

## Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Edmund Arrowsmith Catholic Academy

URN: 135418

Carried out on behalf of the Most Rev. Malcolm McMahon, Archbishop of Liverpool on:

Date: 20-21 September 2023

### Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....

2

### Catholic life and mission (p.3)

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.....

2

### Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education.....

2

### Collective worship (p.7)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.....

2

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

✓

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

✓

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

Fully

## Summary of key findings

### What the school does well

- There is a sense of positive renewal about the school which has been embraced by everyone with an interest in making things better.
- The school has successfully placed Catholic life and mission at the centre, deriving the energy for improvement from the Word of God.
- The Catholic leadership of the Headteacher is inspirational in propelling the school forward, and there is evidence that other leaders have corresponding skills.
- The model for prayer and liturgy is exceptionally strong. This is making a lasting impact on the formation of students as well as staff.

What the school needs to improve:

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent across the team. The programme of monitoring and support should be given the highest priority until standards are securely good. Staff should continue to access appropriate training which supports the development of their teaching.
- Opportunities for students to experience enrichment outside the classroom are underdeveloped and therefore need to improve. As part of the overall programme of improvement for the subject, this should be factored in as a need, and will support the wider development of an identity for the department.
- Although the package of resources for prayer and liturgy is very strong, leaders and teachers should develop ways to ensure that materials are adapted to the age needs and abilities of students.

## Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Catholic life and mission key judgement grade:.....

2

### Pupil outcomes

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school .....

2

### Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school .....

2

### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school .....

2

St Edmund Arrowsmith's distinctive Catholic identity, based around the mission statement "*He has come so they may have life and live it to the full*" provides a challenge as well as an inspiration for students. Among older students, there is a greater understanding that each of us is created "*in the image and likeness of God*", and can give examples why this is a basis for human spirituality. The development of 'Sacred Time' is an essential part of the schools educational Catholic mission and skilfully provides opportunities for students to hear and learn about the Gospels, and how scripture is relevant to their lives. This applies to all students, regardless of their faith. By being responsive in the way of fundraising and other charitable works, and because students are actively engaged in learning which endorses the needs of local and national causes, the vast majority of students, but not yet all, understand the basis of Catholic social teaching. Students show respect to their peers and adults, and this is evident in recreational as well as structured time. The school's now thriving chaplaincy provides many students opportunities to engage in activities which promote the school's Catholic mission. These are taken up in increasing numbers which still needs encouragement so that more benefit. "We have been given the confidence to be individuals but learned to work in partnership with others" is how one student described their experience.

The school has an inclusive and welcoming Catholic culture. Like the students, staff understand the school's core values, and seek to embody these as part of their joyful work as educators. Most students readily say that support from teachers is strong, and that they are respected, listened to and cared for. The tangible sense of community among the staff illustrates the rapid growth in confidence that the overwhelming majority have in the direction

that the school is moving. In no small part, this is attributable to the relentless work of the headteacher and the senior team. Staff receive excellent support to ensure that they understand the relevance of the school's Catholic identity. Because of this, they are able to impart meaningful guidance to students which is reflective of the life and mission of the school, and its service to the community. Students and staff recognise the great success of quickly developing a purposeful, calm, and harmonious school community, and are proud of their part in this achievement. At the heart of the school is the recently redesigned school chapel. It is an inspirational and visible metaphor illustrating that Christ is at the centre of this school. Provision for Relationships, Sex and Health Education has been well-thought out, and is regularly reviewed to ensure students are given faith appropriate foundations for personal development.

Leaders and governors have placed Catholic life and mission at the core of school improvement. With highly skilled and insightful support from governors, the Trust, and the Archdiocese, the headteacher has ensured that Catholic Christianity is the source and inspiration for his team, and the community in general. Improved parish links are emerging, and there is a clear strategy to develop even better links with parents by engaging their opinions and interest in innovative ways. Leaders and governors have a convincing vision for continued improvement, and, if used well, the imminent mission review will help galvanise, among staff, the fact that subject curriculums are founded on a distinctive Catholic philosophy. Leaders and governors have been sensitive to the needs of staff, and have expertly nurtured this resource by listening to people, showing care to them, and by targeting appropriate training and support. Leaders and governors are rightly proud of the progress made in this aspect, but are self-critical in the drive to improve. This leads to well-planned change. In conjunction with detailed whole school professional development focussed on Catholic mission, processes for the induction of new staff are thorough, and start with a teacher's core responsibility of being strong witnesses to Christian living.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

2

### Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.....

3

### Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education.....

2

### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for religious education.....

2

There has been an improvement in the development of the knowledge, understanding, and skills of students in religious education. The development of religious specific vocabulary is supported by using regular recall and retrieval strategies, and is evident in medium term planning, lesson visits, and quality assurance processes. Because this is not yet good, the impact on what students know and what they remember is low. Student's work is mostly presented well, with the best examples shared to help others improve. When assessment is used well and "next steps feedback" is clear, students learn more. However, across different groups, student engagement is inconsistent and so their progress is slower. Large numbers of students say they enjoy religious education lessons but, when asked, too many Year 11s did not know their GCSE target grades and had no knowledge of current working grades. Evidence in books demonstrates that practice GCSE questions have been completed and some aspect of self assessment applied, but no mark or current working level has been assigned. Data shows subject results to be below the national average, and also below the school English outcomes. The limited subject assessment and tracking stands to benefit from the implementation of a new whole school system.

Subject and pedagogical knowledge is the focus of departmental training, and religious education teachers are supported by a coaching programme delivered by the senior team and external subject specialists. A recently appointed early career teacher is benefitting from this as well as a comprehensive whole school induction programme. The subject leader for religious education is working towards a middle leadership qualification as well as using departmental training to support her team. The subject team are enthusiastic about developing their expertise and skills. The subject leader engages well with Archdiocesan support, and is a good role model to team members who can witness the very positive relationships she has with students arising from her desire and skill to deliver good lessons. Medium term curriculum planning promotes the school mission, and is designed to support the spiritual development of students. 'Book-looks' further illustrate the drive

to connect religious education to Catholic teaching, and students are shown how and why there is a link to the school's mission. Students like the classcharts rewards system as well as praise post cards home.

Leaders and governors ensure that religious education has parity with other core subjects, and is true to Archdiocese requirements. Curriculum mapping for religious education is in line with all subjects, and is a strong foundation for the development of medium term plans. Whole school quality assurance processes are thorough and applied well to religious education. These detailed procedures accompany subject specialist professional training, and the drive to improve teaching and learning in all subjects. Training has focused on ensuring students have opportunities to progress in what they know and what they remember. In the religious education department, at this stage, better examples of this are only emerging, and this therefore remains a focus for improvement. Leaders and governors show a strong commitment to the regular evaluation of provision in religious education. Typifying this is the identification that opportunities for enrichment in religious education are not sufficiently extensive, and that there is a need to monitor arrangements whereby students are placed in mixed ability groups in Key Stage 3 and in sets in Key Stage 4.

## Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

2

### Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship .....

2

### Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school .....

1

### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship .....

2



Almost all students willingly participate in prayer and liturgy. This is because it is has been thoughtfully conceived, well constructed, and is consistently delivered across the school in 'Sacred Time' sessions. A well-planned calendar informs and guides all forms of prayer and liturgy, and is fully reflective of Catholic tradition. Students, who are members of the chaplaincy team, enthusiastically engage in the planning of prayer and liturgy, and take a lead in the delivery of worship. All tutor groups, at some point, plan and deliver prayer and liturgy assemblies throughout the year. This is a source of pride among students who recognise that presentations to peers, whilst sometimes daunting, also allow for a growth in confidence and for them to earn respect. One student commented that they have a higher regard for these instances now because it is students delivering the Word of God. The influence of the Catholic curriculum can, for the most part, be seen in student conduct in lessons, in unstructured time, in students' charity work, and in their engagement with prayer and liturgy. Many students reflect on, and can articulate how, their faith experiences affect them. When asked why they raise money for Cafod and Macmillan, one student said that "it feels good, encourages others to do the same, and we have a responsibility to people who are not as lucky as we are".

Prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school, and an established part of daily routine and the liturgical year. Some outstanding examples were seen. Prayer and liturgy time begins with scripture which is explained in the context of the students' experiences, and they are given time for reflection. They respond enthusiastically, joining in confidently with prayer and many show great confidence in reading the Word. For younger students, instructional approaches ensure that all have an understanding of accepted, and expected, responses. Staff articulate a strong commitment to faith and liturgy, and are able to explain its importance and

influence on the school community. Senior staff take time to model best practice, and middle leaders are confident in their growing skill in planning and delivering 'Sacred Time'. There is a developing creativity with live music at the start and end of prayer and liturgy. The art and design technology departments have contributed student display work to the outstanding sacred spaces and communal areas of the school. Over the last year there has been a positive and welcome increase in the involvement of parish priests in school. The leadership team have made significant efforts to engage parents. Because of this, the school is emerging as a centre of the community.

Recently developed, but not yet reviewed by governors, the prayer and liturgy policy is well thought out, and its impact is beginning to show through observations appropriate to the age and capacity of the students. Mass is celebrated regularly in school, and key events are planned through the liturgical calendar. The staff, regardless of faith affiliation, appreciate, and are enthusiastic about, the quality and impact of Catholic training introduced since the new Headteacher took over. This includes weekly training from the chaplaincy on the theme of the week as well as support from the Trust chaplaincy. Middle leaders showed knowledge and understanding of both Gospel values and Catholic social teaching. The deployment of financial resources illustrates how important the development of distinctive and meaningful prayer & liturgy is to the school.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Edmund Arrowsmith Catholic Academy
School unique reference number (URN)	135418
Full postal address of the school	Cumber Lane, Whiston, Merseyside, L35 2XG
School phone number	0151 477 8770
Name of head teacher or principal	Mr Lee Peachey
Chair of governing board	Mrs Gill Donohoe
School Website	<a href="https://stedmundarrows.greenhousecms.co.uk">https://stedmundarrows.greenhousecms.co.uk</a>
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Pope Francis Catholic Multi Academy Trust
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	11-16
Trustees	Liverpool Roman Catholic Archdiocese
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	10 March 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

## The inspection team

Philip Mooney	Lead inspector
Marie Rishton	Team inspector
Ivan Gaughan	Team inspector
Name of inspector	Lead/team

## Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement