



INSPECTION REPORT

School: Blessed Trinity R C College
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Headteacher: Miss Bernadette Bleasdale
Chair of Governors: Father Brian Kealey

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Diocese of Salford
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the
Education Act 2005

Date of inspection: October 2011
Date of previous inspection: September 2008
Reporting Inspectors: Teresa Dervin & Margaret Diffley

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades
Overall Effectiveness of the School	2	
Capacity for Sustained Improvement	2	1 = Outstanding
Outcomes for Pupils	2	2 = Good
Leadership and Management of Catholic Life of the School	1	3 = Satisfactory
Effectiveness of the Provision for Catholic Education	2	4 = Inadequate

Information about the school

Blessed Trinity Roman Catholic College opened in September 2006 as a result of the merger of two former single-sex Catholic schools. The college moved into new premises in 2010 after a considerable period of disruption caused by the re-organisation and building programme.

The school is larger than most secondary schools and a majority of students are admitted from the partner Roman Catholic primary schools. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is about the same as the national average, as is the proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds. 66.26% of pupils are baptised Catholic and 94% are of White British heritage. The Catholic population is falling year on year.

The proportions of students who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, are below the national average. The school has specialist status in humanities and sport.

The school serves 8 parishes in Burnley, Lancashire, but currently receives pupils from up to 42 primary schools, a further 4 of which are Catholic schools. 60 of the 71 full time and part-time staff are Catholics.

Overall Effectiveness

Grade 2

Blessed Trinity is an improving Catholic High School which has many good and outstanding qualities. The Headteacher clearly articulates the vision underpinned by Gospel values which seeks to ensure that pupils are able to take their place in later life as committed members of the Church and as caring members of society. Leaders and managers throughout the school, supported by an effective governing body, are committed to this ideal and, at a time of significant change, work hard to translate it into a reality. Pupils effectively understand, appreciate and can articulate the Catholic ethos of the school. They make a very good response to the school's outstanding provision for its Prayer Life, take responsibility for and are involved in a wide range of Catholic Action and other forms of charitable activity. The school makes a strong contribution to social cohesion in its local and wider communities. Standards are rising and achievement in Religious Education, which is good, is informing whole school practice. The school recognises that there is potential to further improve the quality of teaching and learning in the subject to move from good to outstanding.

Capacity for sustained improvement

Grade 2

The inspectors agree with the school judgement of good. Issues from the previous report (2008) have been successfully addressed by the school and have had an impact in terms of raising standards. GCSE results in the subject are showing an improving trend across most discrete groups. Good practice from the Religious Education department is being used to support whole school progress and the raising of attainment, with the

previous head of department joining the senior leadership team. The school's senior leaders are strongly committed to securing further improvements. The mission of the school is clearly promoted and supported from the inspirational quotation at the front door, quotations on the corridors and walls and displays around the school.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- To ensure all teaching in R.E. is at least good and moving to outstanding
- To improve the quality of assessment and monitoring at KS3 to ensure raising of attainment levels.
- To audit current provision for the increasing numbers of pupils from non Catholic schools, to be able to better meet their discrete needs.

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

Grade 2

The extent that pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. Pupils understand the ethos of this Catholic school and play their part in evaluating its distinctive nature. They lead and take responsibility for shaping activities of a religious character, ably supported by the student sacristans, the lay chaplain and school staff. The school's extensive model for chaplaincy impacts on their spiritual and moral development. Pupils are proud of their background and beliefs and they have a strong sense of personal worth. In and out of lessons they express their own views and beliefs with confidence. They are able to understand and explain how the teachings of Jesus apply to their own lives. Pupils have a sense of the wider world, other people's beliefs, cultures and needs. They are generous in their support for those less fortunate and suffering from the effect of global disasters e.g. support for CAFOD, Women's Refuge, St Joseph's Penny, by providing local food parcels and a celebratory meal for elderly people at Christmas, all prepared by pupils. A recent staff and pupil exchange has been established with East Rand School in South Africa. Pupils of all ages take responsibility for themselves and their actions, demonstrating mutual respect, which results in a calm, harmonious and safe environment in which learning takes place. Pupils appreciate that religious beliefs and spiritual values are important for many people in their community. They show interest in the religious life of others as well as care and respect for religious objects around school. They are justifiably proud of their chapel and eager to further extend its use by all the pupils. Pupils act with reverence and are keen to participate in the prayer life of the school. They are always challenged to sing as a community, and they join in traditional prayers appropriately and with confidence, showing good understanding of religious seasons and feasts. Assemblies and other forms of prayer and worship make use of music, art, drama and information technology media, all of which enhance the opportunities for engagement and response.

Assembly themes are well planned, and relate to the Church's Liturgical Year. Everyone seems at ease when praying within their school community. In Religious Education, the majority of pupils make the progress expected given their starting points and some make good progress. Most pupils concentrate very well and are rarely off task. They work steadily and at times show high levels of enthusiasm and interest, as well as a keenness and commitment to succeed. A key feature of lessons was pupils' ability to use religious language in a meaningful way alongside their understanding of the implications of belief for their everyday lives. Staff are confident, knowledgeable and have a good rapport with pupils allowing them to articulate their knowledge and ideas and be praised for so doing.

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

Grade 2

Leaders and managers of Religious Education conduct systematic monitoring activities, which ensure that they are well informed of the school's strengths and weaknesses. All of the Bishops Conference and local diocesan requirements are met. The Religious Education curriculum helps pupils develop an understanding of the Roman Catholic faith and their own personal response to questions of meaning and purpose. Religious Education is enriched through well planned strategies which capitalise on the expertise of the lay chaplain, local clergy, Faith Friends and the local community. In these cases learning is stimulating and memorable. The RE curriculum provides for the academic, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils. Schemes of work are in place and used effectively. Key Stage 3 schemes are currently being further modified. Extra curricular activities including retreats to Savio House and other local venues, are much enjoyed and usually oversubscribed. The school facilitates extra curricular opportunities where pupils can demonstrate both their commitment to their beliefs and their responsibility to helping others.

Quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good overall, with some outstanding practice seen in a Year 11 lesson on 'suffering and evil in the world'; with Year 10 on 'how Christians make moral decisions' and with Year 9 pupils about 'the parable of the sheep and goats'. The majority of teaching enables pupils to make good progress as learners. In most lessons pupils are keen to learn, concentrate well and achieve. Interviews with pupils confirmed this "RE is always amazing!" Detailed planning of lessons demonstrates teachers' strong subject knowledge, which translates into lessons which inspire and challenge most pupils. Timing and pace of the best lessons facilitates progression and learning as observed with some Year 10 and Year 11 classes. The relationship between teachers and pupils is based on mutual respect, students are well managed and their good behaviour allows learning to flourish.

The inspectors agree with the school's judgement about the effectiveness of assessment and guidance in Religious Education. The school's accurate and detailed information on pupil achievement is used effectively at Key Stage 4 to identify and tackle any underachievement. Regular assessment including peer and self assessment ensures that pupils know how well they are doing and what needs to be done in order to improve. The department should now aim for greater consistency in this, across all staff and both key stages. The RE department sets challenging targets and progress is monitored systematically. There is good evidence that outcomes are improving strongly.

The quality of the school's prayer life is judged to be outstanding. Prayer is central to the life of the school and a key part of every celebration and meeting. Local clergy generously support the school and are a fundamental part of its prayer and liturgical life. Extracts from the inspiring and beautiful prayer commissioned for the new building are visible all around the site, displayed on walls, stairways, corridors and at the entrance to the school. Pupil's liturgical formation is well planned and shows progression. Pupils speak fervently about the Crowning of Our Lady and how it reflects both the changeover ceremony for senior prefects and is taken out into the local community. A Year 7 Mass attended by an inspector was appropriately planned, taking account of pupils with different religious beliefs. Pupils participated reverently and prayerfully.

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

Grade 1

The Headteacher leads by example in ensuring the Catholic life of the school is embedded in its daily life. She is well supported by her team of senior leaders and a very active school governing body. The financial commitment to the refurbishment of the chapel and the appointment of a full-time chaplain, line managed by the Headteacher, is further testament to ensuring the Catholic ethos is securely embedded in the everyday life of Blessed Trinity. Members of the governing body, who bring a broad range of appropriate personal experience and skills, have a vigorous approach to their work and give generously of their time. They have a strong focus on both Catholic ethos and the provision of Religious Education and are well informed about both. Governors are committed to ensuring that Blessed Trinity continues to adapt its provision in order to best serve the needs of the local Catholic community and a pupil population whose profile is changing year on year. Governors are involved in learning walks, interviews, progress evenings, school development planning and attend an annual Governors' residential. Governors also attend Year 6 information evenings in the feeder primary school to be able to answer parental queries and show explicit support for Blessed Trinity and the Headteacher. They work discretely alongside non-Catholic staff providing help, advice and guidance where necessary. Governors believe strongly that it is incumbent upon them to use their professional abilities and links to help and support Blessed Trinity in

translating their aims into a reality and live out the words from the new school prayer “May our doors be wide enough to welcome everyone, yet be narrow enough to keep out prejudice and division”. Governance is therefore outstanding.

The appointment of Fr O’Carroll to support the school through BSF has provided expertise across a range of areas, including Community Cohesion. The school population is largely white (94%) and the school is acutely aware of its location within a multi ethnic society. The school has been proactive in raising awareness in relation to community cohesion, developing a range of programmes to inform pupils and staff. Links with Africa and China, Faith Friends weekly programme, staff INSET and visits to the local mosque, joint working with Sir John Thursby via the partnership development manager to produce a video for circulation within the wider community, demonstrate exemplary practice. Pupils’ diverse backgrounds are now being recognised and the school is aware of the need to adapt its provision to better meet these needs. The school works hard with Governors, parents and carers to encourage greater involvement and participation in all school activities and events. Support for Blessed Trinity from parents and carers is good. The work of the school in promoting community cohesion is outstanding.

Leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education is good. The new head of department is being mentored by the previous head of department, who has been promoted to the senior leadership team. This gives confidence that the rigour within the department will develop further under the new subject leader. The co-location of curriculum Religious Education classrooms provides good support for all curriculum teachers. Working relationships within the department are very supportive, sharing of resources including classroom support is good and there is an appropriate division of responsibilities. There is an upward trend to GCSE results across most discrete cohorts and Religious Education is a leading department within the school.

There is an effective system to assess pupils’ capabilities in Religious Education on entry to the school. An ethos has been created which effectively promotes and supports pupils’ spiritual and moral development. The department is well resourced, with good use of ICT to enhance learning. Learning walks and sharing good practice will support teaching and learning moving from good to outstanding.