



**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION  
REPORT**  
(Under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005)

on

**THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL  
AND  
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**School:** St. George's Catholic Voluntary Academy

**Address:** Uplands Avenue  
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**School URN:** 138296

**Headteacher:** Mrs Patricia Hurd

**Chair of Governors:** Rev Canon Alan Burbidge

**Inspectors:** Mrs Anne Recchia  
Mrs Anita Blake

**Date of Inspection:** 26 September 2013

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The inspection of this school was carried out on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham under Canon 806 of Canon Law and Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in accordance with the Diocese of Nottingham Schedule for Section 48 Inspections. 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 9 Religious Education lessons and 2 Acts of Collective Worship.

Meetings were held with the headteacher, the subject leader for Religious Education and governors. Discussions were also held with pupils and parents.

The inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including monitoring evaluations, assessment data and examined the work in pupils' Religious Education books.

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St. George's Catholic Voluntary Academy, part of the Holy Family Catholic Academy Trust is a larger than average sized primary school situated in Littleover, Derby. There are 351 pupils on roll with 158 baptised Catholic children (46%), 9% from other Christian denominations and 25% from other world faiths. The remaining 20% have no religious affiliation.

The school converted to academy status in September 2012.

The parishes of St. George's, Normanton and Holy Spirit, Sinfyn are served by the school.

The school serves an area of significant deprivation with 39% of pupils coming from some of the most deprived backgrounds.

Since the last inspection, a range of building works have taken place which have enabled the school to provide a specific chaplaincy area for staff and children to use.

The percentage of pupils who qualify for the pupil premium is above average and there are 45 children including 4 children with statements on the special educational needs register, this represents 13% of the school total.

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## INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

**OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**

**1**

**CATHOLIC LIFE**

**1**

**COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

**1**

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**2**

### KEY FINDINGS

- St. George's is an outstanding school where its mission as a Catholic school is a lived experience for staff and pupils. Pupils thrive in this inclusive community where the high quality pastoral care and provision impacts very positively on them. They in turn, are able to contribute positively to the school's ethos and values showing a growing awareness of the impact that their faith has on their lives.
- Collective Worship is central to the life of the school, is valued by pupils and staff alike and as such is outstanding. The development of pupils' skills in planning and leading liturgies is having a very positive effect on their moral and spiritual development.
- The quality of Religious Education is good overall. Pupils achieve good standards by the end of each key stage. Given their very low starting point on entry, pupils make good progress throughout the school.
- The school's leadership team has a very accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses through thorough monitoring and evaluation. They plan improvements in a systematic and effective way to improve provision and outcomes for pupils.

### WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- To use assessment information to 'fine-tune' teaching and learning in Religious Education ensuring that all pupils, especially, those who are high achieving, are effectively challenged and that any slow-down in progress is addressed swiftly. This will ensure that progress in Religious Education across all key stages is consistent.
  - To improve the presentation of pupils' work in their Religious Education books.
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# CATHOLIC LIFE

## THE QUALITY OF 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.
- 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 quality of the Catholic Life at St. George's is outstanding. Almost all pupils are at the centre of shaping the school for the future and contribute to the systematic monitoring of the Catholic Life, taking an active role in planning improvements to it. Within the school there are teams of staff and pupils gathering feedback from pupils on a wide range of issues relating to its ethos and values, as a consequence - pupils feel they have a central role in setting the agenda for the future development of the school as an inclusive Catholic community. Pupils feel valued and have a deep sense of belonging to the school community and work hard to promote the school's ethos in a very positive way both in and outside the school. They have an excellent understanding of the mission of the school and it is evident that this is part of their daily experience. They have a deep awareness of the needs of others and are actively involved in fundraising locally, nationally and at a global level. Pupils regularly and enthusiastically get involved with diocesan and parish led celebrations and activities due to the strong links developed by leaders and managers. Pupils from other faiths and backgrounds are given regular opportunities to share their beliefs, as a result - all pupils are proud of their religious identity.

The school's mission statement is clear and inspiring: staff are fully committed to implementing it on a daily basis and are fully involved in developing it year on year. There is a tangible sense of a school working together led by a highly effective headteacher and senior leadership team. This has a profound effect on the pupils. They thrive in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect and see adults as role models for their continuing development. The school is a joyful and supportive community that comes to terms with difficult circumstances because of the strength of pastoral care and the sense of joy and comfort that their faith brings. The school was able to support pupils, parents and staff through a recent tragedy, putting policy into practice and supporting the most vulnerable. One pupil commented that the school had 'helped them in very sad times so that we could move on but not forget'.

Behaviour of almost all pupils is exemplary at all times. Pupils take full advantage of the excellent pastoral care provided and are developing as confident young people with the ability to praise one another, forgive and make amends when things go wrong. The headteacher sees it as her core responsibility to develop the Catholic Life of the school and does so through systematic self-evaluation including key partners in this endeavour. This has led to year on year improvements in provision. Parents' views are sought regularly and are acted upon. The senior leadership team has devised creative ways to ensure that even the more reluctant are able to comment on and evaluate the Catholic Life of the school.

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Governors are very well informed and act as very effective critical friends to the school. They are focused on its Catholic dimension and are actively involved in specific school priorities that develop its ethos and values.

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

### THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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

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The quality of Collective Worship at St. George's School is outstanding. Pupils respond to and participate in a reverent way showing an enthusiasm for prayer and liturgy. They include a variety of prayer styles, interpretation of scripture, artefacts, liturgical music and moments of prayerful silence. As a consequence, worship and prayer is appropriate and meaningful. It makes a difference to the pupils and has a very positive effect on their spiritual and moral development. Pupils develop skills to plan and lead worship from an early age. With the appropriate adult support, they acquire a confidence in and enthusiasm for liturgy. The inclusive nature of worship in the school allows pupils to express and celebrate their faith and beliefs whatever their background.

Collective Worship is given a high priority and is at the heart of every school celebration. It is well planned and utilises the skills of adults and pupils to engage the whole community in meaningful and heartfelt liturgies. Staff training has been used skilfully to increase the confidence of staff in order to develop their own skills and those of their pupils in this area. They have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical calendar and the Church's mission, using this as a framework to plan high quality Acts of Collective Worship. Appropriate resources have been purchased to support pupils and staff in the on-going development of liturgy.

Liturgical and spiritual development is seen as a high priority by leaders. All new staff receive appropriate training and support to ensure that the quality of worship remains consistently high. The headteacher and senior leaders, including governors regularly monitor provision, evaluating feedback and pupils' response and making effective changes in a systematic and thorough way. In this way, Collective Worship remains vibrant and relevant to pupils and is a truly outstanding feature of the school.

# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

## THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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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 (including governors) monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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Pupils demonstrate good levels of concentration and commitment to their learning. They have very positive attitudes and speak enthusiastically about their learning in Religious Education. During the lessons observed, pupils were rarely off task with the majority working without specific direction from the teacher. These levels of concentration increased as the children progressed through the school. Behaviour for learning is outstanding and all lessons observed progressed without any disruption. Pupils enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with abilities and skills that are considerably below national expectations and, from this extremely low starting point, make rapid and sustained progress through Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. By the end of Year 2, a large majority of pupils are securely at national and diocesan expectations in Religious Education in relation to their age. A small minority exceed these expectations. Progress is sustained throughout Key Stage 2 where there were examples of outstanding progress however, this is not consistent throughout the key stage. This inconsistency impacts particularly on attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 where the majority of pupils attain age related expectations but only a very small minority exceed expectations. It was noted that this gap in attainment is being narrowed over time as a result of more focused teaching and learning across the key stage and projections show an improving picture. Standards in pupils' books verify this improvement; although book sampling identified a lack of consistency in the presentation of work and this is an area which needs to be addressed.

Teaching and assessment are good overall. The majority of teaching is good with some outstanding teaching observed during the inspection. Good progress over time was seen. Where outstanding teaching was observed, teachers were passionate and enthusiastic about curriculum Religious Education. The majority of teachers have strong subject knowledge which inspires and promotes confidence. Some teachers use imaginative resources and techniques to stimulate and encourage pupils. Time management and the pace of learning were generally good and the sequence of lessons was shown to be effective building on, and extending, prior learning. Overall, tasks were well differentiated due to the careful use of assessment data and accurate levelling of pupils' work in Religious Education. However, to maximise learning for all ability groups questioning should be used to extend, reshape and deepen pupils' levels of understanding and thus increase learning in Religious Education. Marking and on-going assessment provides constructive feedback allowing pupils to reflect on their learning. Pupils have detailed knowledge on how to improve their work. The 'pink for think' Assessment for Learning strategy is in its early stages and requires a more consistent approach and careful monitoring if it is to have a more effective impact on learning.

The monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education is outstanding. The Religious Education subject leader and the headteacher have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and the areas for development. As a result, pupil attainment is rising. This is particularly true in terms of pupils' use of scripture to support their explanations and ideas. The leadership of the school use searching analysis to challenge and improve all areas of curriculum Religious Education. Their meticulous action planning and review leads to on-going improvements, which are continuously evaluated. The headteacher and the Religious Education subject leader demonstrate a high level of expertise and this inspires confidence in the staff which in turn impacts on the standards achieved by pupils. Productive links with other schools and the diocese have had a focus on raising attainment. The diligent, meticulous hard work of the leaders of St. George's has led to significant improvement in outcomes for pupils and the indications are that this will continue with a stimulating and creative curriculum. Governors make regular visits to the school. They are involved in monitoring and evaluation activities. The Religious Education governor has an excellent understanding of standards in Religious Education and is extremely supportive of the school but also confident and questioning in her approach.

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## WHAT INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS MEAN

Within the report, the following grades are used:

<b>Grade 1</b>	Outstanding
<b>Grade 2</b>	Good
<b>Grade 3</b>	Requires improvement
<b>Grade 4</b>	Inadequate

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

<b>Grade 1</b>	Outstanding	The school is a highly effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are exceptionally well met.
<b>Grade 2</b>	Good	The school is an effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are met well.
<b>Grade 3</b>	Requires improvement	The school is not yet a good Catholic school, it is not inadequate however, there are aspects that require improvement.
<b>Grade 4</b>	Inadequate	There are features in need of urgent and immediate attention. The school is not meeting the basic minimum requirement for adequacy. The school will receive a monitoring visit within twelve months.

