



DIOCESE OF  
**SHREWSBURY**

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**Cardinal Newman Catholic High School,  
Warrington**

**URN:111456**

**DfE Number 8774624**

**14th and 15th October 2015**

**Report on the  
Inspection of Denominational Education**

**Lead Inspector: Mr John Wilbraham**

**Link Inspector: Mrs Michelle Garvey**

**The inspection of the denominational education of  
Cardinal Catholic High School  
was carried out at the request of the governors of the school  
in fulfilment of their obligation under the requirements,  
and according to the directives of, the School Inspections Act 2005.**

**The school was inspected within the framework  
approved by the Bishop of Shrewsbury  
for the conduct of inspection of the denominational education of  
Catholic Secondary Schools within the Diocese.**

**Key for inspection grades**

**Grade 1 Outstanding**

**Grade 2 Good**

**Grade 3 Requires Improvement**

**Grade 4 Inadequate**

## Information about the school

Cardinal Newman Catholic High School is a below average sized voluntary aided, co-educational 11-16 secondary school. The school is under the trusteeship of the Diocese of Shrewsbury and in Warrington Local Authority. The school mainly draws pupils from seven parishes and the attached primary schools but has a significant number from other primary schools. There are 775 pupils on roll; 57% of the pupils are baptized Catholics with 21% from other Christian denominations and 3% from other world faith traditions. There was no declaration from 19%. There are 57 members of teaching staff including the Head, 44% of whom are Catholic. The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which in this school provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority is below average and the number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals falls within the national average.

### **Overall Effectiveness:**

**How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education : Grade 2**

### **The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the School** **Grade 2**

This is a significant strength of the school as it clearly takes very seriously its declared aims. Pupils are very happy at the school and proud to belong to what they perceive as a supportive and productive environment. They are appreciative of all that is being done on their behalf. They act responsibly and participate constructively in the Catholic life of the school beyond the taught curriculum. They are given time and opportunity to reflect upon the religious nature of the school and the importance of religious faith in people's lives. Within the school day pupils pray, reflect and evaluate, with many examples of integration of moral and social issues with religious reflection. This was exemplified by a school focus on bullying synchronized with study of the topic in the RE lessons. Some of the pupils are increasingly active within their parishes. One of the local churches is a major asset for the school's celebration of liturgical events and this parish is developing a revised strategy with the school for the Confirmation programme. The pupils show interest in the religious life of others and treat those of different beliefs with respect. Pupils behave well in all areas of school life and respect each other's views and show care and consideration to those in need, whether in school, the local community, or the wider world. They are very committed to charities, both in terms of fundraising and awareness raising, as exemplified by the fortnightly 'Go Green' initiative which focuses on social and ethical issues. Pupils' appreciation of the religious life of the school is stimulated and supported by displays of religious and other relevant quotations and imagery, along with pupils' work, all of which contribute to a productive environment. The school achieves one of its key aims in 'providing a caring and welcoming school based on Christian morals and values that safeguards and promotes the welfare of all.'

## **How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education**

### **Grade 3**

Standards pupils achieve in Religious Education at the end of KS4 are 57% A\*-C in 2015, which is below the national average of 71%. Over a three year period the examination results have remained within the range of 57- 61% A\*-C, although these outcomes for pupils often exceed those achieved by other core and Humanities subjects, with a negative gap between RE and English (57% RE compared with 63% in English). Some groups of pupils make good progress. Examination performance of pupils for whom English is an additional language is in line with all other pupils and particularly strong at A\* and A grades. Similarly, Pupil Premium pupils achieve well at A\*-A grades and in 2015 the gap between Pupil Premium and non Pupil Premium pupils narrowed (-13% in 2015 compared with -29% in 2014). Extra revision classes, rewritten revision materials and a focus on examination technique have had a positive impact on this cohort of students. In 2013 boys outperformed girls at A\*-C by 2% in 2014 and 2015 boys performance at A\*-C was lower (-16% in 2014 and -15% in 2015). The subject leader has employed strategies to address boys' relative underperformance; these strategies include a revision of the examination content and a decision was made to move from paper 10 to 8; the content of the latter (A Christian/Jewish response to Ethical and Philosophical issues) has motivated the boys. The introduction of classroom initiatives such as 'Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time', Purple Pen' ( pupil response to teachers' comments) and 'RE achievement', alongside a focus on exam technique are starting to impact on the confidence with which students understand how to move their learning on. At KS3 86% of pupils either achieved or exceeded their target, a 10% increase on 2014.

## **How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship**

### **Grade 2**

Pupils respond with respect and reverence when worshipping and praying and there are some outstanding examples of participation and ownership. They listen well and relate much of their prayer and reflection to the needs of local and wider communities and service to others. This is evidenced in assemblies, voluntary masses and form times and in the use of the chapel and chaplaincy room. A variety of resources, including Powerpoint, video and reflective music enhance the experience and engage the pupils. There is an appreciation of the feasts and seasons of the liturgical year and an appreciation of the use of scripture in prayer, reflection and relevance to spiritual, moral and social issues. Pupils benefit greatly from the availability of the chapel area and an active and extensive chaplaincy provision, well supported by the RE team. During the inspection, the assembly and prayers observed indicated positive levels of engagement and attitude and full acceptance of worship as a key element of the life of the school. Staff appreciate and draw regularly upon the materials and support provided by the RE team. Pupils appreciate prayer walls in classrooms and appreciate the sharing of problems and successes within their prayer and worship. The school's pupil- driven chaplaincy group provides a very positive commitment to pupil ownership and will increasingly impact upon the spiritual life of the school as it gains more members.

**How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvements to outcomes for pupils** **Grade 2**

This is a further major strength of the school. Leaders, governors and managers demonstrate a strong commitment to the Church's mission in education, with spiritual and moral development a priority. The school sets out its vision in its declaration of aims and values and pupils benefit greatly from their implementation. The Headteacher, supported by governors and other leaders and managers has made the religious life of the school a cornerstone of the very successful rebuilding of morale and confidence after challenging times. The leaders, governors and managers are actively engaged in developmental planning and monitoring which fully integrates all aspects of the school's religious life into the process. Planning involves the Headteacher, governors, SLT and the RE team with evaluation sought from staff, pupils and parents. Evidence from staff and student interviews and questionnaires, along with more informal discussions, all indicate that the school community holds its Catholic identity in high regard while providing an inclusive and welcoming community. The chaplaincy model which includes a pupil-led group has a positive influence on the school and will be significantly enhanced when the governors appoint a suitable chaplain to the current vacancy.

Whole school training focusing on the Catholic life of the school is a regular well planned feature within the INSET programme. The self-evaluation document is accurate and very comprehensive and indicates full commitment to providing high quality provision for the spiritual, moral and religious life of the pupils.

**How well leaders, governors and managers resource, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement improvements to outcomes for pupils** **Grade 2**

Leaders, managers and governors are very committed to providing high quality religious education and raising levels of examination performance. They monitor the provision for religious education and have established a range of processes which provide a firm basis for appropriate diagnosis of strengths and areas for development. Effective planning is based upon very thorough data analysis. In its Development Plan and its derivative Achievements and Standards Action Plan the school has identified the key areas for improvement of examination performance, establishing intervention strategies and longer-term initiatives to bring about the desired improvements. These strategies include in-depth analysis of Key Stage 3 assessment of learning outcomes as preparation for the challenges of GCSE, strategies for improving boys' performance and the setting of even more challenging targets. There is a determination to push the examination results in Religious Education to match or exceed the highest in the school. The curricular time committed to Religious Education meets the Bishops' Conference requirements in both key stages. Levels of departmental funding are commensurate and appropriate with other core subjects.

## **The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education** **Grade 2**

The curriculum is well planned and meets the requirements of the Bishops Conference (CCD2012). Curriculum planning is also responding to the Bishops Directive for the teaching of GCSE from September 2016 to include 50% Catholicism and 25% Judaism. A member of the department is attending specialist training at Liverpool Hope University to help the department prepare materials on Judaism. The current KS4 curriculum builds on the KS3 curriculum and the decision to move to paper 8 was made as a response to the analysis of student data and a gap in student performance at GCSE on paper 10. The Head of Department has seen a marked improvement in the motivation of boys in response to the new material which was also evident in lesson observation and views gathered from student voice during the inspection. The curriculum is enriched through a variety of learning experiences including visiting speakers and youth groups. There was evidence of effective differentiation to meet pupil's individual needs which needs to be shared across the department. Students enjoy their learning experience in RE.

A department improvement plan has been developed with members of the Leadership Team to improve student outcomes which includes the development of pupil tracking, monitoring, assessment and intervention.

## **The extent to which the Religious Education Curriculum promotes pupils' learning** **Grade 2**

All teaching observed was good with some evidence of outstanding classroom practice at KS3 which showed pupils were excited by their learning. The teachers all have a strong subject knowledge. All of the lessons are well planned using a variety of teaching and learning techniques and imaginative resources which keep the pupils focused. Lessons were planned to meet the needs of individual students. Pupil Progress within lessons is at least good. Where progress is most significant pupils work collaboratively and take more responsibility for their own learning. Review strategies at KS4 and the use of 'Red, Amber, Green Confidence cards' alongside suitable differentiated materials and higher order questioning techniques help pupils make very good progress within the lessons. The department needs to create opportunities to share and embed the outstanding elements of teaching witnessed. The pupils are keen to learn and spoke positively about their experience of RE. The classroom environments are stimulating displaying 'Can do' quotations and celebrate pupils' work.

## **The Quality of Collective Worship provided by the school** **Grade 2**

Much of this aspect of the school is good with many outstanding features and only requires more consistency in form-based prayer to be judged outstanding overall. Acts of Collective Worship are given high profile and are well delivered with expertise by staff, visitors and local parish priest, with regular ownership and participation of pupils. Staff and pupils are comfortable praying together; as, for example when a member of staff shared his reflections on the Gospel which he had heard at the previous Sunday's mass. There is a range of formal and informal opportunities for daily prayer in form time and assemblies with a small chapel used by the prayer group and available to all. Staff review and plan improvements to the school's provision and are planning to develop

ways of ensuring that pupils are skilled and equipped in leading prayer and owning aspects of collective worship. Staff value the prayer and reflection/discussion materials, including a book of prayers and school website materials supplied to support them in form time. A member of the Religious Education department provides resources and coordinates liturgical activities and provides pupils with the opportunity to give evaluation and feedback. The Church's seasons and feasts are well highlighted and appropriately celebrated. Themes are consistent with the Catholic character of the school and take note of the diversity of pupils and the wider community. while also involving moral questions and charitable and social enterprise projects. Increasing links with parishes have involved use of a local church for mass ( for example for the recent celebration of Blessed John Henry Newman's feast day) and a review of the Confirmation programme.

### **Recommendations for further development**

1. To establish effective strategies to raise the standard of teaching from good to outstanding
2. To ensure sustained improvement in GCSE through effective monitoring, intervention and aspirational target- setting
3. To appoint a chaplain to further enhance the provision for worship and the Catholic life of the school
4. To develop more consistency in the quality of form-based prayer and reflection