

THE DIOCESES OF SHREWSBURY & CHESTER



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SHREWSBURY

 **THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND**
Diocese of Chester

**St Chad's Catholic and Church of England
High School,
Runcorn**

URN: 135731

DfE No: 8764614

14th and 15th July 2016

**Report on the
Inspection of Denominational Education**

Lead Inspector: Mr John Mc Cann

Link Inspector: Mr David Thorpe

The inspection of the denominational education of St. Chad's Catholic and Church of England High School, Runcorn 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 and the Bishop of Chester for the conduct of inspection of the denominational education of Catholic and Church of England Secondary Schools within the Dioceses.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1 Outstanding

Grade 2 Good

Grade 3 Requires Improvement

Grade 4 Inadequate

Description of the school

St Chad's Catholic and Church of England High School is a slightly larger than average-sized 11-18 co-educational secondary comprehensive school. The school is under the trusteeship of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Shrewsbury and the Church of England Diocese of Chester, within Halton Local Education Authority. St. Chad's mainly draws pupils from the nine parishes that it serves and the Catholic and Anglican partner primary schools within them. There are 1058 pupils on roll; 55% of the pupils are baptized Catholics, 35% Anglican and 1% from other world faith traditions. There are 89 members of teaching staff, including the Head, with 67% Catholic or Church of England and 25% identifying with other Christian denominations. 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 and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is above the national average. The number of pupils supported on school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is around the national average.

The inspection team observed teaching in each key stage, 7 lessons in total, and all specialist teachers of Religious Education were observed as were a number of non-specialists who were timetabled on the days on inspection. A cover supervisor and the chaplain were observed working with pupils. Pupils' work was sampled in each lesson observed as well as a scrutiny of pupils' work provided by the RE department. Inspectors observed the work of the chaplain with two groups of pupils, visited 4 classes during form time and attended two half year Acts of Collective Worship. Inspectors spoke to pupils in their classes as well as conducting structured interviews with representative groups from each key stage. Inspectors took into account the results of 32 completed parents' questionnaires, 24 staff questionnaires and 159 pupil questionnaires which related to the Religious Education Department and the Faith Life of the school. Discussions were held with: the Headteacher, two members of the Governing Body (Chair and parish priest), a group of parents; a Deputy Headteacher, an Assistant Headteacher, the Head of Religious Education, the school chaplains, a newly qualified teacher; the attendance team and Hub Manager for EAL. Learning walks were undertaken as well as a visit to the Emmaus area. Throughout the inspection the team had access to school, chaplaincy and departmental documentation, development plans and school documentation and resources.

Overall Effectiveness:

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education

Grade 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features and lives out its mission statement. The school has effectively met all of the recommendations for development raised in the last Section 48 inspection.

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Anglican/ Catholic Life of the School

Grade 2

Pupils undoubtedly benefit greatly from the Catholic/Anglican life of the school and unreservedly state this is a good school. They are proud that they attend here and they, and their parents, are openly appreciative of all that is being done on their children's behalf by all staff and particularly the RE department. This is clearly a school with a Christian ethos. Many opportunities exist,

within the school day and in planned activities for all pupils to access the chapel through the chaplains to engage in prayer, reflection and enquiry. A number of pupils are active within their parishes. The pupils show interest in the religious life of others and treat those of different beliefs with respect.

Throughout the school, there are aspirational quotations and reflections as well as acknowledgements of pupil achievements in a range of fields. The almost total lack of graffiti in and around the building as well as within the pupils' books indicates a pride in their school as well as in themselves. Within the school's Mission Statement – "Faith in God, Faith in ability, Faith in each other", there are five core values which have been identified which exemplify how the Mission is to be achieved. These values are promoted throughout the school in classrooms and public spaces and are known to the pupils and staff and form the core of many of the prayer opportunities provided. An awareness of the common good and commitment to the wider community and service for others runs throughout the school eg Cafod, Christian Aid, Seel Street Charity Liverpool, Christmas hampers.

At present there are limited opportunities for pupils to participate in away days and retreat activities.

The vast majority of pupils are polite and considerate of others within the class and outside in the grounds. Incidents of bullying are rare and the pupils state they are dealt with efficiently, effectively and fairly. From pupil interviews it is overwhelmingly believed that this is a safe and secure place in which to learn where everyone is valued and success celebrated and all are made welcome.

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education **Grade 1**

This subject is a strength of the school in terms of pupil participation and engagement as well as academic achievement. Pupils achieve well in each key stage, benefitting from appropriate and well-structured curricula, clear target setting and monitoring, regular focused assessment with, for the most part, clear teacher guidance and pupil self-assessment. The percentage of pupils achieving grades A*-C since the last inspection has always been above national average and significantly higher than the school's English and mathematics outcomes. This year 75% of the entry gained A*-C. In each year the percentage of pupils achieving A*-A has been high and in each year has been significantly higher than English and mathematics. In 2015, 32% of the entry achieved the highest grades. Although girls currently outperform boys at GCSE, effective steps have been taken to close the gap through targeted intervention, this is also the case for disadvantaged pupils. This area has seen the most dramatic increase in boys' attainment within the last year with 67% of boys in 2015 and 97% in 2016 achieving Level 5+ and 39% of the boys achieving Level 7. This area continues to be targeted by the department and will be further addressed in the planning for the delivery of the new KS4 syllabus. All pupils are encouraged to work hard and aspire to achieve the best that they can.

There are opportunities for further success in Key Stage 3, especially if pupils develop skills within the philosophical explorations this will improve their religious literacy. Pupils in KS3 and KS4 show that they are skilled in working in a variety of different settings and can move easily between them. The vast majority of pupils of all ages speak positively about religious education and see its relevance to their own lives and the wider world; they also take pride in their work

which is very well organised and presented and they benefit from excellent classroom environments.

The cohorts in KS5 are relatively small owing to the demands of 'A' level option choice. Students achieve well in this subject with all students for the past 3 years achieving a A*-C grade and at least 40% achieving A*-B. In 2015 the Religious Studies residual was 40.6 significantly higher than most other subjects.

There is a General RE programme within the Sixth form offer but all students do not have the opportunity to access it and for those who do the time allocation falls short of that recommended by both diocesan bodies.

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship Grade 2

In whole year groups pupils respond with respect, reverence and improving levels 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. Pupils benefit greatly from the availability of the recently reinstated well-appointed and resourced chapel and the work of a very active and highly effective full time and part time chaplain. During the inspection, outstanding whole year Acts of Collective Worship were observed, which 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 regularly draw upon the comprehensive materials provided on a weekly basis by the chaplain to support prayer and reflection in form time. Staff value the support provided by the chaplain and, as necessary, members of the RE team and Assistant Head with responsibility for the Catholic Life of the School. All staff have access to a published calendar at the beginning of the year of weekly themes to support collective worship and assist tutors in forward planning. The themes are all centred on the Gospel readings of the following Sunday. Whole year group, form time and staff reflection echo these readings throughout the week. Links are made to one of the five values and reflection on, and response to, local, national and international events are woven into the themes. The approach to, and the provision of, form based acts of collective worship is consistent throughout the school. Events and liturgical seasons are appropriately marked, often through Year or whole school celebration of the Eucharist. There is an experienced Assistant Head with a specific responsibility for monitoring, leading development and having a strategic planning/ overview of the Catholic/Anglican Life of the school.

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

Leaders, governors and managers demonstrate a strong and determined commitment to the Church's mission in education, with spiritual and moral development a priority. The school has recently set out its vision identifying five key values in which it seeks to make an impact and which is at the heart of all it does. There is evidence that it is striving to make a positive and effective impact in each of the areas.

The school has appointed a dedicated full time lay chaplain and a part time lay chaplain who also serves as a member of the school governing body. Both chaplains are highly regarded by the whole school community for the opportunities that are provided with the support of an extended

chaplains team covering a number of subject disciplines to develop the pupils' spiritual, liturgical and prayer life. The school may wish to consider greater involvement by the school's Faith Council in the development and delivery of the work of the chaplains team. Opportunities throughout the day exist for staff and/or pupils to visit the chapel for private prayer and reflection or a planned liturgical event. It is hoped that the chapel will be seen by all as 'a place of stillness and reflection where all in need of silence or support feel welcome' Although numbers attending on a voluntary basis are small at present this is an area that the school is seeking to develop.

A number of monitoring systems are in place to check on provision and outcomes. Evidence of some effective systems used by the recently appointed Head and Assistant Head has been seen. The school may wish to consider extending them further. Leaders and managers are aware of the strengths and areas for further development, especially in relation to consistent provision and developing pupil participation in the planning and delivery of Acts of Collective Worship especially in form time.

There is a strong, effective and well-resourced pastoral support system in place to support pupils with different needs. It is clear from pupils' interviews that there is a high regard for the Catholic/Anglican Life of the school and the encouragement for everyone to be involved in it.

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 committed to developing the quality of Religious Education to the highest level. Levels of departmental funding are commensurate and appropriate with other core subjects. An effective and extensive range of systematic monitoring and training activities are in place which have succeeded in very significant improvements over time. Issues are identified and strategies implemented to ensure rapid improvement without stifling creativity and allowing for extending writing opportunities.

Outstanding use of the assessment process results in well targeted planning and strategic action taken. At present there is no link governor attached to RE however governor links are being re-structured for the coming academic year with two governors being linked to the Mission of the school as set out in the Strategic Development Plan. An Assistant Headteacher who is a former experienced Head of RE is line manager for the Department as well as for the Catholic Life of the School. This is a very effective and productive partnership. The Head of RE regularly presents status reports to the governing body with a focus on attainment and progress at each Key Stage.

Curriculum provision in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 meets the Bishops' Conference and Diocesan Board of Education's requirements, as does the time requirement for Religious Studies 'A' Level. However the provision for general Religious Education as a core entitlement for all students in the sixth form is inadequate and needs to be addressed.

There is an excellent network of links between the Religious Education Department, chaplains, chaplains team and the leadership team which leads to well-planned programmes to support staff and bring about change.

The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education Grade 1

Teaching at Key Stage 4 and 5 is never less than good and there are examples of outstanding practice. In Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 all teaching is good or better, ensuring pupils are interested in their learning, enthusiastic and making good progress in a variety of learning contexts. At the core of the Religious Education Department are a team of 7 RE subject specialists. As a result of good assessment procedures, teachers and learning support personnel work well to meet the needs of all pupils. Support provided by other adults is effectively deployed. Teachers have strong subject knowledge which challenges most pupils and contributes to their very good progress. Good and imaginative use is made of resources and activity, including technology to maximize learning and is a strength of the department. However care must be taken in some lessons that timing does not become an issue which impacts on the effective conclusion of lessons. Pupils are consistently provided with positive, constructive and formative feedback both orally and written at GCSE and 'A' Level which helps pupils make very good progress. There was also highly effective marking and feedback evidenced in Key Stage 3. Achievement and effort are highlighted and personalised advice is regularly given, appreciated and acted upon.

Sixth form pupils are very good advocates for A level Religious Studies. They enjoy being challenged in their thinking and discussion skills respond appropriately. They benefit from being challenged to go beyond their initial thoughts and respond appropriately to the thoughts of others.

The provision of materials to support learning is excellent, as are the learning bases throughout the Department both in and outside of the classrooms. The department may wish to consider greater use of exemplar material to be displayed within the department so that all students are aware of the quality of work being produced on a regular basis in this subject.

The extent to which the Religious Education Curriculum promotes pupils' learning Grade 1

The Religious Education curriculum is enriched through imaginative and well planned strategies to capitalize on the expertise within school. The Religious Education curriculum provides many opportunities for spiritual and moral development within the school day. Extra-curricular opportunities are limited to Key Stage 3 and are much enjoyed. The curriculum is characterised by ready reference to local and world-wide social and ethical issues and opportunities for, and reflection on, service to others. The curriculum offered matches fully the requirements of The Bishops' Conference and the National Board of Education. The school's plans for the introduction of new curriculum developments at GCSE and 'A' Level Religious Studies in 2016 are clear and appropriate and as with all schools will require further development.

The Quality of Collective Worship provided by the school Grade 2

Staff and students are comfortable praying together. The school is seeking to increase ownership and participation by pupils. There are a range of formal and informal opportunities for daily prayer in form time, assemblies and chapel area. The Assistant Head, RE department and chaplain 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. There could be a greater role for the Faith Council in this respect. Staff value the prayer and reflection/discussion materials supplied by the chaplains which supports them in form time. Year group and whole school Acts of Collective Worship are outstanding given high profile and are well delivered with expertise by staff, chaplains and for some occasions the chaplaincy team. The Church seasons and feasts are celebrated by the whole school community. Themes are consistent with the Catholic/Anglican character of the school and take note of the religious diversity of pupils and the wider community when appropriate. The chaplains and the local clergy, as and when appropriate, significantly enrich and support the provision and their contribution is much appreciated by the staff, governors and pupils.

Recommendations for further development

1. Due to recent significant staff changes at all levels it would be timely and appropriate for the school to visit its Mission Statement with the St Chad's Community so that it is known and its impact on all areas of the curriculum understood.
2. To ensure the provision, for all Sixth Form students, of a general RE programme which meets the Diocesan Board of Education and Bishops' Conference requirements.
3. To continue to develop the effective strategies in KS3 and KS4 to further close the gaps in pupil premium and gender.
4. Continue to develop resources to support the new courses being introduced into KS4 and KS5 in September 2016.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Key to judgements:	Judgement
Grade 1 = outstanding, Grade 2 = good, Grade 3 = requires improvement and Grade 4 = inadequate	

OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS: How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic/Anglican life of the school	2
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	1
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	2

LEADERS GOVERNORS AND MANAGERS How effective leaders, governors and managers are in developing the Catholic/Anglican life of the school	2
How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic/Anglican life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	2
How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	2

PROVISION How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic/Anglican Education	1
The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education	1
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning	1
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	2

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS	
How effective the school is in providing Anglican/Catholic Education	2