



Archdiocese of
Liverpool



Diocese of Liverpool

Report on the Denominational Inspection carried
out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 of

**THE ACADEMY OF ST NICHOLAS
A JOINT CATHOLIC AND CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ACADEMY**

51 Horrocks Avenue
Liverpool
L19 5NY

Inspection date:	25 & 26 April 2024
Date of previous inspection:	6 & 7 July 2016
URN	136119
Inspectors:	Deacon Paul Mannings Mrs Fiona Ashton

Type of School:	Multi Academy Trust
Age range of pupils:	11 – 18 (mixed)
Number on roll:	985
Chair of Governors:	Mr Christopher Price
Chief Executive Officer:	Miss Heather Duggan
Head Teacher:	Mr Gary Lloyd
Telephone number:	0151 230 2570
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

The report of the inspection is produced for the Anglican Diocese and the Archbishop of Liverpool (Code of Canon Law 804 and 806) and for the governors of the school.

Description of the school

The Academy of St Nicholas is an Anglican and Catholic 11-18 school. It is under the joint trusteeship of the Archdiocese and Diocese of Liverpool and a member of the All Saints Multi Academy Trust. The academy serves in the main the communities of south Liverpool, with a smaller number drawn from city centre areas. All Saints Sixth Form serves those students who have progressed from the academies of St Nicholas and St Francis of Assisi as well as increasing numbers from local authority secondary schools and a neighbouring authority. The school is within the lowest 5% of the deprivation index for employment and income. It has become culturally diverse which has made a positive impact on the learning environment. The whole environment is purposeful and happy, a place where students and staff can thrive. In terms of religious affiliation, 34% of students identify as being Anglican, 39% as Catholic, and 13% who are members of other world faiths and religions. Within the staff community 71% identify as Christian, 15% of these as being Anglican, and 47% as being Catholic. The religious education department has five trained specialists that teach all lessons throughout the school.

Key for inspection grades:

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

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The distinctiveness and effectiveness of the Academy of St Nicholas as a Christian school is good.

The academy remains a significantly improving community with tangible and measured success in its Christian mission and vision both within school and in its links with home, parishes, and church communities in the wider area. This is a school committed to its gospel values of service to others through respect, ambition, resilience, and compassion.

Grade: 2

Improvement since the last inspection

There has been good improvement since the last inspection with a number of outstanding features. For collective worship there is a process for monitoring and evaluation. There has been training for staff in maximising their usage of existing themes and resources, which remains a work in progress. Over time there has been significant progress in raising students' attainment in religious education. This has impacted significantly in key stage three and progress is now evident in key stage four at GCSE. Sixth form religious education is in place with the content due for further revision. At advanced level Philosophy and Ethics is also in place as a popular and successful choice.

Grade: 2

Capacity for continued improvement

The capacity to maintain and improve what has already been achieved is at least good. This is the result of consistent and successful steps in the usage of the joint inspection self-evaluation framework, which is entirely fit for purpose. Strengths are highlighted and areas for development are clearly identified. During inspection, two of the school's gradings were increased.

Grade: 2

Focus for development

- Provide a rigorous and collaborative process between governors and school leaders for monitoring and evaluating Christian life.
- Revise the content of the programme of study for general religious education in key stage five to ensure that students learn about and learn from a range of world religions and worldviews.
- Ensure all staff receive the necessary support to lead collective worship.

The development of the school's distinctive Christian nature is good at meeting the needs of all learners.

This is a school where students and staff are connected and belong. During interview, representatives spoke with clarity about their achievements. This was echoed in conversations around the school, especially during the guided tour. Students are aware that the Christian character of the school is at the heart of its sense of purpose in guiding their life choices, and supporting rates of progress, which ensures they are confident young people. There is outstanding use of the school environment and campus to articulate its Christian character. The chapel is located at the centre of the atrium and available for public and private prayer, and reflection. Arts and crafts are displayed around the school to create a reflective and spiritual warmth that is tangible. Religious signs and symbols too reflect the reason for this community. Due to significant facilitation from senior leadership including the lay chaplain, many staff and students know how the school's values of respect, ambition, resilience, and compassion directs their pathways through life. The school is increasingly focused on the development of students' social skills which motivate them to become involved in a wide range of charitable and fundraising projects that enrich the common good. Consequently, students are increasingly becoming agents of change. Music and the arts provide wide ranging cultural experiences. There is an outstanding emphasis on teamwork which is well balanced in providing increased levels of students' individual flourishing all underpinned by respect for diversity and difference. Provision for collective worship and religious education continues to strive toward ensuring the community has a lived experience of belonging to this Christian community. Here the levels of maturity amongst sixth form students are notable both in their demeanour and through the clarity with which they link Christian life to faith in action. The school is focusing with intent upon further enriching this link throughout the school so keeping it as a community in which to 'flourish and thrive.'

Grade 2:

The effectiveness of the provision for Collective Worship is good.

Worship is important in the life of the school. This is a whole area that continues to develop through effective practice. The approved process for gathering, reflecting, responding and exploring is used in prayer and worship during form time, amongst form groups and during the range of services throughout the year. There are good levels of planning and evaluation with a focus upon participation of staff and students. Here too the ambience of the chapel and atrium areas provide a conducive atmosphere for reflection and prayer. Lay chaplaincy ensures that quality resources are shared weekly. There is training for leaders. This should now be enriched to include a broader range of resources and encouraged student participation particularly during form time. In many areas this is already good and such practice can be effectively shared. Most students and staff appreciate collective worship as time for personal space and are they are

keen to engage. They appreciate that prayer and worship increase their feelings of connectedness with the Christian community regardless of faith, religion or worldview. Students provide examples of how the whole curriculum is structured to link with the prayer themes and so make collective worship relevant to their everyday lives. The principles and practice of collective worship embrace the traditions and structures of Anglicans and Catholics. There is meaningful inclusion of knowledge, understanding and celebration of other world faiths and traditions. This is underpinned by consistent links with local parishes, churches, priests and ministers. The school's chaplaincy action team can be cited as an example of good practice amongst Year 7 and Year 9 pupils who meet weekly to plan form group worship. Of equal note is the sixth form faith union which is inclusive and focused on faith in action throughout school and in the local and indeed the global community.

Grade: 2

The effectiveness of Religious Education is good.

This is an area of significant improvement since the last inspection. Progress has included the impact of past and current teams of senior leaders and governors wholly committed to religious education being firmly established at the core of the curriculum. The department is now fully staffed by trained specialists. This team is skilfully led by the head of department who is committed to effective continued professional development for the staff. All of the above are outstanding features. The departmental team is cohesive and committed. Areas of expertise are readily shared between staff. They frequently monitor and evaluate progress and share findings with senior leaders and governors who together populate the self-evaluation document, which is a valuable tool for monitoring progress. Students are aware of their rates of progress and how to improve in accordance with their age, stage and requirements for any special educational needs and disabilities. This is evident from the qualitative diagnostic assessment, marking and annotation of students' work. Most are highly supportive of religious education because of its relevance to their lives and the whole rate of teachers planning and creativity. They also enjoy the content. Therefore, students are motivated in class and their behaviour is excellent. All groups in key stages three and four receive 10% teaching time with 5% for the sixth form general course. Programmes of study are inclusive of the content requirements for Anglican and for Catholic schools. There is a current need to continually monitor the establishment of the Religious Education Directory (Catholic) in key stage three and for a thorough revision of the general course in key stage five. GCSE is now well established for all pupils and whilst end of course results still fall short there is evidence that rates of attainment and progress are significantly rising. Advance Level introduced since the last inspection has large cohorts and results are strong.

Grade: 2 The effectiveness of the Leadership and Management of the Christian life of the school is good.

The head teacher ensures the school is outstanding in its living, understanding and shared ownership of its mission statement, vision and values. Since the last inspection there has been a determined drive to deal with areas identified for improvement. The mission is supported by a strong process for monitoring that should now be enriched through increased inclusion of governors. Governors and senior leaders articulate the mission with confidence and energy. They successfully encourage staff and students to do the same. The latter was particularly evident from affirmative conversations with staff. Staff receive support through effective continued professional development in Christian life. They are held accountable in their pursuit of the highest standards from students according to their faiths, religions and world views. This is a place where everybody matters. The school has established active links with the local community and its churches. Together they join in worship and projects to assist those in need. The school is aware of the constant need to ensure that as many as possible of the community are included in the Christian life. There has been an upward trend over time in support from parents who regard the school through title and by action as living its Christian mission. Furthermore, the school has most of the community on board. This is particularly evident in its shared levels of pastoral care, which includes a space where more vulnerable students can be closely supported even in the short term. The school has increased the dimension of the work of the lay chaplain in defining clear areas of responsibility, monitoring of progress and scope for her own identification and fulfilment of the needs of the community both personally and through facilitation. This is a clearly defined management role. Leaders are successful in their striving to maintain a school that is wholly Anglican and wholly Catholic.

Grade: 2

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in developing its distinctive Christian nature	2
The school's capacity for sustained improvement	2

OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS

How good are outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils?	
How well pupils achieve and make progress in Religious Education	2
How well pupils attain in Religious Education	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Christian life of the school	2
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	2

PROVISION

How effective is the Religious Education?	
The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education	2
The effectiveness of assessment in Religious Education	2
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
How effective is the provision for Collective Worship?	
How well Collective Worship supports spiritual and moral development	2

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

How effective is the leadership and management of the Christian life of the school?	
How well leaders and managers use the Mission Statement to promote, a distinctive Christian vision for the school.	2
The extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for all aspects of its distinctive Christian nature so areas needing development are tackled decisively and responsibilities met.	2
How effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion	2

Key to judgements: Grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory and grade 4 inadequate	Grades
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