



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. EDMUND ARROWSMITH CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

ASHTON-IN-MAKERFIELD

Inspection Date Wednesday 1 February 2012

Inspectors Dcn. Paul Mannings Mrs. Barbara Melia

Unique Reference Number 106540

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School Catholic voluntary-aided, mixed,
comprehensive

Age range of pupils 11-16

Number on roll 1,234

Chair of Governors Dcn. John O'Brien

Headteacher Mr. Peter W. Phillips

School address Rookery Avenue
Ashton-in-Makerfield,
Wigan
WN4 9PF

Telephone number 01942 728651

E-mail address office@arrowsmith.wigan.sch.uk

Date of last inspection 24-25 April 2007

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.

Information about the school

St. Edmund Arrowsmith is a Catholic voluntary-aided, mixed, comprehensive in the Wigan Authority. There are 1,234 pupils on roll, drawn in the main from feeder schools in two local Pastoral Areas. Baptised Catholics account for 98.7% of the roll, with 1.2% from other Christian denominations, and 0.1% from other world faiths or religious traditions. There are 85 teachers of whom 68% are Catholic. The Religious Education department has seven full-time, qualified teachers.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

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Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school.

Inspection Judgements

Overall effectiveness:

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main Findings:-

St. Edmund Arrowsmith is an outstanding Catholic high school committed to its mission to embrace and encourage each member in a spirit of discipleship. Pupils, parents and carers are highly supportive of the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils are outstanding. This is evident in standards of achievement and attainment, together with pupils' learning and their progress in Religious Education. They make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. Their response to and participation in Collective Worship is outstanding.

Provision for Catholic Education is outstanding. This is reflected in the quality of teaching and learning, and in the curriculum. The process for assessment is good with outstanding features. The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding.

There is outstanding leadership and management of the development of the Catholic Life. This is shared by senior and departmental leadership, together with governors. Their promotion of community cohesion is outstanding.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding. The Section 48 Self-Evaluation is detailed and accurate in judgement. Areas for development are challenging and supported by strategic planning and monitoring.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Continue to develop the outstanding practices already evident in Catholic Life and Religious Education through:
 - Regular monitoring and review of the Section 48 Self Evaluation.

How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils

Pupils' achievement in Religious Education is outstanding. In Key Stage 3 the average level on entry is 3.1, which rises to 5.9 by the end of Year 9. In Key Stage 4 results for GCSE are consistently above the national average, with the 2011 cohort gaining 85.7% A*-C (39% A*-A). Also in 2011 accelerated pupils entered for AS in Year 11 achieved grades A-C. Another group achieved Level 3 in the Wider Key Skills course. Results for Entry Level also indicate maximum performance. Achievement and attainment overall is reinforced by the quality of teaching and learning, together with the curriculum.

The quality of pupils' learning and their progress in Religious Education is outstanding. Pupils are rigorously challenged to maintain pace and progress that is commensurate to their age and stage. Knowledge and understanding in Religious Education is consistently above average. Their motivation and outstanding behaviour contributes significantly to learning and overall achievement.

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the School is outstanding. This is the result of Religious Education which links content to the contemporary lives of pupils. They confidently speak about how it encourages their engagement in social interaction for the needs of others. They are equally confident to speak about their faith and show high levels of knowledge of Church teaching and its application. In class and beyond, pupils celebrate each other's contributions and are skilled in team efforts that support the school's mission.

Pupils' response to and participation in Collective Worship is outstanding. They are well practised in contributing and leading prayer and worship. They value the content and resources. Pupils relate Collective Worship to their own lives as a contributor to the Catholic Life. They pray with reverence. Opportunities for personal reflection enable them to put daily events in perspective and be at peace with themselves. They have knowledge and understanding of the liturgical year through involvement in appropriate worship. Pupils are skilled in accessing resources that improve the quality of both their participation and leadership.

How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils	
How well pupils achieve in Religious Education	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pupils' standards of attainment in Religious Education 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the quality of pupils' learning and their progress in Religious Education 	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	1
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	1

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education is outstanding. Teaching is confident, highly organised and creative. It is focused on the achievement of clear learning outcomes that challenge pupils to give their best. Independent and group learning is structured and enabling. It is well differentiated to suit all levels of ability through clear direction and extension tasks. At times some lessons would benefit from more accelerated pace by teachers so as to maximise the motivation of pupils. In all lessons pupils share in the process of teaching and learning. Questions are searching. Pupils are confident to respond. There are abundant opportunities for reflection, well structured within the content.

Assessment in Religious Education is good with outstanding features. The department continues to make innovative development. Levels of attainment are well established and pupils are confident in using them. Marking and

annotation is positive and encouraging. Comments should now include reference to levels as a further enrichment of their use in challenging learning. End of task assessments are robust. The assessment process will continue to benefit from development in recording and tracking based on two attainment targets. In addition the department is to liaise with primary schools to ensure transition of levelled progress.

The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs is outstanding. In Key Stage 3 the Icons process is well established and developed. In Key Stage 4 the large majority of pupils undertake an appropriate GCSE specification over two years. A group of pupils follow an accelerated GCSE course in Years 9-10. This has led to enriched provision in Year 11 which includes AS Level and Wider Key Skills Level 3. The school continues to seek other accredited courses. Entry Level is a popular and successful option for a small group of pupils. The curriculum makes an outstanding contribution to pupils, spiritual and moral development.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding. Year groups gather weekly and there is daily prayer and worship in form groups. There is effective coordination which includes thorough monitoring together with the identification of and provision for in-service training. The daily reflection booklet serves the community well, through appropriate resources that are effectively used in encouraging maximum participation by staff and by pupils. Collective Worship makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development.

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education	
The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education	1
The effectiveness of assessment in Religious Education	2
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs	1
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	1

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic Life of the school

Leaders and managers provide outstanding promotion, monitoring and evaluation of the provision for the Catholic Life of the school, together with good planning and implementation of improvement to outcomes for pupils. The Mission Statement, supported by clear objectives is known and owned. It directs all policies and development plans. Senior Leadership is incisive in its sharing of Catholic Life with clergy of the local pastoral areas and with the wider community. The full time lay chaplain continues to provide maximum impact in the daily life of the school by being available for all, and through co-ordination of Collective Worship. This role provides a major contribution to spiritual and moral development. Management and lay-chaplaincy are pro-active in enabling the spiritual and moral dimension of school life to be tangible through inclusion and team work. Self-Evaluation of Catholic Life is thorough and cohesively linked to targeted outcomes.

Senior leaders and managers provide outstanding monitoring and evaluation of the provision for Religious Education. Leadership and management of the department is outstanding. Religious Education is at the core of the curriculum and of Catholic Life. The Section 48 Self Evaluation is clear, concise and accurate in judgement. It is linked to continued development. Members of staff are highly skilled and motivated. They consistently participate in diocesan training. The school is generous in contributing a key member of staff to assist in the diocesan Key Stage 3 writing group.

Governors provide outstanding challenge and support for the Catholic Life and Religious Education. Areas needing development are challenged and addressed. Governors have high levels of expertise not least through their active involvement in the life of the school. They are encouraged by senior leadership to be part of all planning and development.

Leaders and managers provide outstanding promotion of community cohesion. The school is inclusive through social interaction and fundraising projects at local, national and global level. One key strand in this area is the active St Vincent de Paul group. Collective Worship is also inclusive in its development of themes related to major social issues and celebration. Religious Education programmes continue to include knowledge, understanding and where appropriate the celebration of other world faiths and traditions. The school has recently achieved international recognition for its efforts in highlighting community cohesion. The school exists for the common good.

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic Life of the School	
How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	1
How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement 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 areas needing development are addressed decisively and responsibilities met	1
How effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion	1