
The Diocese of Hallam Section 48 Report

The Catholic Life of the School and Religious Education

Diocese of Hallam



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

St BERNARD'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

School URN	138329
Name of Chair of Governors	Mr Austin Senior
Name of Head teacher	Mr Terry Mahon
Date of inspection	8 November 2016
Section 48 Inspector	Mr Sean McClafferty and Mrs Lissa Oldcorn

“ An enthusiasm for the things of God”

Introduction

The Inspection of St Bernard's Catholic High School has been carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Diocese of Hallam Framework and Schedule for Section 48 Inspections as approved by the Bishop of Hallam.

The process of inspection in the Diocese of Hallam has been developed as an activity of the Church to support schools in further deepening the quality of Catholic education provided.

Description of the School

St Bernard's is an 11-16 Catholic Voluntary Aided comprehensive school located just outside the centre of Rotherham. It is smaller than average size with 694 students on roll. The school serves the parishes of Forty Martyrs"; St Bede"s; St Mary"s (Herringthorpe); St Mary"s (Maltby); Blessed Trinity; St Gerard"s in the Rotherham Deanery and St Joseph"s, Dinnington, in the Bassetlaw Deanery.

It has integrated provision on site for blind utilising LA VIT supporting 1 student. The proportion of students from minority-ethnic groups is below average. Proportion of Pupil Premium students is broadly in line with national averages. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities supported at previous school action is below average and the proportion of students (K & Statemented) is above average. The School serves a relatively deprived catchment: Deprivation factor = -0.24. School is currently over-subscribed, (PAN = 140 each Year; total 700). In year transfers have been high compared to previous years. There have been 32 appeals for entry to school since September 2015 for places.

Type of School	Catholic Voluntary Academy
Age profile of students	11-16
Number on roll	694
Number of students on Special Needs and Disabilities Register	116
Number of students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs	5
Number of Catholics on roll	386
Number of Other Christian Denominations	163
Number of other Faiths No religious affiliation	145
School Address	Herringthorpe Valley Road Rotherham S65 3BE
Telephone Number	01709 828183
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School Website	www.sbch.org.uk

SUMMARY JUDGEMENTS

OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS

2

THE PROVISION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

2

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

1

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

2

The overall effectiveness judgment is based on all the evidence available.

- Outcomes for pupils,
- The provision for Catholic Education
- Leaders and Managers

Inspection Grades: 1 is Outstanding, 2 is Good, 3 requires improvement in order to be good, 4 is Inadequate

OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS

How good outcomes are for pupils, taking into account variations between groups.

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school.	1
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	3
How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' Collective Worship	2

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

- There is a strong, caring Christian ethos which is evident throughout the school. Students spoke about the 'friendly, supportive environment' where 'all students were given a chance to succeed'.
- Students are encouraged to be involved in shaping the provision of the Catholic life of the school through the chaplaincy group which organises events in school such as a Christmas dinner for the community.
- Students are keen to support others in need: For example, the school regularly raise money for good causes with national and international charities, such as the Lesotho Project, Bluebell Wood Hospice & St Wilfrid's Centre.
- All year groups have the opportunity to attend a retreat, and this has a very high uptake. Students are also given the opportunity to participate in a pilgrimage to Lourdes and Lesotho. These are popular with the students and provide them with the opportunity to experience community living whilst helping those in need.
- Students are enthusiastic about taking on positions of responsibility in the school such as student council, form reps and the Head boy/girl team.
- Effective care, guidance and support systems are in place in the school. Students are able to access counselling from the school Chaplain and Hallam Caring Service. This has had a positive influence on the students who have developed resilience, self confidence and enhanced relationships within school.

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education requires improvement

- Attainment on entry is at national norms for all year groups. Outcomes at KS4 in Religious Education remain below the national average and that of other Diocesan schools and Catholic schools nationally. Y11 in 2016 performed worse in their Religious Education than in their other

core subjects. This performance was also significantly less than that seen nationally (70.7% - 2015 national data).

- There is, however, an improving attainment at Key Stage 4 over the last three years. (2014 – 53.5% A*-C, 2015 – 60.6% A*-C, 2016 – 61.7%).
- The number of students who achieve A*-A is slightly below the national figure (29.7% in 2015) and other Diocesan schools with 8% in 2014, 21.3% 2015 and 28.1% in 2016. This has been addressed through targeted interventions during form time and the use of exam preparation documents.
- Boys' achievement and engagement in RE is a concern and they significantly underachieved, with 39.7% achieving A*-C at GCSE (63% nationally). An action plan has been created to address this.
- Progress is improving but it is not yet good: The percentage of pupils making 3 Levels of Progress is 64.8% (School Target 100%), with those making 4 Levels of Progress 41.6% (School Target 94.5%).
- Most students speak positively about their experiences in RE and appreciate its value and relevance within school. Some pupils have a reasonable sense of where they are in terms of progress but are sometimes vague about how they can improve.

How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' Collective Worship is good

- The Church's liturgical cycle is well integrated into the life of the school. The provision for prayer life and collective worship is excellent.
- Students demonstrate respect and behave well during collective worship although some are passive if not directly involved.
- Many students lead prayers, assemblies and acts of worship with confidence and respect which are part of the daily routine within form time. There is an expectation for students to be involved.
- Students have a good understanding of the religious seasons and feasts. They are at ease when praying with their school community and appreciate what is taking place.

PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education.	3
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning.	2
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.	1

The Quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education overall requires improvement as overtime the standards reached by pupils are not sufficiently high given their starting points.
- However, on the day a large number of lessons were observed during the inspection. The majority of the lessons seen were good. However, some of those observed required improvement.
- In the best lessons seen during the inspection, there was a good variety of tasks presented to stimulate and maintain students' interest, good and appropriate references to exam techniques and good pace and use of questions. In these lessons teachers displayed high expectations of the students and as a result all students were on task and were seen to be enjoying their learning. However, lack of pace in lessons and a lack of differentiation were also observed.
- Marking & feedback was seen regularly in books. However, there was little student response seen and areas identified for improvement were sometimes generic and not subject specific, e.g. 'take care with presentation'. There was also little assessment seen so some students were unclear about where they were in regard to their target grade or how to improve.
- Student outcomes indicate that that teaching and learning is not yet consistently good.

The extent to which the Religious Education Curriculum promotes pupils' learning is good

- The requirements of the Curriculum Directory published by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales are met in all key stages, and are supplemented by assemblies and prayer. Religious Education is well resourced and the requirement of 10% timetable allocation is fully met.
- Staff are very knowledgeable and show a strong commitment to the Church's mission. Relationships between staff and students are outstanding and this leads to positive attitudes to learning.
- The Department is currently working on developing resources for the new GCSE curriculum, and has chosen to study Route B of the Eduqas specification.

- Extra-curricular opportunities – such as retreats, Lourdes, Lesotho visit, countless charity initiatives - are varied and have a high take up.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding

- The quality of Collective Worship is exceptional. The school, from the headteacher through to all the staff (teaching and support), show a passion and desire to engage all pupils’ interest and inspire them in deep thought and heartfelt response.
- Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and a key part of every school celebration. The school chaplain plays a major role in ensuring that Collective Worship is rich and varied. Her philosophy is one of empowerment, with staff and students encouraged not only to participate but to lead Acts of Worship.
- The voluntary masses are open to all students and student attendance at these masses is impressively high. Staff spoke enthusiastically about the Inset days and how effective they are in increasing participation and confidence of staff in leading prayer and liturgies.
- A thriving chaplaincy team exists: the chaplain informed us that ‘Everyone is a member of our chaplaincy team’. This illustrates the inclusive nature of this aspect of the school. Students participate willingly in leading Acts of Worship through assemblies, retreats and masses. Retreats take place in every year and the uptake is very high. This is again a very strong feature of the school.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

How effective the provision is for Catholic education

How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.	1
How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement for improvement to outcomes for pupils.	2

How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils is outstanding

- Leaders, governors and managers are deeply committed to the Church’s mission in education. The Headteacher states that everyone in the school community ‘lives out their mission day by day’ and is hugely proud of the Christian values which he sees as underpinning the success of the school.

- Leaders and managers are aware of the areas that need to improve and are very clear as to the actions that they must take to improve further as a school and in particular the outcomes for students in Religious Education. They are also aware of the need to continue to develop Catholic senior leaders as part of succession planning. The chaplain monitors and evaluates different aspects of the Catholic Life of the school and this evaluation acts as the basis for further improvements.
- The headteacher is passionate about the Catholic Life of the school and clearly articulates this to the school community. The chaplaincy within school provides outstanding guidance to staff, students and the school's wider community. Staff are encouraged to participate fully in the religious life of the school, deliver assemblies and to pray with students. Staff receive training on the Catholic ethos as part of their induction into the school.

How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement for improvement to outcomes for pupils is good

- Governors and colleagues express confidence in the leadership of Religious Education. Despite recent staffing issues, the leadership within the department appears strong and to have a firm grasp of the issues. They have identified strategies to move the department forward – a 3 year increasing trend does encourage optimism.
- Leaders and managers have introduced a further range of monitoring activities relating to provision and outcomes. These activities need to bed in at the moment as it is too early to say what impact on outcomes, particularly regarding boys' achievement, will be made.
- Through the school's recording and tracking system, students' attainment and progress are being monitored more closely. The RE department has improved its level of analysis of data and is now adept at monitoring students' progress on an individual basis, introducing interventions to support learning as necessary.

This final section draws together all the evidence and judgements made in the preceding sections

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	2
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The overall effectiveness of St Bernard’s Catholic High School is good.

- Outcomes are generally improving but are not yet outstanding.
- The Governors, senior leaders and middle managers are effective in developing the Catholic life of the school placing collective worship at its heart.
- Standards are rising in Religious Education and with the stabilisation of the RE team under new leadership, the indications are that this improvement will continue.
- This good team work is reflected in the harmonious ethos among the pupils, many of whom opt to extend their Religious Studies into the sixth form. Teaching observed was mostly good or better, however this is yet to impact fully on student outcomes.
- Prayer and worship underpin the Catholic life of the school so that pupils’ spiritual, moral and social development is very strong. They are helped to understand the Church’s global mission through their support for many charities.
- The provision to promote Catholic education at St Bernard’s is good and all connected with the school can be rightly proud of its achievements.

Recommendations

- Review steps taken to develop future Catholic leaders in school so that key appointments at senior and middle level have a strong field of internal candidates.
- Ensure the plans in place for improving outcomes within Religious Education have the desired impact, making any further changes as required, following any future monitoring and evaluation.
- Continue to ensure that Religious Education has the same profile within the school as the other core subjects so that attainment and progress in RE matches that achieved in other areas.