



DIOCESAN CANONICAL INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL, COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Sacred Heart Catholic Voluntary Academy

Beacon Road, Loughborough, LE11 2BG

School URN:	138296
Inspection Date:	9 June 2015
Inspectors:	Mrs Geraldine Willders and Mrs Anne Recchia

Overall Effectiveness	Previous Inspection:	Good	2
	This Inspection:	Good	2
Catholic Life:		Good	2
Collective Worship:		Outstanding	1
Religious Education:		Requires Improvement	3

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

Sacred Heart Catholic Voluntary Academy is a good Catholic school.

- The quality of the Catholic Life of the school is good. Pupils value the school as a Catholic community and are regularly involved in activities that develop its ethos. They are enthusiastic and participate well in celebrations and activities throughout the liturgical year that promote the school's Catholic identity. The mission statement is clear and is a good expression of the school's Catholic aims; staff are committed to its implementation across the curriculum and the whole of school life.
- The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding. It is central to the life of the school and is securely rooted in pupils' daily routines. Pupil-led liturgy in particular is very well embedded.
- Pupils have a well-developed understanding of how to plan engaging Acts of Worship and are regularly involved in their evaluation.
- The quality of Religious Education requires improvement. Most pupils enjoy Religious Education lessons and understand the impact this has on their lives. Attainment and progress in Reception and Key Stage 1 are good. Learning in Key Stage 2 lacks pace and attainment by the end of this stage falls below diocesan averages. Some teachers lack in-depth knowledge of the subject and do not always challenge pupils to achieve at the highest level. The targets regarding the tracking of pupils' progress in Religious Education highlighted in the previous inspection have not been fully addressed. This has led to decline in standards over recent years which has not been identified and tackled.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. It is part of The Blessed Cyprian Tansi Catholic Academy Trust and converted to academy status on 1 July 2012.
- The school serves the parishes of Sacred Heart, Loughborough; St Gregory's, Sileby and The Divine Infant of Prague, Syston.
- Most of the pupils on roll are baptised Catholics (96%) with a very small minority from other faith backgrounds (4%).
- The proportion of pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support is below average. This is additional funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average; the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The current headteacher took up post in September 2014. An acting headteacher was in post from January – July 2014.
- There have been five new members of the governing body since September 2013.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- To develop a more strategic vision for the school as a Catholic school through a more rigorous self-evaluation cycle involving all stakeholders.
 - Ensure that self-evaluation is robustly moderated and that subsequent planned developments are carefully targeted to ensure that the priorities for the school are being addressed.
 - Evaluate the impact of new initiatives on the development and progress of all pupils.
- To improve the quality of teaching in Religious Education so that all teaching is at least good or better over time.
 - Develop systems that regularly and systematically monitor classroom practice and pupils' work.
 - Evaluate the impact of recent training and initiatives on the teaching and learning in Religious Education.
 - Ensure that the teaching of Religious Education is given the appropriate amount of time on the timetable to fulfil the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and check that this is being done through more frequent, incisive and robust scrutiny of planning and pupils' books.
- To improve the rate of progress that pupils make in Religious Education especially at Key Stage 2 so that pupils reach at least the diocesan average by the end of Year 6.
 - Seek the help and advice of the diocesan primary adviser for Religious Education in establishing more rigorous systems within the school.
 - Track individual pupil progress and set up progress meetings to discuss any underachievement.
 - Set up intervention strategies that tackle underachievement and raise standards.

As the quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education requires improvement, it is recommended that a monitoring visit (with a focus on Religious Education) should take place within a year of this inspection to assess the progress made on the above targets.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL	2
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- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school - good

- Pupils are happy to be members of Sacred Heart Catholic Voluntary Academy and fully appreciate the community in which they belong. They feel happy and secure and they receive good personal support from staff within the school.
- The behaviour of pupils is mostly good. Pupils feel that the school helps them to 'be a better person', particularly through the 'Statements to live by' which are well embedded in the school. In the words of one pupil, these statements 'make me want to be a part of this school'.
- Pupils are committed to welcoming new people into their school and ensuring that they 'blend in and don't feel left out'. They are eager for new pupils to quickly feel as though they were always part of the community and see this as a strength of the school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of key celebrations throughout the school year and enjoy the links with the parish, including the celebration of Mass both in church and school.
- Pupils understand what it means to have religious belief and spiritual values and are able to articulate this at an age-appropriate level. In their studies of Hinduism, pupils showed high levels of respect and interest.
- Pupils have not had enough involvement in shaping the school's mission and as a result of this, they are not able to articulate its significance. Although they are able to describe what they like about the school, their understanding of the school as a Catholic school is not clear.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school - good

- The learning environment reflects the school's mission and identity consistently. There are plans afoot to raise the profile of the school as a Catholic school; leaders will need to ensure that the actions planned in relation to the 'branding' of the school have a meaningful impact on pupils and the community in ensuring that its mission is integral to the life of the school.
- Behaviour policies are rooted in Gospel values and aim for high standards of moral and ethical behaviour. There is a collective understanding of the need for good behaviour and pupils are on the whole provided with clear guidance and support. However, during the inspection, there was some evidence of behaviour management that would not be consistent with Catholic values and that was not always supportive of vulnerable pupils.
- Pastoral programmes for PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) are in place and reflect Catholic teachings and principles particularly through the positive provision and work around the 'Statements to live by'. Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is taking place and is a priority for development in light of upcoming diocesan training.
- Staff are committed to the Catholic Life of the school and are aware of their role in promoting it. Support staff are used well for the benefit of pupils in the school.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school – requires improvement

- The school has highly effective strategies for engaging with parents. The inclusion of references to the 'Statements to live by' in school newsletters has a positive impact on the promotion of the Catholic Life of the school. Parents speak positively and many are keen to share that the school's Catholicity is clear.
- Whilst the headteacher expresses support for the Church's mission in education, there is a focus on the external branding of the school rather than its core values and mission as a Catholic school. She does take this seriously but lacks direction at present and therefore the development and sustenance of the distinctive nature of the school is not sufficiently focused.
- Although leaders and managers have made very positive judgements about the effectiveness of the Catholic Life of the school in self-evaluation documentation, these judgements are not based on rigorous monitoring and evaluation in order to provide a coherent analysis of the current provision and are therefore inaccurate. As a result, the plans for school improvement lack direction with too many targets to be a realistic way forward.
- Governors are committed to the school and have high expectations for its Catholic Life. They, along with the parish priest, speak positively of the faith identity and of the nurturing, inclusive environment within the school.
- Whilst governors are committed, there is little direction or challenge given in relation to holding leaders to account for the development of the Catholic Life of the school and its impact on standards in particular. Governors must be more rigorous in their challenge of senior leaders and involve themselves fully in ensuring that self-evaluation is moderated, that planned developments are carefully targeted and to ensure that the direction that is being taken addresses the key priorities for the school.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP	1
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- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.
- The quality of provision for the Collective Worship.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

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How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship - outstanding

- Pupils act with reverence when they join in collective prayer and the majority of pupils sing enthusiastically.
- Collective Worship is something that pupils speak of as part of everyday school life. It is securely rooted in their daily routines and most pupils are able to articulate the importance of prayer on their spiritual and moral development.
- Pupil-led liturgy is very well embedded and pupils have a well-developed understanding of how to plan engaging Acts of Worship. Pupils would now benefit from experiencing a wider range of Collective Worship as the vast majority is formal liturgy. The development of other non-sacramental worship would further enhance pupils' experience.
- The chaplaincy team is well established and the experience of the eldest members is passed onto the next team. This positive routine for developing pupils' skills in planning liturgy could be extended further and shared with all pupils in the school.
- Collective Worship is planned to reflect the liturgical year and as a result, pupils are developing a good understanding of religious seasons and feasts.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship - outstanding

- There is a tangible sense of a shared school prayer life which is evident throughout the school. Prayer is central to the school day.
- The chaplaincy team is well-established and their work is very well resourced and planned to inspire and engage pupils of all ages.
- Staff competently guide pupils in the planning of liturgy. As a result, there is a whole school approach in the planning and delivery of high quality Collective Worship.
- Christian meditation is well-established in the school and this is valued by the pupils who attend the lunchtime 'club'. Extending this opportunity, along with other forms of worship and prayer, would further enhance the prayer life of pupils.

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- Attendance by the wider school community, including parents, is good and a range of opportunities are planned throughout the year for the whole community to come together in prayer.
- Themes chosen by pupils and staff reflect a deep understanding of the Church's mission. The inclusion of a range of media to tie themes together ensures that worship is engaging and that it includes the spiritual aspirations of all pupils.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship - outstanding

- Leaders and managers have worked hard to secure the quality of Collective Worship in the school, particularly in developing pupil-led worship.
- Leaders and managers are positive role models in Collective Worship in the school and are key in ensuring that it is of the highest quality. The regular presence and involvement of the parish priest makes a particularly positive contribution.
- Collective Worship is carefully planned throughout the year to reflect the liturgical year, including key celebrations. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of the Church's year.
- There is a strong emphasis on promoting pupil involvement through pupil-led worship but also involving pupils in the evaluation of Collective Worship; this is a strength of the school.
- Formal monitoring of Collective Worship is undertaken by leaders. This is well developed, involving all stakeholders, and is informing self-evaluation and improvement planning.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	3
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- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education – requires improvement

- Most pupils enjoy Religious Education and understand the value of it in their everyday lives. They apply themselves in lessons and work at a good pace on the tasks provided for them.
- Pupils enter school with limited knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith. They make good progress in the Reception class; quickly acquiring knowledge and understanding and are developing and applying a range of skills well.
- In Key Stage 1, work is well differentiated and meets the needs of all groups of pupils. Pupils are effectively challenged and the pace of learning is good. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards at least in line with diocesan averages with a large majority exceeding expected levels. This has been a consistent and improving picture over time.
- Progress in Key Stage 2 is inconsistent. Although pupils acquire some knowledge, understanding and skills over time, the pace of learning and skill acquisition requires improvement. Some pupils are not given sufficiently challenging tasks in lessons to move their learning on. As a result, the expected levels at the end of each year are not always met, (given pupils' starting points at the end of Key Stage 1).
- Standards of attainment in Religious Education at the end of Key Stage 2 are not in line with diocesan averages and there has been a steady decline over recent years. Given the lack of challenge and the standard of work in pupils' books in the current Year 6 cohort, the gaps are not closing quickly enough to address this decline and therefore requires immediate attention.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education – requires improvement

- Whilst the quality of teaching is never inadequate it is not consistently good throughout the school and therefore requires improvement. Teaching is stronger in Reception and Key Stage 1 overall.
- Where teaching is good or better, lessons are well differentiated to meet the ability and interests of pupils. Planning is informed by assessment and tasks are carefully matched to pupils' ability and prior learning. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils' ability and convey this effectively. As a result, pupils make good progress and know how to improve their learning in Religious Education.
- Planning and time management especially in Key Stage 2 requires improvement since the pace of learning in lessons is too slow. In some instances, the amount of time allocated to Religious Education is not sufficient to allow for the in-depth study required for each topic. In some of the pupils' books, particularly in Upper Key Stage 2, there are significant gaps in learning where no work has been recorded for several weeks. This has not been identified and addressed by senior leaders and managers.
- Some teachers have some specialist knowledge and expertise in the teaching of Religious Education and can therefore use a range of resources and strategies, leading to a good level of learning. This however, is not a consistent picture across the school. Some teachers lack the knowledge and expertise to deliver the curriculum to the depth and breadth required in order to challenge pupils' thinking and learning.
- Teachers use assessment to arrive at a broadly accurate picture of pupils' attainment but this is not refined enough to fully meet the needs of all pupils. In some classes, teachers are not ensuring that tasks build upon pupils' prior knowledge, understanding and skills. In these classes, some pupils are given targets that are below the level achieved in the previous year or work that does not effectively challenge them. Some pupils are given a choice of tasks and will often choose the less demanding one. Pupils in these classes make progress which is below expectations.
- The quality of marking and feedback is variable. Where good practice is evident, pupils are set challenging tasks, marking makes reference to the learning objective and the extent to which the pupil has achieved this. It also makes reference to the next step in their learning. Some teachers, however, focus too much on the quality of the written English and comment too briefly on pupils' religious understanding and skills.

The extent to which leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education – requires improvement

- Leaders' and managers' promotion, monitoring and evaluation of the provision for Religious Education requires improvement.
- Since the last inspection, leaders and managers have monitored the quality of teaching and the attainment and progress of pupils in Religious Education using a range of activities however, more recently, this has become less frequent. The analysis and evaluation of the results from monitoring are not appropriately rigorous and searching enough to ensure an accurate diagnosis of the strengths and areas for development. The school has identified some development issues in the current school improvement plan but this has not as yet, had sufficient impact across the school to raise the quality of teaching and learning overall. The targets for improvement need to be much more finely focused and should be based on a more strategic approach to self-evaluation and the whole-school development cycle.

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- Leaders and managers have made attempts at securing accuracy and consistency in the assessment of pupils' work based on the *Levels of Attainment in Religious Education* through both internal and external moderation. This is not yet embedded and there are still some inconsistencies in assessment within the school.
- The Religious Education subject leader has attended the relevant training provided by the Nottingham Roman Catholic Diocesan Education Service and successfully implemented the *Come and See* programme a number of years ago. Over recent years, the focus on improving teaching and learning through rigorous tracking of pupil progress and targeting specific individuals and groups has lacked vision and cohesion. Consequently, attainment in Religious Education especially in Key Stage 2 has declined. The headteacher and governors have not identified this as an area for improvement in the school improvement plan.
- Governors rely too heavily on information provided by the headteacher and do not ask challenging questions about the attainment and progress of pupils in Religious Education.
- The Religious Education curriculum is used successfully in some classes to meet the needs and aspirations of pupils but it needs to be more finely tailored in others in order to ensure consistently good progress over time. Good use is made of links with the parish, other agencies, parents and the wider community. The curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales in its content but great care must be taken to ensure that all classes are fulfilling the requirement to allocate 10% of the timetabled week to the study of curriculum Religious Education and that pupils in all classes complete sufficient work in order to meet these episcopal requirements fully. This must be addressed as a matter of urgency and must be monitored regularly.

SCHOOL DETAILS

School Name	Sacred Heart Catholic Voluntary Academy
Unique Reference Number	138296
Local Authority	Leicestershire

The inspection of this school was carried out on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham under Canon 806 of Canon Law in accordance with the evaluation schedule for diocesan canonical inspections in the Diocese of Nottingham. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. The process begins with the school's own self-evaluation and the inspection schedule is in line with the criteria set by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA).

During the inspection, the inspectors observed 7 Religious Education lessons and 1 whole school Act of Collective Worship. Meetings were held with the headteacher, the subject leader for Religious Education, the parish priest and governors. Discussions were also held with pupils, including members of the former liturgy team and parents.

The inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including the school Improvement plan, the self-evaluation form and additional monitoring and evaluation evidence. Inspectors also examined the work in pupils' Religious Education books.

Chair of Governors:	Mr Frank Fay
Headteacher:	Mrs Lisa Atkins
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WHAT INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS MEAN

Within the report, the following grades are used:

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

In the context of the whole school, the overall effectiveness grades have the following meaning:

Grade 1	Outstanding	The school is a highly effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are exceptionally well met.
Grade 2	Good	The school is an effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are met well.
Grade 3	Requires Improvement	The school is not yet a good Catholic school, it is not inadequate however, and there are aspects that require improvement. There will be a monitoring visit within the next 12 months and the school will be re-inspected within 3 years.
Grade 4	Inadequate	There are features in need of urgent and immediate attention. The school is not meeting the basic minimum requirement for adequacy as a Catholic school. The school will receive an annual monitoring visit and will be re-inspected within 3 years.