

**National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report in conjunction  
with the Roman Catholic Diocese of Plymouth**

**St Cuthbert Mayne Roman Catholic/Church of England Voluntary Aided Secondary School**

Trumlands Road  
Torbay  
Devon  
TQ1 4RN

**Diocese: Plymouth and Exeter**

Local authority: Torbay  
Date of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> November 2011  
Date of last inspection: 24<sup>th</sup> June 2009  
School's unique reference number: 113551  
Headteacher: Mrs Catherine Gilfillan  
Inspector's name and number: Mr Andrew Rickett 201/ Mr John Mannix

**School context**

St Cuthbert Mayne is a joint Roman Catholic-Church of England secondary school. It is a larger than average secondary school with 1078 students on roll, of whom 140 are in the sixth form. The majority of students are of white British origin. As the only church secondary school in the authority, students come from a wide catchment area. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The school has specialist status for mathematics, computing and science.

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Cuthbert Mayne as a Roman Catholic/Church of England school are outstanding**

St Cuthbert Mayne is a Christian community that embraces its faith with joy and uses its joint denomination to enhance the life of the students. This makes a significant contribution to the academic progress of the students and to the development of their moral and spiritual growth.

**Established strengths**

- The strong emphasis on developing the self worth of each student.
- The shared understanding that love is fundamental to the life of the school.
- The acceptance and appreciation that the school is a worshipping community.
- The progress students make in religious education.

**Focus for development**

- Ensure that opportunities for the spiritual growth of students are clearly identified.
- Foster broader and deeper experiences through collective worship.
- Develop the role and impact of the chaplaincy.

**The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners**

When talking with students it is clear that the school is moving forward. They talk about being part of a more cohesive community that has greater respect for each other, where everyone pulls together. This is largely through the quality of mutual relationships based on trust between students and adults. When asked what makes this sense of community, students are emphatic, quite unashamedly, and that fundamental to this is love; the love that Christ showed us and taught us. This is one of the very special qualities of the school and is particularly evident in the way that no child is demeaned, rather that a strong emphasis is placed on developing an individual's spirit. This was seen throughout the school day both in

lessons and in the everyday contact between students and adults. This focus on praise, and the consistency with which it is used throughout the school, makes a significant impact on the students' personal development and on their academic progress because the fact the teachers believe in them, gives students the encouragement and confidence to succeed. The impact of a series of student voice groups, whose work makes a real difference to all aspects of school life, is a reflection of this Christian love in action. Students are able to make the connection between the work of these groups and Gospel values. For example, they talk about compassion in their charitable work and forgiveness when solving relationship issues. The school regards its chaplaincy very seriously. The recent appointment of a new chaplain has created opportunities to take chaplaincy forward and the school is keen to explore further how this can be done. For example, he has identified ways to extend of the impact of the 'Cornerstone' (the purpose-built chaplaincy base) including the systematic introduction of all pupils to it through their planned programmes in Year 7 alongside opening the centre during non-school hours as a way of engaging with parents and other community groups. The spiritual development of students is a key aspect of the school mission. Students have an excellent understanding of what it means to be spiritual and can articulate this maturely. They talk about 'an inner feeling of closeness with God' or 'listening to the silence of your own heart'. More could be done to identify an explicit entitlement to experience opportunities that allow for spiritual growth across the school. The school cares deeply for its students and the quality of pastoral support is outstanding. Students appreciate this and say that they feel safe and cared for and know that adults in school 'are always there for them when they need help'.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

The school is a worshipping community where acts of worship are central to the life of the school. It is something that is understood and celebrated by all members of the school community: there is a sense that 'worship' is not just confined to a specific time or act within the school day. There is an acceptance that students and staff can live out their worship experience at any point in the day, with prayer as an integral part. This is reflected in the many opportunities for members of the school community to meet for prayer or just quiet reflection. For example, students refer to the Cornerstone as a special place where they can come and be still, pray and refresh their spirit. The school has worked hard to improve the overall worship experience to ensure that students receive consistently high quality acts of worship whether as a year group or in tutor groups. The success with which this has been achieved means that the impact of collective worship is now good. The monitoring and evaluation of collective worship has also developed since the previous inspection, is now good and has the potential to develop even further. The school is aware that more can still be done to offer students broader and deeper experiences in tutor group worship. Students have clear opinions about the type of worship that they prefer; some like the more intimate feel of the tutor group while others say that they gain more in faith from the year group worship. Having said that, the tutor group worship observed during the inspection was very good. It involved students, encouraged them to reflect and was clearly based on Christian teaching. The year group worship observed was outstanding and seamlessly joined the practical issue of giving students information alongside the Christian belief in vocation and in a God who has an aspiration for the fulfilment of each and every person. Students appreciate that acts of worship are inclusive regardless of denomination and that there are opportunities for the whole school to celebrate occasions such as the anniversary of St Cuthbert Mayne. All students have the opportunity to attend Eucharist according to their own tradition and this is something that students respect and appreciate.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding**

Overall attainment in religious education (RE) is close to the national average and standards are generally good. However, students' progress throughout the school is excellent and their achievement is significantly above national expectations considering their starting point. This is evident in results at GCSE where students gaining A\*-C grades in RE show that the subject is consistently among the most successful in the school. Achievement at the higher grades in GCSE is particularly significant. By the end of Key Stage 3, students make very good progress with above 80% exceeding their targets. With a third of students taking RE at A Level, with very good results, RE continues to be a popular subject in the school and is highly regarded by students. Progress and achievement in RE compare very favourably with

other core subjects. The use of assessment to drive standards and set higher expectations is a strength. The confidence and ability to level students work has improved since the previous inspection and means that teachers have an accurate view of students current attainment and can pinpoint for each individual how further progress can be made. The overall quality of teaching and learning in RE observed during the inspection was good with many outstanding examples. At its best, teaching challenged students through carefully devised tasks that encouraged them to 'think outside the box'. This was seen in a Year 7 lesson where the teacher skilfully guided students as they understood the differences between beliefs, facts and opinions but also explored the difficulty of deciding where the boundaries lay between them. Similarly, a Year 9 lesson challenged the students by firstly developing their understanding of messiah, prophesy and the rejection of The Messiah by the Jews but then explored the increasing complexity of the relationship between all three elements. Students respond very well to these challenges and are eager to contribute and do so with confidence. A Year 10 lesson successfully immersed the students in the complex issues of crime, punishment and forgiveness. The positive relationship between teacher and pupils was strongly evident and the lesson had a complex structure designed to allow differentiated responses and peer-supported learning. RE has a very high profile and makes a significant contribution to the Christian ethos of the school particularly through the encouragement of the students' spiritual and moral development. When talking with students they are clear that RE is one of the important ways through which they express their church school status. This is also reflected in the fact that all students in the sixth form receive a core RE entitlement of an hour each week. The excellent progress and achievement of students in RE and the significant contribution that RE makes to the Christian ethos makes RE outstanding.

#### **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding**

The leadership and management are committed to ensuring that St Cuthbert Mayne is a Christian community united in service to God. This strength of faith is also used to provide an education that meets the academic and spiritual needs of all those in the school community. That it is successful in achieving this is a reflection of the way that the school has developed since the previous inspection. The headteacher has led the school in creating a community that is at ease with its Christian foundation in an unselfconscious way; where there is a greater sense of shared purpose based on a Christian ethos. This is explicit when listening to the views of staff, students, governors and parents. The headteacher is very clear about the purpose of being a church school and is very ably supported by senior staff who are working together to ensure that the Christian distinctiveness continually moves forwards. For example, the recent production of a discussion paper on what it means to be distinctly Christian helps keep fresh the shared understanding. The chaplain is very confident that he has the support of a management team that prizes highly both his role and that of the Cornerstone. Formal structures exist to ensure senior management and chaplain meets every week to ensure effective co-ordination and communication. Together the leadership of the school are outstanding in their effectiveness. The ethos committee, consisting of staff and governors, makes an important contribution to the development of the school's Christian character. For example, it not only provides opportunities to discuss issues but is also developing an understanding of how a Christian ethos can link to the students' learning. Governors are very committed to the promotion of the Christian ethos. They are knowledgeable about the school and carry out their responsibilities very effectively. The RE coordinator is excellent. She is passionate about her subject and ensures that it has a high profile within the curriculum. She is very effective as a leader with a clear understanding of how to use assessment to improve standards and a good grasp of how to take the subject forward. Moreover, she has an excellent understanding of the contribution that RE makes to the life of a church school. Parents feel that there is a strong community feel to the school. They appreciate the fact that the school can be open about its Christian ethos and say that they share the school's mission and values. In particular, parents agree that the school is a community where staff are keen to support their children and respond to their individual needs with great care.