



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

NOTRE DAME CATHOLIC COLLEGE

Liverpool

Tuesday/Wednesday 10-11 October 2006

Inspectors Mr. Paul A. Mannings Miss Barbara Hunt

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Catholic Voluntary-aided, Girls Comprehensive (Mixed in Sixth Form)
Age range of pupils	11-18
Number on roll	1,076
Chair of governors	Mr. Alf Westwell
School address	Everton Valley, Liverpool, L4 4EZ
Telephone number	0151 263 3104
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Date of last inspection	4-5 December 2002
Headteacher	Miss Christine Byrne McCann

Introduction

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

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.

Description of the school

Notre Dame College is a Catholic, voluntary-aided, girls' comprehensive school in the Liverpool Authority, with a growing number of boys admitted to the Sixth Form. The college is under the trusteeship of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. The college has Specialist School status for the Arts. Learners are drawn from the local associated parish primary schools with a larger number from parishes and schools in the wider area. There are 1,076 learners on role of whom 80.48% are baptised Catholics, with 13% from other Christian denominations and 2% from other world faith traditions. There are four core and three part-time teachers in the Religious Education department. There are 9 learners with statements of special educational needs, a further 198 who are supported by School Action, with 166 receiving School Action Plus. There are 75 teachers of whom 53.3% are Catholic.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

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Overall effectiveness of the school

Notre Dame is a good Catholic college with a number of outstanding features. It is a caring supportive community underpinned by a good Catholic ethos. Standards are good. Learners are making good progress in each key stage. Results for GCSE Religious Studies in 2006 were outstanding. Teaching is good and assessment provides good guidance on learning. The extent of identification and provision for additional learning needs is outstanding. Learners' behaviour is good with a significant element that is outstanding. The provision for learners' spiritual and moral development is good. The quality of Collective Worship is good. The headteacher is providing good leadership and a good capacity for continued improvement. The head of Religious Education is providing good leadership and management of a committed department. The learners show outstanding support for Religious Education.

Grade: 2

Improvement since the last inspection

There has been good improvement in the two areas for development identified in the last inspection. The process of *ICONS* is reflected in the revised Key Stage 3 schemes of work. The Religious Education department development plan is a continuous process with agreed targets and success criteria.

Grade: 2

Capacity to improve

The Religious Education self-evaluation document provides a good appraisal of the department's strengths and areas for improvement. The document is cohesively linked to both the departmental development plan and the college improvement plan.

Grade: 2

What the school should do to improve further

- Monitor the available time allocation of 8% for Religious Education in Key Stages 3 and 4, increasing this to 10% when possible;
- In Key Stage 3 the *ICONS* programme should be further developed to include more rigorous tasks and opportunities for learners' in-depth personal study;
- Continue with the existing process of in-service provision for the continued development of form group Collective Worship.

Achievement and Standards

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are good. In Key Stage 3 learners are provided with a good level of knowledge and understanding that enables them to make good progress according to their levels of ability. In Key Stage 4 results for this year have shown an outstanding level of improvement. Candidates entered for GCSE achieved 62% A*-C which is above the national average (60%). At Entry Level there was 100% pass rate. In Key Stage 5 results for AS/A2 are good. Overall, learners show outstanding enjoyment of Religious Education. The behaviour of learners in class is good with elements that are outstanding. Through their knowledge and understanding of Religious Education learners are enabled to make a good contribution to the college community.

Grade: 2

Quality of Provision for Religious Education

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The good progress made by the learners and the outstanding attitudes they show to their work is the result of effective teaching. The teachers' good subject knowledge lends confidence to their teaching styles, which engage learners. The level of challenge stimulates most learners to make progress. However, in Key Stage 3 and 4 the department should now develop more fully the opportunities for independent learning, amongst the more able, through the greater use of text-book resources and opportunities for personal research. This will ensure the sufficient level of challenge for all learners. There is outstanding identification of and provision for additional learning needs through effective setting, teacher led differentiation and individual work well matched to their needs. Learning support assistants are well directed and effective in supporting this process. There is a good level of formative and summative assessment. Learners are encouraged to assess their work themselves. This process should now be gradually matched to the Religious Education Levels of Attainment. The standard of marking of learners' work varies. There is evidence of thorough marking supported by developmental comments. A minority of written work is being accepted which lacks adequate or accurate detail. The department should now ensure an overall standard of consistent quality marking. Good attention is given to the presentation of written work. Evidence gained from questionnaires indicates a good level of parent/carers involvement in their children's learning and development.

Grade: 2

Curriculum

There is good provision for Religious Education in terms of content. The curriculum time allocation in Key Stages 3 and 4 is 8% with 5% for the general course in Key Stage 5. The Bishops of England and Wales require 10% in Key Stages 3 and 4. However, the college has continued to increase the time

allocation within the constraints of a 30 period week. This process should continue to be monitored and increased when possible. In Key Stage 3 the programme of study is matched to the *ICONS* process. The department should further develop this content through more rigorous tasks and opportunities for learners' in-depth personal study. At Key Stage 4 the majority of learners are following a new GCSE specification that is suited to the needs of the learners. This is evident from the overall success in this year's examinations. The department should now ensure that the content is further developed to ensure detailed knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith in addition to the existing studies of other faiths.

In Key Stage 5 the A/AS level course in Religion, Philosophy and Ethics is becoming increasingly more subscribed in Year 12. There is a Sixth Form course in general Religious Education approved by the National Accrediting Board of Studies. The content is delivered through weekly lessons in Year 12 and through college pastoral units in Year 13. Consequently the Religious Education curriculum provides a good level of response to external requirements and local needs.

The curriculum makes a good response to the spiritual and moral development of learners.

Grade: 2

Leadership and Management

Religious Education

The headteacher and college leadership team provide good line management of Religious Education. This is focused on the process of raising standards and promoting the personal development and well-being of learners. The head of Religious Education provides good leadership of four core and three part-time members of the department. Consequently there is a common sense of purpose and commitment amongst the staff expressed through their individual expertise and ownership of the departmental development plan. There is a good process for the monitoring of teaching linked to the college policy for performance management. The head of department observes members of staff formally on two occasions each year. In addition there is a system of informal monitoring through shared observations. There is good promotion of equal opportunities through outstanding differentiation and access to accredited courses suited to the age and stage of all learners in Key Stage 4. The department shares the same capitation funding formula as the other core subjects. Resources are good and so is their efficient deployment between the teaching rooms. These rooms are well organised and exhibit a good standard of learner and teacher generated display. The governors provide good leadership of the department. They are committed to Religious Education remaining at the core of the Catholic ethos of the college.

Grade: 2

Catholic Life of the School

There is good leadership and management of the Catholic life of the college, inspired by the charism of St. Julie Billiart. The mission is expressed through a Vision Statement prepared by governors and teaching staff, supported by 'strap lines' which constitute its aims and objectives. Whilst the Vision Statement provides an outstanding expression of the Catholic ethos and is clearly being lived, the college is now in the process of developing its ownership by learners. This is being undertaken through the development of a college motto that summarises the overall Vision. Every policy and all practices refer to the Vision Statement as their starting point. The lay chaplain is also the head of Religious Education. Previously the chaplaincy has always been separate as a sign of its total availability to the community. The college is aware this current joint role is not recommended for such a ministry. However, it is under constant review and being developed through the institution of a chaplaincy team. The lay chaplain provides a good contribution to the Catholic ethos of the college through the spiritual support of all staff and learners and the coordination of a wide range of pastoral programmes. The college has well established links with the local community through its sharing in parish life. Parents and carers are strongly encouraged to support all college activities. The headteacher provides good monitoring of Catholic life through annual departmental reports and their contribution to the college policy for spiritual and moral development. All new staff is required to make a commitment to actively support the Catholic ethos of the college.

Grade: 2

Collective Worship

The quality of Collective Worship is good. Year groups gather for prayer once each week and form groups meet daily. There is a weekly Service of the Word with Communion and celebrations throughout the Liturgical Year. Other occasions for prayer include staff meetings and the end of lessons. Collective Worship is co-ordinated by the lay chaplain through good resources available for all staff. Learners respond well to the opportunities to be involved in worship. The college's performing arts status makes a major contribution to Collective Worship. The college has identified the need to continue its good progress in the development of form group worship through further in-service training. Collective Worship is making a good contribution to the spiritual and moral development of learners.

Grade: 2