



# ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

## INSPECTION REPORT

### ST AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

#### ST HELENS

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Inspection Date: Wednesday 13 March 2019

Inspectors: Deacon Paul Mannings and Mrs Barbara Melia

Unique Reference Number: 104833

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: 579

Chair of Governors: Mrs Anne Moore

Executive Headteacher: Mr Tim Alderman

Head of School: Mrs Catherine McCormack

School address: Boardman's Lane,  
Blackbrook,  
St Helens  
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Date of last inspection: Thursday 16 January 2014

## 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 Augustine of Canterbury is an 11-16, Catholic voluntary aided, mixed comprehensive.
- The school is under the trusteeship of the Archdiocese of Liverpool.
- There are 571 pupils on roll of whom 55% are baptised Catholics, with 24% from other Christian denominations and 2% from other world faith or religious traditions. There are 19% of pupils who express no religious affiliation.
- The school serves the associated parishes in the St Helens pastoral area, with a significant number of pupils drawn from schools in the wider area.
- The school has 42 teaching staff, 50% of whom are Catholic.
- The Religious Education Department has two full time and two part time members, all of whom are qualified in Religious Education.
- The Chair of Governors, Executive Headteacher, Head of School, Religious Education Line Manager and Coordinator of Relationships and Sex Education have all 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. Augustine of Canterbury is good in its provision of Catholic Education.  
Religious Education requires improvement.

## 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 good.
- Pupils relate to the Mission Statement and confidently explain the contributions they make to its fulfilment toward serving the needs of others. They are justifiably proud of their work in supporting the local *Foodbank* and centres for the homeless community. The *Faith in Action Award* is growing in popularity. Pupils explain how and actions speak louder than words in serving the needs of others.
- Pupils have a significant re-emerging pride in their school. This is because standards of behaviour continue to improve. They wholly support the concept of restorative justice in increasing their sense of forgiveness and in having a clearer understanding of right and wrong.
- When asked about their understanding of Gospel Values pupils gave key examples. Furthermore, they know how to apply them to the good of the school community.
- At this point, pupils were quick to cite school chaplaincy as the best example of how they are encouraged to share in supporting each other and living by their faith or world views.
- Relationships and Sex Education is delivered in a way that encourages pupils to keep healthy, safe and above all to develop respectful attitudes towards themselves and others.
- Increasingly pupils are appreciative of how each subject and extra-curricular experience is about maximising their potential holistically.
- The school has a growing awareness of its place within the diocesan family of schools especially through its preparations for Synod 2020.

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

- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is good.
  - The school Mission Statement is about, “striving to be a Catholic learning community.” Its supporting aims have been revised to focus on Christ at the Centre of school life.
  - This is a supportive community in which staff are encouraged to give of their best in skills and by personal example of the highest standards of conduct.
  - The school environment readily reflects its Catholic character. The chapel has been thoughtfully and tastefully refurbished as a space for personal stillness. As a *Visual Arts School* it takes a pride in creating corridor displays that reflects spirituality and ambience.
  - School chaplaincy is well respected and supported by leadership and staff. This is because provision includes time for everyone, a permanent open door of welcome, together with encouragement to share this ministry, which is firmly at the core of Christ centred provision.
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- Secure and effective pastoral care includes everyday interaction between year heads, pastoral managers and the drive toward increased pupil attendance. *Team Around School* is a process being piloted in conjunction with the local authority. Its dedication to early intervention

ensures firm guidance and support in child-centred guidance that is clearly defined in policy and practice.

- One highlight of provision is in the school's perseverance to think and act globally, specifically within its projects for staff and pupils to support those in need in parts of South Africa and in Peru.
- Relationships and Sex Education is delivered within the programme for Personal, Health and Social Education. Much work has gone into regular curriculum provision of content that upholds Catholic Social Teaching.

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

- Leaders and governors are good in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- The continued development of Catholic Life by governors and leaders is regarded as the core leadership responsibility. This is evident from the mission statement review, which has empowered pupils with the confidence to contribute to *Student Voice* and to *Student Council*.
- Leadership reports on Catholic Life at each governors meeting. Their current priority is the re-establishment of links between parents and school. Here too the role of the lay-chaplain is clearly defined and regarded as pivotal.
- Continued professional development for staff in all areas of Catholic Life is being re-structured according to personal needs and whole school re-development.
- Amongst governors, leaders and staff there is confident articulation of what Catholic Life is about in terms of daily practical provision both within the curriculum and in all aspects of pastoral care. Members of staff who were consulted during inspection spoke about their own vision for the school and how this is already tangible in terms of everyday practice. They are encouraged and listened to. Consequently, they have an increasing sense of purpose supported by positive challenge and structured planning toward continued improvement.
- There has been significantly increased interaction amongst the relatively new headteachers in the three local Catholic high schools. Between them there is clarity of Catholic vision and purpose within their networking and actions. This is well linked to whole diocesan preparation for the expression of *School Voice* within the forthcoming Synod.

## **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 requires improvement. There are good processes in place to address this.
- GCSE performance for 2018 was considerable below the national average. Pupils' achievement in Key Stage 3 falls short of expected rates of progress. Achievement in both key stages are subject to a robust programme for improvement in teaching, learning and assessment.
- In class most pupils show a willingness to learn. Those interviewed rated Religious Education as a subject that is improving in terms of consistency of hard work, interest and relevance. Certainly, within the classes observed, pupils contributed well. They benefited from times for stillness to gather their thoughts, to reflect spiritually and to apply the content to their everyday lives. Pupils value this because for many of them Religious Education is a new aspect

of study and one which they are gradually taking on board as purposeful for their own development.

- There is ongoing progress in actively engaging pupils in lessons and in motivating their commitment to progress.
- Here too, during inspection behaviour in class was good in the main with the few pockets of low-level disruption effectively dealt with. This is the result of increased focus upon and support for pupils' behaviour management.
- The current drive toward improving the quality of formative and summative diagnostic feedback and assessment outcomes requires improvement. However, a number of pupils were able to proudly review their work and to state their realistic rate of progress and what needs to be done to reach the higher levels.
- The encouragement pupils receive in class is having a positive impact on their rates of progress.

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

- The quality of teaching and learning on the day of inspection was good overall. Assessment requires improvement.
- Good teaching and learning included positive interaction between teachers and pupils brought about by skilful questioning that was both celebratory and developmental. Consequently, pupils were fully involved. Well prepared content made full use of prior learning. Teaching strategies were creative and imaginative. There were clearly identifiable progress indicators for pupils, all suitably differentiated. There was efficient and productive support from learning support assistance. There was effective use of time. Pupils were confident in applying their literacy skills to all aspects of their learning.
- In the few areas requiring improvement pupils should be provided with more stimuli for independent and group study. Whilst content was well explained, there was an over dependence upon time for listening rather than action, which in a few cases caused pupils to drift off task.
- Overall in teaching and learning, very effective use is made of monitoring pupils' confidence, application and focus. They are confident to ask for help. There are positive levels of cooperation, sharing and support during group projects.
- Pupils work is regularly marked but there is the need to continue ensuring regular and qualitative diagnostic commentary at a level that is consistent across the department. However, there are some examples of good marking practice which is providing purposeful signposting for pupils. Better use should be made of the target summary sheets contained in pupils work books. The whole marking scheme will benefit from a total update of process and practice.

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

- Leaders, governors, line and departmental management require improvement in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Religious Education. They are working with commitment and making good rates of progress in bringing about improvement.

- The new team of senior leaders has strategies in place for improvement, which now includes ongoing diocesan support. This package contains an entire focus on the development of teaching, learning and assessment aimed at bringing about wholesale improvement in pupils' achievement and thereby continuing to raise the profile of Religious Education amongst pupils.
- In Years 9-10 the required curriculum allocation for Religious Education is being met. In years 7-8 there is 8% provision which is currently acceptable at diocesan level. The school is conscientiously on course to provide the full 10% when current staffing constraints make this possible. This will further support developments in pupils progress.
- Religious Education content matches diocesan and Curriculum Directory (2012) requirements. In Key Stage 3 *People of God – Called to Serve* is in place and will benefit from further development. All pupils are entered for GCSE in Year 11 and study the required components on *Catholic Christianity* and *Judaism*.
- Programmes of study include other world faiths and religions. *British Values* are consistently underpinned by *Gospel Values*.
- The subject leader has a vision for teaching and learning and is embracing the whole school changes being made to bring about continued improvement.
- Departmental staffing changes have had a negative impact and highlighted the need to harness and develop the existing good practices and an overall sense of collegiality. Members of the department are committed, professional and hardworking. They attend diocesan continued professional development. They have made links in networking with centres of good practice.
- Departmental administration is now benefitting from a collaborative approach in streamlining its systems and processes. This process includes support from line management and governors.

## 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 good.
- School rightly regards its provision as being amongst its strengths.
- Members of the inspection team joined two gatherings. Each gathering engaged the pupils' interest, a fact reflected by their willingness and to join in discussion and in communal prayer. They demonstrated a good understanding of the Liturgical Year, placing Lent in context with the other seasons. Pupils spoke about how they were challenged to take the message away and to live it for their own and others good.
- Those interviewed spoke of how Collective Worship sets them up for the day. This is because they are given time for reflection and personal stillness. They find that the themes reflect their needs and those of the wider community.
- Pupils are encouraged to participate in and lead acts of Collective Worship. They take this very seriously because help from staff is always at hand. They regard Collective Worship as an aspect of *Pupil Voice* that has always been in place.
- They are well practised in using a variety of approaches that express prayer through Scripture, reading drama and music.
- Collective Worship contributes well to their spiritual and moral development They are secure in Collective Worship because it is inclusive. They are encouraged to consider the beliefs and practises of other world faiths and religions. Those who express world views appreciate that everyone is warmly encouraged to participate. Their thoughts, opinions and judgements are valued. They are listened to and encouraged at all stages to respond.

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

- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is good.
- There is time set aside daily for staff and pupils to pray together. During inspection there were inspiring moments in Collective Worship whereby teachers provided an atmosphere of calm and stillness so as to break open and share the content of the theme with pupils. This was particularly skilful in that it enabled pupils to fully engage, yet with enough guidance and support to keep them on track.
- There are quality weekly themes and supporting resources added to the school's shared drive. These provide structure for daily prayer in form and year groups. They are enriched with power-points and video hyperlinks. They contain scope for personalised presentation by staff and pupils. Pupils commented on how they are encouraged to make prayer time their own and are greatly assisted by the quality of materials.
- There is expressed coverage of the Liturgical Year. Other world faiths and religions are carefully included and celebrated as appropriate.
- The quality of provision prioritises the school's aim to ensure time each day for personal reflection, and for at least one challenge to bring Collective Worship to life through positive personal action.
- At all times Collective Worship is inclusive. Pupils are provided with gatherings that are welcoming and open to the sharing of beliefs and ideas.
- Whilst the school maintains its aim to ensure maximum participation by pupils and staff, significant progress continues to be made. The community has occasions to practice for masses and services, whereby pupils are encouraged to rehearse personal readings, dramatic and musical inputs.
- School continues to increase the breadth of scope for the celebration of Collective Worship in a variety of contexts. There is a retreat programme that is being broadened. The Chapel provides a community sanctuary of peace in which a wide variety of prayer experiences take place.

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

- Leaders and governors are good in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Collective Worship.
- The coordinator provides structured planning. This is evident in the policy document which forms the basis for effective delivery. The content is reviewed and updated as required.
- The training programme has evolved very well over time. This is provided for new members of staff. There are occasional sessions provided within whole school training for Catholic Life. More regularly, staff and pupils are encouraged to seek guidance from the coordinator. However, in the first instance, the weekly theme provides most of the guidance that is necessary. It is this level of support that ensures effective delivery of Collective Worship. Those organising the delivery of prayer and worship are encouraged and motivated because of this structure.
- The annual cycle of provision is monitored by leadership to ensure it is liturgically appropriate and takes account of other world faiths and religions. Care is also taken to provide a structure that is flexible to change so that any events affecting the life of the school can be included at short notice.

- Furthermore, the monitoring and evaluation of daily provision is undertaken by the coordinator and by members of leadership. This determines the consistency of daily Collective Worship particularly in form groups. It ensures an evidence-based analysis of how inclusive it is. Pupils through *Student Voice* provide their input about quality. The whole process efficiently informs training needs that is well resourced by the existing good and better practice that is in place.
- Consequently, leaders and governors show clear understanding of what Collective Worship is about and how it underpins Catholic Life.

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

The context of this report acknowledged the sustained progress being made by governors and leadership in further enriching the quality of its Catholic Life and Collective Worship, and the sustained focus on raising standards in Religious Education. The school should now work with planned and evaluated diocesan support in:

Overhauling the quality of the Section 48 Self-Evaluation Document by:

- Using concise qualitative statements that refer to supporting documents in each section;
- Using these to inform the existing school improvement and departmental plans.

Further enriching the successful development of Catholic Life by:



- Continued collaboration with local Catholic schools in working together to express their mission as a collaborative community;
- Increased engagement with local parishes;
- Further development of interaction between home and school.

Maintaining the successful development of the programme for Relationships and Sex Education by:

- Using the Catholic Education/National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers website to inform best practice by use of the site's model policy document and resources, together with attendance at local training.

Significantly increasing the profile, management of Religious Education and the pupils' standards by:

- Re-structuring the departmental handbook to become a practical expression of its day-to-day administration;
- Ensuring the departmental development plan reflects the areas noted for improvement in the Section 48 Self-Evaluation document;
- Consistent departmental collaboration in planning and development of programmes of study;
- Continuing to raise achievement at Key Stage 3 by using the new interim *Assessment Standards* document as the key to pupils' progress;
- Raising achievement in Key Stage 4 by harnessing the experiences gained from the first cohort of examinations, and sustaining attendance at all diocesan training and networking;
- Maintaining the rising quality of teaching and learning by the sharing of good practice across the school;
- Totally revising the departmental process for marking and assessment through close reference to the whole school policy and the consistent use of diagnostic progress indicators for pupils, brought about by regular departmental standardisation of practice.

Celebrating the quality of Collective Worship by:

- Undertaking the school's initiative to include governors in regular monitoring and evaluation;
- Using Collective Worship as a key means of further involving parish and parental interaction with school

## **INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS**

### **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**

<b>How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education</b>	<b>2</b>
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### **CATHOLIC LIFE**

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	2
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school	2

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school	2
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## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	3
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	3
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	3

## **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

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

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