



# Saint John Henry Newman Catholic College

URN: 136432

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Salford

29th Feb–01 March 2024

## Summary of key findings

### Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

3

#### 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

3

#### 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

3

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

Partially

## What the school does well

- The sense of community at Blessed John Henry Newman Catholic College is evident in several ways. In particular, this is seen in the quality of pastoral care, the support for students, and positive relationships across the school.
- Student behaviour in lessons and recreational times is very good. The school has acted upon advice and improved this so that everyone benefits from an ordered and agreeable environment.
- The religious education team have planned the new curriculum well and this is helping students consolidate learning and make better progress.
- The work of the student chaplaincy team enhances the Catholic life of this school. It is a resource which has the potential to grow.

## What the school needs to improve

- The absence of a lay Chaplain has delayed a faster development of Catholic life. The school should redouble efforts to secure an appointment.
- The religious education team, supported by school leaders, should review systems and practices for marking and feedback so that standards improve in line with stronger examples seen in school.
- Strategies for the development of prayer and liturgy are underdeveloped and do not always provide students and staff with rich experiences. The school should seek external advice and implement improved approaches.

## 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

**Pupil outcomes**

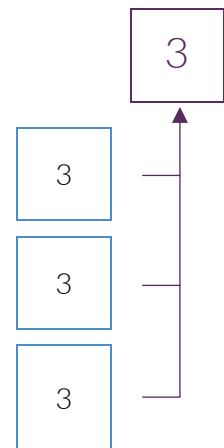
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

**Provision**

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

**Leadership**

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



Many students recognise the Newman values of *'Love, Service, Courage and Dignity'* which are used in different ways to promote the school's distinctiveness. Typical of this is their use in the classroom system for rewards and sanctions. However, interactions with students did not give a sense that they understood the aspects of their experience which were uniquely Catholic and found difficulty in drawing on scripture to illustrate their own worth as unique beings. Outwardly, students are happy and naturally foster positive relationships with staff and their peers. The evidence that Newman's students are developing moral awareness is in their good conduct, for they are polite and generous in their openness. Students show respect to visitors and are a strong witness for the school's vision of *'Welcome'*. Because Catholic social teaching is not yet sufficiently developed, students are unable to bond their intrinsic moral perspective to the message in *'Laudato Si'*. Student chaplains show greater understanding and value the way they are supported in their work by teachers. This is, however, not translated to the student body as a whole, and so greater numbers are unable to describe what chaplaincy is since they are not exposed to it in a meaningful way.

The school mission to *"live our Christian faith, in love and service to all others, to achieve dignity and excellence"* has newly restored core values arising directly from the head teacher's recent drive for improvement. Most staff understand and show commitment; however, some do not know how to translate the message into meaningful participation. The school community has demonstrated its intrinsic strength during acute recent periods of bereavement. This is especially embodied in comments from one teacher who spoke for all by saying *"Newman's compassion for its family was paramount. I was supported*

*and given time to express sadness and grieve without judgement. I was included. Individual needs were recognised and met".* Staff show great respect to students and afford them the dignity they deserve. Pastoral care is a strength, and systems of student support are effective. The school's inclusivity and genuine commitment to vulnerable young people is amply illustrated by support for students classed as "looked after" and those with education, health, and care plans. A more rapid development of Catholic life and mission is delayed because there is no lay chaplain. Although still emergent, relationships, sex and health education is compliant, with 'Ten-Ten' a core resource. This curriculum is evolving to ensure students are provided with relevant and meaningful guidance.

The school consistently seeks to promote its mission and show that it is governed by the teachings of Christ. A strong Diocesan engagement is typified by the use of the school for the purposes of Confirmation. The positive dialogue with parents is underscored by the drive to foster an understanding of the school's core mission. Leaders show respect to staff who are consulted about change. The concept that life in a Catholic school is governed by the teachings of Christ is not yet fully exemplified across the curriculum. Whilst governors show ambition for school improvement, attention to Catholic life and mission is incomplete exemplified by some gaps in the monitoring of prayer and liturgy at form time. The school polls opinions from students and staff and sometimes this influences policy. Processes for staff induction around Catholic life exist but are not sufficiently developed to ensure that teachers understand their core duty as Catholic educators. Staff are regularly exposed to training but there is little opportunity afforded to explore themes and responsibilities at a deeper level.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

**Pupil outcomes**

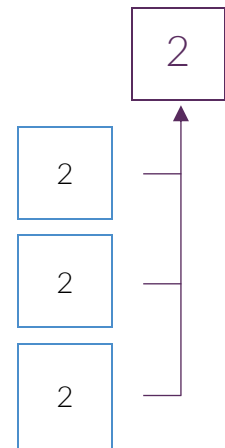
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

**Provision**

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

**Leadership**

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



Although not yet seen in outcomes, most students make good progress from their starting points because teaching enables them to know more and remember more. The 'Do Now' activity and effective questioning facilitate students in demonstrating their secure knowledge and understanding of subject material. In some lessons, students were able to speak accurately about complex religious concepts and, with more freedom given to lesson structure, staff could be more creative. Students' extended writing shows their good levels of religious literacy. Key vocabulary is identified and explored in all lessons as part of a structured whole school model. Books are well-presented with students taking a pride in their work. Students contribute to class discussion and often speak confidently about learning. In a year seven lesson, when asked how it was possible to explain each of the three persons in the Trinity, a student gave a skilful and succinct answer "God is the creator, his Son is God made flesh, and the Holy Spirit is our spiritual guide". Behaviour and engagement in lessons is good and students speak positively about their enjoyment of the subject. Students know how to improve their work and understanding is assessed regularly.

Almost all teachers have strong subject knowledge providing students with good insights into the subject. They respond to students in a very clear way, even when faced with complex theological questions. This is a real strength, but the areas of weaker subject knowledge must be addressed, especially to improve learning for students in the nurture group. In religious education, good relationships are seen as a fundamental starting point and teachers understand their place as a 'link in the chain that bonds connections'

between their students. Teacher expectations are high, and students appreciate the support they receive. Staff develop students' understanding using a good variety of questioning and assessment techniques. Written feedback in books is weaker and effective quality assurance processes have identified this as an area for development. The use of school-wide systems for rewards, underpinned by the four school values, is appreciated by students, and the department has good plans to develop this further. Teachers recognise how religious education can impact on the moral formation of their students and there is a desire to give more time to reflection in lessons.

Implementation of the *Religious Education Directory* is well advanced. This progress enables the department to assess and consider additional strategies and modifications. The curriculum is clearly planned, and resources that aid students' learning are of a high quality. Planned progression is effective in allowing students to build on previous knowledge. The presentation of '*What?, Why?, Why Now?*' in lessons allows them to understand their progress and the use of scripture is developing. Religious education has parity with other core subjects in relation to resourcing, timetable, staffing and accommodation and subject specific professional development is seen as a priority. Senior leaders have provided time for the department to plan collaboratively and this has contributed to success. The department effectively use professional development and sharing of best practice for improvement. The subject leader has a clear vision and shows ambition. She leads the department in a collaborative way and, because of this, team members feel involved and show a desire to improve. The department is keen to promote the department identity by inviting speakers and organising school visits so as to enrich the curriculum for students.

## Collective worship

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

### Collective worship key judgement grade

**Pupil outcomes**

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

3

**Provision**

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

3

**Leadership**

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

3

3

Prayer and liturgy need further development. Pupil chaplains are trained to lead prayer in different formats and are proud of their role in developing Catholic life. However, participation by students in form time is passive and lacks enthusiasm. Particularly in this format, students show respect but their response is characterised by caution and hesitancy. Pupil chaplains spoke positively about their role in planning, organising and leading liturgical celebration, and this approach is improving. For the majority of students, however, they do not show the ability to be reflective and they find it hard to give concrete examples of how prayer is linked to their daily school and home life. The rhythm of the liturgical year is reflected in weekly themes but most students do not have a clear understanding of why this is provided. Often, prayer and liturgy have little impact because there is a lack of variety, and some is of a poor quality. Most students say that they enjoy learning about Catholic life in lessons but the majority do not show the ability to be reflective or see connections between the curriculum and the wider life of the school.

An appropriately planned calendar, reflecting that of the Church, provides a good starting point. However, the quality of prayer and liturgy is variable. Weekly themes are underdeveloped and give a limited insight for teachers to deliver prayer which is reflective, has scriptural reference explained, or is linked to real life. This results in teachers being underprepared. As a consequence, there is no opportunity for students to experience the Catholic tradition in its richness or for a sense of belonging to be generated. Staff, including senior leaders, do contribute to prayer and liturgy but the

provision is inconsistent and sometimes of a low quality. A few staff show enthusiasm for, and a commitment to, creating meaningful materials. Larger numbers of staff, however, need to be given a clear understanding of how to plan, deliver and evaluate the quality and impact of what is used. The school's ability to make the best use of space is limited by arrangements with the local authority and the owners of the building. For example, the chapel is located in the heart of the school but is often disturbed with the hustle and bustle of school life. Priests' visits to the school are supportive to the formation and well being of students and staff. Although further development of such visits and parish links are needed, such a presence is appreciated.

Leaders have appropriately set aside opportunities to celebrate holy days of obligation and other significant days in the school calendar. Additionally, leaders strive to offer the Sacrament of Reconciliation at key times. The policy for prayer and liturgy is fitting but not impactful in outcomes. Understanding of the different levels and skills of participation reflective of the age and capacity of students is limited. Training for prayer and liturgy is insufficient and does not lend sufficient gravitas to the centrality of this to staff who work in a Catholic school. As a result, the importance of prayer and liturgy is not widely understood. Extended knowledge and skills linked to the development of prayer and liturgy are posited with a small number of leaders and other staff. The head teacher is sincere in his Catholic leadership and is respected by staff and students. He is devoted to the development of authentic Catholic education. This vision is shared at associate leadership level. Nevertheless, this combined passion for the Catholic life is not yet evident at all levels with some leaders misunderstanding what makes Catholic education distinctive. Religious education staff and pupil chaplains are an underused resource.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	Saint John Henry Newman Catholic College
School unique reference number (URN)	136432
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3534608
Full postal address of the school	Blessed John Henry Newman Catholic College, Broadway, Chadderton, Oldham, OL9 9QY
School phone number	01617858858
Headteacher	Glyn Potts
Chair of Governors	John Cassin
School Website	<a href="http://www.newmanrc.oldham.sch.uk/">http://www.newmanrc.oldham.sch.uk/</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Secondary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	11-16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	18 <sup>th</sup> September 2015
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

## The inspection team

Philip Mooney	Lead
Helen Hall	Team
Xavier Bowers	Team
Edward Allanson	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