



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. EDMUND ARROWSMITH CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

ASHTON-IN-MAKERFIELD

Tuesday-Wednesday 24-25 April 2007

Inspectors Mr. Paul A. Mannings Mrs. Elizabeth Dolan

URN 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	1,209
Chair of governors	Rev. Deacon John O'Brien
School address	Rookery Avenue, Ashton-in-Makerfield, Wigan, WN4 9PF.
Telephone number	01942 728651
E-mail address	p-phillips@admin.arrowsmith.wigan.sch.uk
Date of last inspection	6-7 February 2001
Headteacher	Mr. Peter Phillips

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

St. Edmund Arrowsmith is a Catholic voluntary aided mixed Comprehensive School in the Wigan Local Authority. The school has Specialist College Status for both Technology and Music. Learners are drawn mainly from the eight associated parish primary schools with a number from schools in the wider community. The school serves a wide geographical area of mixed socio-economic background. There are 1,209 learners on roll, all of whom are baptised Catholics. There are 20 learners with statements of Special Educational Needs, a further 83 supported by School Action and 67 by School Action Plus. There are 80.7 teachers of whom 75% are Catholic. There are seven core members of the Religious Education department. An informal collaborative exists with seven other high schools in the western area of Wigan. This is a self-funding and self-governing arrangement with a focus on the promotion of national learning initiatives in a local context.

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

St. Edmund Arrowsmith is a good Catholic school. There are a number of outstanding features. There has been good improvement since the last inspection with good capacity for continued improvement. Achievement and standards in Religious Education are good. Teaching and learning is good and so too is the curriculum provision. Leadership and management of Religious Education are good. Collective Worship is satisfactory. The good management of the Catholic life of the school is directed by the Mission Statement and its clear aims and objectives. Learners show outstanding enjoyment of Religious Education. Their behaviour is outstanding. Religious Education enables them to make an outstanding contribution to the life of the school. It makes an outstanding contribution to their spiritual and moral development.

Grade: 2

Improvement since the last inspection

There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The Mission Statement has been reviewed. Collective Worship continues to develop. The Religious Education department has produced a policy for spiritual and moral development. Roles and responsibilities have been formulated for all members of the Religious Education department. The departmental self-review indicates monitoring strategies and success criteria for Religious Education curriculum development. Schemes of work continue to be revised.

Grade: 2

Capacity to improve

The capacity for continued improvement is good. The Religious Education self-review is clear, concise and linked to the departmental three-year development plan. Annual priorities are selected from this plan and included in the process of performance management. All development is included and monitored within the school improvement plan.

Grade: 2

What the school should do to improve further

- Continued development of strategies for differentiation at all levels in Key Stages 3 and 4;
- Undertake the department's identified need for a revision of the marking policy and ensure its consistent use;
- Revise the policy for Collective Worship and use the current developmental initiatives in a programme of in-service provision for staff.

Achievement and Standards

Achievements and standards in Religious Education are good. Learners are making good progress taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners. The majority are meeting challenging targets in relation to their capacity and starting points. Most groups of learners including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make at least good progress with some making very good progress in both key stages. The department should now focus on the further development of differentiation in both mixed ability and set teaching groups to maximise progression routes for all learners. In Key Stage 4 58% of learners entered for GCSE achieved grades A*-C. This result is slightly below the current national average (61%). However, in recent years results have shown continued improvement and on several occasions exceeded the average. In Key Stages 3 and 4 Assessment for Learning is making a good contribution to the raising of standards. Learners show outstanding enjoyment for Religious Education. Their behaviour is outstanding. Religious Education enables learners to make an outstanding contribution to the school community.

Grade: 2

Quality of Provision for Religious Education

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning in Religious Education is good. The extent and rigour of assessment is good. In Key Stage 3 there is one formal assessment each term with one at the completion of each study unit in Key Stage 4. In both key stages the assessment tasks are linked to the new Religious Education Levels of Attainment. The good identification and provision for additional learning needs should continue to develop through greater use of teacher-led differentiation in all classes. There is good and effective deployment of the Sensory Support Assistant. The teachers' good subject knowledge lends confidence to their styles, which are varied, imaginative and creative. The levels of challenge in the majority of classes are stretching the learners without inhibiting them. There is good use of peer marking and self-assessment. There is evidence of some good marking and annotation of learners' written work with supporting developmental comments and monitoring of corrections. The department has identified the need to revise the marking policy to ensure its consistent use in all classes. There is good parent/carer involvement in their children's learning and development through regular reporting, meetings, communications, and by reference to learners' journals.

Grade: 2

Curriculum

The curriculum provision for Religious Education is good. There are also a number of outstanding features. Learners in Years 8-11 receive the required 10% with 6.7% in Year 7. The *ICONS* programme is used throughout Key Stage 3 inclusive of the groups in Year 9 commencing GCSE in the final term. The department uses good schemes of work and is now developing these to include learning outcomes linked to Levels of Attainment. Other World Faith Traditions are to be effectively combined with other units in each year. The department should conduct an annual review of the programme to ensure a consistent coverage of all areas of study. In Key Stage 4 all learners have access to either GCSE or Entry Level accredited courses. The department has recently introduced AS Level Religion and Philosophy for one large group of learners in Year 11, having already achieved GCSE in Year 10. This demonstrates outstanding practice in the development of accredited courses for post 14. Consequently the Religious Education curriculum makes a good response to both Archdiocesan and national requirements. It provides an outstanding contribution to the spiritual and moral development of learners.

Grade: 2

Leadership and Management

Religious Education

Leadership and management of Religious Education are good. There is good governor and senior leadership discharge of responsibilities in raising achievement and supporting learners. The head of department provides good leadership through the daily support of staff and by regular departmental and management meetings. There is a good process for performance management with each member of staff observed once a year. In addition the head of department undertakes annual observations. The department is introducing peer monitoring to enable greater sharing of good practice. This process is already in operation on a cross-subject basis between heads of department. There is good promotion of equal opportunities in Religious Education through its promotion of Citizenship and the common good by the continued developments in differentiation and through the range of accredited courses available for all learners at Key Stage 4. Resources are good. The department has seven core members. All are well qualified in Religious Education. They work as a dedicated and professional team. Information communication technology is well used by the department and is gradually becoming available in all of its classrooms. There is efficient and effective deployment of resources between the teaching rooms, most of which are in close proximity. The department is funded according to the same capitation formula as other core subjects.

Grade: 2

Catholic Life of the School

Governors and senior management provide good leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school. The Mission Statement is supported by clear aims and objectives that direct the Catholic life. It has been thoroughly reviewed since the last inspection and prominently displayed in learners' journals and within all school documents. Whilst learners are clearly 'living-out' the Mission Statement its content should be considered more regularly in class and through prayer and worship. The full time lay-chaplain has been in post since the start of the academic year and makes a strong impact on the Catholic life through availability for the whole community and by facilitation of a range of new initiatives that support the school's spiritual life. There is tangible expression of the Catholic life through the full range of fundraising activities, support groups and extra curricular activities undertaken by staff and learners. There is good monitoring of the Catholic life by annual reports from each department and by active participation by members of the governing body in the life of the school. It is recommended this be further enriched by an annual review of the Mission Statement linked to the development of the Religious Education department policy for spiritual and moral development to include the whole school. This process could be guided effectively by the existing Mission Statement Working Group.

Grade: 2

Collective Worship

The quality of Collective Worship is satisfactory. There are also a number of good elements. Collective Worship takes place once each week for year groups and daily in form/tutorial periods. Both should continue to develop greater possibilities for learners' involvement. Learners do respond positively to the efforts being made to enable their greater participation. There is a voluntary Eucharist celebrated each week and a range of services and celebrations throughout the liturgical seasons. The chaplain continues to develop good resources to assist staff and learners in daily reflection and prayer. The policy should now be updated to include strategies for the effective delivery of prayer and worship. Current developmental initiatives should form the basis of further in-service provision to assist staff in this delivery. Collective Worship is making a satisfactory contribution to the spiritual and moral development of learners.

Grade: 3