



DIOCESE OF
SHREWSBURY

**REPORT ON THE
MONITORING INSPECTION
OF OUTSTANDING SCHOOLS**

Blessed Thomas Holford Catholic College

URN: 106376

19 November 2013

Inspector - Mr J Wilbraham

The areas of focus in this monitoring Inspection were :-

1. **OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS** - How well students achieve and enjoy learning in RE and RS.
2. **LEADERS AND MANAGERS** – How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvement of outcomes for pupils.
3. **PROVISION** – The quality of Collective Worship

This inspection confirms the College's self-evaluation which judges it as **outstanding** in all areas of its provision for Catholic Education

1. OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS

The RE Department was identified as one of the three most successful departments (in terms of outcomes for students) in the latest Ofsted report of June 2013. Students perform well at Key Stage 3 with approximately 40% of students achieving level 5 or higher by the end of year 8. At GCSE, a sustained improvement from an already impressive level has resulted in an outstanding 82% of the year achieving grades A*-C, with 100% achieving grades A*-G, indicating success for students of all abilities, providing both academic challenge and appropriate support. The first cohort to complete the A level in the newly established Sixth Form achieved 100% grades A*-C with 50% achieving A*-B. The General RE programme in the Sixth Form is well received by students and is endorsed by the NOCN with a pass rate of 100%. The standard of teaching in the Department is outstanding and its leadership is outstanding. Highly effective monitoring, evaluation and strategies for achievement of targets are all in place. Students engage with the subject and enjoy it, while benefitting from clear, consistent and informative assessment and marking.

2. LEADERS AND MANAGERS

The Headteacher provides outstanding leadership and is supported by the Senior Leadership Team, Governing Body, Head of RE and RE team. All are deeply committed to the school's clearly declared Catholic values. Clear evidence of these values is embedded not only in policies and practices, but also in the consciousness and demeanour of the whole school community. The values are expressed in the school's motto, "Outstanding, Exceptional and Aspirational". The Headteacher and other leaders constantly and carefully monitor the development of these values and ensure their application to the life of the school. Regular parental satisfaction surveys and the online '*Parent View*' provide evidence that the school is perceived to live out its values in its provision for the students and indeed in the students' response to each other.

3. PROVISION

Collective Worship and prayer are a vital and integral component of the daily life of the school. It is facilitated by the RE team and excellently supported by the Music department and the staff as a whole. Student ownership and participation in Collective Worship and Liturgy is supported and encouraged by the Chaplaincy Group called the *Heart of Blessed Thomas Holford*. These Worship and Prayer-based activities are linked to practical activities which enrich the students' spiritual, moral and cultural education.

Examples of this are the charitable activities and experiences such as retreats and the Lourdes project. The worship and prayer activities reflect a clear indication of the Church's mission and include the spiritual aspirations and needs of the students. Local priests lead the celebration of Mass for a variety of events such as welcoming new students or special feast days, some of which celebrate the patron of each House which are named after saints or other special Christian people.

4. OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Outcomes for pupils, the provision for Catholic Education, leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school and the RE Department are all confirmed by this inspection as Outstanding. The values of the school are strongly evident in terms of practice, aspiration and relationships. Not only does the school provide for excellence in academic terms but is able to ensure that this excellence embraces provision for SEN students and the success of those identified as 'pupil premium', both praised by Ofsted.

IMPROVEMENT SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

- Academic performance in RE has continued to grow from an already highly successful level
- The school's work with SEN students and the 'pupil premium' have enhanced the school's commitment to the inclusive nature of the Church's mission
- The Sixth Form has been established and makes an increasingly effective contribution to the positive and productive Christian atmosphere within the school, while reinforcing aspirations and role modelling for younger students

RECOMMENDATIONS

- There were no issues to be resolved from the **previous inspection**; therefore it is recommended is that the exceptional commitment to the school's values is continued at whole-school and departmental level.

In order to develop further the school's outstanding achievements it is recommended that:

- the monitoring and intervention strategies ensure that boys' performance at GCSE, excellent as it is, is fully commensurate with that of the girls
- the school should plan for the introduction of a lay chaplain to develop further the outstanding work of the RE Department and Leadership Team and Clergy in the spiritual and liturgical life of the school community