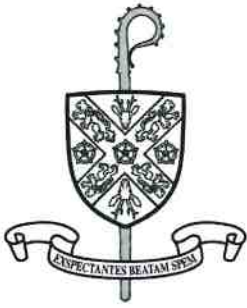


Diocese of Middlesbrough



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13 April 2015

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Interim Review Visit: ST FRANCIS XAVIER, RICHMOND

Conducted by Anthony Finnerty on Wednesday 25th March 2015

Overview:

It was evidenced in the Review Visit to St Francis Xavier that the school has sustained the outstanding quality demonstrated during the 2012 Section 48 inspection and has achieved some very significant developments.

Three areas were highlighted for further improvement in the 2012 inspection: The first was a clearer promulgation of school policy on Collective Worship, greater pupil involvement in planning themes, prayer and reflection; and it was suggested that the appointment of a chaplain might aid this process. In September 2014 the school did appoint a lay chaplain and this area of school life has been rejuvenated! There is now a vibrant chaplaincy group and a core group of students and staff is being forged and formed. There is strong support for Collective Worship from senior leadership and the RE department and Year Heads are positively involved. The strong discipline in the school leads to exemplary behavior of pupils, providing the base on which assemblies can be conducted in imaginative ways. In the brief time I was in the school, evidence indicated that the school is poised to further improve the quality and provision of prayer and worship in the school. The current situation encourages student participation in planning and in delivery, but the students have themselves not yet been sufficiently formed, or trained. I saw good quality material being presented in a respectful setting, which is in itself something to be proud of, but there is an even higher standard to aspire to! As well as an assembly in the main hall, I was also present in a tutor group for a beautifully led period of prayer which was clearly the regular experience of that group of pupils, but conversations with other members of the community revealed that this quality is not consistent across the school. The work of the Anglican and Catholic clergy, the involvement of the RE department and the support of the leadership team is now all coupled with the energy of the new chaplain so that this crucial area of school life can flourish.

The second area noted by the inspection related to the visual display of the Gospel message. The school has been rightly cautious in responding to this recommendation, a caution that has perhaps caused delay, but now the issue is being addressed with some urgency (again the appointment of the lay chaplain has made the difference). There are concrete plans for the greater display of biblical quotations and suitable art work which will witness to the mysteries of Christian faith.

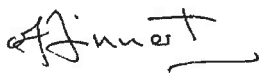
The third area set out by the last inspection recommends greater links with the local, national and global community. There are current practices, especially in relation to local churches and community groups, and also future strategies, which show that this suggestion has been responded to wholeheartedly. A particularly exciting, but as yet under-formulated, prospect relates to the development of ecological projects, such as solar panels on the school roof. This plan expresses concern for the local and the international community while educating pupils and staff in care for the planet inspired by a biblical vision of God's creation and by concern for the poorer nations of the earth.

During the visit I was also able to visit some RE classes and see well-designed and enthusiastically delivered lessons engaging young people of different ages and abilities. The RE department is strong but will lose a valued member of its team in the summer. The governors and the Senior Leadership Team know how important it is to make a strong appointment to maintain the current high quality of provision in this department.

My visit to St. Francis Xavier was a pleasure. There is no doubt that the school (although facing many challenges) is an outstanding example of how a joint Catholic and Anglican enterprise can witness effectively to the gospel and serve young people in their education.

I offer these comments with renewed thanks for the hospitality shown during my visit.

A copy of this report will be sent to Kevin Duffy, Director of Schools, Theresa Laverick, Diocesan Religious Education Adviser, and Dr Jim Whiston, Chair of Governors.



Anthony J. Finnerty
Diocesan Secondary R.E. Adviser

QUESTIONS FOR THE ADVISER TO CONSIDER

<p><i>Does the school have good quality, practical and achievable improvement plans for Religious Education, Collective Worship and the Catholic Life of the school, especially for those areas which were subject to recommendations in the last inspection?</i></p> <p>Yes. The school has a Development Plan which is clear and realistic.</p>	
<p><i>Does the school have evidence that progress of the plans is being monitored?</i></p> <p>Yes</p>	<p><i>Does the school have evidence to demonstrate progress with the plans?</i></p> <p>Yes</p>
<p><i>Did what the Adviser saw and heard around the school reflect at least the previous grade of the S 48 inspection?</i></p> <p>Yes. I was left in no doubt that the high standard attained at the last inspection has been maintained</p>	
<p><i>Did the most recent Ofsted inspection raise any concerns; and are these reflected in Religious Education, Collective Worship and the Catholic Life of the school?</i></p> <p>The only concern raised in the 2012 section 5 report related to the consistency of good teaching. This is not currently an issue in the RE department.</p>	
<p><i>In summary, is the school making good progress since its last S48 inspection?</i></p> <p>Yes</p>	

Recommendations.

1. Accelerate the formation of the chaplaincy groups so that members are formed and trained to lead Christian prayer in the school.
2. Put into effect the plans to use spaces in the school for the display of high quality religious art and expressions of faith. It would be good to set a date (such as Pentecost of this year) to do this.
3. Form a small team to plan the ecological projects , mentioned above, which will involve the whole school and be closely and overtly inspired by teachings from the traditions of the Anglican and Catholic Churches. These projects will relate to the local community, and but will also have an international dimension.