

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

**THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE
SCHOOL AND RELIGIOUS
EDUCATION**

School: Cardinal Allen Catholic High School

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School URN: 119799

Headteacher: Mr Philip Mooney

Chair of Governors: Mr Philip Waters

Inspectors: Mr A. J. Finnerty [Lead inspector]
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Date of Inspection: 24 and 25 May 2012

The inspection report is produced for the Rt. Reverend Michael Campbell O.S.A., the Bishop of Lancaster (c.f. Code Canon Law, 804, 806), and for the Governing Body of the school (Education Act 2005, Section 48). The inspection reviews, evaluates and plans further improvements in the school's witness to the Catholic faith and Curriculum Religious Education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation.

The inspection schedule follows criteria set by the National Board of Advisers and Inspectors.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Cardinal Allen is a smaller than average secondary school situated on the Fylde Peninsula. The school has specialist status for mathematics and computing and has many awards including Green Flag status and the Design Award. Almost all pupils are of White British backgrounds with English as their first language. There are a small number of pupils with white European background other than British and a few with minority ethnic heritage. The number of students known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. The overall proportion of disabled students or with special educational needs is below average, but the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll:	806
Planned Admission Number of Pupils:	165
Percentage of pupils baptised RC:	59.6%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	24.3%
Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths:	1.6%
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	14.8%
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups:	0.7%
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	16.5%

Staffing

Full time teachers:	42
Part time teachers:	7
Percentage of Catholic teachers:	50%

RE Department Staffing:

Number of full time RE teachers:	4
Number of part time RE teachers:	0
Percentage of Catholic teachers:	75%
Percentage of teachers with CCRS:	25%

Percentage of learning time given to RE:

Yr7	8%	Yr 10	10%
Yr8	8%	Yr 11	10%
Yr9	8%		

Parishes served by the school:

St. Wulstan's, Fleetwood	126
St. Teresa's, Cleveleys	85
Sacred Heart, Thornton	66
St. Mary's, Fleetwood	65
St. Bernadette's, Bispham	44
St. Edmund's, Fleetwood	23
St. John Southworth's, Cleveleys	20
St. John's, Poulton-le-Fylde	8
St. Mary's, Great Eccleston	7
St. Bernard's, Knott End	5
St. Nicholas Owen, Thornton	5
St. Kentigern's, Blackpool	3
St. William's, Pilling	2
St. Martin's, Carleton	2
Sacred Heart, Blackpool	1

Overall Effectiveness

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

1

MAIN FINDINGS

Cardinal Allen is an outstanding Catholic School which is strengthened and directed by gospel values. The leadership team are clearly committed to fostering a worshipping and learning Christian community built on mutual respect and faith. Students are comfortable with the prayer life of the school and recognise the significance of being part of a Christian community. Students are proud of their school and appreciative of the contribution it makes to their well-being. As one student said, "I am very proud to wear the badge of Cardinal Allen on my blazer."! The caring attitude of staff is evident in all aspects of school life and students know they are safe and valued.

Outcomes for students are good at all key stages. Current and secure data provide a positive picture of student progress and achievements. The determinedly high standards set throughout the curriculum, linked to support systems and professional realism, suggest the capacity to continually improve outcomes for students is outstanding.

Leadership at Cardinal Allen is outstanding. A strong vision is firmly held but power is devolved appropriately allowing circles beyond the Senior Management Team to share decision making and exercise autonomy. The Governing Body is closely involved in the life of the school and the Chair of Governors is routinely in the school to meet with the head teacher and other staff. Whole school strategies express high aspiration but are carefully formulated and so ensure the capacity of the school for continuous improvement.

Overall, the provision for Catholic education is outstanding. The Religious Education department is well resourced with a strong team of teachers, and a suite of dedicated teaching rooms. The developing chaplaincy is a very positive element in the provision and the lay chaplain is strongly appreciated and valued by the whole school community.

Recommendations to the school for further improvement:

- Establish a formally constituted chaplaincy team to further extend the work and extent of the current provision.
- Provide instruction on the Church's teaching on stewardship and creation to underpin the positive ecological practices of the school.
- Encourage further formation of students in liturgy and spirituality so that they become leaders in worship and have confidence to evangelise their peers.
- Ensure the time given for curriculum RE at KS3 accords with the demands of the Bishops conference.

PUPILS

How good are outcomes for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups?

1

Students at all key stages are unanimous in their praise of the department and rank Religious Education amongst their favourite subjects. A high level of engagement was evident in the lessons observed. Pupils acquire knowledge, develop understanding and learn and practise skills well. They are keen to learn and collaborate productively with their peers. As a consequence almost all students make good progress and some make outstanding progress. At KS3 both attainment and progress are good with a large majority of students meeting their targets. The average value added point score at KS4 has been positive over the last three years and in 2011 the majority (70%) of students made at least expected levels of progress achieving their targets for Religious Education. Attainment at A*-C was consistently above national average from 2009 to 2011. Able, gifted and talented students make very good progress and the number of A*/A grades gained at GCSE has been impressively high in comparison with other subjects in school, and often above the national average. Students with special educational needs make outstanding progress. These outcomes will transform the life chances of these young people and represent an achievement that reflects the school's commitment to those most in need.

Students make an outstanding contribution to this school and gain a corresponding benefit from it. They are aware of the core values and teachings of Christianity and support Catholic practices and worship. Pupils feel very strongly that they and their peers are able to express their own views and beliefs with confidence. They respond generously to appeals for those in need especially through projects sponsored by CAFOD.

Students value and gain profound benefit from the Catholic character of Cardinal Allen Catholic High School. Relationships between staff and students are happy and supportive. Care and concern are shown by staff and students and the good behaviour prevalent in the school reflects the positive values underpinning the community. Pupils appreciate the work of the chaplain. This work is enhanced by visits from local clergy, the Castlerigg Outreach team, and visiting speakers. Extra-curricular activities such as the diocesan Lourdes pilgrimage, the Madrid Youth Day and the visit to the recent "Flame Congress" encourage a deeper level of personal involvement.

Students respond positively to collective worship at Cardinal Allen. The firm but gentle discipline that is present throughout the school ensures

there is a strong sense of respect in assemblies and other times of shared worship. Students benefit from the atmosphere created by the use of music and varied media in assemblies and during liturgical celebrations. In form groups students readily participate in prayer and sometimes make thoughtful contributions of their own. They appreciate opportunities to pray for themselves and for others, especially in times of need. Deepening student involvement in these activities on a routine basis would offer even greater impact. A number of students regularly attend the weekly Mass on Friday in the school chapel and participate by reading and serving.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

How effective are leaders and managers in developing the Catholic life of the School?

1

Leadership and management is outstanding. The head teacher is passionate in promoting the Catholic life of the school and in ensuring outstanding outcomes for all pupils. He shares his leadership with a team which effectively supports him in his work. There is a strong sense of shared responsibility and aspiration. The current SEF 48 is a model of collaborative effort. Care, guidance and support is outstanding with all pupils feeling valued and able to express themselves within a secure and affirming environment. All leaders give priority to developing the Catholic life of the school, and make explicit the school's mission of service. By giving the highest priority to promoting, monitoring and celebrating the Catholic life of the school they enable all members of the community to grow in faith.

At Cardinal Allen, monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education provision is systematic, rigorous, and targeted at securing improved outcomes for students. The on-going evaluation of teaching and learning is honest and robust. This has led to clear priorities for development being established which are planned for appropriately. A strongly led team of teaching specialists work together to share ideas and to review progress. Religious Education is rightly seen to be at the core of the curriculum, it is a jewel in the crown and immensely valued by all.

Governors are actively involved in the Catholic life of Cardinal Allen and ensure continuous improvement through both informal monitoring and evaluation and more formal governor briefings and improvement planning. The governors know the school very well; several are frequent visitors to the school, many attend school Masses and other events. They speak passionately and knowledgeably about the impact of the Catholic life of the school on the pupils and the contribution to this of the Religious Education department and chaplaincy. Governors provide challenge and support in equal measure and their role is valued by the staff with whom they come into contact. Strengths and skills on the board of governors are broad and are effectively deployed. They play a full and very active role in planning the strategic development of the school, and they enjoy being part of the school community.

The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting Catholic learning and well-being is outstanding. The principle partnership is with parents and the high level of response to the Parental Questionnaire is just one indicator of the close relationship the school enjoys with parents. Links

with feeder primary schools are strong. Contact with local parishes is encouraged and local clergy often visit the school. Caring for the disadvantaged and needy is also underlined by support for charities such as the SVP and CAFOD. The school has regular contact with Castlerigg Youth Manor including an annual retreat opportunity. Some special needs pupils experience the opportunities offered by the Calvert Trust. Students suffering from bereavement, emotional and other problems benefit from the expertise of specialist organisations. The school funds a Relate counsellor and enjoys the services of a Barnardo's family worker.

Leaders and managers make an outstanding contribution towards promoting community cohesion. The RE curriculum fosters study of major world religions and visits have been organised to their places of worship. A member of staff with Muslim heritage has shared his insights with students. The school has a strong commitment to international solidarity and links have been forged with Birla High School in India. Contacts with primary schools have been strengthened by activities such as cross-phase teaching. Concern for the environment is enthusiastically promoted in Cardinal Allen and helps forge links with other schools in Eco conferences and science fairs, but the underpinning Church teaching on ecology is not always recognised. A trans-generational IT group, made up of local senior citizens and pupils, allows both groups to help each other. Citizenship is fostered by involving pupil volunteers in projects in Rossall ward. Parents/carers and staff cooperation is strong and shown by the work of Cardinal Allen Family and Community Association.

PROVISION

How effective is the provision for Catholic Education?

1

The quality of teaching in Religious Education at Cardinal Allen is good and students enjoy a range of learning activities and respond well to the rigorously planned lessons. Teachers have very good relationships with their classes and work hard to develop the curriculum for the students. The majority of teaching enables pupils to make good progress. In lessons most students are keen to engage and to concentrate; and the quality of their work reflects good standards of learning. A range of teaching styles and strategies are evident in the classrooms. There are good examples of dialogue and of questioning techniques, which contribute to the building of learning.

The school has rigorously focussed assessment strategies which provide an accurate and current picture of pupil achievement. Assessment is sound and frequent. The recent development of a robust homework strategy illustrates this. Challenging targets are set to help students to aspire to do their best. Pupils are aware of their progress and familiar with the level descriptors. A Learning Review Triangle and Learning Tree are just two examples of recent schemes to further develop pupil understanding of their individual progress. Moodle is used effectively to provide feedback to pupils.

The curriculum has been adapted to meet the needs of individuals and groups. It is constantly evolving. Homework is presented in a variety of formats to meet different needs. The requirements of the Bishops' conference are met at KS4 with 10% of time allocated to the subject, but not at KS3, where RE is given approximately 8% of teaching time each week. The location of the school makes it unlikely for students to encounter people of Faiths other than Christianity and so the department has sought to arrange opportunities of encounter by visitors and trips.

Prayer and Collective Worship are central to the life of the school. Mass is celebrated weekly and to mark special occasions. Assemblies are generally well prepared and delivered effectively by staff. The preparation is careful and the materials are of high quality. Students not of the Catholic Faith are encouraged to engage as fully as possible with the acts of worship provided by the school. Cardinal Allen has the great benefit of several local priests who support the religious and sacramental life of the school. A cleverly designed octagonal chapel sits at the heart of the school surrounded by a beautiful garden. It is the natural centre for celebrations and, at other times, for many of the school community it is a quiet haven.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Key for inspection grades:

Grade 1 **Outstanding** Grade 2 **Good** Grade 3 **Satisfactory** Grade 4 **Unsatisfactory**

Overall effectiveness	1
The school's capacity for sustained improvement	1
How good are outcomes for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups?	1
• how well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education?	1
❖ the quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
❖ the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
❖ pupils' attainment in RE	1
• to what extent do pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school?	1
• how well do pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship?	2
How effective are leaders and managers in developing the Catholic life of the School?	1
• how well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan improvement to outcomes for pupils?	1
• how well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for RE and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils?	1
• the extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory and canonical responsibilities met?	1
• how well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and well being?	1
• how effectively leaders and managers promote Community Cohesion?	1
How effective is the provision for Catholic Education?	1
• the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education?	2
• the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education?	1
• the extent to which Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs?	2
• the quality of Collective Worship provided by the school?	1