



ST MARGARET WARD CATHOLIC ACADEMY



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Our Ref: 01A/OfstedInspectionReport/DM/LBI

17th November 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to you as a parent or carer of a child in the Newman Catholic Collegiate as I would like to share with you our recent Ofsted inspection report.

Since I have become Principal at St. Margaret Ward Catholic Academy I have been very proud of the improvements that we have made as a school. The school grounds are safer, children are very well looked after, the finances of the school are stable, the curriculum is far more challenging and our expectations of students are higher. During this time, we have introduced our 'Teaching minds, touching hearts and transforming lives' approach to the holistic education of our children to ensure that, not only are they supported to achieve a high quality, challenging academic curriculum, but careful thought is also given to the wider curriculum around the child to ensure they are well prepared for life outside and beyond school. In addition, we continue to develop the extra-curricular offer for students after school and during the school holidays. I am sure many of your children may have accessed the school holiday clubs we offer and have heard of the exciting transition work we do.

In the Collegiate we want to offer a high quality 3-19 education and it is hoped that the natural progression for your children is to move to St. Margaret Ward when they leave their Primary schools.

In September this year, St Margaret Ward received a 2-day Ofsted inspection. We are very pleased with this report and the number of positive comments contained within. I would like to draw your attention to a few key points;

With regard to our 'Teaching minds', academic curriculum;

'Leaders are ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Over recent years, they have taken steps to ensure that pupils study a broad range of subjects in depth from Year 7 to Year 9. As a result of these actions, more and more pupils are better prepared to study the range of subjects that are part of the English Baccalaureate.'

'Teachers give pupils regular opportunities to answer questions about topics that they have learned before. Pupils told us that this is helping them to remember content they have learned in the past. Teachers explain subject content clearly and are knowledgeable about their subjects. In the sixth form, they correct students' misconceptions well.'

In their observations around the culture and behaviour of the school;

'Leaders have very clear expectations for how all members of the community behave towards each other. Staff share these expectations, known as the 'Margaret Ward Way', clearly and consistently with pupils.'

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Pupils appreciate this clarity. They told inspectors, 'we know where we stand'. Pupils try hard and consistently live up to these expectations.'

'The school environment is calm and orderly. Pupils behave sensibly in lessons and at other times of the school day. They follow teachers' instructions and are respectful of each other.'

With regards to our 'Touching Hearts' Curriculum and extra-curricular offer;

'The school's 'Touching Hearts' curriculum is a strength of the school. It develops pupils socially and personally. As part of this curriculum, pupils learn about different faiths and beliefs. There is a strong emphasis on mutual respect and tolerance. This prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. In addition, the 'Touching Hearts' curriculum builds year on year so that pupils get the information they need at the right time.'

'Leaders acted swiftly to restart lunchtime and after-school clubs following the disruption due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. There is an impressive range on offer. Most pupils make good use of them. These include an orchestra, choir, football, jazz band and drama club and many, many more.'

Their recognition of how we keep children safe;

'Staff are knowledgeable about the signs of abuse. They have a strong understanding of the school's safeguarding procedures. Leaders ensure that staff pass on any concerns about a pupil quickly. When pupils need help, leaders take swift action. Leaders are acutely aware of the local risks to pupils. They ensure that pupils get the support and information they need to help them keep safe.'

'Bullying rarely happens. If it does, pupils know who to speak to and they are confident it will be sorted out quickly.'

They also made positive observations about how we support students with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND);

'Pupils with SEND learn the same curriculum as their peers. These pupils have an individual 'pupil passport'. This passport sets out how adults can best support them. Teachers use this information well in lessons. As a result of these approaches, pupils with SEND achieve well.'

I am sure you will agree this is a report to be proud of however, both the staff and I are committed to continue our improvement to strive to become an Outstanding school.

To conclude, despite the interruptions and distractions of the pandemic, we have managed to make significant improvements to the school over the past three and a half years which have been acknowledged and recognised in this inspection. We are very proud of the relationship we have with all the schools in the Newman Catholic Collegiate and we will continue to focus on improving towards our goal of becoming one of the best schools in the country. This Ofsted inspection has affirmed that we are on the right path and look forward to welcoming all children from our feeder primary schools to our wonderful school.

Attached to this letter is a full copy of our Ofsted report.

Yours faithfully,



Mr D McKenna
Principal

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