

De Lisle College, a Catholic Voluntary Academy

URN: 138298

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham

19–20 June 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

Catholic life and mission (p.3)

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

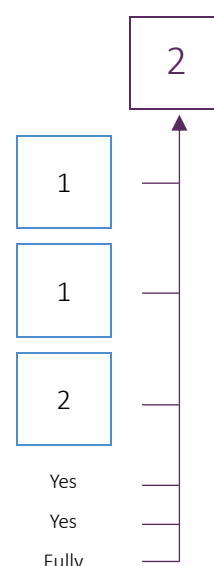
Collective worship (p.7)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection



What the school does well

- Pastoral provision at De Lisle College is exceptional. This is founded on the college's mission and permeates the whole community.
- The behaviour of students is exemplary at all times. Students show respect for each other, the staff and the environment.
- The religious education department is proud of its knowledge-based curriculum through which all students are able to achieve, and many excel.
- The provision for core religious education in the sixth form is inspirational, giving students the opportunity to develop their creative and reflective skills.
- The development of a five-strand approach for the mission team, linked to the LOVES section of the mission statement, is promoting and developing student leadership successfully across the college.

What the school needs to improve

- Provide opportunities for all students to participate in Catholic Social Teaching across the curriculum, further understanding the theology which underpins their actions.
- Ensure that all students are able to access “discern” and “respond” opportunities within religious education lessons.
- Ensure that planning and evaluation of collective worship is undertaken consistently by students.

Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Catholic life and mission key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

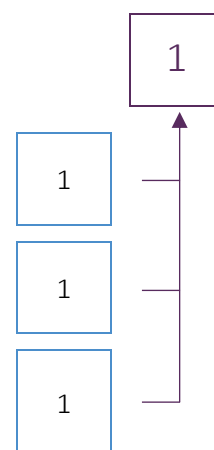
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school



Students at De Lisle College benefit from a strong culture of welcome, which is evident in the strength of relationships at all levels. This is because Christ is authentically at the heart of the college. Students greet each other, their teachers, and visitors with great respect; behaviour is exemplary in lessons and throughout the college, underpinned by 'the De Lisle Way'. New students say, 'We are so glad to be here' and speak very positively about the college. Students support many national and local charities including Cafod, local food banks and homeless shelters: this enables them to respond well to the demands of Catholic Social Teaching. Furthermore, students' attendance at specific conferences has effectively supported their understanding of Catholic Social Teaching. Students say that, 'to help raise money for those less fortunate is to fulfil our school mission'. Although the college has chosen four saints as house patrons, not all students can describe how they can follow in their saints' footsteps. Students value the chaplaincy provision, and the mission team actively participate in and contribute to opportunities provided by the college. The recently designed artwork for the mission statement was drawn by a student, demonstrating how the gifts and talents of students impact positively on the whole community.

Staff embrace and are committed to the mission statement, 'Rooted and grounded in love', regularly going above and beyond their calling to fulfil this mission. As a result, the college is held in very high regard by parents who, when describing staff, say that 'they genuinely care'. A repeated phrase is that, 'the school never gives up on us'. There is an embedded culture of inclusivity where all are treated with dignity and this is articulated beautifully by all stakeholders. The pastoral arrangements, house system and 'prep time' create a sense of family and belonging within the college. The physical environment is outstanding; the mission statement is highlighted everywhere and displays clearly illustrate the Catholic identity of the college. Retreat and pilgrimage opportunities further enhance the development of the whole person. In-house retreats are occasions of which students speak highly: the Year 11 'more than

a grade' retreat delivered by the Mizan Foundation was particularly well received by students and supported their understanding of forgiveness. The provision for relationships, sex, and health education meets all statutory requirements and is firmly rooted in Church teaching.

The headteacher has an inspiring vision for the college's mission and expresses this with confidence and clarity, supported by a dedicated senior leadership team. The local governing body are enthusiastic and dedicated in placing Catholic life and mission at the heart of all they do. They are ambitious for the college and monitor the Catholic life of the college through visits, which are carefully documented and reported. Leaders work closely with the diocese, the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust and the local parishes. Governors understand fully their responsibility to hold senior leaders to account and provide appropriate challenge when necessary. Leaders know that self-evaluation is at the heart of driving improvements in Catholic life and mission across the college. Leaders and governors place the highest priority on the dignity of workers, and there is an explicit commitment to staff well-being. The Catholic curriculum extends beyond religious education for some students, but not all: it has, however, become a more prominent feature in the art curriculum, for example. Staff are clearly supported in their understanding about working in a Catholic school through a coherent induction programme and ongoing continuous professional development, and staff value the support given to them by the senior leadership team.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

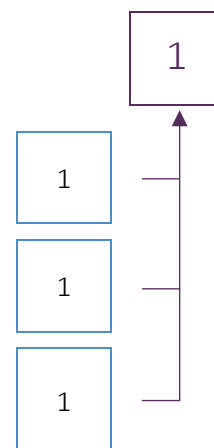
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education



Students respond well to the knowledge-based curriculum, which is delivered consistently by experienced and highly skilled staff. Students enjoy their religious education lessons, and value the retrieval resources provided which help them to self-assess their progress to great effect. In Key Stage 4, students are thoroughly prepared for examinations by making regular reference to exam criteria and techniques in lesson activities: they respond well to opportunities for practice questions. Consequently, the outcomes in public examinations are outstanding for all groups of students, especially at Key Stage 4, with attainment and progress above national and diocesan averages. Success in Key Stage 4 has led to increased uptake at A level and strong examination results, with most students achieving the highest grades and making excellent progress. The quality of work and its presentation is consistently of high-quality, comparable with that of other core subjects. Great emphasis is placed on religious literacy and this is very successful, as students are confident in using specialist vocabulary in their written and oral work, demonstrating their ability to reflect spiritually and ethically on what they have learnt. The 'echo reading' approach to new vocabulary gives students the confidence to learn new technical language. Participation in external events, such as the 'Ethics Cup', work with Nottingham University's theology department, and students completing a certificate in philosophy, add to the enjoyment of religious education.

The teaching of religious education at De Lisle College is exceptional. Teachers know the ingredients of excellent teaching and consistently provide them in all lessons. Their subject knowledge is deep and secure, enabling them to answer students' questions and reshape explanations to correct misconceptions. Teachers have very high expectations in lessons, nurturing the confidence and resilience of students. The religious education department uses "discern" and "respond" questions, in line with the Religious Education Directory, though this is not consistent practice across the whole department. In the best religious education lessons, adaptive teaching works well, with effective use of specific resources. Extensive work has been undertaken to ensure that a well-resourced curriculum faithfully reflects the demands of the

Religious Education Curriculum Directory. Staff are constantly tweaking the booklets they make to meet the needs of the current cohort. The religious education team go far to support their students, encapsulating the college motto 'Quod justum, non quod utile' ('Do what is right, not what is easy'). The religious education curriculum is a faithful expression of the Religious Education Directory and has full parity with other core subjects.

The subject leader for religious education has an inspiring vision and a high level of expertise, supported by a highly committed and dedicated team. She liaises with other heads of department to support them in their delivery of both GCSE and the Key Stage 3 curriculum. Departmental resources have been shared with other schools in the diocese as examples of good practice. Leaders in the religious education department have ensured that they stay abreast of changes brought about by the introduction of the new Religious Education Directory. This has meant that the new curriculum has been implemented already with Year 7 and will be rolled out over the whole of Key Stage 3 over three years. Leaders also have embarked on training with exam boards for both GCSE and A Level to ensure that the provision for these courses is of the best quality. Enrichment opportunities have included students visiting a synagogue to support their GCSE studies. The department includes enrichment opportunities for staff including high quality training with a particular focus on Hinduism. Monitoring and evaluation are planned carefully to ensure well-targeted improvements are reliably identified and further enhance the quality of provision.

Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

1

2

De Lisle is a prayerful community where students' response to and participation in prayer is good. Students are respectful and engage in prayer and liturgy reverently. Students experience prayer in a variety of ways. For example, they use different traditional prayers at certain times of the year, include silence when meditating, and regularly incorporate various visual stimuli to help focus their intentions. Students are not confident in understanding why traditional Catholic prayer forms are used or why these are important. Prayer that is planned and led by students within the school is mainly directed by the student mission team. Some students speak readily about how college life and specific topics within the curriculum influence their prayers and how this inspires them into action, though this is not fully embedded across the college. Some students contribute to the evaluation of prayer through student voice, though evaluation of prayer and liturgy is generally limited to the mission team. Students are able to describe parts of the Church's liturgical year, such as Advent and Lent, but are not always able to make the link between these and the curriculum or the wider life of the college. When students pray after lunchtime, the prayer used, which is linked to the mission statement, was written by a group of students.

Worship is a core feature of the college's Catholic identity. The beautiful chapel is at the centre of the college and the Blessed Sacrament remains present. The chapel is always open for students with activities taking place every lunchtime. A prayer space is provided for students of other faiths to pray and this supports the inclusive nature of the college as a whole. Planned prayers are central to the life of the college. Prayer is always linked to the word of the week, contains scripture and a reflection. The 'prep time' prayer takes place later, building on the prayer experience from the beginning of the day. Celebrations of the word are led by different senior leaders. The mission group is also instrumental in leading these times, supported by the lay chaplain whose work is making a valuable contribution to the prayer life of the college and provides an excellent role model to all. Greater numbers of students are not closely involved in the leadership, planning and delivery of prayer and liturgy across the college.

The new collective worship policy and recently shared 'expectations of prayer' document support staff to ensure that leaders' expectations are clearly communicated, with relevant training offered to support staff in meeting them. These documents help staff with their understanding of the importance of prayer in the life of the college. They have a strategy for growing the skills taught for pupil leadership of prayer, though this does not impact many students beyond the mission team. Senior leaders inspire others through their modelling of exemplary practice. This ensures common messages are delivered and consistently high standards of worship are experienced by all. Prayer and liturgy are included as part of the college's self-evaluation cycle, though this is not systematic, nor does it fully involve students in establishing its impact on the community. The local governing body shows commitment to the prioritisation of prayer and liturgy, which is evidenced by their investment in chaplaincy, where staff provide models of excellent leadership through provision. Lay chaplaincy work nurtures and shepherds the mission team's confidence and develops their skills. Leaders plan ambitiously for retreats and pilgrimages, despite growing costs. Staff speak enthusiastically about the quality of professional development in regard to prayer and liturgy and, as a result, all staff understand its importance.

Information about the school

Full name of school	De Lisle College, a Catholic Voluntary Academy
School unique reference number (URN)	138298
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8554601
Full postal address of the school	De Lisle College, a Catholic Voluntary Academy, Thorpe Hill, Loughborough, LE11 4SQ
School phone number	01509 268739
Headteacher	Chris Maher
Chair of Local Governing Body	Helen Torresi
School Website	http://www.delisle.leics.sch.uk/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi Academy Trust
Phase	Secondary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	12 December 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	Requires Improvement

The inspection team

Louisa Craig	Lead
Claire Restell	Team
Caroline Cirino	Team
Janet Mellor	Team

Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement