



Excellence in Pupil Development Award

Verification Report

School name:	St Damian's Roman Catholic Science College	
School address and postcode:	Lees Road, Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancashire OL6 8BH	
School telephone:	0161 330 5974	
School website:	https://www.stdamians.co.uk/	
Head teacher:	Mr S Logue	
Head teacher's email:		
EPDA coordinator:	Ms M Joyce	
EPDA coordinator's email:		
Award verifier:	Mr C Noble	
Award adviser (if applicable):		
Date of verification:	13 th July 2022	



Commentary on the evidence provided:

The evidence consisted of an examination of written evidence for those key performance indicators where the evidence had not been available at the time of the interim visit on 29th April 2022, a tour of the College with the Head Teacher, a presentation given by the Head and the Award coordinator and discussions held with four parents, four staff and seven students in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10. Written evidence from a governor was also made available.

The written evidence was of a uniformly excellent quality with the evidence supplied very accurately matching that which was required; but the spoken evidence had this verifier requiring new superlatives. The parents, some of whom knew schools very well indeed, were not just enthusiastic in their praise and support for how the College had promoted and protected their children's personal development, but they spoke from a point of well-informed appreciation of what is usually possible in secondary schools. They could explain what the College had put in place to improve the confidence, personal skills and dispositions of their children. The students, similarly, showed enormous insight and perception as to why they were the articulate, confident and thoughtful young people they had become. Many were leaders in a variety of fields which the College had organised for them. Some said they would not have recognised themselves from where they were and who they had been before entering the College. Such had been the opportunities given them, along with appropriate support, that they had developed exponentially. They were very appreciative of the PSHCE programme and the tutor time they experienced.

Staff were similarly effusive, very committed to the development of the 'whole child' and understanding of the importance of personal development both for its own sake but also to help maximise academic achievement. A lively discussion took place as to why the College had managed to achieve all it had in pupil development, and it was agreed that 'St. Damian's Way' was probably the main reason. This negotiated set of approaches and values was also quoted by students.

There is no doubt that the rich PSHCE programme, which incorporates 'British Values' as well as the complete suite of PSHCE topics, is very well resourced and taught. This is supported by a very strong enrichment programme of visiting speakers and visits out, by the tutor time, Aspire (drop-down) days, and by a very good menu of clubs such as the debating club, the LGBTIA+ club, the eco club and the journalism club. Students are appreciative of what they have in the College and possess a well-developed understanding of the importance of these 'soft skills' for their current lives and their lives ahead.



Strengths identified during verification:

There were many clear strengths which were on display during the verification. The leadership and support of personal development by the Head and the Award Coordinator were very impressive and very important. The lunchtime 'wet-sponging' of the Head and other staff as part of a charity fund-raising initiative was indicative of both the fun-loving and relaxed atmosphere, with a serious intent, in school, and also the lengths to which staff willingly go to help develop the personal and societal experiences of the students.

The organisation and delivery of PSHCE is also a huge strength. It was highly valued by staff, students and parents. Its coverage is comprehensive and very well supported - as mentioned above.

An interesting discussion took place as to whether being a Catholic school with an expected sense of community and strong moral purpose was an advantage in developing students or whether this came more from the character of the staff, the appointments made and the strategic use of the curriculum. No conclusion was reached; all were clearly strengths.

Impact:

The College felt that it was already doing a lot in terms of the personal development of students but that EPDA has guided it to becoming more strategic. Hence:

In the strategic plan – The 'St. Damian's Way' means we always ensure our pupils' personal development is a high priority.

EPDA ensured that an audit was carried out, therefore identifying next steps required

EPDA ensured we streamlined our approach and developed a strategic curriculum of when and how different aspects of Personal Development are delivered

Specific scheduled times during the year to obtain pupil feedback

More effective collection of feedback from Partners of the school

Further growth of pupil leadership opportunities



Areas for development:

Next year we will:

Continue to widen our Pupil leadership programme through:

- Embedding the role of the Student Council
- Developing and growing the Debate club
- Promoting and celebrating the work of our exceptional STEM leaders
- Linking the role of Form/ Vice Captains with the Student Council
- Ensuring our LGBTQ+ community continues to grow in confidence
- Ensuring the Journalism club continues to flourish

Refine our bespoke Pastoral Schedules ensuring pupils fully engage with Pastoral themes and know they are explicitly linked to FBV

Embed mechanisms of obtaining feedback from external partners

Continue to review the impact of our external partner network

Promote the impact the EPDA has had on our community through social media, Headteacher's letters, Visible Displays around school

Verifier recommendation:

I recommend that St Damian's Roman Catholic College receives the Excellence in Pupil Development Award for a period of three years.



Head teacher comments: thloc

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