



DIOCESAN CANONICAL INSPECTION REPORT

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

St George's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Uplands Avenue, Littleover, Derby, DE23 1GG

School URN:	138666
Inspection Date:	04 October 2018
Inspectors:	Mrs Helen White and Mrs Ann Glynne-Jones

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

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St George's Catholic Voluntary Academy is a good Catholic school.

- St George's is a caring school; staff and pupils live out their mission statement 'Grow in Faith, have Faith in Growing'. Since the last diocesan canonical inspection, there has been a change of headteacher. The school is now part of the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust.
- The quality of the Catholic Life is an outstanding feature of St George's. The school promotes many charities. Behaviour across the school is excellent. Pupils have a strong sense of belonging and they are rightly very proud of their school and their contribution to it.
- The quality of Religious Education is good. Pupils enjoy their lessons and respond positively. Leaders at St George's work hard to disseminate their skills in teaching Religious Education to other teachers. This area is not yet outstanding due to some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning over time and the quality of pupils' work.
- The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding. There are a variety of styles of Collective Worship throughout the week. Pupils enjoy taking part in these. Collective Worship is enhanced by the quality of the music provided by the staff.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St George's Catholic Voluntary Academy, part of the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust, is a larger than average sized primary school situated in Littleover, Derby.
- There are 343 pupils on roll with 158 baptised Catholic children (46%).
- 9% of pupils are from other Christian denominations.
- 25% of pupils are from other world faiths.
- The remaining 20% of pupils have no religious affiliation. These are very similar to the statistics during the last diocesan canonical inspection in 2013.
- The parishes served by the school are St George's Normanton and Holy Spirit, Sinfin.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or a disability is just under 16%.
- 10% of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, (this is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, in local authority care or with a parent in the armed forces).

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- The school's self-evaluation document (SEF) needs to be more concise, more precise and needs to include impact of actions throughout.
- Improve the quality of Religious Education further in school by:
 - Encouraging pupils to become more independent in their learning and providing opportunities for pupils to peer assess and to be more involved in the evaluation;
 - Accelerating the progress of the higher ability pupils;
 - Developing teachers' questioning skills and their ability to adapt tasks and explanations during lessons in order to maximize pupils' learning further.
- Enhance the quality of Collective Worship by:
 - Developing further the good practice of pupils in preparing and leading Collective Worship so that pupils have more ownership over ideas and planning.
 - Providing more opportunities for quiet, reflective time for pupils to pray within Acts of Collective Worship.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL	1
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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 governors 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 – outstanding

- Pupils at St George's have a deep sense of belonging to their school community. They openly share, explain and strive to live out their school mission: 'Grow in faith, have faith in growing'.
- It is clear that pupils are at the centre of both shaping and evaluating the school's Catholic Life. Within the school community, pupils willingly take on several responsibilities such as the learning council, chaplaincy team which involves 36 pupils working in four teams; liturgy, charity, music and ICT. There is also an anti-stigma team, prayer group leaders and mini leaders. Pupils evaluate the Catholic Life of the school through an annual pupil questionnaire which then impacts on the work of the chaplaincy team and the school development plan.
- Pupils at St George's care for one another, being alert to the needs of others by supporting the work of a number of charities both at a local, national and global level. The charity committee of the chaplaincy team plays an integral role in deciding how they should fundraise and which charities would be good to support. These include CAFOD appeals, Hope Centre, Padley Centre, Refugee support, Sports Relief, Children in Need and a hospital in Umunumo. The class-led Harvest Festival shared with the whole school and parents was a joyous celebration of the Harvest which linked with fundraising for the Padley and Hope Centre alongside the message of developing and sharing our gifts and talents. The chaplaincy team, supported by the parish assistant writes an article for the 'Catholic News' to share their work with the parish and wider community. Pupils are enthusiastically and regularly involved with parish and diocesan celebrations.
- Almost all pupils consistently demonstrate exemplary behaviour. They show respect to each other and forgiveness is embedded as one of the core values within the behaviour policy and the school community code.
- Pupils' personal development and growth is promoted through a range of opportunities including parish and diocesan celebrations as well as a residential. All pupils are taught, in an age appropriate manner, to love and respect one another leading to an understanding of a loving relationship within a Christian context.
- Almost all pupils have an understanding of what it means to have a vocation and recognise the importance of using one's gifts in the service of others. This is due to the annual retreat led by One Life, 'Aspiration' being one of the core values within the community code and includes a huge range of speakers, for example, priests, the Briars staff, footballers, doctors, nurses who talk to the children about their career paths and how God led them to their work.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school – outstanding

- The school's mission statement was developed by all stakeholders, is a living expression of all that is undertaken within St George's School. The high standard of religious displays throughout the school offer opportunities for pupils to think more deeply about their faith. The learning environment is a wonderful reflection of the school's Catholic ethos and religious identity.
- There is a strong sense of a supportive, welcoming and joyful community with prayer at its centre. Staff commitment to Catholic Life is strong; staff are excellent role models, relationships are strong and are based on mutual respect and support. Staff enthusiastically participate in school activities which reflect the Catholic Life of the school and attend numerous training opportunities to further develop their faith and that of the pupils.
- The links between the school and the parish are very strong, they support one another with fundraising, social events, weekly class Masses and regular visits from the parish team. The parish priest and the chair of governors also visit on a weekly basis to support staff and pupils providing pastoral care if needed.
- Pastoral care is strength of the school. Programmes for Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) are in place and are consistent with Catholic teaching and principles.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school – outstanding

- The headteacher provides a strong lead in ensuring that the Catholicity of the school is given the highest priority ensuring that all staff are highly trained and that they share her commitment and drive. Along with the subject leaders for Religious Education and senior staff, she continually monitors and evaluates the Catholic Life of the school, both formally and informally.
- School self-evaluation celebrates what the school does well but requires a greater focus on more succinct analysis and self-challenge.
- St George's engages well with parents; they are extremely complimentary about the school. They are also appreciative of the school's strong Catholic ethos and are well informed through regular communication and visits to the school.
- Governors are highly ambitious for the Catholic Life of the school. Governors are actively involved: they frequently visit, joining the school community for special events such as whole school Masses, Acts of Worship and liturgies and more formal meetings for example discussing data, outcomes of teaching and learning, participating in work scrutiny and moderation. They have a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- School leaders keep abreast of and act upon the Bishop's directives and the Diocesan Adviser's guidance, putting policy into practice.
- The parish priest is a strong presence in the school and his support is valued by pupils, staff and governors alike. Although he plays a lead role in the pastoral care of the school community, he also has an astute understanding of school leadership and is able to support and challenge the headteacher and staff.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	2
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- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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

- Pupils make good progress from the varying starting points, which are assessed as they start school. By the time that pupils reach the end of Key Stage 2, they leave with levels which are above diocesan averages. Higher ability pupils need to be challenged more in order to accelerate their learning further. Pupils need to be provided with more opportunities to work independently and source their own links within Religious Education. During the inspection, inspectors noted that pupils were given reference information to include in their work rather than resourcing their own ideas and links. Inspectors saw teaching and learning over time ranging from requiring improvement to outstanding with the majority being good.
- Pupils apply themselves diligently. Almost all pupils engage well during lessons and can explain ideas and concepts appropriate for their ages. Older pupils are able to make reference to scripture during their lessons; this is a strength within the school. The use of Bible passages is evident in the displays around the school; this has enhanced the pupils' knowledge of scripture.
- The school has worked hard on improving the presentation of pupils' work since the last inspection. Across the school, pupils record their work in books with handwriting practice paper inside.
- The beautiful Religious Education displays around the school and in every classroom either celebrate the achievements of pupils or are informative and interactive. For example, the display of the liturgical calendar in one of the corridors also included school photographs of celebrations of key times during the Church's liturgical year.
- Excellent behaviour is demonstrated around the school including during Religious Education lessons. House points motivate pupils and encourage positive behaviour throughout the school. One pupil told the inspectors that he was excited about spending his rewards, saying that he nearly had enough points for a cinema ticket.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education – good

- The school has teachers who are confident in the delivery of Religious Education lessons and, as a result of this; pupils apply themselves well and make good progress in their lessons and over time. Teachers have good subject knowledge of Religious Education. During the inspection, teachers were observed using a variety of teaching strategies including a strategy, with Key Stage 2 pupils, called silent debate where pupils move around the classroom annotating a phrase with their ideas and questions; the use of 'hands up' in order to answer questions is discouraged.
- Assessment by teachers in Religious Education is accurate. In class, the opportunities to peer assess and to be involved in pupil evaluation was observed by the inspectors as part of the formative assessment procedure, 'what a good one looks like'. This is however, a teacher-led activity; pupils need to be given the opportunities to peer assess individually in order to support them being more independent learners. Pupils respond well to marking in books.
- The skills of the headteacher and the Religious Education subject leaders are cascaded well throughout the school and these good practices are evident throughout the school. Planning and marking are consistent as is the layout of the recorded work in pupils' books.
- The use of driver words is embedded throughout the school, pupils colour their driver words in order to highlight the learning objective for themselves in their exercise books. This helps to drive up standards by identifying their task in hand.
- In order to maximise the learning of pupils further, teachers need to question more skilfully and adapt tasks and explanations during lessons to suit the learners' needs. All adults in classrooms need to be deployed effectively to move pupils' learning on further. Inspectors observed support staff in all classes supporting individuals or groups of pupils; where this was effective, adults challenged pupils through key questions which enriched their learning, where this was less successful, adults focussed on the task and not the learning.
- In the most effective lessons, time was used well and pupils were involved and engaged throughout, in less successful lessons, there was an over reliance on teacher talk and pupils were more passive and compliant.

The extent to which leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education – good

- Governors and leaders have ensured that the Religious Education curriculum meets the episcopal requirement of 10% of the timetable being devoted to curriculum Religious Education.
- Leaders were accurate in their evaluations in the school toolkit and the headteacher was accurate when reporting back to governors regarding the quality of teaching and learning within Religious Education; in these documents, the school judges itself to be good and inspectors agree with this judgement. Leaders also identify areas for improvements within the toolkit and the report to governors. The monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education has led to improvements and involves leaders at all levels, including governors. Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development within this subject area. They play a supportive yet challenging role in driving forward improvement in Religious Education.
- The judgements in the school's self-evaluation document (SEF) do not match the judgements in the toolkit, or match the reports from the headteacher to the governors. The SEF document needs to be evaluative throughout. It currently includes all the actions carried out by the school with regard to the three areas being inspected, this means that it is overly lengthy and it fails to effectively evaluate the impact of these actions throughout.

- Termly pupil progress meetings take place between class teachers and Religious Education subject leaders, focusing on Religious Education attainment and progress. Religious Education lessons are also observed on a termly basis and pupils' books are also scrutinised termly, this allows staff to cascade any current best practice in Religious Education and address any issues raised in a timely manner.

- The headteacher and the subject leaders have fully embraced diocesan initiatives. The school also plays an active part in attending and accessing any training from the diocese or from individuals who visit the school, for example, the lead lay chaplain for the Catholic Multi-Academy Trust. The headteacher and the Religious Education subject leaders lead regular training sessions for teachers and teaching assistants. This allows the skills from these key members of staff to be cascaded throughout 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 governors 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

- All pupils demonstrate high levels of interest and engagement in Collective Worship. It is very evident that prayer and worship are fundamental aspects of life at St George’s and that they are highly valued by all members of the community. Pupils act with reverence; they sing joyfully and join in community prayer appropriately and with confidence. More opportunities for quiet, reflective prayer is an area that the school has identified for further development.
- The chaplaincy team is involved at some level in planning and leading worship alongside adults.
- In class, pupils have the opportunity to lead class liturgies using the ‘Let us Pray’ materials and each class has a liturgy box to support them in resourcing their liturgy.
- Knowledge of the Church’s liturgical year is clearly understood by pupils with displays and focus tables that highlight these times. Staff, pupils, governors and the parish priest plan together the liturgical calendar for the year ensuring it is comprehensive, inclusive and engaging.
- The experience of living and working in a faithful, praying community has a positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of all pupils, irrespective of ability or faith background. All pupils show a deep respect for those of different faiths. Pupils learn about other faiths such as Judaism and Islam and attend workshops and visit places of worship from other faith communities to deepen their understanding.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship – outstanding

- Collective Worship follows the liturgical year of the Church and acknowledges special occasions such as *Adoremus* and significant dates for other faith groups. It is well resourced with class worship boxes, religious artefacts and music resources such as John Burland.
- The Act of Worship observed during the inspection had a clear purpose, message and direction. Staff are highly skilled in helping pupils to plan and deliver quality worship. They have a thorough and comprehensive understanding of the purpose of Collective Worship. Collective Worship is given high priority in terms of planning, evaluating and resourcing. Parents are welcomed and feel part of the community.
- Staff equip pupils well so that children take ownership of the focus areas for prayer; these are regularly updated with different pictures, icons, symbols, cloths and artefacts. The chaplaincy team audits these areas and provides additional resources where necessary.
- The views of parents, parishioners and governors are sought on a regular basis and attendance at Masses and Acts of Worship has increased. Their evaluations and responses to their experience of Collective Worship are extremely supportive and positive. They acknowledge the outstanding impact that this aspect of the school has on their child's life.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship – outstanding

- Leaders clearly have an expert knowledge of how to plan and deliver quality experiences of Collective Worship. They also ensure that this aspect of school life is given utmost priority in terms of training and resourcing. This includes opportunities for liturgical and spiritual development of staff.
- All staff have a thorough understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons, rites and symbols and staff who are new to a Catholic school are well supported in developing these skills.
- The headteacher and senior leaders regularly lead worship and are quick to model new developments such as using paired talk during reflection time. All staff attend Collective Worship and join in enthusiastically.
- Monitoring and evaluation procedures for Collective Worship are robust. Views of stakeholders are sought regularly and are acted upon. They are quick to respond to findings in a systematic and thorough way, leading to a continued development of outstanding practice.

SCHOOL DETAILS

School Name	St George's Catholic Voluntary Academy
Unique Reference Number	138666
CMAT	St Ralph Sherwin

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 (September 2018)* 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 12 Religious Education lessons and 1 Act of Collective Worship.

Meetings were held with the headteacher, the two subject leaders for Religious Education, two governors including the parish priest. Discussions were also held with pupils and parents.

The inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including reports of the governing body, action plans, the school development plan, monitoring forms, assessment information and parental response forms. Inspectors also examined the work in pupils' Religious Education books.

Chair of Governors:	Mrs Karan O'Connor
Headteacher:	Mrs Rachael Snowdon-Poole
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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 18 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.