



## DIOCESAN CANONICAL INSPECTION REPORT

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

# Blessed Robert Widmerpool Catholic Voluntary Academy

Listowel Crescent, Clifton, Nottingham, NG11 9BH

<b>School URN:</b>	137425
<b>Inspection Dates:</b>	16 March 2015
<b>Inspectors:</b>	Mr Peter Giorgio and Mrs Anne Recchia

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	Previous Inspection:	Outstanding	1
	<b>This Inspection:</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Catholic Life:</b>		Outstanding	1
<b>Collective Worship:</b>		Outstanding	1
<b>Religious Education:</b>		Outstanding	1

### SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

**Blessed Robert Widmerpool is an outstanding Catholic school.**

- The school's Catholic ethos is central to everything that takes place in the school, it is a lived reality rooted in the mission statement.
- Pupil leadership of worship is outstanding; there is an impressive sense of autonomy. Acts of Worship are deeply moving and spiritual experiences.
- The quality of teaching inspires all pupils to achieve high levels of attainment in Religious Education. There is a positive climate for learning where all children feel included and make outstanding progress given their starting point.

## FULL REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- Blessed Robert Widmerpool Catholic Voluntary Academy is an average sized primary school situated in Clifton, south west of the city of Nottingham.
- The school takes pupils from the parish of Corpus Christi Clifton and is part of The South Nottingham Catholic Academy Trust. Most pupils transfer to The Becket Catholic School, which is part of the trust.
- Blessed Robert Widmerpool has been accredited as a teaching school and is the lead school in the Nottingham Catholic Teaching School Alliance.
- 77% of pupils currently on roll are baptised Catholic, 5% are from other Christian denominations, 5% from other faiths and 13% of pupils have no religious affiliation.
- 46% of all pupils are from ethnic groups other than White British and the proportion of pupils who enter school with English as an additional language is well above national average: the current proportion of pupils in the Foundation stage who are at the earliest stage of language acquisition is 54%.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below the national average and a small minority of pupils (11%) benefit from pupil premium.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below the national average. This funding relates to pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.

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

- To continue to develop a more robust tracking system that takes account of the rigours of the Religious Education curriculum by:
  - Continuing to work with the Nottingham Roman Catholic Diocesan Education Service (NRCDES) in devising a system that takes account of the amount and depth of skills and knowledge needed to attain levels in Religious Education
  - Tracking pupil progress using this system from entry into the school
- To revise the current scheme of work for RSE.
- To continue with plans to introduce meditation as part of the school's provision for Collective Worship.

## CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL	<b>1</b>
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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 - outstanding**

- Pupils at Blessed Robert Widmerpool demonstrate an exceptional sense of pride in their school; they speak with great enthusiasm about what being part of their school community means to them.
- Pupils thrive in an environment where the unique gifts and talents of all are recognised and valued. This sense of self-worth is then reflected in the tremendous sense of welcome and respect afforded to visitors to the school.
- Pupils treasure the school's Catholic identity and are able to recognise what makes their school different.
- 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 a number of responsibilities such as the liturgy team, house captains, sports ambassadors, eco council, Fairtrade ambassadors, librarians and prayer monitors.
- Pupils are fully involved in decision making processes and enjoy many varied opportunities to show how they care for others by supporting the work of a number of charities both at a local and national level. These include Emmanuel House, the Clifton Food bank, CAFOD, Comic Relief and De Paul UK. The school's contribution to this charity also led to media coverage and an invitation to attend a Mass of Thanksgiving held at Westminster Cathedral.
- The behaviour of pupils is exemplary at all times; they are polite and alert to the needs of others.
- Pupils' personal development and growth is promoted through a range of opportunities including parish and diocesan celebrations as well as residential.

### **The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school - outstanding**

- The school's mission statement, 'to walk kindly in the footsteps of Jesus' is understood and is at the heart of the school community. Staff are excellent role models; relationships are strong and are based on mutual respect and support. According to one pupil, 'we follow the example of Jesus and try to behave like he did in everything we do'.
- The learning environment at Blessed Robert Widmerpool is a wonderful reflection of the school's Catholic ethos and religious identity; artefacts are tasteful and displays are of extremely high quality.
- Pastoral care is a strength of the school. Pupils commented that they felt well cared for; they could approach any adult in the school and they would help them. 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.
- Recent questionnaires undertaken with staff demonstrate a great awareness of the school's Catholic ethos and the importance attached to the development of pupils' moral and spiritual development. Opportunities are provided for the spiritual formation of staff such as the annual academy trust day of reflection. Reference to the school's distinctive ethos is also made in staff induction programmes.

### **How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school - outstanding**

- The school's inspirational headteacher is deeply committed to the educational mission of the Church; she is well supported by both assistant headteachers. As such, the school's Catholic ethos is seen as of paramount importance. There is a great sense of unity, determination and consistency within the senior leadership team.
- Self-evaluation is incisive and thorough; it provides an accurate picture of the school through regular and robust monitoring activities. As part of this process, views of a range of stakeholders are sought and analysed.
- Parents are extremely complimentary about the school; they are appreciative of the school's strong Catholic ethos and are well informed through regular communication and visits to the school.
- The parish priest is a regular visitor to the school; he has recently arrived to the parish and speaks very positively about the school's strong Catholic Life.
- The school improvement plan addresses all aspects of the diocesan canonical inspection *evaluation schedule*; actions are specific and appropriate. It demonstrates a strong desire for a school which is continually improving.
- Governors are fully involved in reviewing and shaping the Catholic Life of the school. They are passionate about the school's mission and receive regular reports on progress being made against actions highlighted in the school improvement plan both through the headteacher's termly reports and meetings of the strategic development committee

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP	<b>1</b>
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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**

- 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 Blessed Robert Widmerpool and that they are highly valued by all members of the community. As one child stated, 'Collective Worship in our school makes me feel included with God; we can follow Jesus by praying more'.
- Pupils at Blessed Robert Widmerpool are highly skilled in planning and leading worship. This was evidenced in both the Key Stage 2 and Year 2 Acts of Worship observed during the inspection. Both of these were outstanding examples of pupil-led worship.
- In the Key Stage 2 Act of Worship which was planned and led by the chaplaincy team, pupils demonstrated their excellent liturgical knowledge and confidence in using a variety of approaches to worship including the use of scripture, periods of silence, discussion and joyful singing. It was a truly inspiring experience for any visitor to the school, not least due to the impressive sense of autonomy on the part of the chaplaincy team. It is clear that this approach to worship is now a well-embedded feature of the school's liturgical life.
- The class based Act of Worship in Year 2 also demonstrated pupils' excellent ability at planning and leading worship at a level which is beyond their years. Their interpretation and reflection on the theme of service exemplified by Christ at the washing of the feet was beautiful.
- Other faiths are respected and celebrated. Pupils show a deep level of respect when praying with others who do not share their beliefs.
- Collective Worship makes a very powerful contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development.

### **The quality of provision for Collective Worship - outstanding**

- Blessed Robert Widmerpool is a vibrant, prayerful community. As a result, Collective Worship is of consistently high quality and is treasured by all members of the school community.
- Opportunities for parents and parishioners to join the school community for worship including the celebration of Mass are plentiful. There have been tremendous efforts to engage parents using a range of initiatives such as the Prayer Bear, travelling cribs and the Lenten resource.
- Resources throughout the school are of the highest standard; the importance of developing high quality music and singing is also recognised.
- Staff, including the chaplains from the local Catholic Academy Trust are highly skilled in helping pupils to plan and lead worship. The two high quality Acts of Worship observed during the inspection are a wonderful testament to this. As a result of this, pupils are able to select themes which are relevant and appropriate to the liturgical season.

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

- Leaders and managers 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 the liturgical and spiritual development of staff.
- As always, leaders' strong aspirations and high expectations have led to very impressive developments in the school's approach to Collective Worship. In collaboration with the school chaplain, pupils are now able to evaluate worship through a 'blog' which is part of the school's website.
- Monitoring and evaluation procedures for Collective Worship are robust. As in Catholic Life, views of stakeholders are sought regularly and are acted upon. These findings are shared on a regular basis with governors.
- Governors are aware that the school's approach to Collective Worship is of high quality; they are proud of this and are keen to ensure that it continues to develop.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	<b>1</b>
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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 - outstanding**

- Pupils show a passion and enthusiasm for their learning in Religious Education and many say that it is the most important of all lessons. Behaviour for learning is exceptional, with pupils rarely off task even when not directed by an adult; lessons proceed without any interruptions.
- Most pupils enter school with very limited knowledge and understanding of the subject and a minority have the added task of learning English as an additional language. They respond well to the outstanding teaching and support provided and make rapid and sustained progress throughout their time in school. They learn exceptionally well and quickly acquire knowledge and a depth of understanding from an early age. Pupils speak with assuredness and authority about the extent Religious Education influences their lives.
- The standard of attainment of almost all groups of pupils are at least in line with diocesan averages with the majority of pupils exceeding the expected level by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Most pupils are in line to achieve expected levels in the current academic year with a minority already exceeding these.
- Pupils' work is exceptionally well presented and an obvious pride is taken in their efforts so that their books become treasured possessions. Work in pupils' books often exceeds the levels achieved in assessed pieces of work showing that high standards are maintained in every lesson. Pupils are able to respond effectively to marking and can evaluate their own and the work of their peers with increasing insight as they progress through school.

### **The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education - outstanding**

- The majority of teaching is outstanding and never less than consistently good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge; their lesson planning takes good account of pupils' previous learning and effectively tailors tasks to challenge and enthuse learners. The high standards set by teachers has resulted in a very effective learning environment where behaviour for learning is exemplary.
- The quality of teachers' questioning is very effective in stimulating deep thought and heartfelt responses from pupils. Learners are continually challenged to think more deeply, respond more fully and relate their learning to their own lives.
- Good use is made of resources to create imaginative and stimulating lessons that engage the pupils and encourage a consistently high level of participation, securing outstanding progress. Teaching assistants are highly skilled and are used very effectively to support the teaching and learning within the classroom.
- Teachers very effectively communicate, through the use of driver words, learning objectives and targets for attainment. Assessment for learning is a fully embedded system that celebrates achievement and signposts areas for development. The consistent approach to the use of 'I can' statements throughout the school, ensures pupils have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and how to improve. Time is used well to allow pupils to respond to marking and self and peer assessment.

**How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education - outstanding**

- The subject leader for Religious Education has excellent subject knowledge, is well informed and provides outstanding support for teachers. She keeps up to date with current educational practice and is highly focused on improving teaching and learning in Religious Education. She and the headteacher regularly attend diocesan led training and actively seek the support of the diocesan primary RE adviser.
- As members of the working party currently working on improving assessment across the diocese, they are proactive in developing a more robust tracking system that takes account of the rigours of the Religious Education curriculum especially at Key Stage 2.
- Religious Education has a high profile in the school and has a profound impact on the moral and spiritual development of pupils.
- Both the subject leader for Religious Education and the headteacher strive continually for excellence in Religious Education through review and improvement of systems, the continuing professional development of staff and the development of the curriculum. This very positive learning ethos is shared with staff and pupils to create a very constructive learning environment.
- Leaders and managers ensure that teachers are confident in the levelling of pupils' work. Accuracy is checked through moderation both internally and externally. Pupils' progress is tracked effectively; regular pupil progress meetings accurately identify those pupils who may need support and intervention.
- The headteacher and senior leadership team systematically monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching. Outstanding practice is regularly shared and teachers new to the school are well supported with a thorough induction process and all benefit from on-going professional development activities. Governors have an accurate picture of how well pupils are achieving and progress in Religious Education through a range of monitoring activities. They are able to ask searching questions and hold the school to account.
- Religious Education is well resourced in terms of staffing and curriculum time; it meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales fully.

## SCHOOL DETAILS

<b>School Name</b>	Blessed Robert Widmerpool Catholic Voluntary Academy
<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	137425
<b>Local Authority</b>	Nottingham City

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 8 Religious Education lessons, 1 Key Stage 2 Act of Collective Worship and 1 Key Stage 1 Act of Collective Worship.

Meetings were held with the headteacher, the subject leader for Religious Education, the senior leadership team, the parish priest, the chaplain and governors. Discussions were also held with pupils, including members of the 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.

<b>Chair of Governors:</b>	Mrs Christina Whitaker
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Mrs Anita Blake
<b>Date of Previous School Inspection:</b>	10 January 2008
<b>Telephone Number:</b>	0115 915 2392
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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, 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.
<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 as a Catholic school. The school will receive an annual monitoring visit and will be re-inspected within 3 years.