

Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for **St Mary's College, Crosby**

URN: 104972

Carried out on behalf of the Title. Archbishop Malcolm McMahon, Arch/bishop of Liverpool on:

Date: 08-09 November 2023

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....

1

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.....

1

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education.....

1

Collective worship (p.7)

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

1

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

Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- St Mary's College charism is known, understood and lived and the centrality of the Edmund Rice principles is the golden thread through the college.
- The opportunities created for staff and students to respond to the call to serve those in need are exceptional and has resulted in generous funds and support offered to local charities in the form of shoebox appeals, football boot collections, food hampers and work with the sick. Faith in action is deeply rooted in the college.
- There is a strong, tangible sense of family and community in which a warm welcome is felt throughout the college, whoever you meet.

- The expertise in teaching and learning in religious education is authentic, skilful and highly knowledgeable and the religious education team are strong advocates for the subject they teach.
- The resources created for prayer and liturgy are engaging, relevant and appreciated by the staff as they aim to deliver high quality reflections during their time at the college.

What the school needs to improve:

- Appoint a Catholic life and mission link governor to work with leaders to monitor, quality assure and develop Catholic life and mission, especially prayer and liturgy, and ensure this process is included within the college self-evaluation cycle.
- Strengthen the role of chaplaincy to include the introduction of a student chaplaincy team, pastoral support for all staff, further strengthen parish links and enhance collaborative work with the Archdiocese.
- Provide a quality assurance process for prayer and liturgy in which good practice is identified and shared, and evaluation of the copious resources is tracked, so that the quality of prayer is explicit in form time.

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:.....	1
Pupil outcomes The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school	1
Provision The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school	1
Leadership How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school	2

Catholic life and mission is a golden thread running through all aspects of life at St Mary's. Students clearly articulate their understanding of how they are valued and speak confidently about how they feel happy, safe and loved. They flourish by embracing the school's charism and make a strong practical contribution to Catholic social teaching through charity, advocacy and outreach work, centred around the Edmund Rice Eight Principles of Religious Education. This is evident across all year groups. Through their relationships with each other and with adults, and their exceptional behaviour, students show their deep respect for their own and other's personal dignity and beliefs. Students of other faiths and cultures thrive. Students spoke very positively about the new chaplaincy provision and the impact it has already had on their lives. They value the increased use of the chapel as a place of reflection.

Through the Edmund Rice principles, the clear mission of the college is lived and an inspiration to all. Staff speak confidently about its impact on maintaining a joyful, welcoming community where inclusivity is a real and tangible strength. Staff are committed and caring role models. They are equally as committed to an extensive extra-curricular programme which is valued by students and enhances the "family-feel" of the college. Staff state they feel "loved". There are explicit signs of Catholicity and charism throughout the college; students and staff appreciate and use the prayer corners. An emerging chaplaincy programme shows the school's commitment to the education of the whole person and is well-planned and valued by students who engage well. The provision for relationships, sex and health education is carefully planned, adapted to meet needs and meets statutory requirements. Students can articulate its impact and appreciate its relevance.

Leaders articulate the Church's and the college's mission and ensure the centrality of Christ. The development of Catholic life and mission is at the centre of the college's strategic plan. Leaders and religious education staff engage with the archdiocese. Local parish priests support the college. However, partnership could be strengthened. Parents are very supportive of the college's mission and state that they appreciate the impact this has on the development of their children. Parents are actively involved in supporting the college in a variety of ways. Leaders are extremely aware of the Church's preferential option for the poor or those in greater need and ensure that within their decision-making processes, resources, time and energy are allocated to supporting the vulnerable both through charitable activity, outreach work and practical support. The college has a successful scholarship programme and these students flourish. Staff responses indicate excellent pastoral support for staff which is also shown in low staff turnover. The curriculum has an expression of catholicity at its core and evidence shows there are considerable cross curricular links with religious education. Governor's contribution to evaluating and developing the Catholic life of the college needs to strengthen to ensure the college's self-evaluation is rigorous. Students make a systematic contribution to college evaluation and improvement. They acknowledge their contribution is acted upon, for example, through increased use of the chapel. Staff highly value the quality of induction, including the Edmund Rice Induction days, and ongoing, effective professional development.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.....

1

Provision

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

1

Leadership

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

1

Student outcomes in religious education are consistently strong. GCSE students achieve significantly above average attainment. A-level results are above the college average. Students make consistently good progress by knowing more, remembering more and doing more. Recall activities are securely embedded across the department. Students have developed a deep understanding of theological concepts which underpin the curriculum. Students have a secure understanding of the vocabulary needed to articulate theological ideas and are confident in working independently to do so. For example, in a Year 10 lesson, students were able to work independently of the teacher to analyse Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam* and to explain Christian beliefs about creation from the image. Students are actively engaged in their learning and approach their lessons with great interest, passion and enthusiasm. Students produce good, well-presented work. They described religious education as engaging and interesting because, 'you're encouraged to have your own point of view, but you need to be able to say why you believe it.' Student voice demonstrates that students have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

Teachers have a deep passion and understanding for the subject they teach and are highly effective in communicating this to students. There is a deep and inspiring commitment to the academic value of religious education and the importance of this for transmitting faith. One teacher commented, 'if RE is challenging, faith isn't seen as something which is childish but is something you can discover as a thinking person'. Skilful questioning is widely used within lessons to check and accelerate student understanding. Students are assessed on a half-termly basis. These assessments are used to provide relevant and specific feedback which ensures that all students clearly understand what they need to do to make progress in their

learning. There is strong evidence of positive and productive relationships between students and staff. Students are encouraged to try tasks which they do not feel confident in, and effort is celebrated, leading to high levels of motivation from students. Students use a variety of high-quality resources, including artwork and visiting speakers to support them in their learning.

The head of religious education has a clear and inspiring vision of outstanding teaching and learning, with a particular emphasis on rigour and challenge. Students are encouraged to write like, think like and talk like theologians. There is a plan in place for ensuring that the new Religious Education Directory will be implemented with Year 7 from September 2024, with the remaining year groups to follow. Religious education has full parity with other core curriculum subjects. Staff are confident that they can access continued professional development when requested and this can be tied to appraisal objectives. There is an expectation of a progression of skills at key stage three to prepare students for GCSE. This is evident in the making progress sheets which students are given at the start of the year which outline a range of skills that students of different abilities will develop each year with a progression to GCSE. Learning plans are thoughtfully and carefully planned to meet the needs of different groups of students and are creatively structured to build on and enhance prior learning. Learning plans also include an understanding of the school charism. The college has forged excellent links with the wider community. There is particularly strong enrichment provision in core religious education, where students have the opportunity to put Catholic social teaching into practice by serving others, by visiting Nazareth House or through advocacy work with Edmund Rice International.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

1

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

1

Leadership

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

1

Students respond well to the experiences of prayer and liturgy offered by the college; they listen respectfully in silence. Students understand a variety of ways to pray as part of Catholic tradition and they work well with others and the chaplain to engage in prayerful experiences including the footprints activity in the chapel. There was a queue of children to read at assembly and students expressed how they are encouraged to volunteer for liturgical ministries at regular masses. Students understand how prayer and liturgy can lead to action demonstrated in the enormous amount of charitable works of all students in their pursuit to support those most in need; the work with Jospice, Sefton Womens and Children's Association, and Whitechapel Centre is commendable. The college community spoke of the relevance of prayer in supporting the recent bereavement of a student at the college and acknowledged the strength and comfort it gave them at a difficult time.

The use of Firefly as a resource for prayer and liturgy is fundamental. Staff value it as a rich, useful resource. Resources are thoughtfully planned from a variety of sources for example, the messages of Pope Francis and current affairs clips drawn from YouTube. The daily pattern of prayer within key stage three is integrated into personal, social and health education. At key stages four and five the use of Firefly is instrumental in providing appropriate resources for staff and older students to support the extensive personal development programme. There is well-chosen use of scripture across the college. The retreat programme, alongside the Firefly resources, is evidence of the college's plan to build up skills of participation as a student moves through the college. The topics and themes embraced within these programmes matures alongside the student. The choir lead singing at Mass and the brass band accompanies carol concerts which emphasises the college's aim to creatively enhance prayer and liturgy by involving the gifts of many. The chapel is being promoted as a welcoming place and its use is increasing. There is a prayer corner in every classroom; students talk of the beneficial focus it provides alongside the prayer jar. The college

works well with families; new parents attend the Year 7 Welcome Mass at the start of the academic year. This cycle of Mass is repeated in Year 11 and Upper 6 Leavers Masses which are all carefully planned by the chaplaincy team. There is a programme of well-attended events in terms of holy days and feast days which leaders have thoroughly planned to ensure all those at the college participate and feel welcome.

Staff, including leaders, are inspiring models of exemplary practice as faith practitioners; they ooze the college charism as they poignantly lead prayer and liturgy. Staff morning prayer is witness to this. Relevant staff are highly skilled in providing support and encouragement to others who may need inspiration to construct prayers and liturgy. Local parish priests support the work of the college and are readily available to support when asked. Equally, leaders ensure they support the local parishes as best they can in identifying those students who wish to engage in sacramental programmes. Presently, leaders have an informal approach towards reviewing the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy but embodiment of a more robust quality assurance process from all stakeholders would ensure excellent practice is shared and evidence of impact is recorded. The college policy for prayer and liturgy is fit for purpose and used by relevant staff. There is annual continued professional development for prayer and liturgy and weekly staff reflections to inspire and enthuse. Prayer and liturgy are well-resourced which enables staff to further develop opportunities for students and themselves.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary's College Crosby
School unique reference number (URN)	104972
Full postal address of the school	Everest Road, Crosby, Liverpool. L23 5TW
School phone number	0151 924 3926
Name of head teacher or principal	Mr Michael Kennedy
Chair of governing board	Mrs Shelia Ward
School Website	www.stmarys.ac
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	n/a
Type of school	Secondary selective
School category	Independent
Age-range of pupils	11-18 years
Trustees	St Mary's College Trust
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	25 February 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Mrs Alison Rigby	Lead inspector
Mr Ivan Gaughan	Team inspector
Miss Jennifer Rowlands	Shadow Inspector
Name of inspector	Lead/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