



## ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

MARICOURT HIGH SCHOOL

MAGHULL

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Tuesday 17 November 2009

Inspectors                      Rev Dcn Paul Mannings      Mrs Elizabeth Dolan

URN                                      104960

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Type of School	Catholic voluntary-aided, mixed comprehensive
Age range of pupils	11-18
Number on roll	1,481
Chair of governors'	Sister Marie Moore
School address	Hall Lane Maghull Merseyside L31 3DZ.
Telephone number	0151 330 3366
E-mail address	doolanj@maricourt.net
Date of last inspection	19-20 June 2007
Headteacher	Mr Brendan McLoughlin

## 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

Maricourt is a Catholic, voluntary-aided, mixed comprehensive under the trusteeship of the Sisters of Mercy, within the Sefton Authority. The head teacher has been in post since September 2007. The school has Specialist Mathematics and Computing Status. There are 1,481 learners on roll of whom 96.56% are baptised Catholics, with 2.84% from other Christian denominations and 0.07% from other World Faith traditions. Four associated parishes in the pastoral area account for 52.81% of the role, together with a significant number of 47.19% from Catholic schools in the wider community. Three learners have statements of special educational needs, with a further 148 supported by School Action and 78 by School Action Plus. There are 101 teachers of whom approximately 60% are Catholic. The Religious Education department has six full and one part-time member.

## 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**

Maricourt is a good Catholic school, committed to living its mission through 'Christian values ... where growth, knowledge, respect, love and friendship are shared by all.' A number of areas are outstanding. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. There is good capacity for continued improvement. Achievement and standards are good. Teaching and learning is good with outstanding features. The curriculum is good. Programmes of study at Key Stage 3 remain outstanding. Leadership and management of Religious Education are good, with the governors providing outstanding practical support for continued improvement. There is good monitoring of the school's Catholic life. The impact of lay-chaplaincy is outstanding. Collective Worship is good. There is good promotion of community cohesion. Parents and carers show good support for this school.

**Grade: 2**

### **Improvement since the last inspection**

There has been good improvement since the last inspection. In Year 11 curriculum provision has been increased to the required 10%. There has been some improvement in marking and annotation. The quality of Collective Worship continues to benefit from improved infrastructure in terms of organisation, resourcing and monitoring. Significantly increased staffing has led to greater stability in the Religious Education department.

**Grade: 2**

### **Capacity to improve**

Capacity for continued improvement is good. The departmental self-evaluation document accurately grades progress and clearly indicates areas for improvement, supported by good development strategy. Progress is effectively monitored through annual departmental improvement action plans. Governors, senior leadership and the subject leader are committed to securing continued improvement particularly with achievement in Key Stage 4.

**Grade: 2**

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

- Restore GCSE achievement to above national average for A\*-C;
- Review the Mission Statement with a focus on learners' awareness and ownership.

## **Achievement and Standards**

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are good overall. In Key Stage 3 achievement and standards are good with all learners progressing in levels of attainment. However, in Key Stage 4 achievement at GCSE is satisfactory with this year's cohort gaining only 48% A\*-C, which does not reflect the rate of progress at the last inspection. The school has identified this as a cause for concern. The governors, together with senior and departmental leadership have already sought diocesan assistance in raising achievement. A new GCSE specification has been introduced. Rigorous practice in examination technique together with more intense sharing of teaching styles will be the key means of progression. Standards in Key Stage 4 are good and this is a secure base from which to progress. In the Sixth Form achievement at AS/A Level is good. In recent years this cohort has been small with most learners achieving the lower pass grades. However there is currently a large cohort in Year 12 making at least good progress. In Year 13 standards are at least good with several candidates working towards the higher grades. Achievement in Sixth Form General Religious Education is good. The learners interviewed showed good support for Religious Education. Behaviour in class is good overall with elements that are outstanding. Religious Education motivates learners to make a good contribution to the life of the school.

**Grade: 2**

## **Quality of Provision for Religious Education**

### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. There are a significant number of outstanding features. Outstanding lessons showed high levels of organisation, pace and progress with all learners on task. Overall there is active engagement of learners in their own progress. Independent learning is a particular strength. Peer-assessment and collaborative work is also good but in some classes would benefit from closer monitoring to ensure all remain on task. Assessment for learning is good and well structured through formative and milestone tasks. Differentiation in mixed ability and in set groups is good. The standard of marking and annotation continues to improve. However, in Key Stage 3, there still needs to be greater use of diagnostic commenting and setting of specific targets. This is a particular strength in Key Stage 4 and the Sixth Form. There is a good level of parent and carer involvement in their children's learning and development through reporting and reviews. They are kept closely informed regarding any causes for concern. A particular strength is the level of parental and carer support for learners' attendance at Saturday GCSE revision sessions.

**Grade: 2**

## **Curriculum**

The curriculum is good. There are some outstanding features. Since the last inspection provision in Year 11 has risen to the required 10%. A rise from 8% to 10% in year 10 would contribute to achievement. In Key Stage 3 learners receive 8% and the school should ensure this does not decrease. In the Sixth Form provision for AS/A2 is 20% with the required 5% for the general course. In Key Stage 3 Icons is well developed and continues to benefit from the outstanding programmes of study, which are undergoing further development. In Key Stage 4 the school is committed to entering most learners for GCSE. In the Sixth Form AS Philosophy and Ethics Level is very well subscribed, with a smaller cohort in Year 13. There has been outstanding progress in the development of accredited Sixth Form General Religious Education for all learners. Consequently there is a good response to national and diocesan requirements. The curriculum provided a good contribution to learners' spiritual and moral development.

**Grade: 2**

## **Leadership and Management**

### **Religious Education**

Leadership and management of Religious Education are good. Both senior and subject leadership are committed to ensuring its place at the core of the curriculum. Performance Management is well embedded. This process will benefit from further development of peer observation focused on teaching and learning strategies that can be applied to raising achievement at Key Stage 4. Departmental management is well organised. There is a comprehensive and practical handbook updated annually. The programme for continued professional development enables participation in all diocesan in-service. Increased core staffing has led to stability and team commitment. There is good provision for equal opportunities through differentiation, tracking of progress and access to accredited courses. There is good provision and deployment of resources. This will be further enhanced by the planned provision of interactive whiteboards in all teaching rooms. The governors are commended for their financial support for the increase in staffing. This together with their involvement in strategic management and development of the department through linked governance is a model of good practice.

**Grade: 2**

### **Catholic Life of the School**

There is good leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school. The charism of the Sisters of Mercy permeates the overall ethos. The Mission Statement is in place and supported by practical aims and objectives. It will now benefit from a review that focuses on ownership and understanding by all learners. This process should be undertaken through a development of the successful Mission Day attended by all staff. Reviewing the Mission

Statement annually would compliment the exiting good structures in place for monitoring of Catholic life. The lay chaplain, currently working three days each week, makes an outstanding contribution to Catholic life through active involvement in outreach, prayer, worship and availability for all members of the community.

**Grade: 2**

## **Collective Worship**

The provision for and quality of Collective Worship is good. Improvement since the last inspection has resulted in greater focus on active involvement of learners' participation particularly in form time. This is a fact they appreciate. During interview they also commented positively on the nature of the content and its relevance to their lives. Both these factors were evident in the two acts of worship inspected. The school has begun a process for monitoring prayer and worship. This should continue as a useful means of identifying good practice that can be shared, together with any training needs. Collective Worship is well co-ordinated by the head teacher and lay chaplain. Daily worship takes place in form groups with year groups gathering once each week. There is a weekly Eucharist and also services throughout the Liturgical Year. A good policy is supported by a thematic approach. Collective Worship makes a good contribution to learners' spiritual and moral development.

**Grade: 2**

## **Community Cohesion**

Promotion of community cohesion is good. This is evident in the Religious Education programmes that provide knowledge, understanding and celebration of other World Faith traditions. Citizenship is promoted through Gospel values explored and researched at every age and stage. In Collective Worship there is good inclusion of cultural and social diversity. Each year group has named activities and projects that provide personal and fundraising involvement in a range of diocesan and wider community outreach. The school has identified the need for even wider participation by learners in activities that develop their understanding of community cohesion. This could be provided within the process for reviewing the Mission Statement. Members of staff are role models for the whole community. Leadership at all levels promotes mutual respect and focuses on the common good.

**Grade: 2**