



# ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

## INSPECTION REPORT

### ST CUTHBERT'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

#### ST HELENS

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Inspection Date: Tuesday 19 June 2018

Inspectors: Dcn Paul Mannings and Mrs Barbara Melia

Unique Reference Number: 104835

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Acts 2005 and 2011

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Type of School: Catholic, voluntary aided, mixed, comprehensive

Age range of pupils: 11-16

Number on roll: 777

Chair of Governors: Fr Philip Swanson

Headteacher: Mrs Catherine Twist

School address: Berry's Lane,  
Sutton  
St Helens  
Merseyside  
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Date of last inspection: Wednesday 23 February 2013

# Introduction

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Acts 2005 and 2011

The report of the inspection is produced for the Archbishop of Liverpool (Code of Canon Law 804 and 806) and for the governors of the school.

The inspectors are members of the Christian Education Department and their associates approved by the Archbishop of Liverpool for this purpose.

## Information about this school

- St Cuthbert's Catholic High School is an 11-16, Catholic voluntary aided, mixed comprehensive.
- The school is under the trusteeship of the Archdiocese of Liverpool and situated in the St Helens Authority.
- There are 777 pupils on roll of whom 304 (39.12%) are baptised Catholics, with 288 (37.07%) from other Christian denominations and 9 (1.16%) from other world faith or religious traditions. There are 176 pupils (22.65%) who express no religious affiliation.
- The school serves the associated parishes in the local pastoral area, which accounts for 48% of the roll, with a significant number of pupils drawn from state primary schools in the wider area.
- The school has 49 teaching staff, 51% of whom are Catholic.
- The Religious Education Department has four full time members, all of whom are qualified in Religious Education.
- The Headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection.

### Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires Improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

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# OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

St Cuthbert's is good in its provision of Catholic Education.  
Catholic Life and Collective Worship are outstanding.

## CATHOLIC LIFE

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

- The extent to which the pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.
- They ensure that the Mission Statement is at the heart of the school's Catholic Life. Pupils are particularly articulate in linking the statement's aims to the supporting references from Scripture and how to apply these in everyday life. This is their method of evaluating the impact of the mission.
- Pupils are proud of their school. During inspection, their behaviour around school ranged from good to exemplary.
- Pupils fully appreciate and feel protected by the school's zero tolerance of any forms of bullying. This enables them to thrive by taking a pride in themselves, striving towards personal potentials and celebrating the strengths of others.
- Pupils are enthusiastic in their support of the wider ranging charities and social projects for the needs of others both locally and internationally. This is because they are encouraged to assume leadership and facilitate organisation.
- Pupils cite two key areas that underpin Catholic Life namely Chaplaincy and Chapel Club. They appreciate the extent to which their chaplain is on hand most days and knows all of them. Chapel Club is a space for prayer and support of the community projects. Their attendance is voluntary, and the uptake is high because pupils regard it as the heart of community action and support.
- Relationships and Sex Education enables pupils to acquire a positive understanding of the meaning of loving relationships. They know the responsibilities this demands, all within the context of a Christian understanding of the purpose of sexual love.
- Pupils have a sense of purpose enriched by their understanding of how every subject and activity contributes to their holistic development and personal vocation.
- Pupils value their Catholic school because it is totally inclusive. They feel part of a wider Archdiocesan family irrespective of their own faith commitments. This is because they are encouraged at all times to belong herein.

### **The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school**

- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.
- The clarity of the Mission Statement is an inspiring expression of the school's educational mission. Its fulfilment is linked to daily living and to personal action.
- The staff is fully committed to living the Catholic mission. This is expressed by their understanding of the school's provision of Church for so many young people who may not otherwise experience a regular parish community. It is a fact that whilst many of the pupils' hail from state sector primaries their background is in many cases rooted in a Catholicism maybe not practised. For St Cuthbert's this is the call for inclusivity, by providing involvement led by inspired staff. This is why the staff enthusiastically participate in school activities which reflect the Catholic Life and inspire pupils by their example.

- The school is a joyful and supportive community. The campus is tastefully enriched by Christian symbols that reflect its Catholic character. The staff promote the highest standards through purpose and by direction.
- The curriculum is rooted in the school's aim to make every minute and action count. Its content includes identification of how it fulfils the demands of Catholic Social Teaching through ensuring it meets the demands of all pupils to develop their potential and to be responsible citizens made in the image and likeness of God.
- There is daily promotion of spiritual and moral development through time for personal reflection on the impact of what has been learnt. There is total insistence on right and just behaviour.
- The Chaplain, a local parish priest who also chairs the governing body, is a long-standing member of the school and parish community, well experienced in local needs and priorities. Chaplaincy provision is inclusive and facilitative. It is consistent on a daily basis and highly regarded as core to Catholic provision.
- Pastoral policies are all according to Catholic principles and provide the basis of sound care and practice toward pupils and staff.
- Relationships and Sex Education is provided within the framework of Personal, Social and Health Education. Its co-ordination is highly organised. The content is rigorous and delivered through a cross curricular process. Its supporting policy document expresses the need for the content, "to be faithful to the Church's vision of human wholeness, whilst recognising the context in which we work today."

### **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school**

- Leaders and governors are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- The school's leadership is deeply committed to the Church's mission in Education. This is evident from the Mission Statement which seeks to ensure, "staff, governors and friends will work together as a Christian family to live the message of the Good News of Jesus Christ to love God and our neighbour."
- The Mission Statement is the evaluative means of ensuring relevant continued professional development of staff in Catholic Life. It directs the content of the Section 48 Self Evaluation Document which monitors progress in terms of fulfilment of its aims by pupils and staff, together with identified areas for improvement.
- Consequently, the whole process of mission ensures staff commitment in enabling pupils to live-out the community life of St Cuthbert's. Furthermore, the mission aims are shared with parents. This results in their continued commitment to the school because they too are encouraged to be involved and to belong. This is also the reason why those parents, staff and pupils who hold other faith and world views are encouraged to participate. Everyone matters.
- The governors are continually pro-active in their support of senior leadership in ensuring Catholic Life embraces the living of British Values in the light of the Gospel. They are highly informed through their own practice and by sharing in the inclusive life of the school.
- At all levels the school responds wholeheartedly to Archdiocesan policies and initiatives through interaction and a commitment to maintaining its participation within the family of Catholic schools.

# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

- The extent to which pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is good.
- The department continues to make commendable progress in raising of pupils' performance at the end of each Key Stage. In 2017 results for GCSE approached the aspirational set target for improvement. Whilst this falls short of the national average for Catholic schools, it demonstrates that significant improvement is in hand. By the end of Key Stage 3 almost half of pupils are now making three levels of progress. This is good in relation to their overall capabilities and starting points.
- Differentiated teaching strategies are enabling good progress in class. They are using their knowledge, understanding and skills to reflect spiritually and to think ethically and theologically and so apply their learning to the demands of everyday life.
- This prioritised approach continues to revive pupils' commitment to achieving. They are motivated and for the most part behave very well. Any minimal disruption is effectively challenged.
- Also, pupils want to achieve because they value and enjoy Religious Education. They speak about the variety of activities used in lessons and support from staff. They are encouraged to express their opinions and beliefs.
- Formative assessment enables pupils to appreciate their strengths. They are given clear guidance in making progress. Pupils are also realistic in identifying their own areas for improvement. They care and are interested in maximising good personal performance in practical and in written work.
- A key contributor to pupil achievement is the commitment of teachers to celebrating what is being done well.

## The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education

- The quality of teaching, learning in Religious Education is good. In some areas it is outstanding.
- On the day of inspection teaching that was outstanding was thoroughly planned. There was teacher expertise in subject knowledge. Inspired delivery and robust challenge engaged pupils. Time management ensured maximum use of the whole lesson. Good teaching positively aspired to reaching the same standard. The few elements requiring improvement needed more rigour in capturing and developing the responses by pupils so ensuring maximum participation and engagement.
- Overall, pupils' behaviour in lessons ranged between good and outstanding, with only very few instances of minimal disruption that were effectively challenged. Teachers have a good rapport with pupils which according to some pupils makes their learning, "strong but fun."
- Teachers are committed to their ongoing development in wide ranging strategies and skills. They ask open questions to which pupils' responses are encouraged and developed. They carefully guide pupils to develop their contributions more fully. This results in an atmosphere whereby pupils want to contribute, showing and sharing their progress.
- There is balanced teaching and learning whereby pupils can make significant contributions to their own progress with efficient support on hand from teachers and assistants.

- Scrutiny of pupils' work is focused on key vocabulary and concepts. Pupils use their marked work to gain a clear knowledge of their skills and understanding. Tasks include a range of activities. There is evidence of differentiation. They use teacher guidance to make improvements and respond positively to critiques that are given. Teachers use individually prepared proformas to encourage pupils to answer assessment or examination questions. Pupils are regularly involved in self and peer assessment.
- Consequently, the continued development of teaching and learning is impacting on raising pupils' achievement.

## **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education**

- Leaders and governors are good in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Religious Education. They are committed to Religious Education as a core subject that underpins Catholic Life. Together with the curriculum leader, they demonstrate outstanding capacity for continued improvement by their support of continued departmental development.
- The content of curriculum Religious Education fulfils the requirements of the Bishops Conference. The 10% curriculum requirement is provided in each Key Stage.
- The Section 48 Self Evaluation Document contains the shared vision for continued improvement and development of Religious Education. Together they scrutinise and manage effective progress, and frequently consult with departmental staff. Senior leaders and governors ensure Religious Education has full parity with other core subjects including resourcing, staffing and accommodation. They regularly participate in Archdiocesan training.
- *People of God – Called to Serve* has been fully implemented. The GCSE specification includes Catholic Christianity and Judaism. Other world faiths and religions are included in all programmes of study. Consequently, the additional requirements and policies of the Archdiocese regarding the Religious Education curriculum have been implemented and continue to develop in enrichment.
- The curriculum leader for Religious Education continues to undertake the successful major renewal of the department, though strong and respected leadership and management. This has already raised the profile of Religious Education for pupils, which in turn has contributed to raising their achievement. The four members of staff work as a committed, professional, friendly, co-operative and hardworking team, that shares ongoing creative expertise in classroom practice and skills in the production and development of resources. Their classrooms are well organised and contain quality displays of pupils and teachers work. Continued improvement is ensuring teaching and learning in Religious Education that is at least consistently good.

## **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

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

- Pupils response to and participation in the school's Collective Worship is outstanding overall.
- During interview pupils spoke about how Collective Worship (known in school as *Sacred Time*) enables them to reflect upon other peoples' situations and to gain an insight into what is going on in the world. Occasions to reflect are valued because they can benefit from the stillness and make time for themselves, even to organising their days and mindsets.
- They are very happy to take part in leading worship and agreed they had the confidence to plan worship with enthusiasm because help and preparation time is available. They are

creative and resourceful in their planning because the themes are well linked to the content of Religious Education. This means that during reflection time they can consider how to present a theme and make it relevant for the worshipping community.

- Pupils are confident in their understanding of the Liturgical Year because it is indicated within the weekly themes and within the voluntary masses and services that take place.
- They understand that Collective Worship is celebrated in many different styles including drama, mime and readings. They enjoy occasions supported by musical accompaniment and singing. Pupils also understand that Collective Worship is as much about their presence in the worshipping community without necessarily taking a role in leadership. Therein they are able to participate through discussion, feedback and personal reflection.
- Indeed, the experience of living and working in a faithful, praying community has a strong impact on their spiritual and moral development. This is because they are challenged to reflect upon how they can put faith into action by supporting others. They are encouraged to be thankful for their personal gifts. They are led to thinking of how they can contribute to the moral framework of the school by their own examples and support of codes of conduct.
- Pupils are clear that Collective Worship is inclusive. There are many ways in which they can contribute through faith or by world view. They know that other peoples' beliefs and opinions are important. They want to know about them and to share views, and experiences.

### **The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school**

- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school on the day of inspection was good overall. There were outstanding features that reflected the fact that provision and organisation is in the main of high quality, yet on occasion requires some further guidance for staff.
- Outstanding features on the day included pupils' high standards of behaviour and attentiveness. There was focus and stillness during reflection. Pupils lively participation and interaction was encouraged. Staff and pupils were truly collective though contribution and encouragement. In other areas, which were good, there was a need for the theme resources to be more tailored to the needs of the group. There was also the need for more interaction and leadership from pupils, some of whom whilst passive, appeared to be attentive.
- Weekly themes and resources are digitally shared with all staff. They contain a clear purpose, meaning and direction. There is an abundance of supporting resources readily available for staff and pupils. These are carefully inclusive of other world faiths and religions.
- Provision ensures that staff and pupils gather daily for prayer in staff, form and year groups. There is a rota of providers which ensure that each form has the scope to prepare and plan its contribution at least once during the academic year. Masses and services are as well planned. This ensures that staff and pupils form an active part of the Liturgical Year.
- Staff are skilled in helping pupils to plan and deliver worship through the school's training provision.
- There are many occasions in the school year whereby guest speakers are invited. Parents and the wider community are encouraged to participate and readily do so.

### **How well leaders, governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship**

- Leaders and governors are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Collective Worship.
- The Section 48 Self Evaluation Document clearly demonstrates the school's commitment to Collective Worship as essential to upholding and expressing Catholic Life through prayer and by resultant faith in action. Areas for continued improvement are duly noted as are the many strengths.

- There is efficient line management and co-ordination which includes significant input from the Religious Education department and the Chaplain. The Collective Worship policy expresses the nature of Sacred Time and is practical in outlining how it is delivered and organised.
- There is a focus on making Collective Worship entirely relevant and capable of encouraging the community to respond personally and or through actions to serve the needs of others. This is why the structure for contribution includes governors, senior leaders, year heads and form groups.
- Its monitoring and evaluation takes place informally and efficiently by staff attendance and participation. The process includes senior leadership attending form group worship. Best practice is shared. Areas for development are noted and supported by strategies for improvement.
- Leaders have encouraged Chapel Club to successfully promote pupil participation. On the day of inspection this included a gathering of pupils in their own time to reflect, pray, prepare and celebrate acts of worship. This occurs several times during each week.
- The Chapel itself is school leadership's expression of a place for prayer and reflection at the heart of the school; open at all times for public and private prayer as well as a place for personal stillness.

## **What the school needs to do to improve further**

Further development of the useful Section 48 Self Evaluation Document by:

- maintaining focus on its noted areas for development:
- ensuring this document remains the key tool for departmental development.

Ongoing development of assessment in Religious Education by:

- standardisation of the existing current pupils' assessment proformas within each year group.

Continued improvement in GCSE Religious Studies performance by:

- use of model answers to enable pupils to judge their own work against these criteria and set targets for improvement;
  - maintained usage of past paper questions (making additional use of new examples as they are published);
- ongoing rigour in practice and assessment of Part D questions.

Maintain and further enrich the quality of Collective Worship by:

- sharing the abundant best practice in the delivery of weekly themes to ensure maximum pupil leadership and participation.

## INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	2
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### CATHOLIC LIFE

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	1
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school	1

### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	2
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	2

### COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	1
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	2
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	1

***Key to judgements: Grade 1 is Outstanding, Grade 2 Good, Grade 3 Requires Improvement and Grade 4 Inadequate***