



DIOCESE OF LANCASTER EDUCATION SERVICE

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

**St. Benedict's Catholic High School
Whitehaven**

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

**THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

School:	St. Benedict's Catholic High School
Address:	Red Lonning, Whitehaven CA28 8UG
Telephone Number:	01946 692275
Email Address:	admin@st-benedicts.cumbria.sch.uk
School URN:	112398
Headteacher:	Mr I P Smith
Chair of Governors:	Mr W Slavin
Lead Inspector:	Mr Stephen Tierney
Team Inspector:	Mr John Reardon, Fr Michael Docherty
Date of Inspection:	9 th & 10 th May 2017

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Benedict's is an 11-18 school with just under one thousand students on roll. The student intake in terms of ability and levels of social deprivation is broadly average; in line with all schools nationally. There are relatively few students from a minority ethnic background or who have English as an additional language. Over the past few years the school has become increasingly oversubscribed.

STUDENTS	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Number on roll	194	192	166	151	155	66	75	999
Catholics on roll	95	49	82	93	98	37	33	487
Other Christian denomination	99	141	84	58	57	29	42	510
Other faith background	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
No religious affiliation	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
No of learners from ethnic groups	4	5	6	4	4	2	1	26
Total on SEN Register	17	26	11	10	15	1	2	82
Total with Statements of SEN	1 (EHCP)	5 (EHCP)	2	4 (EHCP)	3 (EHCP)	0	2 (1xEHCP)	17

Exclusions in last academic year 2015-16	Permanent	1	Fixed term	63
Index of multiple deprivation	0.19			

PARISHES SERVED BY THE SCHOOL	
Name of Parish	No of Students
St Begh's, Whitehaven)
St Mary's, Kells) 339
St Benedict's, Whitehaven)
St Mary's, Cleator	96
St Joseph's, Frizington	18
St Mary's, Egremont	25
Other	9

TEACHING TIME FOR RE	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Total teaching time (Hours) 2016/17	3	2	3	2	2	5 days	5 days	
% of teaching time 2016/17	12%	8%	12%	8%	8%	3.3%	3.3%	
% of teaching time (proposed) 2017/18	3/12%	2.5/10%	2.5/10%	3/12%	2/8%	3.3%	3.3%	

TEACHING TIME FOR ENGLISH	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Total teaching time (Hours) 2016/17	3	3	3	4	4	5	5	
% of teaching time 2016/17	12%	12%	12%	16%	16%	20%	20%	
% of teaching time (proposed) 2017/18	3/12%	3.5/14%	3/12%	5/20%	4/16%	5/20%	5/20%	

TEACHING TIME FOR MATHS	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Total teaching time (Hours) 2016/17	3	3	3	4	3	5	5	
% of teaching time 2016/17	12%	12%	12%	16%	12%	20%	20%	
% of teaching time (proposed) 2017/18	3/12%	3.5/14%	3/12%	4/16%	4/16%	5/20%	5/20%	

STAFFING	
Full-time teachers	43
Part-time teachers	14
Total full-time equivalent (FTE)	57.62
Classroom Support assistants	7
Percentage of Catholic teachers	36.4%
Number of teachers teaching RE	8
Number of teachers with CCRS or equivalent	7
Number of teachers currently undertaking CCRS	2
Chaplaincy staffing	1

ORGANISATION	
Published admission number	210
Number of classes	7 form entry
Average class size KS	29
Average class size KS	26

EXPENDITURE (£)	Last financial year 2015/16	Current financial year 2016/17	Next financial year 2017/18
Total expenditure on teaching and learning resources	£97,000	By request	TBC
RE Curriculum allowance from above	£5,300	By request	TBC
English Curriculum allowance from above	£6,400	By request	TBC
Total CPD budget	£10,000	£10,000	TBC
RE allocation for CPD	As required	As required	TBC

How the school has developed since the last inspection

Since the last denominational inspection the current headteacher, governors and staff have worked tirelessly to develop and enhance the Catholic ethos of the school, move the school out of special measures (leading to Ofsted grading the school as good in 2014) and develop a substantial vision for new school buildings as part of Campus Whitehaven.

RE DATA															
	RE					English					Maths				
	KS4				KS3	KS4				KS3	KS4				KS3
	% Entry	A*-C	3L	4L	Yr 7-9 2L Prog	% Entry	A*-C	3L	4L	Yr 7-9 2L Prog	% Entry	A*-C	3L	4L	Yr 7-9 2L Prog
2016	97.9	53	51	22	N/A	99	68	57	22	N/A	99	64	61	27	N/A
2015	99.1	63.6	59.4	27.4	N/A	99.5	66	65	21	N/A	100	62	58	24	N/A
2014	97.7	70.8	66	33	N/A	99	61	60	17	N/A	100	74.8	68	20	N/A

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

2

CATHOLIC LIFE

2

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2

KEY FINDINGS

St. Benedict's is a good Catholic School. There has been a significant and discernible improvement in the Catholic life of the school since the last inspection, which is attested to by older students, staff, school leaders and governors. Leaders are committed to the further development of the school; establishing the necessary quality assurance processes that will allow them to monitor, evaluate and improve aspects of practice.

Students are clear that St. Benedict's is a happy place to be. They report that their teachers show great concern for their welfare and that they are genuinely interested in how they are doing. The quality of relationships and pastoral care are outstanding and are built on the foundations of the school's Catholic Life. One student, spoke for many, when he described the support provided by staff as "unparalleled". The school is fully committed to the development of the whole child rooted in the vision of Catholic Education.

Behaviour is excellent and students are respectful of each other and the staff. They are active in the Catholic Life of the school through established School and Year Councils and more recently formed groups, for example, the Chaplaincy Group known as Frassati's Friends. Sixth Form students visit residential homes in the area, litter picking is conducted in the neighbourhood by students and there is a rich variety of charitable works across the school.

Students experience prayer and liturgy. Time is set aside for students to be reflective. With greater guidance, direction and richness of experience they would be able to more fully benefit from these opportunities. Themes for assemblies sometimes reflect the liturgical calendar but more explicit links need to be made to Sacred Scripture.

The quality of Religious Education is good. The department strives to plan for the development of all learners. This is particularly effective at A-level where results are very good and improving due to the good subject knowledge of the teachers which is used to inspire and motivate students within lessons. Enhancing progress for students in Key Stage 3 & 4 is a recognised priority; the use of assessment and feedback are key to further increasing the challenge for students particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those who enter the school with low or middle prior attainment.

The department is very well led and well managed and there is a clear vision for the development of the department. The mission of the Church is shared and

supported by staff. Governors and school leaders have detailed quality assurance processes in place which they should keep under review to assess their impact.

From September 2017, the school will comply with the Bishops' Conference and Diocesan requirements for time allocated to curriculum RE. Sixth Form students appreciate the opportunities afforded in General RE to explore contemporary themes of a philosophical and ethical nature which have significance in these times. They say that it helps them to ponder the 'Why?' and widens their horizons.

WHAT THE SCHOOL NEEDS TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

To improve further the school needs to:

- Develop and implement a simple, effective and holistic quality assurance framework to monitor, evaluate and further improve the Catholic Life of the School by:
 - Systematically monitoring the quality of prayer and liturgy and works of social justice
 - School leaders and governors using the information to evaluate and identify key issues for action.
- Improve progress at GCSE and in Key Stage 3 Religious Education, particularly for disadvantaged students and those with low or middle prior attainment, by:
 - Reviewing assessment and associated quality assurance processes to increase further the level of challenge within the class room, promote pupils' learning and enhance teaching
 - Ensuring pupils respond to feedback, provided through the STEP marking system, to improve the quality of their work.
- Further develop the prayer and liturgical life of the School by:
 - Developing a rich and engaging vision for prayer and liturgy rooted in Sacred Scripture
 - Providing ongoing formation and development to staff and students in order that they may shape the liturgical life of the school and actively participate in it.

PART A: CATHOLIC LIFE

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

2

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

2

3

2

Students are encouraged to proclaim their faith. Year 10 students described how they are involved in visiting a local primary school to work with pupils there on the Easter Story. They were able to make the connection between this activity and the commandment of Jesus to 'Go and teach'. They said that their work would help prospective students get a sense of the community spirit at St. Benedict's.

It is evident that students have been involved in shaping the Catholic Life of the school. The School Council has been involved in selecting the focus of charitable activities in the school and these often reflect discerned needs within the local community or from a context of the personal circumstances students face. They see charitable fund raising as being the fruit of 'a sense of faith' which 'reflects on us and who we are'. Students state that they feel as though they are being 'trained' by the school to show compassion. They see the root of this in the Catholic Ethos of the school. They say that because it is a Catholic school you get a sense of community rather than it being just an 'exam factory'.

Students acknowledge that an atmosphere of mutual respect exists in the school. Staff show great commitment to the success of their students and a willingness to go the extra mile to help. Students say that one of the strengths of the school is the teachers. They recognise that they are helpful and that their door is always open. Sixth Form students speak of the way in which the school offers unparalleled support.

The headteacher and Chair of the Governing Body have consistently high expectations of the Catholic Life of the school. They have both effectively led the significant improvements seen since the last inspection, alongside the challenges of raising attainment and an extensive capital programme.

Monitoring and evaluation of the Catholic Life of the school is less well developed than the systems in place for the monitoring of pastoral and academic outcomes. For example, the more limited monitoring and evaluation of prayer and worship has meant good practice is not yet effectively identified and shared. The use of Sacred Scripture, as a source for the daily pattern of prayer in the life of the school, is an area for development.

Staff are role models for many students and seek to make up for deficits present in a child's life. The school strives to give young people second chances, especially for young people in the area who have 'run out' of chances for a variety of reasons. They are given an opportunity to make a fresh start.

Parents are invited to assist at class Masses and local clergy show a willingness to support this. It was evident that students had prepared well for the celebration, guided by staff in R.E. lessons, and were able to utilise and celebrate skills they possessed. Students demonstrated a fluency in making the responses. There are a variety of Masses and liturgical services to celebrate key times in the Church's and school's calendars. There is a beneficial supportive relationship with the priests in the south of the deanery who are willing to help out in the school.

The ongoing development of the Chaplaincy provision in the school is noteworthy. Engagement with students is excellent and the work of the School Chaplain is bearing fruit. For example, Frassati's Friends, a group of Year 7-9 students, work to support the development of prayer and liturgy within the school. There are a range of examples of PowerPoints used during presentations, in assemblies, focussed on Ash Wednesday and Easter. With the move to the new school there is an opportunity to further develop Chaplaincy provision and make it a central aspect of the school's Catholic Life.

The Collective Worship Policy of the school is yet to be fully embedded. As a result of this students experience a limited variety in prayer and liturgy. While time is set aside for students to be reflective, guidance and direction is not always given to enable students to use this time in the most effective way. Themes for assemblies in the school at times reflect the liturgical calendar but links are not often made with themes present in Sacred Scripture. Whilst students were instrumental in writing the 'School Prayer' they currently have yet to reach their full potential in shaping fully the prayer life of the school.

PART B: RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2

- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education
- How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education
- The quality of provision in Religious Education

2

2

2

The quality of Religious Education is good. Students have good religious literacy and the department strives to plan for the full development of all learners. Greater and more consistent provision of challenge would ensure that students consistently achieve their very best. Teaching is of a high quality and there are regular opportunities for students to feed back on their classroom experiences so that practice can be further developed. Students feel that their voice is valued and their experience in lessons also enables them to grow on their own personal faith journey. In the Sixth Form the uptake for the A Level course is high with very good outcomes.

The vast majority of students enjoy Religious Education and can confidently explain its value. They have a secure understanding of the Catholic faith and are able to articulate their understanding of it accordingly. Although progress is still variable, most students are engaged, enquiring and show independence as learners with the ability to analyse, evaluate and critically reflect upon their work and that of their peers.

In lessons an environment is created where students feel that they can ask questions and explore matters of faith more deeply, and this leads to effective discussions that advance learning and, indeed, the personal faith of students. Where questioning is effective it skilfully draws out responses from students; improving their ability to make meaningful contributions to class discussions. This starts in Year 7 where no concept is deemed too difficult for students to engage in discussion about. A good pace in the majority of lessons observed moves students on. Teachers employ a variety of strategies to engage and enthuse students and display high expectations. This is most evident when teachers are focussed on exploring key concepts within the curriculum. Thinking skills are developed within the subject, especially in the sixth form where students are confronted with particularly challenging issues.

Religious Education is very well led and managed and there is a clear vision for the development of the department. Plans are constantly reviewed and reflected upon, being seen as organic, working documents to which all can contribute. The mission of the church is shared and supported by staff. There is potentially a need for leaders to be more reflective on which aspects of current practice are having greatest impact and which are time consuming but

ineffective in improving students' outcomes.

The department effectively implements the school's policies, for example, quality assurance and assessment. The school's STEP marking process was consistent and evident in books seen during the inspection. However, students are not yet responding to the targets (T) given by improving their work using the feedback provided. An assessment system to replace levels is still at an early stage of development and care should be taken in ensuring the system developed allows reliable measures and valid conclusions to be drawn from data produced. Of interest during the inspection was a series of Year 11 sheets in students' books where an analysis of their recent mock papers had been completed. This had allowed teachers to identify areas that required revision or re-teaching. Consideration should be given to how this could be systemised at a departmental level.

The head of department and second in department unfailingly lead by example and model best practice. They support their staff in the pursuit of academic excellence and in forming students who are resilient, active Catholic citizens engaged in fulfilling their responsibilities to others. A sense of mission is lived out through Christmas support for particularly vulnerable and deprived students and their families, and there is a strong sense of responsibility towards others that is undertaken without question. Governors and school leaders are committed to the Catholic mission of the school and to the place of Religious Education within and outwith the school curriculum. The management of staff is well organised and high quality support exists for non-specialist delivery of the school's HRSE policy.

The Religious Education curriculum provides good opportunities for students to advance their understanding of spiritual, moral and faith issues. Students are engaged and teaching is good. Teachers display excellent subject knowledge and students are keen to do well. Greater opportunities for challenge will enable students to develop further. The head of department and second in department have worked extremely hard to ensure that schemes of work are fit for purpose and these continue to be reviewed in light of student voice surveys and staff feedback. More focused and simpler monitoring and evaluation will allow the impact of measures taken to be judged more fully.

General RE helps students to relate their academic life to the local community and the wider world. It enables them to grow as rounded individuals and to prepare for future life beyond school. One student said that General RE was about 'the person you are, not just knowledge you have'.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Overall Effectiveness	2
Capacity for sustained improvement	2
Catholic Life	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school. 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well leaders and managers promote and ensure provision for the Catholic Life of the school through monitoring and evaluation. 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school. 	2
Religious Education	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education. 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education. 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality of provision in Religious Education. 	2

	Pupil Outcomes	Leadership & Management	Provision	Overall
Catholic Life	2	3	2	2
Religious Education	2	2	2	2