



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection Report

ST EDMUND'S CATHOLIC ACADEMY

Part of the Bishop Cleary Catholic Multi-Academy Company

Compton Park, Compton Road West, Wolverhampton, WV3 9DU

Inspection dates:

1st & 2nd February 2018

Lead Inspector:

Ben McArdle

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:

Good

Catholic Life:

Outstanding

Religious Education:

Good

Collective Worship:

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection:

Good

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

This is a good Catholic school because:

- The school has a clear mission which is spearheaded by strong leadership. It is both shared with and owned by the whole community.
- Catholic Life is a clear priority for the school's continual development. It is regularly monitored and evaluated by leaders.
- Standards in Religious Education are generally high. The school has processes in place to review teaching and learning, and to plan for its improvement.
- Collective Worship successfully meets the community's needs. Staff effectively facilitate pupils' leadership of it. It is regularly evaluated with a view to further improving provision.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- Progress is not consistently high across all key stages. Pupils are not always challenged in Religious Education by higher order thinking.
- Improvement planning in Religious Education does not always clearly identify all the key issues which would further contribute to its high standards.
- The school does not fully meet the requirement of the Bishops' Conference to allocate 10% of curriculum time to key stage 4 Religious Education.

FULL REPORT**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Stabilise the positive progress measures in key stage 4 Religious Education, by providing appropriate support and challenge for all abilities across all key stages.
- Develop strategies for enabling pupils to respond to teachers' feedback in Religious Education.
- Ensure the provision for General Religious Education in the sixth form is formalised and firmly rooted in taught Religious Education.
- Ensure that the Bishops' requirement, for 10% of taught curriculum time to be allocated to Religious Education, is fully met.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The quality of the Catholic Life of the school.	Outstanding
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.	Outstanding
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.	Outstanding
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school.	Outstanding

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.**The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.**

- The school's mission is wholeheartedly shared by all members of the community. As a result, pupils feel safe, secure and valued as children of God.
- Pupils speak openly of both the need for forgiveness in all aspects of society and of the importance of listening to the voices of God and each other in their lives. These principles are reinforced through the school's Gospel values programme, resulting in both exemplary pupil behaviour and a culture of celebration. There is an authentic practice of these values by staff, as modelled in the school's behaviour management strategies.
- Pupils have a strong sense of the dignity of the human person and can articulate with clarity how this is the impetus for the school's mission. As one pupil explained, "Our school works because we are all different."
- The strong presence of faith within St Edmund's is a real strength of the school. Pupils are proud of their backgrounds. They speak with conviction about how the Catholic ethos of the school is relevant to their own faith, culture and beliefs. The high regard the school gives to all faiths is appreciated by pupils and staff. This respect for other faiths is clearly seen in the Unity Tree on windows at the centre of the site, which features all the local places of worship where pupils and staff attend.
- There is a firm sense and understanding of vocation amongst pupils. This enables them to fulfil confidently their duty to the wider community by means of various fundraising and outreach projects throughout the year, whilst discerning the type of person God is calling them to be.
- Feedback on the Catholic Life of the school is regularly sought from both pupils and staff. Evaluation of this monitoring is used to inform improvement planning.
- There has been a steady growth in the number of pupils participating in retreat experiences over the last two years. The academy has also recently led a pilgrimage to

Rome. These outcomes are typical of pupils' ever-increasing appreciation of the school's outstanding chaplaincy provision.

- Pupils value Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). Delivered through Religious Education lessons and several personal development days each year, pupils reflect on key questions such as, 'What is love?' This ensures that a Christian context permeates RSE.
- Inspired by the strong personal faith of the principal, the school's mission statement, expressing dedication to *nurturing a learning community where all can grow in faith inspired by the Gospel values of love, service and forgiveness*, is an inspiration to the whole community. Pupils and staff alike actively seek ways live out the school motto, *to love and serve the Lord*, in every activity undertaken at St Edmund's Academy.
- The school provides regular professional development for its staff. A staff retreat day provided the opportunity for staff to apply Gospel values to education with enthusiasm. This day also launched the school Mission for staff, a vibrant sign of staff's commitment to Catholic Life.
- The centrality of prayer to the school is of the utmost importance. Every meeting of staff, pupils and parents begins with prayer. Prayers are always appropriate to the Church's liturgical year and all view the prayers used as an expression of the school's mission.
- The mission of the school is clearly reflected in the school's physical environment, as demonstrated by the many installations around the site. Of particular note is the school's Peace Garden, outside the chapel, which features a set of Stations of the Cross, a Marian grotto and a mosaic of Christ, which was designed by Year 7 pupils. This space is available to all members of the community who desire a quiet space to spend a moment in prayer.
- Staff behaviour is exemplary; they are outstanding role models of mutual respect and forgiveness to pupils. As a result, pupils believe that the Gospel values they are taught are modelled by staff who embody Christ's command to, "Love one another, as I have loved you."
- Catholic social teaching is incorporated into the school curriculum. The launch of a new recycling programme, initiated by a non-teaching member of staff and the school council, has at its centre the call to stewardship and hope for the common good. In the sixth form, Catholic social teaching features in all assemblies, but there is scope for this to be made more explicit in other areas.
- Both pupils and staff can talk at length about the support, guidance and friendship offered to them by the school's lay chaplain. She has instigated several highly valued initiatives to ensure that spiritual and moral development remain at the core of the school's chaplaincy provision, including voluntary acts of Collective Worship.
- The principal is committed to the pastoral care of staff. She has restructured the school day with a view to increasing the frequency of staff training, and to improve staff's work-life balance. Pastoral visits are also made by the senior leadership team and lay chaplain to staff who are unable to attend school for extended time periods.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school.

- The school adopts an, 'everybody is a leader,' philosophy, which is demonstrated in the way that monitoring and evaluation of Catholic Life is shared at all levels.
- The cycle of self-evaluation at St Edmund's Academy ensures that all senior leaders hold Catholic Life as a priority throughout the year. It is one of four areas of school life which they all monitor. The person in charge of the Catholic Life of the school (PICCLS) provides quality assurance of monitoring through training and resources. For example, leaders are trained to conduct learning walks during personal development days. All leadership meetings have their agendas determined by this cycle.
- Feedback is sought on many occasions and, in particular, after major events. For example, evaluation of the Mission Week has led to the planning of a further mini-

mission. Pupils have heard the testimony of people from the national Catholic community who have relied upon the Gospel values to help them in times of personal challenge.

- Various monitoring activities and meetings ensure that all aspects of the Catholic Life of the school is always under review. The academy committee are presented with summative findings from monitoring activities. They ratify and offer some appropriate challenge to improvement plans.
- The school is very thorough in its monitoring and evaluation of Catholic Life.
- Staff new to the school spoke enthusiastically of their introduction to the school's Catholicity. This aspect of induction is firmly embedded as part of the school's training programme. Led by the PICCLS, it enables staff to actively contribute to the school's mission. New staff thus develop a genuine appreciation for the school's sacramental provision and the ethos of the academy community.
- The school uses online surveys to get the views of staff and students about its Catholic Life. Catholic parents report how well the school develops the faith of their children in secondary education. Parents of non-Catholic children speak very highly of the efforts the school makes to include their faith traditions.
- St Edmund's Academy fully implements the decisions of the Diocesan Bishop relating to Catholic Life. The school actively promotes his vision for the diocese by embedding Gospel values at the heart of everything it does.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of Religious Education.	Good
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	Good
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.	Good
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.	Good

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.

- Over the last three years, attainment in GCSE Religious Education has been almost always above the diocesan average. In 2016 there was a slight decline in the number of pupils attaining the highest grades, but this swiftly recovered in 2017.
- Following staffing challenges within the department, pupils' progress in key stage 3 is not as strong as key stage 4. This issue is being addressed and progress is recovering.
- Recent measures of pupil progress in key stage 4 have been outstanding. Most impressively, pupils from all major groups, including those with special educational needs, made positive progress.
- At the end of key stage 5, pupils have consistently attained lower than diocesan averages over the last three years. However, there is evidence to show that the gap between attainment at St Edmund's Academy and the diocesan average is narrowing. The school is continuing to work towards closing the gap, given the level of expertise within the department.
- Progress in key stage 5 has fluctuated over the last three years, although it remains below national averages. The school would benefit from investigating this further to determine whether the support it offers to the department is fully meeting its needs.

- The school has rightly identified the issue of the low uptake of A-level Religious Education as an area for development. This issue is now being addressed and steps have been taken to increase uptake.
- In lessons, pupils are consistently encouraged to think about issues and use sources of religious authority to substantiate their views. Pupils enjoy their learning; as a result, they actively participate in lessons, contributing to discussions and completing written tasks with enthusiasm.
- Pupils routinely use success criteria to self and peer assess written tasks with some confidence. However, pupils are less confident when attempting to articulate the differentiation of marks within a published mark band and were frequently unable to explain why a piece of work had been allocated a specific mark.
- Pupils value the evaluative nature of the tasks set during lessons. The focus of pupils' attention when undertaking such tasks is rightly on securing a score in a high mark band, though there is still capacity to place more emphasis on engaging pupils in critical debate.
- Behaviour in all Religious Education lessons is exemplary. Classroom environments are conducive to learning and allow for high levels of concentration, which empowers pupils' resilience. They take pride in their work, which is always presented neatly.
- Teachers plan lessons which are broadly linked to the vast majority of pupils' needs. As a result, most pupils learn well. This is underpinned by expert subject knowledge demonstrated by all Religious Education teachers, which pupils find inspiring.
- The department provides ample opportunity for pupils to write at length. This is most prominent when pupils evaluate controversial issues. However, less able pupils could be helped to secure their attainment in such tasks through a more consistent use of differentiated teaching strategies across the department.
- Religious Education teachers utilise a range of teaching styles to ensure they maximise pupil concentration. The most successful learning episodes take place when all pupils are challenged to think critically.
- Teachers' expectations are generally high, although they are not always consistently so. The best learning takes place when activities are well-paced and carefully planned to enable sustained progress. The best learning also provides a suitable level of challenge for all learners, in particular for the more able.
- Teachers generally target their questioning of pupils well. However, there is inconsistency in the department's practice. Opportunities are sometimes missed to develop higher order thinking skills. Higher expectations of this could help elicit more considered responses from pupils.
- The quality of feedback given to pupils is variable. At its best, explicit targets for improvement are set, which pupils are then afforded time to respond to, or work on during the next task. However, this practice is not yet embraced by all teachers.
- When issued, merits and star awards are gratefully accepted by pupils, who are visibly pleased with the accolades, which further motivate them to achieve well.
- In the sixth form, General Religious Education takes the form of a call to live out the school's mission statement. As a result, students sometimes serve the school community, for example, by assisting teachers in lower school lessons across the curriculum. Students are required to meet with the class teacher and keep a record of their work.
- The content of the General Religious Education course would benefit from a review. The course should provide greater engagement with the study of Catholic social teaching, so that students' understanding of service is rooted in Religious Education. The focus on pupils' service to others should be balanced with a taught Religious Education course which includes an assessment of outcomes.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

- The content of the Religious Education curriculum fully meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory.
- Just under 10% of curriculum time is apportioned to Religious Education in key stage 4 and therefore, does not meet the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. In its self-evaluation the school has identified that rectifying this situation is an area for development. The academy committee must ensure this issue is addressed when building future timetables.
- Religious Education has parity with other core subjects in terms of resourcing and accommodation. The recent conversion of the school library into new teachings rooms for the department afford a good climate for learning. The annual capitation made available to Religious Education is in line with English and Maths.
- Leaders' evaluation of Religious Education is a reflection of frequent monitoring, analysis, and reasonable self-challenge. The Raising Achievement Plan (RAP) written in response to monitoring and evaluation is mostly accurate. However, it doesn't always identify key issues that need to be addressed. For example, low levels of progress at key stage 5 and developing pupils' response to feedback, so that it helps them to improve their work, have not been a sufficient focus.
- The subject leader is highly experienced. He maintains excellent working relationships with his department. He is also a member of the school's senior leadership, and he is generous with the time he spends mentoring the Religious Education team. In light of unavoidable staffing challenges, he manages resources effectively, with a view to improving outcomes for pupils.
- As a result of pupil voice exercises, school leaders ensure the curriculum meets the needs of pupils. Pupils believe the Religious Education curriculum teaches them what they need to know and satisfies their curiosity about the Faith.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The quality of Collective Worship.	Outstanding
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.	Outstanding
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.	Outstanding
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.	Outstanding

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the School.

- Pupils' leadership of prayers, assemblies and liturgies is inspiring. They confidently embrace the challenge of being a member of St Edmund's Catholic Academy. They take seriously the application of Gospel values to their lives. In one assembly observed, a Year 10 tutor group prepared and led a reflection on the link between social media and Jesus' temptations. It is clear that pupils are well skilled to lead worship.
- In all acts of Collective Worship, pupils are enthusiastic. They respond well to the opportunities made available to them. During Collective Worship, there is a genuine raising of the heart and mind to God on both a collective and individual level.

- Liturgies are planned thematically based on Gospel values. They feature: scripture, as an inspiration for reflection; a range of traditional, modern and spontaneous prayers and they almost always have a practical element to them. As a result, pupils' interest is held and they frequently feel inspired and uplifted by such acts.
- Acts of Collective Worship are thoughtfully mapped against the Church's liturgical calendar. Pupils can speak confidently of the Church's seasons and feasts, and the relevance of them to their lives.
- Collective Worship contributes well to pupils' moral development. It invites pupils to reflect on key questions, such as, "What would life be without trust?" With the help of prayer, music, sound bites from scripture and Church teachings, Collective Worship challenges pupils to apply Catholic teachings to their experience of life.
- Irrespective of pupils' faith backgrounds, all pupils are touched by the experience of living and working in the community of St Edmund's Catholic Academy. Pupils have a good understanding of spirituality in their lives and plan acts of worship which are accessible and inspirational.
- Collective Worship plays a central role in the school. All are included in the school's provision and pupils are comfortable participating in and evaluating worship.
- The work of the lay chaplain is influential at all levels: the school committee, staff and pupils are able to talk about her impact on the community. She makes an outstanding contribution, developing the confidence of pupils and staff to devise and lead acts of Collective Worship for each other.
- Regular communication between the chaplaincy ensures that all worship is liturgically accurate. The school takes steps to ensure the highest priority is given to Collective Worship. For example, Eucharistic Services are conducted should the priest chaplain become unavailable.
- Collective Worship is part of the taught curriculum at St Edmund's Academy. Subject areas utilise the lay chaplain, whenever it is relevant to their teaching. For example, the English department benefitted from a liturgy on stress before pupils sat an exam; in Sociology, pupils reflected on the cycle of life in relation to childbirth and pupils routinely undertake spirituality lessons as part of the Religious Education curriculum. As such, the impact of the school's provision for a Catholic curriculum is far-reaching and interwoven into the fabric of what the school is teaching.
- Parents have remarked about the positive effect of the regular lunchtime 'Light Fever' liturgy. In this spiritual moment, pupils can light a candle and pray for their intentions. Parents report that this liturgy unites pupils of different faiths.
- The power of the recent school's Mission Week also had a profound effect on parents. Parents were fully informed about the programme of the week and were invited to join in some of the events. Parents felt that this had allowed them to experience the high quality of Collective Worship at St Edmund's Catholic Academy for themselves.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

- All stakeholders can articulate the centrality and purpose of Collective Worship at St Edmund's Catholic Academy. This is the result of the remarkable work undertaken by the chaplaincy team. Their work is effectively monitored and evaluated under the leadership of the PICCLS. Because of this, there is a culture of constant refinement of its practices.
- Planning for Collective Worship is well formulated. Its purpose is clear, and it is always based on the needs of the pupils. Leaders' planning has given staff an excellent understanding of the rhythm of the Church's liturgical calendar.
- The academy committee are fully committed to developing the offer of worship within St Edmund's Catholic Academy. They have funded initiatives such as Mission Week, the installation of a statue of Mary into the Peace Garden and reformatted

the arena area to assist its transformation from a school hall into a sacred space. Collective Worship is a top priority for leaders, meaning that pupils' needs are catered for exceptionally well.

- The leadership of the PICCLS is strong and reflective. He reports to the academy committee regularly. He produces an annual written report, in conjunction with the school's chaplains.
- Evaluation has accurately identified that pupils' participation in singing needs to be improved. Leaders have taken action and sought external help to improve pupils' interest and enthusiasm in singing.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Unique reference number	139891
Local authority	Wolverhampton
<i>This inspection was carried out under canon 806 of Canon Law and under Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act.</i>	
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy
Age range	11-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	875
Appropriate authority	Board of directors
Chair of the local academy committee	Mrs Margaret Gallagher
Headteacher	Mrs Maggie Hughes
Telephone number	01902 558888
Website address	www.stedmunds.org
Email address	enquiries@stedmunds.org
Date of previous inspection	24-25 January 2013

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL

- St Edmund's Catholic Academy is a slightly smaller than average sized school, located just to the west of the centre of Wolverhampton. The school serves the parishes of St Michael's, St Teresa's, Ss Peter & Paul, Ss Mary & John, St Bernadette's, St Christopher's & St Thomas of Canterbury's, all within the Wolverhampton deanery.
- The percentage of pupils on roll who are Catholic is 43.9%.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities is in line with the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic origins is above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is higher than the national average.
- Attainment of pupils on entry in Year 7 is in line with the national average.
- There have been several significant changes since the last inspection: the school has converted to academy status and become part of the Bishop Cleary Multi-Academy Company; the school has moved to a new building as part of the government's Building Schools for the Future programme; a new Principal and Vice Principal have been appointed following the retirement of the previous Principal (in addition to other changes in senior leadership); there has been a new priest chaplain to the school; the school took the decision to appoint a lay chaplain and changes have been made to the pastoral structure of the school, as well as to timings of the school day.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors.
- The focus of the inspection was on the impact, quality and leadership of the school's provision of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship.
- The inspectors observed teaching across twelve Religious Education lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Most of these lesson observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspectors completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic Life, the impact of Religious Education teaching on their learning over time and their experience of Collective Worship.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Board of Directors, the Chair and members of the Academy Committee, the principal, the Religious Education subject leader and PICCLS, lay chaplain, priest chaplain, the school's pastoral team, a group of newly qualified teachers and parent representatives.
- The inspectors attended voluntary acts of Collective Worship, form and class Collective Worship, two assemblies, a staff training session and undertook a learning walk to look at aspects of learning and teaching in Religious Education, the presentation of the Catholic Life of the school and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' attainment and progress, Analyse School Performance (ASP) data, the school development plan, the Religious Education and Catholic Life action plans, teachers' planning and learning journals.