



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST AMBROSE BARLOW CATHOLIC COLLEGE

NETHERTON

Inspection Date Tuesday 2 July 2013

Inspectors Deacon Paul Mannings Mrs Elizabeth Dolan

Unique Reference Number 104963

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Acts 2005 and 2011

Type of School Catholic voluntary-aided, mixed comprehensive

Age range of pupils 11-16

Number on roll 433

Chair of Governor Mrs Val Leatherbarrow

Acting Headteacher Mr. Stephen Hall

School address Copy Lane
Netherton,
Liverpool
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Date of last inspection Thursday 29 April 2010

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 Ambrose Barlow Catholic College is a voluntary-aided mixed comprehensive in the Sefton Authority.
- The majority of pupils are drawn from associated Catholic primary schools in the pastoral area. Others attend from the wider area.
- There are 433 pupils on roll of whom 66.6% are baptised Catholic, with 16.7% from other Christian denominations, and 0% from other faith or religious traditions. There are 16.9% of pupils who have declared no faith or religious affiliation.
- There are 34 teachers of whom 59% are Catholic.
- The Religious Education department has two full time members. One of these is on a fixed term contract. In addition two members of staff from other subject disciplines teach some Religious Education. Of the four, three are qualified in Religious Education.
- The headteacher was 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 Ambrose Barlow Catholic College provides good Catholic Education.

Inspection Judgements

The extent to which the pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school

- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is good.
- Pupils talk about and show understanding of the distinctiveness of this Catholic school. They are proud to belong to it. They provide examples of numerous projects undertaken to serve the needs of others.
- Pupils understanding of the Catholic Life could be further enriched by their inclusion in annual appraisal of the Mission Statement and Catholic Life. Members of School Council would be affirmed by this shared responsibility between staff and pupils.
- Pupils appreciate the close ties between school and the local parishes in terms of religious celebrations and community interaction.
- Religious Education enables pupils to link the content with their own lives.
- Pupils express their own beliefs and respect the beliefs and world views of others. They say Religious Education encourages this response.
- The school provides strong pastoral care which is celebrated by pupils. They readily link this as a key expression of Catholic Life.

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

- Pupils show good levels of achievement and attainment in Religious Education.
- This judgment is made as a result of significant improvements in Key Stage 3 since the last inspection. At the beginning of Year 7 the majority of pupils are working within Level 3. A minority are at Level 2. Some are at Level 4. By the end of Year 9 51% of pupils are securely attaining Level 5 and 34% are within Level 6.
- This improvement has yet to fully impact in GCSE performance at the end of Year 11. Results for entered full course cohorts have show some limited improvement over three years. Results for A* - C in 2010 were 52%, in 2011 were 64% and in 2012 were 54%. The school has identified staffing issues as a limiting factor. These to some extent have now been rectified. It is expected that pupil performance should begin to show a significant upturn from 2014. In addition teachers should continue to engage with GCSE in-service training. One teacher marks for an examining board, to ensure a practical knowledge of national standards.
- Pupils overall are making good progress in lessons. They want to achieve. This motivational factor supported by their own high standards of behaviour contributes to the school's development of attainment and achievement.

How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship

- Pupils' response to and participation in Collective Worship is good.
- Pupils can request opportunities to lead acts of worship. They can share presentations of themes through public reading and dramatisation. Pupils say these opportunities occur in some in some house group Collective Worship. There are also occasions when they share a more practical participation in form groups.

- Pupils are keen to participate. They listen attentively and join in community prayers.
- Pupils express a good understanding of weekly themes. They readily link these to their contemporary lives. They regard the themes to be inclusive. They cover world media issues. They focus on applying prayer to contemporary life.
- Pupils feel Collective Worship is relevant to their needs. It brings alive their Religious Education. They view it as an important dimension to Catholic Life. This is because it offers time for their own personal stillness and/or opportunities for reflection.

The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education

- The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education is good.
- This judgement is the result of observations on the day of inspection together with information provided from the Section 48 Self- Evaluation document.
- Good practice includes a calm and controlled atmosphere in class. Pupils are secure and focused. They are challenged. The content of the lesson is organised. Evaluation skills are promoted. There is a strong relationship between the teacher and pupils.
- There are other elements requiring improvement. In these areas all pupils in class should be targeted to make progress. There needs to be a clearer presentation of teaching materials. The range of such materials should be varied. Assessment for Learning requires implicit use throughout the lesson. These areas requiring improvement should be set in context. It is clear that such teaching has a solid foundation of content. Further training will enrich continued improvement.
- Differentiation is good overall. It will continue to develop as areas requiring improvement are addressed.
- Scrutiny of pupils work showed high levels of appropriate marking. It is positive, encouraging, diagnostic and informative. There is evidence of peer assessment. Levelling is well embedded. There are well devised feedback sheets for projects and assessment tasks. They provide pupils with clear information on levels of progress made and how to progress further.
- There is a clear need for a detailed marking and assessment policy. This should be used consistently. It will contribute to the continued development of pupil's attainment and achievement.
- Learning support assistance is extremely well deployed. It demonstrates high standards of knowledge and understanding of Religious Education. This quality support is highly beneficial to pupils.

The extent to which the Religious Education Curriculum promotes pupils learning

- The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning is good.
- In Key Stage 3 the content is well focused on Research, Revelation and Response.
- In Key Stage 4 the GCSE full course is set to serve the pupils well.
- An alternative to the GCSE short course should be considered. There are a number of accredited courses ranging from Entry Level. The content can be organised by the school to focus on the needs of pupils.
- The required 10% curriculum time is available for all but two classes in Years 7 and 8 where provision is 6.7% (two lessons). This is the result of staffing issues. Provision should not be decreased in these classes. It should also be noted that the school has striven to provide 10% in all other classes amidst serious financial constraints.
- The curriculum content is well planned. Church Teaching is exposed accurately and practically to further enrich pupils faith-informed values.

- The content includes other world faith and religious traditions.
- It provides good opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development.
- Consequently the school provides a good response to the Religious Education Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools and Colleges in England and Wales 2012

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is good.
- This is reflected in the co-ordination of prayer and worship. It is equally reflected in the quality of themes and resources.
- Themes are chosen by whole-school staff and so represent inclusivity. They are clearly linked to the Liturgical Year.
- Daily Collective Worship takes place for pupils and for staff. A good monitoring process is in place.
- This has revealed the need for further in-service training. This will focus on greater participation by pupils. It will also provide an opportunity for sharing existing good practice amongst teachers.
- Collective Worship is open to all members of staff and the wider community.
- There is some retreat provision to reinforce pupils understanding of the variety of prayer. The school should develop such opportunities.

How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.

- Leaders, governors and managers are good in promoting and developing the Catholic Life of the school and show a good understanding of and commitment to the Mission of the Church.
- The Section 48 Self Evaluation document reflects their commitment. The content shows clear understanding of the importance of Catholic Life.
- Areas for improvement are identified. These should be developed to include annual whole school reflection on the Mission Statement.
- The living of Catholic Life is especially tangible in the care and compassion shown toward pupils.
- The school is to be commended for its care of premises and grounds. The campus includes thoughtful memorial gardens and areas of focus. These are used by pupils and staff for quiet moments and reflection.
- Leadership should keep on its agenda the need to restore the post of chaplaincy, when funding permits.

How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Religious Education of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.

- Leaders, governors and managers provide good monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education. Together they plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.
- The Section 48 Self Evaluation Document clearly identifies areas for improvement and plans to implement progress.
- Leaders, governors and managers understand the need to keep Religious Education at the core of the Catholic curriculum. This needs further expression through high profile inclusion within the annual Mission Statement review.

- The head of Religious Education provides good leadership and management. This is evident in departmental policies. It is especially evident in leadership by example and practice.
- The department has undergone particularly challenging times in matters relating to limited and changing staffing. Nonetheless the head of department has provided thorough consistency in development. The department has continued to improve since the last inspection. Areas for improvement have received attention. There is good capacity for continued improvement. It is a recommendation that the Section 48 Self Evaluation document should more rigorously explain how identified areas should be improved.
- It is also recommend that teachers in the department have consistent continued professional development.
- Leaders and managers are generous in their support of the diocesan Key Stage 3 curriculum working group.

What the school needs to do to improve further:

- Continue to enrich quality Catholic Life by:
 - annual in-service training that includes reflection on the Mission Statement;
 - identification of aims for action during the academic year;
 - promotion of whole staff involvement by reflecting on the question asked of all new members of staff, namely, "How can you support the Catholic Life of St. Ambrose Barlow College?";
 - ensuring Religious Education is prominent so as to enhance its place at the core of the curriculum;
 - including Student Council in the process.
- Improve outcomes and provision in Collective Worship by:
 - In-service training for staff focused on greater opportunities for pupil leadership and participation;
 - using this training to share good practice amongst staff.
- Continue to raise Religious Education toward outstanding by:
 - continuing to raise GCSE performance to match progression from Key Stage 3;
 - exploring alternative curriculum options to the GCSE short - course;
 - implementing a detailed marking and assessment policy to share existing good practice in meeting the needs of all pupils.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	2
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OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS

How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils	
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	2
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	2
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	2

PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education	
The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education	2
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning	2
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	2

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

How effective leaders, governors and managers are in developing the Catholic Life of the School	
How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	2
How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	2

Key to judgements: Grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 requires improvement and grade 4 inadequate