide range of students to become regularly involved in the preparation and leadership of prayer and liturgy.

Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Catholic life and mission key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

Leadership

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



Students in this school are happy and feel safe. They know they are loved, and the school is a constant in many of their lives. The school values are adopted with pride by the students; they know and cherish them. The school promotes inclusion and diversity as part of its core ethos, and this is lived out by the students. There is a culture of mutual respect; behaviour in lessons, movement and social time was good. Students can provide numerous examples of not only how they live out the school's values through extensive charitable activities that are organised by the school but also the "why". There is strong evidence of charitable work that is student initiated and led; students respond exceptionally well to chaplaincy provision. This is evident across all year groups but the 1804 Society are an inspiring example of young Catholic leadership in action. The mission and charism is the lifeblood coursing through this living Catholic community. Students are very clear about the school's Catholic mission and the call to action contained within it. They have a real clarity of understanding regarding the school's charism and can quote extensively from the life and example of St Julie. This is shared by the staff and, on being asked to explain the charism inspectors were presented with a choral staff response.

The school has at its heart, the best interests of every student. It has established both specialist and nurture provision as part of its core function. This is a conscious decision and comes at a cost but is a clear exemplification of the duty of Catholics to provide for all. The pastoral care provided to the students is excellent. There is a wonderful sense of welcome, Staff are exceptionally proud to work in this school. There is a palpable sense of community where everyone works together with a shared vision for the benefit of all they serve. The staff are strong role models and the students spoke about their staff with the highest regard and respect.

Relationships, sex and health education is effective and carefully planned to meet Archdiocesan requirements.

The leadership and management of Catholic life is outstanding. Chaplaincy provision is central to life within this school. The lay chaplain has a clear vision and has an infectious enthusiasm that enables the whole community to flourish through her ideas, example and inspiration. Leaders have an absolute commitment to the mission which they live out and articulate. Leaders have fully embraced the long tradition of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur so that its relevance to their community in 21st century inner city Liverpool is tangible. The school is very much in a period of transition between substantive headteachers and different trustees. The acting headteachers and other senior leaders are ensuring that the school remains loyal to the charism and are providing the constant in students' lives as well as stability for the staff. Leaders care deeply about the school and are acting as the "shield" between the many external pressures, in essence protecting staff from the uncertainty and thus enabling them to focus upon the students. This action by leaders and governors is both recognised and appreciated by staff. Governors are ambitious for the community and know the school well. Governors are involved in self-evaluation and are visible in their support and provision of challenge. They understand the planned pace of change, recognise many strengths in Catholic life and mission and have committed resources to it. Leaders and governors have made progress in developing the curriculum, including incorporating school values and are working towards providing a holistic and integrated Catholic curriculum.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

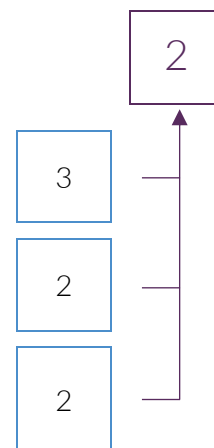
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education



Historic outcomes in the school have fallen since 2019 and religious education is no exception. There have been low levels of attainment and progress in religious education at GCSE. Data provided by the school shows that current Year 11 outcomes are likely to reflect that shortfall due in the main to gaps in knowledge. School leaders including governors are acutely aware of this. They have analysed the reasons for this carefully and concluded that the curriculum was not designed to effectively build up a strong knowledge base. The curriculum has now been changed to meet the needs of the increased knowledge requirement and leaders are able to demonstrate that Year 10 internal data is showing an improvement. This increase in knowledge is reflected in student books which are well presented and cared for. Students clearly enjoy religious education and talk of the calmness within lessons. Student behaviour in lessons was generally good, if overly compliant at times. When asked by teachers, students were able to work independently; this has been identified by the school as a whole school priority. The emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge is having an impact. Students were able to talk confidently about what they have learnt within religious education and were able to provide examples or quote scripture to illustrate this. Students explained that "Do it now" (DIN) slides along with other activities were helping them to recall knowledge.

Teachers of religious education have strong subject knowledge and are deeply committed to its value within a Catholic school. Positive relationships were evident in each lesson we visited, and students were well motivated by praise. The religious education team is clearly reflective and keen to learn from each other. They have implemented some very effective practice to reconnect learning and have trialled other measures to help implement a knowledge rich curriculum. They are aware of their responsibility to support literacy and are working together

in critical reflection to develop resources and teaching materials to ensure all can access the more demanding curriculum.

Effective assessment practice is variable both between and within lessons. Some teachers are very adept at using assessment within lessons to develop an appreciation of the level of understanding and then changing teaching to meet the needs of the whole class or individual students. This is not yet consistent and the practice of adapting the teaching to enable all learners to achieve, including those with special educational needs and disabilities and the more able is very much work in progress. Leaders and governors are clearly conscious that the school is very much in a state of transition. They exercise a strong pastoral role to ensure that the staff can be the constant in students' lives. Leaders and governors have prioritised religious education and ensured that it has parity in terms of resource provision. They have added capacity to departmental leadership to increase standards. Religious education is compliant with the expectations laid out by the Bishops Conference at key stages three and four. Key stage five will be fully compliant from September 2024. Leaders have reviewed the curriculum within religious education in response to weak outcomes and whilst this is unlikely to impact current Year 11 students, those in Year 10 and below are able to demonstrate progress. The curriculum is appropriate, and the Religious Education Directory is being introduced positively as a reflection of Archdiocesan recommendation. The school has a flourish and nurture provision which reflects the absolute commitment to inclusion. However, the school has a higher-than-average numbers of students who are not entered for full GCSE Religious Education, which is being addressed. There is an ongoing evaluation process which is honest and accurate.

Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

2

2

Students respond well to prayer and liturgy. In form time, they are quiet, attentive and respectful but active participation and response is mixed. Students listen carefully to the explanation given by teachers, respond to directed questions and those who volunteer to read do so with confidence. Students were able to articulate their different experiences of ways of praying, including the centrality of scripture. Students understand how their experiences of prayer and liturgy are influenced by the Church's liturgical year. They appreciate the opportunity to reflect in silence as this allows them to consider how the school's core values can be lived out in their daily lives. Students readily explain how their weekly theme can lead to action, for example linking the value of courage with using their gifts and talents. There were many examples provided by students and staff which linked their experience of worship to the many examples of living out the Catholic life and mission. The Christmas marketplace was a particularly prominent example cited by students and staff.

Prayer and Liturgy is central to school life. There is a clear and consistent routine of daily prayer at the beginning of each day. Staff are provided with high quality resources linked to the themes for the week, the chosen value and reflections that are relevant to students' lives. The resources are enhanced by well-chosen scripture passages. For example, the use of the Parable of the Talents enabled students to understand, discuss and explain the importance of using their individual gifts to benefit their school and wider community. Staff have extensive professional development in leading prayer and are provided with individual support if needed. As a result, teachers deliver liturgy effectively and consistently. Student ownership or leadership of form time liturgy is limited. Each form group can prepare and participate in a year group assembly once a year. Students spoke positively of this experience. There are student leadership groups which form part of the chaplaincy provision. The groups are involved in the delivery of prayer and liturgy; the 1804 group are particularly prominent, effective and positive role models for younger students. Prayer is central to the life of this school. This is evident through the way that staff pray together at the start of meetings and at key times of celebration in the lives of students

such as the Year 7 dedication service and the Year 13 Leavers' Mass. Staff speak of the importance of these services in bringing the community together. This has been especially powerful in the times of sorrow and loss that the school has experienced in recent years.

Staff are models of strong practice. They participate in and are confident in leading others in prayer and liturgy. Leaders clearly understand the different levels and skills of participation that are reflective of the age and capacity of students. The lay chaplain is particularly effective in supporting some students in planning and leading prayer and liturgy. This could be further enriched by opportunities offered to younger students more frequently. Governors have ensured the school's policy for prayer and liturgy is well formulated and fit for purpose, with the school calendar recognising key moments in the liturgical year and other significant dates in the life of the school. Governors are very supportive of prayer and worship. They are regularly informed of developments through the dedicated Life of the School Committee. Leaders have ensured that through the weekly newsletter, the website, and social media, all aspects of the Catholic life of the school and liturgy are prioritised and celebrated.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Notre Dame Catholic College
School unique reference number (URN)	104706
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3414782
Full postal address of the school	Notre Dame Catholic College, 180 Great Homer Street, Liverpool, L5 5AF
School phone number	01513305122
Headteacher	Mrs E Brennan and Mrs K Thomas
Chair of Governors	Mrs Anne-Marie Hutton
School Website	http://notredameliverpool.com/
Trusteeship	Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Secondary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	16 November 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Andrew Dawson	Lead
Louise Conway	Team
Anita Stead	Team

Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement