



School Visit Report

School Name: Cardinal Newman

Headteacher: Claire Jarman

RE Coordinator: Catherine McManus

Date of Visit: 31 January 2023

Adviser: Paul McHugh

Purpose of Visit: Focus Visit

Summary of visit:

The day's activities were based on the guidance given in the Focus Visit information form. I had a chance to be with the Headteacher and other senior leaders, including the Director of Faith and Ethos. I spent good time with the Head of RE and department members, both during learning walks, meetings, and in the RE office. I attended a House liturgical assembly. I had opportunity to talk with the Chaplain about her work. I met with students, both in open forum to invite them to speak about their experience of RE, prayer, liturgy and Catholic mission at Cardinal Newman, and in their capacity as Chaplaincy ambassadors and helpers. I conducted a book trawl with the Head of RE.

Areas to Celebrate:

It was an inspiring visit. In every class we visited during the learning walks, there was a really calm atmosphere and good behaviour for learning. Chaplaincy ambassadors offered articulate and faith-inspired responses. A student's expressive joy at attaining full marks in a GCSE practice question was eloquent testimony to a culture of achievement built over time. The school chapel remains a beautiful asset and a living link to the school's heritage. Finally, the Headteacher has shown and continues to show great support for RE, Catholic Life, and Prayer and Liturgy in Cardinal Newman, not least by encouraging staff to attend diocesan CPD events.

Agreed Action Steps:

Preamble

Led by the Director of Faith and Ethos, it is evident that Cardinal Newman have made great strides in responding to the recommendations of their last S48 inspection in July 2017. The new Chaplain's arrival has lent impetus to that effort to 'further embed structures to support staff and student planning, preparation and leadership of liturgical celebrations'. The 11 staff of the RE department are a committed, faith-filled team with an improving theological profile. They are also very cohesive as a group and fully supportive of the leadership of the Head of RE. Student achievement is accordingly improving at GCSE and is outstanding at A-level RS. The third recommendation – concerning teaching strategies and resources – is being addressed. There has been renewed commitment to adopting school-wide initiatives to improve learning outcomes. The new Religious Education Directory will present fresh challenges in terms of the increased theological rigour of its content and will call for targeted subject-knowledge support. Though I do not include it in the recommendations (since it is an ongoing need for all our schools), there will be a need for enhanced and targeted CPD



for the RE department. RE is on the way to being fully compliant in terms of time allocation and there are planned actions to bring it to full compliance in the near term.

Recommendations

- Ensure that Faith and Ethos, so well expressed in the rest of the campus, are also expressed in the College in a style suitable for KS5 but seamless with Cardinal Newman's overall faith, life and ethos, specifically by:
 - Providing a permanent RE teaching room in the College.
 - Including a Catholic leadership voice in the College.
 - Displaying more evidently in the fabric of the College and in its publications Cardinal Newman's overt and celebrated Catholic identity.
- Embed, through clear and constant modelling, the simple rites of entry into and exit from the school chapel to help students appreciate the transcendent threshold of entering that sacred space and awaken the transcendent dimension in them:
 - Consider putting holy water in the stoups and explain its purpose.
 - Consider simple reminders about movement, posture and gesture in liturgy and model gestures like genuflection.
 - Consider simple reminders about the 'sacred geography' of the chapel area, especially the sanctuary, altar and, most especially, the tabernacle.

(But do continue the joyous, celebratory and reflective prayer and liturgy which I have already experienced)

- Review assessment and feedback in RE so as to:
 - Keep what has been beneficial in the use of Google Classroom.
 - Ensure that books show regular feedback from teachers in a way manageable for teachers and consistent across the RE department to help students show learning over time and take pride in their RE books.
 - Ensure that the appearance of and feedback in RE books compare well with those in other core subjects.

It remains to thank all the staff and students at Cardinal Newman school for their honest, open and warm welcome.