



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection

HAGLEY CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Part of the St Nicholas Owen Catholic Multi-Academy Company

Brake Lane, Hagley, Worcestershire DY8 2XL

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| Inspection date | 14 th -15 th March 2017 |
| Reporting Inspector | Janet Mellor |
| Assisting Inspector | Joe Skivington |

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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| Type of School | Academy |
| Age range of pupils | 11-18 years |
| Number on roll | 1081 |
| Appropriate authority | The Board of Directors |
| Chair of Academy Committee | Mrs Elaine Yates |
| Telephone number | 01562 883193 |
| E-mail address | office@hagleyrc.worcs.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | November 2011 |
| DFE School Number | 885/4800 |
| Unique Reference Number | 141414 |
| Headteacher | Mr Terence Hammond |
| Previous inspection: | 1 |
| This inspection: | 2 |

DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



MAKING CHRIST KNOWN TODAY

Evidence

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors.
- The focus of the inspection was on the quality, leadership, and impact of the school's provision of Catholic life, collective worship, and religious education (RE).
- The inspectors observed parts of 12 RE lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Most of these observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspectors completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic life, worship, and the impact of teaching on their learning over time.
- Meetings were held with directors of the multi-academy company, including the chair, members of the academy committee, including the chair and RE link governor, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the person in charge of Catholic life (PICCLS), the subject leader, priest chaplain, pupils and teachers.
- The inspectors separately attended a Year 8 Mass, a Year 13 assembly, form prayers and chapel prayers, whilst both undertook a tour of the school to look at the presentation of the Catholic life of the school and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' attainment and progress, RAISEonline, development plans, teachers' planning and records of aspects of Catholic life across the curriculum.

Information about the school

- The school is located in the parish of Our Lady and All Saints, Stourbridge. It has grown in size since the last inspection and is now above national average. It is oversubscribed, in part due to the proximity of the train station, and serves a wide area of north-east Worcestershire as well as parts of Birmingham, Dudley, Sandwell, Shropshire and Staffordshire.
- In relation to national averages for ethnic minority pupils, the school is well below average. There is a very low percentage of pupils with English as their second language.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 97%.
- The number of pupils granted free school meals is well below national average.
- The school has a lower than average number of pupils with special needs, including those with statements.
- Attainment on entry is significantly and consistently above the national average.
- Since the last inspection the school has become part of the St Nicholas Owen Catholic Multi-Academy Company (SNOMAC) with five of its feeder primary schools. There have been new appointments to the leadership of the RE department and the Catholic life of the school. The school works closely with the nearby Haybridge High School for shared sixth form provision for some subjects, with RE based at Hagley.

Main Findings

- Catholic life is recognised by the whole school community as the bedrock of its existence. The provision of worship opportunities and a well-structured disciplined environment where teaching of the Faith extends through the curriculum leads to a

body of pupils who grow to be mature young Catholics able to make informed moral choices.

- The headteacher's long and valuable leadership of the school has led to very strong links with feeder Catholic primary schools, both within and outside the SNOMAC. His role has contributed to a securing of Catholic education in the area.
- The PICCLS coordinates planning for improvement in Catholic life and this encompasses some planning for RE. Together with chaplaincy committee, they form the strategic and operational core for the development of Catholic life which is recognised as part of the curriculum of every subject.
- The generous amount of time available from the priest chaplain is a very positive asset to the school, and opportunities for Mass and other liturgical and pastoral work greatly enhance the Catholic life of the school.
- Provision of time for collective worship beyond Mass and assembly is limited and there is room for further development against the recommendation of the last inspection. The school has recognised this and plans to increase the formal monitoring, so that improvement can form part of forward planning.
- There are some opportunities for pupils to initiate and plan collective worship but this is not sufficiently developed. There is recognition by the school of this fact but as yet it does not have a high enough priority.
- The RE department is currently developing its schemes of work and assessment in RE to meet new examination requirements. Teachers are well prepared and there is a good level of planning.
- Outcomes in RE at GCSE were in line with diocesan averages in 2016 but progress was below average. The department is developing strategies to track progress more effectively, but forward planning lacks precision in setting success criteria.
- Sixth form work in RE, both at A level and in the Extended Project Qualification is a strength of the school.
- Leadership has a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the Catholic life and RE in the school and is ambitious for its future.
- The academy committee is committed to the values of the school and seeks to support and challenge. Members know about the school through receiving and discussing reports, attending school functions and from the work of the RE link governor.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

Catholic life, collective worship and spiritual, moral and vocational development: provision and outcomes

- Catholic life is outstanding. Collective worship is good with outstanding features.
- Catholic life stands out because leaders ensure there is a strong, caring, Catholic community, and pupils have a firm sense of belonging to a school whose values stem from the teachings of Jesus Christ. This is appreciated and supported by staff, parents, pupils and members of the academy committee and directors.
- Pupils articulate well the ethos of their school and understand the implications of faith in action. Catholic values are evident in the respectful way in which pupils behave within the school community. Throughout their time at the school they gain a mature sense of right and wrong, an ability to listen to the views of others, and to defend their own, whilst interacting with confidence and a sense of responsibility for the school and the wider community.
- Pupils participate in the evaluation of the Catholic life of the school through questionnaires and the meetings of their representatives in the school council, known as 'The Voice'. Their views are taken into account in planning, for example in decisions about support for charities and outreach projects. They had some initial

input into the revision of the mission statement, which was subsequently formulated by the chaplaincy committee and is now back with 'The Voice' for consultation.

- Provision of retreats, pilgrimages and visits, for example to Harvington Hall, greatly enhance the experience of the pupils of the breadth of spirituality of the Catholic Church. Pupils have a sound awareness of the sacrifices and determination of those who defended the Faith in the past, notably of the school's patron, St Nicholas Owen.
- Decisions about the development of Catholic life lie largely with the chaplaincy committee which comprises senior leaders, the chaplain and RE teachers, some teachers of other subjects, as well as the chair of the academy committee. Pupils do not share in the leadership of Catholic life at this level, though 'The Voice' has a sub-committee for Catholic life which has growing importance. The impetus to involve more pupils in chaplaincy is emerging through the initiative of the chaplain working with this group of pupils.
- The major strength of collective worship in the school is that it is fully centred on the Mass. The commitment of the priest chaplain to being available for one and a half days per week has sustained the celebration of Mass for year cohorts, usually one or two per term, and for house Masses, at a specific time in the school week. There are also class Masses, as well as Mass for several other occasions. The stated policy of ensuring that Mass is the centre of the school's life is firmly established. Pupils are aware of its importance, behaving with reverence and respect. In this regard provision is outstanding.
- The chaplain and the chaplaincy committee have had a clear focus on pupil participation in the celebration of the Mass. This participation has been supported through the provision of cards with the Mass readings and text, as well as the words of hymns. In addition, the involvement of musicians, both instrumentalists and vocalists, give a strong lead so that the celebration is lively and full of praise.
- Currently, there is provision for two or three formal assemblies per term for each year group. During the periods when a weekly year group assembly or Mass does not take place pupils meet in their tutor groups to reflect upon and pray about issues related to the Catholic life of the school. During the inspection a Year 13 assembly hosted a talk from the *Friends of Israel*, who presented a balanced historical exposition of the conflict in the Middle East.
- The school rightly plans to review the quality of collective worship beyond Mass and assembly.
- Areas for development in form time need to centre on increasing the amount of time allocated for collective worship, giving pupils encouragement and support to initiate prayer as well as to lead worship. These sessions will then consistently offer a true lifting of the mind to God, inspiring pupils with a sense of wonder and awe.
- The provision of a school prayer book is a very important resource for form tutors with its wide variety of prayers, including many traditional prayers of the Church. Other resources are provided and modelled by the PICCLS through the school chapel prayer rota, where, as with the Mass, pupils participate in reading from Scripture and in leading the prayers. Pupils are familiar with those prayers most frequently used, including the school prayer.
- Moral development of pupils is a very strong feature of the school. Ethical issues are discussed in many areas of the curriculum, for example environmental issues in French, and issues of life and death in RE. There are robust links to the Bible and

the teachings of the Church. Together with the tutorial programme and PSHE, as well as extra-curricular activities, for example the debating society, the curriculum provides a very secure basis for pupils to grow in an awareness of right and wrong. Pupils' excellent behaviour reflects this.

- Pupils are aware of the vocational aspects of career choice and of how they can serve God in the world. Sixth formers participating in the diocesan Lourdes pilgrimage are indelibly marked by work with the sick and elderly in the 'accueil'. The priest chaplain's work with Year 9 pupils in speaking about the vocation to the priesthood offers a sound personal testimony through which confidence to respond to the call is developed.
- Spiritual development is well understood by pupils and they are positive in their evaluation of how the school has helped them grow in their faith, with some taking on roles as readers and Eucharistic Ministers.
- The development of Catholic life journals has greatly increased the awareness of how each area of the curriculum contributes to the development of Catholic values, for example in the work in ICT on prayer. Work has begun on the development of a document about school values based on the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit, and this is currently under discussion in departments. The school is also considering the diocesan initiative based on the Catholic Schools' Pupil Profile.
- The curriculum for Relationships and Sex Education has recently been revised. Pupils speak of the value of this in making informed choices and knowing Catholic teaching.
- The school has close links with local parishes and the clergy. The school Mass Band visits parishes to provide music for liturgy and this is well received.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership of Catholic life and Collective Worship

- Leadership of Catholic life and collective worship is overall good with outstanding features.
- Leadership is clearly recognised as stemming from the personal faith and commitment of the headteacher, together with senior leaders and many staff. In this respect it is outstanding.
- The Catholic life of the school is the first priority in school development planning and is reassessed on a biennial basis using questionnaires to pupils and annually with parents. There is recognition by the school that more feedback is needed from staff.
- Planning for Catholic life development is very well formulated. It is detailed, clear and meticulous, and there is a record of progress made in terms of the tasks needed to reach each aim. Attention needs to be given to setting measurable targets, so that progress in meeting them is more explicit and their realisation celebrated. An example of this could be the percentage of pupils involved in outreach work by the end of the year.
- The leadership of the PICCLS has developed over time and is strategic and immediate. He has attended many academy meetings and given regular feedback to its members who both support and challenge. As a director of the SNOMAC, he is part of the development towards common staff training across the six schools in Catholic life. He works with pupils in leading the chapel prayers and in modelling to form tutors how the resource *Daily Prayers* can be used.

- Leaders seek external advice and evaluation when appropriate. For example, when it was recognised that staff training in leading prayer was needed, diocesan input was secured.
- Leadership of collective worship is good. In terms of the liturgy of the Church it comes from the priest chaplain, working with the PICCLS in a very productive weekly dialogue.
- The leadership of the academy committee is good. The chair's longstanding loyal support of the school includes dialogue with staff involved in the management of Catholic life and chaplaincy. The vice-chair is the newly appointed RE link governor, he is already well informed and preparing to develop the role by visiting classrooms to familiarise himself with the curriculum and teaching strategies.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Leadership, outcomes from and provision for religious education

- Religious education is good overall. Following a fall in attainment and progress in 2016, and with many changes to schemes of work, the RE department has made strides forward to improve outcomes for pupils. They are now providing lessons on the new topics which pupils enjoy and which enable them to achieve success.
- Leadership of the RE department is good. The head of the department is purposeful in leading the team and has developed solid foundations on which success with the new syllabi can be based. There is a clearly determined and enthusiastic approach to providing a high quality experience for pupils. This includes working with other schools in the diocese in order to learn from them and to share ideas and resources. Teachers work together to share good practice especially in regard to pupils with special needs. This results in a very confident and competent delivery of the syllabus in most lessons.
- The RE department is highly committed to its role of contributing to the Catholic life of the school. Teachers are members of the Chaplaincy committee, and there is a close link with 'The Voice'.
- Outcomes in GCSE RE in 2016 represent a drop in attainment from the previous year, with a fall in the A*-C percentage; the A*-A percentage was below diocesan averages. These figures are, however, above national averages and higher than the results in 2014.
- Progress at GCSE 2016 was well below diocesan averages. This needs to be an ongoing major focus for school improvement.
- The head of department has analysed the 2016 results according to the examiners' report and has adjusted the school's margins for expected grades as well as developing skills for accurate quotation from Scripture from Year 7. Attention is given in lessons to differentiation, and consideration is being given to lower achieving groups, to boys' lower attainment and to girls' lower achievement.
- The school has begun to identify progress as a focus for improvement. It has recently put in place strategies to address this area, by targeting, pace and challenge in lessons.
- Progress trackers and grade descriptors are in place for Key Stage 3, though the charts are not yet used consistently. There is a schedule of progress checking

indicated in the RE development plan, beginning in the second term of Year 7 when personalised targets are set.

- Data management in the school requires termly progress checking but within the RE department there is a wealth of data available for more frequent analysis. Progress in Key Stage 3 is compared with other core subjects in various groupings of pupils. RE has a lower initial starting point from baseline assessment than the other core subjects, and this is attributed to variation in prior learning. Some joint work within SNOMAC aims to offer smoother transition.
- Outcomes at A level over the past 3 years have shown 100% pass rates and very good progress rates. RE has fluctuating numbers at this stage but there is evidence of a rise in its popularity and of student commitment to the course.
- The school is rightly proud of its work with the sixth form and the Extended Project Qualification. Pupils develop skills which prepare them very well for higher education and other career paths. Topics chosen have an ethical dimension, which builds on GCSE work, and sometimes involves life-changing experiences such as teaching English in Vietnam. This is a very positive and successful way of developing general RE for the sixth form. The school is now seeking to raise progress rates based on data evidence of student potential.
- Development planning in RE is included in the Catholic life development plan as well as in separate documentation. This links RE firmly to the Catholic life of the school though some issues, such as assessment, are specifically RE issues. The RE departmental development plan follows the whole school format of responding first to whole school initiatives and second to specific issues within the department. Whilst this planning is detailed, it does not include many examples of precise measurable targets.
- In the RE plan for 2016 to 2017 there is a lack of reference to analysis of examination outcomes after the summer of 2016, especially low progress rates for various groups of pupils and targets for progress and attainment in 2017. The planning does not fully reflect the way in which the department is currently seeking to move forward.
- The school's practice of three yearly, in-depth reviews for departments provides a forum for discussion with the headteacher and a senior leader. In the last review presented to the academy committee in September 2016 success in raising achievement in 2015 is attributed to departmental intervention. However, the RE departmental review would have greater impact if it were to be annual.
- Teaching is at least good, and sometimes better, in the majority of lessons. There are examples of outstanding teaching in the sixth form. For example, during the inspection, pupils were seen using prior knowledge as they approached a new topic.
- Lessons are well planned and paced, and teachers direct learning by taking pupils through a variety of tasks, leading to good progress and more independent work. This is especially important given the 75 minutes length of lessons. Pupils are skilled in the use of the Bible as a resource. Teachers' questioning skills are well developed and targeting enables pupils with particular needs to be challenged and to participate fully and confidently in discussion.
- The behaviour of pupils and their engagement during lessons are both excellent, as is their conduct around the school. There is a calm atmosphere which is conducive to sound learning.

- At its best, assessment of pupils' work is thorough and the target setting in place leads to an effective written dialogue between pupil and teacher. However, the quality of assessment and target setting are inconsistent across the team of RE teachers.
- Half-termly assessments in Key Stage 4 give the opportunity for extended writing and this is very effective. Some extended writing opportunities also exist in Key Stage 3. Pupils are well practised in peer and self-assessment, enabling them to identify key points for their work and how to improve.
- The department has created an RE baseline assessment for Year 7 in order to match pupils accurately to the criteria of the *Hagley Grade Ladder*. This is recent work and has had diocesan support. Pupils generally know at what level they are working and what their next steps are.
- The curriculum for RE includes issues from daily life and relates faith to life in a very balanced manner, with a clear and knowledgeable account of the teachings of the Church. Curriculum time for RE is planned to be extended in Year 11 next year, which will support the challenge of new examinations and assessment.
- The curriculum includes study of other world faiths in Years 7 and 8, and includes a visit to a Gurdwara. The RE department has begun work in Year 10 on Judaism, integrating this with Christianity and ethics. Teachers have responded well to training opportunities for the new GCSE syllabus.
- The school has made a clear choice to maintain emphasis on scripture in its choice of GCSE and A level syllabi. There is a coherence and progression in learning from Key Stage 4 to Key Stage 5, and the RE department acknowledges the challenges of the decision whilst viewing this as a sound basis for Catholic theology.
- Documentation from the school shows a desire to overcome any tendency to repeat work from the primary school and this is supported by cooperation within the SNOMAC. There is evidence of pupils having secure knowledge. In a Year 7 class pupils explaining various phrases in the Lord's Prayer were already fully able to articulate and develop the meaning of 'daily bread' as a reference to the Eucharist and a Polish pupil was able to extend this to Polish Christmas customs.

Recommendations

In order to improve the school should:

- Ensure high quality prayer is delivered daily in form time.
- Support pupils to devise and lead high quality prayer and worship more regularly.
- Supplement the well formulated plans for Catholic life and RE with measurable targets to aid school improvement.
- Improve attainment and especially progress for all pupils at GCSE RE.