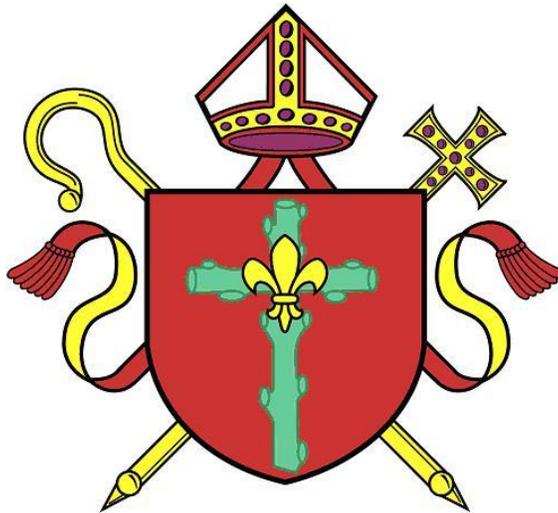


DIOCESE OF NOTTINGHAM INSPECTION SERVICE



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

(Section 48, Education Act 2005)

Saint Benedict Catholic Voluntary Academy
Duffield Road
Darley Abbey
Derby
DE22 1JD

4 February 2013
(Spring Term 2013)

URN: 112973

SECTION 48 DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT

School:	Saint Benedict Catholic Voluntary Academy
Headteacher:	Dr Christopher Reynolds
Chair of Governors:	Mr Mike Ray
Date of Inspection:	4 February 2013
Inspection Team:	Mrs Brenda Carson & Mr Paul Martin
URN Number:	112973
Overall Grade Awarded:	2

Description of the school

Saint Benedict Catholic Voluntary Academy converted to academy status on 1 September 2012. The academy is much larger than most schools. The academy houses the enhanced resource provision for partially sighted, blind and severely disabled students in South Derbyshire. This resource is managed by the governing body of Saint Benedict. The student population of the academy has changed over time. There are now more than average numbers of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and a growing number of students who are new to speaking English. The numbers of students supported at school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is lower than that found nationally although there are more students than average supported at the school action stage. The number of students eligible for the Pupil Premium, which provides additional funding for students in care, students known to be eligible for free school meals or with a parent serving in the armed forces, is in line with the national average but is increasing. The academy currently meets the floor standards, which set the government's minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

Common grading scale for all inspection judgements	
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness

Saint Benedict is a good Catholic School. The Catholic life of the school is excellent and emanates from the strong leadership of the headteacher, the senior leadership team, the chaplain and the Religious Education department, all of whom are dedicated to continuous improvement and to the ethos of the school.

There is a real sense of community, commitment to the 'common good' and a determination to continue to move forward despite the recent disappointment in relation to the withdrawal of the 'Building Schools for the Future' programme.

Students are valued and they in turn appreciate the opportunities afforded them to become educated young people with an awareness of their responsibility to help build a more just and caring society. The prayer life of the school is well planned, however it could be developed further with more opportunities for pupils of all ages to take on the responsibility for leading worship.

The curriculum at Key Stage 3 is delivered using an integrated approach which incorporates Religious Education. In response to the previous inspection, the school has ensured that Religious Education is taught by specialists. Consideration should be given to the effectiveness of double lessons or two hours of Religious Education on one day. There is a variation in the consistency of the quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education, from outstanding to satisfactory, with a judgement of mostly good overall. External examination results are not yet good. Projections indicate some improvement and closing the gap with English but this gap is significant, for example, A* - C in English has been approximately 20% higher than Religious Education for the last 3 years.

The Religious Education department works effectively as a team and there is an ethos of sharing and working positively together, for example with the peer coaching initiative, for the benefit of the pupils and the department as a whole.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Achieve, or exceed, the predicted GCSE results for Religious Education: 53% A* - C in 2013; 61% A* - C in Summer Term 2014.
- Continue to develop effective techniques that encourage and enable pupils to improve their work in Religious Education.
- Provide more opportunities for development of independent learning skills, group work and peer assessment – particularly at Key Stage 4.
- Enable all students to lead worship and ensure that there is a consistent quality across all Acts of Worship across the school.
- Provide the best possible environment for teaching and learning in Religious Education.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

The strong leadership team with its shared vision, the increasingly stable Religious Education department, and the exceptional support and direction of the lay-chaplain make further development a strong likelihood. The main priorities are now to embed examples of outstanding practice in order to ensure that the key recommendations above, particularly in terms of pupil outcomes, are achieved.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement	Grade: 1
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PUPILS

How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups

The standards in Religious Education at the end of Key Stage 3 (Level 5+) are improving but are below those in English and this comparative statistic (which is used within Section 48 inspections at national level) has widened over the last 3 years. However, the number of pupils achieving Level 6 or better in Religious Education has improved significantly and is now above English. This would suggest that the school leaders should investigate further the progress of pupils at Level 5 and below.

Outcomes for students at Key Stage 4 are well below the national average. The percentage achieving A* - C dropped from 52% in 2011 (94% of cohort entered) to 42% in 2012 (100% of cohort entered); whilst English attained 69% in 2011 (100% of cohort entered) and 65% in 2012 (100% of cohort entered). Current data indicates that the 2013 cohort will achieve in line with the school's predictions of 53% at grades A* - C.

At Post 16, the numbers studying Edexcel Philosophy and Ethics to A2 are small and no top grades A*/ A have been achieved in recent years. Results at A/S indicate that value added is in line with national averages. Two thirds of the A/ S group from 2010 to 2011 and one third from 2011 to 2012 did not continue to A Level – this is an issue for the school to explore further.

Students with Special Educational Needs are well supported in class. The Enhanced Resource Base is a credit to the school and all who work within it. The high level needs of pupils attending the base are exceptionally well met and support is delivered with compassion and dignity. This is a real strength of the school and a daily witness to this community living the Gospel values.

How good outcomes are for pupils, taking account of variations between different groups	Grade: 2
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LEADERS AND MANAGERS

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan improvement to outcomes for pupils

The clear vision of the Catholic educational mission of this Catholic Academy is shared at all levels. Governors understand their strategic role, the challenges facing the school and they carry out their responsibilities in relation to Canon Law. The headteacher leads the school well, and the leadership team is committed to raising standards and to the mission of the school. Excellent pastoral and SEN provision promotes inclusion, shared values and the Catholic ethos.

The Religious Education department is resourced in line with core subjects. However, the school should continue with plans to improve the learning environment in which Religious Education is taught.

The school works hard to ensure there is a sense of belonging to something special and students commented upon this in the playground and in the various groups that the inspectors met. There is an increasingly diverse faith community at Saint Benedict and all members actively work towards the establishment of positive relationships within the school so that pupils value diversity and are supportive and respectful of others. These positive relationships, which are a real strength of the school, were evidenced during the inspection in class and during meetings with student groups. One student, who joined the school in Year 12, commented on the terrific sense of community he has experienced at this school.

Excellent opportunities are provided at local, diocesan, national and international level for involving students in events that broaden their appreciation of global justice, community cohesion and fair trade. Pupils commented that, 'the school is a supportive and caring community where spiritual and moral development is made important'. 'We are a large school but it feels small because all the staff know you and genuinely care about you'. The Turnaround Centre is valued by pupils who receive support and develop understanding of the Christian values of sorrow, forgiveness and reconciliation.

The leadership and management of Religious Education were judged to be good. The Religious Education Director of Learning monitors all aspects of the department. Self-evaluation of Religious Education provision, including the quality of teaching and learning, has been a focus since the last inspection. Evaluation of course content and student outcomes resulted in a switch to an alternative GCSE syllabus and schemes of work. The dip in results at A* - C, in 2012, has been acted upon and the team has noted the improvements for the current cohort of students.

The judgements made in the Departmental Review of Summer Term 2012 were more in line with the judgements of this inspection team than were the SEF judgements presented to the inspection team prior to this inspection.

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the school

Grade: 1

PROVISION

How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic Education

Indications from surveys suggest that pupils enjoy Religious Education and this is also reflected in parental attitudes regarding the Religious Education curriculum as a whole. Evidence from observations and talking to pupils also supports this view although some pupils were seen to be off task e.g. due to work not being effectively differentiated.

Lessons are generally well planned and incorporate a variety of resources, including ICT where it is available. The use of ICT could be developed further, especially use of ICT by pupils. Specialist teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith. Where teaching is most effective detailed written feedback on student work indicated how improvement could be made and time was given to ensure that the follow-up happened.

Behaviour is generally well managed and allows effective learning to take place. There is good use of praise and affirmation of students. Some opportunities for discussion and group work were evident but, where teaching was not good, on occasions when such techniques could have enriched learning they were not used. In the best lessons, teachers create a climate where students feel confident to question, knowing mutual respect will lead to their opinions being valued.

Assessment is developing but practice in peer, self and Assessment for Learning, as evidenced in student books and during observations, is not consistent across the department. The progress made by learners is tracked and appropriate intervention is made when monitoring signals the need.

The curriculum has been designed at Key Stage 3 to enable delivery of the Programme of Study in an integrated style – known as ‘iLearn’. This has resulted in blocks when pupils may have two of the week’s three hours of Religious Education on one day and others where there is only one hour of Religious Education each week. The 10% Religious Education curriculum time is met in an unconventional manner. Monitoring needs to ensure that pace is maintained during two hour lessons. A newly structured scheme of work has been developed following the publication of the revised Curriculum Directory for Religious Education (2012).

Conversion rates from, Key Stage 3, Levels 5+ to grades A* - C at Key Stage 4 are deemed satisfactory since they are well below the rates of progress found in English for the same cohorts. The full cohort was entered for the AQA - GCSE in 2012 and a review has taken place to determine how well this met the needs of all students. The results will inform planning for 2013/14.

The National Open College Network (NOCN) qualification in Religious Studies is provided for all students at Post 16 to support their religious formation. One student commented that, as a practising Catholic she has learnt so much more about her own faith as a result of following the course. Teaching was observed to be good and opportunities were provided to differentiate the work using the assessment criteria at both Level 2 and Level 3 within a Year 12 class. School leaders acknowledge, however, that timetabling issues of staff and students need to be resolved to enable the provision for General Religious Education to be improved for all post 16 students.

Development of student literacy is supported across the Religious Education department with an excellent example of this observed during a Year 10 'spelling test'. Religious Education at Saint Benedict makes a very significant contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all students.

The quality of Collective Worship is good, especially during well prepared House and School liturgies that involve the Chaplaincy Team. The student Chaplaincy Team provides a great example of young people exploring and fully living their faith. With the support and excellent guidance of a dedicated lay chaplain; they take responsibility for shaping activities with a religious character in the school and the wider community.

There is evidence of good student leadership of House and School Acts of Worship. However, on the day of the inspection there was a broad spectrum of quality of provision for, and participation in, Form based Acts of Worship and pupils indicated that this was the usual pattern during Tutor Time. In one classroom, pupils had moved their chairs to form a circle and this assisted excellent whole class participation, discussion and prayer. Where the quality of provision was judged as satisfactory students were not all engaged and/or there was no evidence of students leading worship.

Older students take on a range of responsibilities for supporting others e.g. reading buddies / mentoring scheme. One 6th Form student said that she had mentored a difficult / challenging pupil during house group time and this support continued in some lessons which resulted in fewer behavioural problems and an improvement in progress made.

Regular retreats support the spiritual development of each individual. Students with different religious beliefs feel valued and supported in their faith and this was witnessed on many occasions during the inspection.

How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education	Grade: 2
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Inspection Judgements Summary

Overall effectiveness – How effective the school is in providing Catholic education.	2
How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups.	2
How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the school.	1
How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education.	2
How good OUTCOMES are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups.	2
How well pupils progress and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	2
Taking into account:	
<i>pupils' standards of attainment in Religious Education;</i>	3
<i>the quality of pupils' learning and their progress;</i>	2
<i>the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress.</i>	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school.	1
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.	2
How effective LEADERS AND MANAGERS are in developing the Catholic life of the school.	1
How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan improvement to outcomes for pupils.	1
How effectively leaders and managers promote Community Cohesion.	1
How well leaders and managers at all levels monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils.	2
The extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school so areas needing development are tackled decisively and statutory and canonical responsibilities met.	1
How effective the PROVISION is in promoting Catholic education.	2
The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education.	2
The effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education.	2
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs.	2
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.	2