



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD

Inspection Report

Name of School: The Champion School

LEA: Havering

Inspection Date: April 24th 2018

Reporting Inspectors: Damian G Fox (lead inspector)
Derek Kelly

This Inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of School: Secondary comprehensive
School Category: Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils: 11 – 18 years
Gender of pupils: Boys with mixed 6th Form
Number on roll: 1091
Appropriate Authority: The Governing Body
Date of previous inspection: 21 November 2012

School Address:
Wingletye Lane
Hornchurch
Essex
RM11 3BX
Tel. No. 01708 452332

Chair of Governors: Mr P Davis
Headteacher: Mr Keith Williams

Information about the school

The Champion School is a Catholic school in the County of Havering in the Diocese of Brentwood. The school serves the Catholic Deaneries of Havering and Brentwood and the Catholic Parishes of Aveley and Grays. There are currently 1107 students aged 11-18, the majority of whom are boys. Girls are admitted to the 6th Form and currently there are 90 on roll. 87% of pupils are Catholic. 9% are from other Christian faiths. Students come from at least 14 Catholic primary schools.

Levels of attainment on entry are above the national average. The majority of pupils are from white backgrounds. Currently, 4% of pupils are on the Special Needs Register, below the national average. This includes 0.5% of pupils with a statement or EHC plan. There are 11% of pupils for whom English is not the first language. 2% of pupils are eligible for free school meals which is below average.

There are 67 full-time teachers of whom 71% are Catholic. Three teachers hold the CCRS and four have other Catholic qualifications in Theology and Catholic Leadership. There are eight teachers of Religious Education, four full-time and four part-time.

Key grades for inspection

1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires Improvement 4: Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic School

Grade 1

The Champion School is an outstanding Catholic school where young people are inspired to develop their faith in Christ. They have a mature understanding of the importance of faith both in and out of the classroom. The school's commitment to pupils, staff, families and the wider community manifestly demonstrates its central mission of service firmly based on Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church. The words of the patron St Edmund Campion sum up the life and work of the school: "The expense is reckoned, the enterprise has begun; it is of God; it cannot be withstood."

A strong moral purpose underpins the life and work of the community. Pastoral care is a significant strength. Students respond respectfully and willingly to the mission of service to others. The school is totally inclusive of students with different strengths and offers unstinting support to their families. The support of the extensive network of former pupils bears testimony to the long-lasting impact of the school. In every interview, the common themes were community, care and Catholic. 6th Formers make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic life of the school and are good role models for younger students. A 6th Former said "it is not just about following family values but living by Gospel values in school". A governor said: "everything we do is for God and for others".

The Headmaster is an inspirational presence in the school. He is strongly supported by the Senior Leadership Team and together they work highly effectively in the context of the Catholic Life of the school and Religious Education. Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and demonstrate excellent leadership in all areas. They are supportive of the school and are fully informed of progress and areas for development.

The RE Leader provides outstanding leadership of Religious Education. Outcomes in Religious Education are on an upward trend.

Prayer and worship are central to daily life in the community. Students have many opportunities to practice their faith and to experience the love of God throughout each day. The spiritual and moral development of pupils is a central feature of the school.

Parents overwhelmingly agree that The Champion School provides an outstanding Catholic education. One parent commented: "The Champion School shows a genuine Catholic passion in school and beyond". The community ethos is tangible in everything that the students experience and it is extremely well supported by parents, governors and staff.

What the school should do to improve further

Continue to develop expertise in raising standards of teaching and learning

Extend collaboration with other schools to embed robust and effective assessment throughout the school

Extend the leadership of 6th Form students to encompass Chaplaincy provision throughout the school

Outcomes for students

Grade 1

Outcomes in Religious Education at GCSE are good and continue the upward trend over the last three years from 74% A*-C in 2015 to 83% in 2017. They are broadly in line with English over that period. This reflects the commitment of leaders to improve standards of teaching and learning throughout the school. Grades achieved at A*/A have been impressive over the last three years, rising from 16% to 23%. Outcomes for pupils with various needs are very good in relation to other core subjects. The gap has narrowed 7% over the last three years, although leaders acknowledge that this should narrow further. Most groups of pupils make at least good progress with some making outstanding progress. There is good capacity to continue this upward trend.

All pupils whom Inspectors met said that they enjoyed their lessons. They appreciate the various methods teachers use to make learning interesting. They want to learn and are confident working independently and with others. Their behaviour in the lessons observed was outstanding. Pupils were attentive and collaborated well with others. There were only rare occasions when pupils were off task. Overall, the quality of written work reflects the pride pupils have in their learning.

Pupils benefit greatly from The Champion School. They know they are part of a Christian community that recognises and respects the uniqueness of each person as created in the image of God. The school is committed to the common good. The school motto "Auctore Deo" is lived by all for all. The impact of being in the school is evident in so many ways. For example, the school ought to be commended for the fact 11 former students have been ordained and one will be ordained to the Diaconate this year.

Under the outstanding leadership of the Headmaster together with other senior leaders, pupils work and play in a safe and caring environment where each is valued and encouraged to achieve their full potential. Pupils spoke warmly of the caring and prayerful ethos of the school.

The behaviour of the pupils is exemplary whether in lessons, around the school or in the playground. They respond positively to the very high expectations of all staff who consistently act as excellent role models to the pupils. The mature and respectful behaviour of pupils makes a significant contribution to the learning environment and the strong Catholic Ethos that permeates the school. Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent and are based on mutual respect and a belief that they are there to serve rather than be served.

Students are given many opportunities to take on responsibility and to help and serve others. Prefects and school Officials are very positive leaders of the student body as role models of service to others. Peer Mentors play an important part in fostering a community spirit. Every pupil, including 6th Formers, have another pupil to turn to. A pupil, new to the school, commented that they "inherently felt part of the community". Year 7 are welcomed to the school with their own club that is run by 6th Formers. One benefit is that Year 7 students soon become part of and live by the Champion spirit.

Students have a well-developed understanding of Catholic Social Teaching and respond well to those less fortunate. Younger students told an inspector that they "strive to help others". Each form has two Charity representatives so that each year group chooses a charity for that year. The school has raised significant sums of money for good causes. Over the last five years, they have raised more than £110 000. Of note is the annual Hit the Road walk for the Teenage Cancer Trust in memory of a former student. Last year, over 360 students, teachers and parents raised over £13 000 for the Trust. The school has organised the Chester Rugby Tournaments in the past for the same cause. There are annual Wear Blue and Wear Green days in which all teachers and students contribute to causes for people in the local and wider community who are vulnerable and in need.

The Justice and Peace group raised more than £2500 last year for CAFOD and also donated 200 boxes of provisions for local foodbanks. Last year, a pupil won the Jack Petchey award for raising money in aid of Refugees.

The school's high level of inclusion is excellent. There were many comments on parents' questionnaires that reflect the happiness and confidence they have in how the school teaches and cares for their children. For example, a parent of a child with particular needs said that staff "set a wonderful example to all children to be inclusive, especially with people who are struggling".

Acts of worship engage students' interest and inspire them to act with reverence. Students respond reverently and respectfully to the many opportunities there are to experience and participate in prayer and worship every day. They are involved in preparing liturgies and are keen to be involved in reading, serving and singing. The Priests confirmed the Inspectors' findings that students are respectful and reverential in assemblies and masses. The Schola Cantorum and Year 7 choir are regularly used to enhance liturgical celebrations particularly the termly whole school masses.

Each Form group has a liturgy representative to coordinate the act of worship for that class. Inspectors felt that using 6th Form students to lead on coordinating liturgy representatives should be considered as a way of developing Chaplaincy so that more students could be involved in preparing and leading acts of worship. Students confirm that prayer, assemblies and masses are a part of their lives. They are at ease when praying and talking about their faith. The students themselves affirmed that there is no embarrassment in offering intentions for prayer, for example, if a relative is ill. During assemblies, pupils showed reverence and respect. In one assembly, ten pupils were particularly involved in reading and praying and through role play.

The chapel has a prominent place in the school. It is a spiritual and prayerful oasis for the whole community that is open to all members of the community throughout the day. The spiritual ethos is very tangible.

Leaders and managers

Grade 1

Leaders and governors are committed to the Church's mission in education. Service to all members of the community is at the heart of their work. They have a clear vision and are ambitious for the growth and impact of the Catholic and spiritual life of the school. One Governor described the school as a "infused with spirituality".

The Head Teacher's vision for embedding spirituality in the lives of staff and pupils, is understood and shared by the whole community. His spiritual strength and personal faith are manifest in his own relationships with students and the obvious "Gospel in action" which permeates throughout the whole school. He is supported by teachers who demonstrate their own deep understanding of service in the way they conduct themselves and ensure that all students are included and cared for. The Head Teacher and the Subject Leader, pending the appointment of a new Chaplain, continue to provide outstanding service to staff and pupils in engaging them in the preparation of and participation in collective worship.

All staff are an integral part of the fundraising that is a significant part of school life. The whole community willingly participates in ensuring that the needs of others are recognised and addressed.

Governors and school leaders are ambitious for improvements in RE. The School's Self Evaluation is honest and accurate and reflects the progress made in Religious Education and areas for further development. The Governors are effective in their role in both supporting and challenging the Senior Leaders. They are kept fully informed through the Head Teacher's reports and regular visits to the school. The Progress Committee meets termly to review academic progress and discuss appropriate strategies for support and challenge for students.

The school has appointed a Coordinator to monitor and support pupils with particular needs. The gap between these students and others has narrowed over the last three years. His expertise is helping other schools in the locality address the same issue.

The Headmaster has an excellent understanding of how to sustain the upward trend in outcomes in Religious Education. He is the line manager for the Department and meets regularly with the Subject

Leader as part of his role in monitoring teaching and learning. The Subject Leader is a passionate and committed leader. She has an excellent knowledge of standards of attainment and progress and a clear understanding of how to support and challenge pupils. School leaders monitor the work of the Religious Education department through regular lesson observations, the scrutiny of exercise books and rigorous tracking of students' progress. Data is collected and used to set targets for the department and for students across the ability range. Assessment procedures also ensure greater focus on highlighting underachievement of pupils of all abilities. Interventions are appropriate and quickly put in place. The RE action plan has been developed to identify the most able and to provide greater challenge. The minutes of RE meetings show that tracking and setting targets feed into their planning for further improvement. Leaders have developed links with other Catholic schools to share good practice in teaching and in moderating assessments.

Provision

Grade 1

Lesson observations and reviews of students' work during the inspection confirm the school's view that teaching is never less than good and that there are examples of outstanding practice. In all lessons, students are given a clear direction for learning. Lessons were well planned and appropriate differentiation was evident. More effective teaching was characterised by a variety of tasks which were structured in manageable sections to help students learn. Teachers were very good at linking learning to the students' lives with concrete examples of the meaning and impact of the Gospel. For example, in an A level lesson on Augustine's Theodicy, students were able to refer to the world as it is now to try to develop an understanding of the philosophical and theological arguments regarding evil.

There was evidence of high level of questioning and excellent subject knowledge. In one lesson Inspectors observed, questioning was effective in prompting students to use their previous knowledge.

Peer teaching and learning was observed in a lesson where pupils demonstrated a good level of religious literacy.

Students overwhelmingly said how much they enjoyed RE and were keen to learn. They confirmed that teachers made learning interesting. As a result, behaviour was generally outstanding. All teachers were positive and praised the pupils appropriately.

Marking of students' work and the dialogue between teachers and pupils is generally of a very high quality. Teachers use assessment well to inform their planning and target setting. Assessment is undertaken in line with school policy. Results are moderated within the department and when appropriate, collaboratively with other schools. Students are given their assessment graphs to indicate if they are above or below expectations in line with them. A previous external review confirmed Inspectors' findings that the new pupil "progress graphs were effectively used" but not consistently across the department. Leaders acknowledge that embedding more effective and consistent assessment will serve to continue the upward trend in outcomes in Religious Education.

The time allocated for RE is 10% in line with the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. At GCSE, the students study the AQA specification. 6th Form students study the Philosophy and Ethics and New Testament components of RE. The school has introduced their own General RE curriculum which pupils study weekly. There are also "drop-down" days for Year 13 that serve as focused spiritual experiences for students.

The curriculum is presented in a way which is relevant to the students' understanding of how they can and should live by Gospel values. For example, in lessons on Pentecost, students learnt about how people of all languages understood what Peter was saying. They were given opportunities to imagine how it must have felt when this happened and how news about Jesus spread so quickly.

Students learn about other faiths throughout KS 3. There are opportunities for visits such as to a Hindu Temple and a Jewish Synagogue. Judaism is part of the GCSE curriculum. A letter from the Board of Deputies commented on the "delightful and inquisitive students" whose questions and interactions with Judaism educators "were among the best we have ever had".

The impact of the curriculum in its wider sense is excellent. Students know they are part of a caring, happy faith community. The curriculum is enriched by the many opportunities for charity work to which students respond willingly.

Throughout the school the many displays reflect the deep commitment of the school to its Catholic identity and students' learning. For example, in the Hall, students, staff, governors and parents each placed a piece of mosaic to create a visually stunning picture as a spiritual centre display.

The quality of Collective worship is outstanding and is central to the life of the school. Acts of collective worship are given a high profile and are well resourced. There are extensive and varied religious experiences for staff and pupils to pray together. Students confirmed that prayer is part of daily life in the school. It is not something added on to the day.

The school is fortunate to have the support of several priests. There are whole school masses termly and for all major feasts of the Church's year. Pupils also have opportunities for class masses and year masses throughout the year. Many celebrations are enhanced by the Schola Cantorum. There are frequent opportunities for students to offer their own intentions.

All students attend whole school assembly twice a week and a separate year assembly.

The Chapel is a feature of the school and is always open to the community for prayer and reflection. It is a wonderful space that is visually effective and inspires respectful devotion. It enhances the strong prayerful spirit in the school. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is a regular occasion. The Chapel is open at all times for teachers and students to use for private reflections. It is available throughout the week for mass and prayer services.