

Cardinal Allen Catholic High School, Fleetwood

URN: 119799

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Lancaster

07–08 February 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

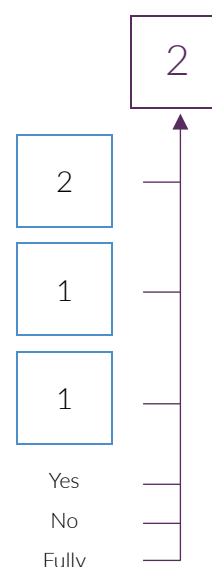
Collective worship (p.7)

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

- Leaders and governors give high priority to Catholic ethos
- Teaching and leadership in religious education is exceptional
- Engagement and leadership in chaplaincy is exemplary
- Opportunities for student leadership and involvement are growing
- The use of scripture is embedded across school life

What the school needs to improve

- Re-examine the school mission statement to reflect the unique identity of the school
- Help students to articulate their understanding of Catholic social teaching
- Support students to understand in greater detail what they need to do to improve and progress

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

1

Provision

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

2

Leadership

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

2

2

The students at Cardinal Allen embrace and benefit from the opportunities for Catholic life and mission offered them by the school. Most feel deeply cared for and respected in their uniqueness and human dignity. They can see how this connects with following Jesus and are drawn into a clear atmosphere of service and discipleship. For example, a Year 10 Child Development Class explained a 'Mary's Baby Shower' event in Advent – arranged to help local parents with limited resources – in terms of a response to the ministry of Jesus. As he journeyed through Galilee, healing people and ministering to their needs, so they felt inspired to try to do the same. While students cannot always articulate the unique story of the school's particular mission, they are very clear on the general vocation of all Christians to charitable service, growth in goodness and a life of faith. In creative work to support the Blackpool Elmer trail (for Brian House, a local hospice) the theme of 'faith' was naturally selected. Students highly value the Catholic life and chaplaincy provision, and enthusiastically take on leadership roles. At the same time, care is always given to diversity and the welcoming of those of other faiths.

The school's foundation statement seeks to express many aspects of this vision of Catholic education, but it could be made more accessible, clear and memorable. Students and staff sometimes find it long and hard to recall, so it lacks the impact it could have in the life of the school. Leaders, staff and students are currently in the process of developing a new mission statement, better reflecting the way the Word of God underlies the school's mission. Catholic social teaching could also be better understood and articulated by students. There can be no doubt, however, that the love of God is expressed in practical ways. There is a real sense of community – with Christ at its heart – welcoming all and especially the most vulnerable. Staff

are a clear illustration of this, many returning to the school they grew up in or sending their own children to it. An immense effort is put into pastoral care by highly dedicated staff supported well by leaders and once again, chaplaincy outreach initiatives support this. The 'LIFE Learning' programme not only meets the legal requirement for relationships, sex and health education, it does so in a fully Catholic context and is an exceptional example of the way in which good leadership encourages innovation.

Leaders and governors are strongly committed to mission and fully engaged in the Catholic life of the community including the local church. A flourishing partnership with nearby parishes and clergy has been fostered by the head teacher and his predecessors over many years and reflects a mutual commitment to serve those most in need. Staff also work hard to engage parents and students in the most challenging of circumstances and this is appreciated by many, if not by all. At the time of inspection, the school was not yet fully integrated into the Bishop's vision for the family of Catholic schools, particularly into the plan for academy trusts. Leaders and governors are clear, however, that they are working hard to move forward on this. This is important, because the school has much good practice to offer neighbouring schools. In many ways it already collaborates and contributes well, for example, in placing religious education leadership at the service of the diocese. But other features, such as exemplary work towards making the whole curriculum an expression of the Catholic understanding of reality (particularly evident in geography, physical education and religious education) could benefit the educational family. Self-assessment is evaluative and detailed, though occasionally slightly optimistic.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

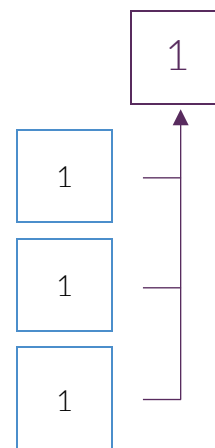
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Students achieve above average attainment and progress when compared to other core curriculum subjects and are in line with the national average for both attainment and progress at Key Stage 4 religious studies. This is a considerable achievement in an area where many come from challenging backgrounds and situations. Many students make good progress in their learning and show fluent religious literacy, according to their ability. There is excellent collaborative planning by the religious education department which ensures depth and richness in resources. Students clearly enjoy their religious education and there is an atmosphere of attentiveness and engagement in both independent and group work. Many produce work of consistently high quality and use religious vocabulary confidently. A Year 8 lesson on 'reconciliation' allowed pupils to unpack this word with great curiosity due to the skilful teaching. Behaviour in lessons is outstanding and pupils are able to understand how well they are doing, following regular formative feedback from their teachers. They could be given more opportunities to articulate in detail what they need to do to improve and progress. It is important, nonetheless, to recognise that much is done through the less formal aspects of the department's approach. These include the general warmth and approachability of the teachers, and helpful displays, iconography and resources.

Careful planning and recruitment on the part of the head teacher, senior team and governors have resulted in a group of expert, confident teachers under an exceptional curriculum leader. The quality of the staff team is demonstrated through high expectations and consistent support to ensure students achieve their potential. Skilful questioning draws out deeper thinking and builds on the engaging materials that help students to reflect on the topics of each lesson. A high standard of teaching, learning and assessment is in evidence across the department, with a remarkable consistency among the teachers. When staffing changes arise, careful planning and collaboration ensure new members are quickly integrated into the team. It is greatly to the benefit of the department that well-resourced dedicated rooms have been

provided by the school, giving dignity and importance to this core area of the curriculum. The department has also benefited from the curriculum lead joining the senior team and having a wider role in the diocese. This ensures good practice in the department has a more than local impact and in turn is nourished by innovation elsewhere. At times, however, the high pace of religious education lessons could perhaps benefit from opportunities for the students to pause and reflect more spiritually on the topics.

Governors and leaders at all levels believe in parity between religious education and other core subjects and, in fact, the department achieves better than this in its attainment and progress. Regular use of high-quality professional development in the subject area enhances and benefits the whole school. Inspiring subject leadership, recognised beyond the school, benefits other diocesan schools and is generously shared by the head teacher and his team. The curriculum leader, supported by a committed and very able team, ensures a well-planned structured curriculum which is imaginative and thoughtfully tailored to the range of ability and interest. There is thorough monitoring, self assessment and challenge within the subject. Its impact extends out into the whole school and the wider diocesan family through engagement with retreats, pilgrimages and charitable endeavours. The long-standing partnership with Castlerigg, for example, or the historic engagement with the diocesan Lourdes pilgrimage, has helped many students and staff over the years.

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

1

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

1

Students are provided with excellent opportunities for prayer and liturgy at Cardinal Allen and they respond enthusiastically and with interest. This is particularly noteworthy as the school welcomes students from a wide variety of backgrounds, including some who will be encountering the Catholic faith for the first time. Nonetheless there are high levels of engagement in chaplaincy activities as in religious education. Students gain a wide experience of different forms of prayer and liturgy, the latter assisted by expert, accessible catechesis from the chaplaincy coordinator (lay chaplain). Staff speak highly of her support for their own leadership of prayer: daily prayers and weekly worship through tutor groups always benefit from central guidance. Students are involved in reading prayers and scripture or sharing personal prayer intentions. They are involved in planning prayer and liturgy in the chapel, where tutor groups come together for enhanced celebrations. An early morning prayer session was also witnessed where a student prepared and led a biblical exposition, connecting scripture with the events of the student day. Class Masses and other opportunities to encounter Catholic faith and life are supported generously by local priests, who show great warmth and approachability.

The centrality of the chapel in the school site symbolises and expresses the way prayer is integrated into school life and is an example of visionary Catholic leadership. The head teacher, supported by governors, has led the transformation of a former library space into this visible sign of the presence of Christ in the community. Open all day, it is made inviting by art, music and appropriate furnishings and is a fitting location for the celebration of Mass and other liturgies. Now the Blessed Sacrament is reserved, good catechesis is being deployed to ensure enhanced reverence and respect, while retaining a relaxed and warm atmosphere. There is a natural pattern of daily, weekly and seasonal prayer, with quality emphasised over quantity.

Consistent links to the liturgical season or Sunday readings are evident, and staff (including senior staff) are excellent role models. Student art and creativity are encouraged in materials and displays, and work is going on to enhance the focuses for prayer in classrooms. The use of sacred art throughout the site is excellent: it underlines the identity of the school. The work of chaplaincy in the school is exceptional, in both its lay and ordained contributions and its staff and student involvement. Parents are invited in on appropriate occasions.

A good prayer and liturgy policy is in place in the school and work is underway to ensure it is fully embedded and widely used as a resource and guide. Chaplaincy and school leaders understand how students mature over time, and skilfully develop their involvement in prayer and liturgy as they progress through the school. The calendar is planned well, with special days (including Holy Days) fully integrated into the school year. Careful thought is being given to a 'Cardinal's Day' or something similar to develop appreciation of the unique gifts and principles evident in the life of William Allen, who came from Rossall. Regular opportunity is given for the celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation and students enthusiastically read and serve at Mass, help to prepare the space, contribute to the musical preparation and enjoy singing. There is excellent evaluation of chaplaincy and its activities in place, through a regular staff and student meeting. Once again, the exceptional leadership in lay chaplaincy is evident through expert liturgical knowledge and highly effective facilitation of the ministries of others. Leaders and governors give Catholic ethos and chaplaincy the highest priority, resource it well, and continually evaluate its impact.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Cardinal Allen Catholic High School
School unique reference number (URN)	119799
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8884718
Full postal address of the school	Cardinal Allen Catholic High School, Melbourne Avenue, Fleetwood, FY7 8AY
School phone number	01253872659
Headteacher	Andrew Cafferkey
Chair of Governors/Trustees	Stephen Doherty
School Website	http://www.cardinalallen.co.uk/
Trusteeship	Lancaster Roman Catholic Diocesan Trustees Registered
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	11-16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	March 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	1 - Outstanding

The inspection team

Dr Daveth Frost

Carol Gregson

Phil Allan

Lead

Team

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