



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ARCHBISHOP BECK CATHOLIC SPORTS COLLEGE

LIVERPOOL

Monday 2 February 2009

Inspectors Rev. Paul Mannings Mrs Elizabeth Dolan

URN 104717

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Catholic voluntary-aided, mixed Comprehensive
Age range of pupils	11-18
Number on roll	1,258
Chair of governors	Mr. John Southern
School address	Cedar Road, Liverpool, L9 9AF.
Telephone number	0151 525 6326
E-mail address	f.leejones@archbishopbeck.liverpool.sch.uk
Date of last inspection	4-5 December 2001
Headteacher	Mr. Paul Dickinson

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

Archbishop Beck is a Catholic, voluntary-aided, mixed, comprehensive school in the Liverpool Authority. The school has specialist Sports College Status. Senior leadership has changed significantly since the last inspection. The headteacher has been in post since September 2007. This was in succession to an acting head appointed in September 2005 who successfully and rapidly, within fifteen months, removed the school from the 'Special Measures' category previously issued. Two new deputy headteachers have also been appointed in recent years. The school serves several city wards of significant high unemployment and social deprivation. There are 1,258 learners on roll of whom 94% are baptised Catholics. They are drawn from eight associated primaries as well as schools in the wider area. There are 5.9% from other Christian denominations. There is one learner from another World Faith Tradition. Eight learners have statements of special educational needs, with a further 262 supported by School Action and 106 by School Action Plus. The school has 75 teachers of whom 70% are Catholic. The Religious Education department has three core and two part-time staff.

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

Archbishop Beck is a good Catholic high school with outstanding capacity for continued improvement. This is the result of incisive senior leadership and management focussed on motivating success, through the Mission Statement that expresses, 'Only the best will do ... We promote the values of the Christian Gospel through the education we provide.' Consequently achievement and standards in Religious Education are good. Teaching and learning is good. The curriculum is good. Leadership and management of Religious Education at all levels are good. The Catholic life of the school is good. Collective Worship is good. The promotion of community cohesion is good. Parents, carers and learners show a high level of support for the school.

Grade: 2

Improvement since the last inspection

There has been good improvement. General Religious Education has been provided in the Sixth Form. The departmental handbook has been renewed several times. Departmental staff has undergone regular in-service training in the provision of schemes of work and development of teaching and learning styles. There is an effective process for the monitoring of departmental teaching and of summative assessment. The Mission Statement has been reviewed. Appropriate in-service training resulted in the provision of the policy for Collective Worship.

Grade: 2

Capacity to improve

Capacity for continued improvement is outstanding. The headteacher, together with senior leadership, subject leader and departmental staff continue to develop Religious Education and re-establish its position at the core of the school's Catholic life. This has been evident throughout formal archdiocesan monitoring undertaken during the last four years, together with rigorous development of the departmental self-evaluation, which could in fact become more celebratory by indicating fully what has already been achieved. This document together with departmental and whole school improvement plans provides a visionary strategy for ongoing improvement.

Grade: 1

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that curriculum Religious Education is delivered as a distinctive stand-alone core subject in each key stage;
- Consistent departmental marking and annotation of learners' work in accordance with the school policy.

Achievement and Standards

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are good. Standards reached by the learners in class are good and have continued to improve in both key stages and in the Sixth Form. Effective setting according to ability and appropriate levels of differentiation in class enables learners to make good progress taking account of the variations in ability. Performance in GCSE has reached 50% achieving A-C. Whilst still below the national average this percentage has continued to rise in recent years. Achievement and standards will be further enhanced by teaching and learning strategies that offer learners more time to pause, reflect and assimilate their knowledge and understanding. A review of marking and annotation to ensure consistency will also be of benefit. Learners show good enjoyment of Religious Education and this, together with overall good behaviour in class makes a positive contribution to rising standards. Religious Education is motivating learners to make a good contribution to school life.

Grade: 2

Quality of Provision for Religious Education

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Any that contains satisfactory elements requires a lessening of pace to enable greater development of learning. Lessons are organised, creative and in-depth. Good differentiation within set teaching groups enhances a clear focus and a good rate of challenge and progress. Learners' discussion in class is particularly mature as is their willingness to feedback and celebrate effective learning. There is good attention to Assessment for Learning. Summative assessments are well developed. There is a clear and practical marking policy and good systems for levelling accompanied by descriptors. This should now be supported by a consistent departmental approach to marking and annotation, with specific attention given to developmental comments and monitoring of corrections and incomplete work. Existing good practice can be shared throughout the department. Regular reporting and meetings ensures good involvement of parents and carers in the education of their children.

Grade: 2

Curriculum

There is good curriculum provision in terms of content. The only area for concern is in Year 7, whereby learners receive half of their allocation in addition to a cross curricular approach. This arrangement was made prior to the school's awareness that Religious Education should, according to Archdiocesan and national requirements, remain a stand-alone, distinct core subject. The headteacher has already taken steps to rectify this for September 2009. Years 8 and 9 receive 6.67%, which is effectively two

lessons per week instead of three. This will be reviewed in relation to financial implications for another member of staff. Key Stage 4 receives the required 10%, with 5% for the Sixth Form general course, 4% in class and 1% gained through extra curricular activity. The *ICONS* programme has been well developed and identifiably supports the GCSE specification begun in Year 9. For GCSE all learners undertake full or short courses in a relevant and stimulating specification. In the Sixth Form much work has been undertaken to develop general Religious Education, which is now accredited and taught to all students. Consequently there is a good overall response to diocesan and national requirements, with clear areas for development identified by the school. Religious Education makes a good contribution to learners' spiritual and moral development.

Grade: 2

Leadership and Management

Religious Education

Leadership and management of Religious Education are good. Governors and senior leadership are committed to restoring Religious Education to the core of school life. The headteacher line manages the department and has good systems in place for performance management. In recent years the subject leader has received much encouragement and re-assurance from senior leadership that the department is well led and managed. This has increased staff confidence and enabled them to continue to grow as a committed and dedicated team. They have pursued continued professional development in every sphere of Archdiocesan in-service. The developing expertise of the two part-time staff would be enhanced by their participation in the *Catholic Teachers Certificate in Religious Education*. Equality of opportunity is evident in the good levels of differentiation, access to accredited courses and by the attention given to improving boys' performance in examinations as well as their perceptions of Religious Education. Learning resources are good and so too is their deployment. Departmental funding for the department has varied in recent years according to prioritised needs. Certainly in the previous academic year there was generous allocation. Consequently governors are providing a good practical discharge of their responsibilities.

Grade: 1

Catholic Life of the School

Leadership and management of the Catholic life are good. Governors and leadership have a clear vision for its continued development. The Mission Statement, supported by clear aims and objectives based on its commitment to mutual respect, is owned, known and shared, particularly by learners and staff. This now enables the Catholic ethos to permeate all aspect of school life. The Mission Statement has been reviewed in the last five years. Governors and senior leadership agree it is now optimum time for another

review involving all stakeholders in light of the substantial changes to the school. Meanwhile, departmental reports to governors should include details of their specific contributions to Catholic life. This will provide an effective process for monitoring. The lay chaplain provides a good response through availability for learners and staff. This role has been significantly more defined and indeed valued in recent years and provides chaplaincy with the scope and support for targeted and effective development.

Grade: 2

Collective Worship

The provision for and quality of Collective Worship is good. It is co-ordinated by the lay chaplain who provides themes and resources linked to the Liturgical Year. There is also a practical policy document. Prayer and worship observed on the day provided evidence of celebration, sharing and participation. Learners appreciate the opportunities for their involvement particularly in weekly year group gatherings and seasonal celebrations. On other days prayer takes place in form time. Here there is evidence of good shared prayer experience. The school is establishing a process for the more effective monitoring of form group prayer to ensure both consistency and identification of in-service needs.

Grade: 2

Community Cohesion

Promotion of community cohesion is good. It is clear that the headteacher has facilitated, using his own words, 'a solid foundation on which to grow'. This is evident through leadership at all levels promoting the common good through commitment to mutual respect and encouragement. There is an established and growing range of charitable fundraising activities. Community links are being re-established through voluntary social support programmes. Links with business and enterprise make a good provision to the work-related curriculum. Collective Worship is inclusive through its coverage of world and local issues. The Religious Education programmes encourage knowledge and understanding of other beliefs and world views. In particular there is celebration of other World Faith Traditions.

Grade: 2