



DIOCESAN CANONICAL INSPECTION REPORT

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

St Elizabeth's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Matlock Road, Belper, Derbyshire, DE56 2JD

School URN:	146119
Inspection Date:	27 September 2019
Inspectors:	Mrs Anita Blake and Mrs Deborah Tibble

Overall Effectiveness	Previous Inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This Inspection:	Requires Improvement	3
Catholic Life:		Outstanding	1
Religious Education:		Requires Improvement	3
Collective Worship:		Good	2

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Elizabeth's Catholic Voluntary Academy is a Catholic school that requires improvement.

- St Elizabeth's is a caring, inclusive Catholic community with a committed team of staff. However, due to weaknesses in the school's provision for Religious Education, the overall effectiveness of the school in providing a Catholic education requires improvement.
- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. Parents have a very positive view of their relationship with the school. All members of the community are highly valued. There is a deep commitment to the school's Catholic values and to its Franciscan heritage.
- The teaching and learning of Religious Education requires improvement. The inspection was not helped by a lack of evidence provided by the school. Work in pupils' books and visits to lessons showed a low level of challenge for pupils; the presentation of written work was poor.
- Collective Worship in the school is good. Pupils respond positively during Acts of Collective Worship and liturgies. Although there is some evidence of child-led liturgy, this is not yet fully embedded.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Elizabeth's Catholic Voluntary Academy is a one form entry school with 206 pupils on roll.
- The school serves the parishes of: Our Lady's, Belper; St Margaret Clitheroe, Duffield and St Joseph's, Ripley.
- St Elizabeth's Catholic Voluntary Academy became part of the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust on 1 September 2018.
- Of the 206 pupils on roll, 57% are Catholic, 31% are from other Christian backgrounds and 13% are from other religious affiliations.
- The proportion of pupils who have an Education and Health Care Plan is 4% which is below the national average; 51 pupils are on the school's special educational needs and/or disability record.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils eligible for pupil premium is 6%, this is below the national average.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

■ Religious Education:

- Implement a robust system of monitoring and evaluation for every aspect of Religious Education ensuring that monitoring and evaluation are evidenced and that these have a direct impact on the quality of teaching and learning.
- Ensure the accuracy of assessment of pupils' work in Religious Education through regular moderation with other schools, the Catholic Multi-Academy Trust and the Diocese so that these activities lead to improved standards in Religious Education and a greater level of challenge for all pupils.
- Review the school's handwriting and presentation policy so that it makes clear expectations regarding the standard of handwriting and the way in which pupils' work should be presented. Ensure that this is clearly understood and followed by staff and pupils.

■ Collective Worship:

- Develop and further embed child-led liturgy throughout the school.
- Ensure that all leaders are able to monitor and evaluate child-led liturgy effectively so that levels of pupil independence accelerate rapidly.
- Ensure that the school engages actively with the support offered by the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust's Lead Lay Chaplain.

As the school has been judged to require improvement, a monitoring visit will be carried out within 18 months from the publication of this report.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL	1
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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 governors 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 St Elizabeth's appreciate and value the Catholic ethos of the school. They refer to the mission statement 'Christian, Potential, Safe, Caring' with confidence and live it out in their daily interactions with each other. They express the view that their school helps them 'to be better people and to come closer to God'. They understand that they are called to help their friends and sometimes their enemies.
- Pupils show a deep respect for themselves and each other as members of a Catholic community. They share an awareness of each other's needs and share their responsibility to care and look after each other.
- At St Elizabeth's, pupils willingly take on roles and responsibilities within their school community. These roles include a recently established school chaplaincy team, positions on the school council, class prayer monitors and Minorities (a lunchtime club with a focus on St Francis, St Catherine and St Elizabeth to help others).
- Pupils have a sense of responsibility for their own spirituality and for the spirituality of others; they embrace this wholeheartedly. For example, during the inspection, pupils expressed how they helped newer members of their community to learn the school prayers.
- Pupils are proud of their Catholic heritage and are willing to share how important this is to them and to their community. They value the strong links that the school has with the Franciscan Sisters and the impact that this has on their daily lives.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school – outstanding

- The school's mission statement is at the core of the community. It is a true reflection of the wider mission of the Church. All pupils are aware of the mission statement and how to live it out in their daily lives. Pupils begin the year reflecting on the mission statement and exploring what it means to them.
- Upon entry to St Elizabeth's, it is very clear that this is a Catholic community not only through the various religious displays and artefacts but through the sense of community that permeates the staff, parents, local governors and the pupils.
- Staff are committed to the Catholic ethos of the school and this is evident in the relationships between staff and pupils. Staff view themselves as role models to the pupils, parents and the wider community treating all with genuine care and respect as they live out their mission as educators in a Catholic community.
- St Elizabeth's is a joyful and supportive community where prayer is central to school's existence. Parents expressed the view that 'Catholicity is at the root of all the school does' with some travelling extensive distances to ensure that their children can attend the school.
- The Catholic character of St Elizabeth's is evident in the physical environment though display and artefacts, many of which have historical links to the Franciscan Sisters. These are valued and enhance the school's Catholicity. These are particularly focused on St Francis of Assisi and St Elizabeth of Hungary. In some cases however, prayer focus areas can appear cluttered and are less welcoming.
- Pupils are aware of their role within their Catholic community for charitable giving and helping those less fortunate. This is through local charities such as Oli's Arm and national and international charities as well. The school recognises an individual pupil's charitable giving such as a pupil donating her hair to charity and another asking for no birthday gifts but for donations to charity instead.
- St Elizabeth's demonstrates a caring attitude towards staff and is mindful of its responsibility to support their pastoral needs. Staff expressed views that they were well cared for and supported in all aspects of their job including their role as teachers in a Catholic school.
- Pastoral programs for PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) and RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) are carefully planned and taught in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church. The school is ably supported by Sister Dorothy Paul in this area of the curriculum.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school – outstanding

- Leadership at all levels is firmly committed to the Catholic Life of the school. Both local governors and senior leaders are dedicated to supporting the community and to ensure that 'Christ is at the centre' of all they do.
- Parents have a very positive view of school leaders. One said that 'the headteacher has his faith at the heart of everything' whilst another said '[the headteacher] speaks of the Gospels with sincerity of heart. He is led by his Catholic faith and this is inspirational to others'. One parent enthused about the Catholic Life of the school saying, 'it has supported my child to flourish and grow in his faith'.
- The local governing body has embraced its role as a critical friend of the school. It has developed a strategic plan to review the mission and vision of the school. Governors' roles have recently been enhanced following the establishment of the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust and this has enabled local governors to assist in the appropriate oversight of the school.
- Leaders embrace diocesan initiatives with enthusiasm. Initiatives such as the Bishop's pastoral themes of 'encounter', 'discipleship' and 'missionary discipleship' have been incorporated into the life of the school. This has included the opportunity for adoration of the Blessed Sacrament led by Sister Dorothy Paul. During lesson visits, pupils were able to recognise their roles as missionary disciples.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	3
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education. 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education. 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education. 	3

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education – requires improvement

- It has been very difficult to reach a judgement on the quality of Religious Education due to the lack of evidence provided by the school. As part of the inspection process, inspectors were unable to access pupils’ Religious Education work books from the previous year and so were unable to make a detailed judgement on progress.
- During the inspection, pupils were able to express religious literacy, particularly at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils working in groups were able to explain how they would live out one of the Beatitudes. They were also able to articulate and recognise that ‘life was a gift from God’.
- During visits to lessons, most pupils were keen to do well. They were able to explain the new feedback policy of highlighting positive responses, however, they were unsure of how to improve their work and therefore raise standards further in Religious Education.
- Based on the evidence provided by the school, there was a mismatch between the school’s assessment judgements and the standards and quality of the work in pupils’ books. Whilst end of key stage assessment information submitted to the diocese states that pupils are working above diocesan averages, the evidence in pupils’ books did not support this view. This therefore raises significant issues about the reliability and accuracy of the school’s assessment procedures for Religious Education.
- The quality of pupils’ current written work requires improvement in terms of content and detail but also presentation. There was not enough evidence in books for inspectors to judge that pupils take care and pride over their work in Religious Education. In many Religious Education work books, the quality of pupils’ work is below age-related expectations.
- Behaviour for learning, as observed during the inspection, is variable. In some cases, pupils were actively engaged in their learning and were well motivated because the tasks were matched accurately to pupils’ level of understanding and their interests, however in other lessons, there was a lack of clarity in the learning intentions which led to pupils becoming disengaged from their learning. Where this disengagement was most apparent, tasks were of a poor quality and lacked challenge appropriate to the pupils’ levels of ability.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education – requires improvement

- As the school's assessment of pupils' work is inaccurate and not appropriately matched to pupils' understanding, teachers do not always plan effectively or with enough rigor and challenge; consequently, pupils do not make the rate of progress that they should.
- Although teachers employ a range of strategies to engage pupils, including the use of poetry and art, pupils were unable to explain the learning intentions or how they could improve their work in many visits to lessons.
- Pupils are involved in a limited way in the evaluation of how well they had achieved in lessons through the use of 'pink for think', 'green for great' and 'purple for response' pens. This method of evaluation is not fully embedded and has limited impact on pupil progress with responses, in many cases, lacking depth and development.
- During the inspection there was significant adult support in all lessons observed. Additional adults were used to support groups and individuals with identified needs however, the impact of additional adults on pupils' learning was minimal as there was a lack of focus on the task and a lack of knowledge of the learning intention.
- Although staff are developing a creative approach to Religious Education, the focus on the actual learning in Religious Education was diluted and hence was not the primary focus. For example, pupils were more enthusiastic about the 'rap' that they were creating than on the religious learning the activity was based upon.
- Teacher expectations in Religious Education are not high enough as evidenced in pupils' books and visits to lessons. Staff are deeply committed to the Catholic ethos of the school but their expectations of pupils' work in Religious Education are not high enough to inspire the pupils to achieve outcomes of sufficient quality.

The extent to which leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education – requires improvement

- During the inspection, insufficient evidence was provided to form a judgement about whether or not the school fulfils the episcopal requirement to devote 10% of the weekly timetable to the teaching of Religious Education. In the limited examples of work seen during the inspection in the first four weeks of the year, this appears to be met. However, there were not enough books from the previous year to make a more definitive judgement. The school has not adhered to an expectation set by the Diocese of Nottingham and which is communicated to schools on a regular basis towards the end of every academic year that schools due for inspection in the next year should keep pupils' Religious Education books from the previous year.
- The school's own self-evaluation is greatly over-inflated, most particularly in the area of Religious Education. This is due to a lack of accurate assessment and moderation, both internally and externally. Evidence to support assessment judgements was limited and evidence for moderation was provided for one task in the previous year and no others. This indicates that the school does not engage on a proactive basis with neighbouring schools within the Trust or across the Diocese of Nottingham as a whole. As a result of this the school has not kept abreast of standards in Religious Education and consequently has an artificially high opinion of where their children are and the general quality of Religious Education.

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- Monitoring and evaluation of standards and provision in Religious Education are ineffective. There is no systematic approach to plan for improvements in the teaching and learning of Religious Education. Although there was some evidence of work sampling and lesson observations there is no evidence to suggest that these activities have led directly to any improvements in the standards of Religious Education.

- There is a lack of rigor when monitoring pupil outcomes in Religious Education. Data is collected on a termly basis but there is no evidence of meetings with class teachers to discuss pupil attainment and progress in Religious Education.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP	2
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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 governors 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 – good

- During the Collective Worship seen on the day of inspection, pupils acted with reverence. Pupils reported that they enjoyed assemblies, liturgies and Masses held at school. They participated well in formal prayer and moments of quiet reflection; singing was tuneful and joyful.
- Pupils willingly share their learning in Religious Education with the school community during weekly assemblies. During these celebrations, pupils take responsibility for readings and all year groups share something that they have learnt during the week. Pupils said that they enjoyed sharing their work in this way and almost all pupils listened attentively to each other.
- Although pupils have prepared some liturgies, they do not yet lead worship independently; there is an over-reliance on adults to prompt. Although some evidence for Collective Worship was provided by the school during the inspection this was limited; inspectors' discussions with pupils showed that pupils did not always lead or prepare liturgies.
- Pupils were able to create a prayerful atmosphere with music and artefacts. Almost all pupils asked demonstrated a very good understanding of the Church's liturgical year.
- Living and working in a community based on prayer has a positive impact at St Elizabeth's. Many of the pupils spoke positively about the atmosphere of the school. The curriculum includes coverage of other world faiths such as the fundamentals of Judaism and Islam. Almost all pupils demonstrate respect for each other.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship – good

- Prayer is prevalent throughout the school. Pupils were able to say that they prayed regularly throughout the day and that they valued as part of their lives at St Elizabeth's.
- The worship observed and the limited evidence provided during the inspection indicate that there are set themes for worship and that the themes reflect the Church's liturgical year.
- Parents and adults expressed a positive view about Collective Worship at St Elizabeth's. Parents state that they are regularly welcomed to liturgical celebrations at the school and that they value these.
- School leaders have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year.
- Staff demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to providing good quality Collective Worship however, child-led liturgy is not fully embedded or understood by pupils. In cases where child-led liturgy was most successful, pupils had greater responsibility and ownership of leading prayer and liturgy and did so with some independence. Where this was not so successful, adults took an overly-directional approach because pupils were not empowered to be independent. The school has adopted using the '*Let us Pray*' resource but this has not yet been fully embedded.
- The St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust has employed a Lead Lay Chaplain from the moment it was created. Unfortunately, there was no evidence to suggest that the school has engaged in an active way with this support.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship – good

- Leaders demonstrate both knowledge and understanding of the Church's liturgical year and how to plan and lead Collective Worship. Collective Worship is held in high esteem and appropriate time and resources are allocated to this area of school life.
- Leaders, including the Franciscan Sisters are models of good practice for staff and pupils. They lead Collective Worship and liturgy in the school and this is valued by all.
- Pupils at St Elizabeth's have a very positive attitude to Collective Worship as it has been made accessible to all pupils. Child-led liturgy is not fully embedded at St Elizabeth's and in some cases, there is an over-reliance on adults taking the lead during worship.
- The evaluation of Collective Worship is not fully embedded and does not have sufficient rigor. It has not had a significant impact to promote a systematic approach to the development of liturgical skills on a year by year basis.

SCHOOL DETAILS

School Name	St Elizabeth's Catholic Voluntary Academy
Unique Reference Number	146119
CMAT	St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust

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 (September 2018)* 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 7 Religious Education lessons and 4 Acts of Collective Worship.

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

The inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including reports of the governing body, action plans, the college development plan, monitoring forms, assessment information and parental response forms. Inspectors also examined the work in pupils' Religious Education books.

Chair of Governors:	Mrs Marie Jo Booth
Headteacher:	Mr Bryan Lowe
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WHAT INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS MEAN

Within the report, the following grades are used:

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires Improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

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

Grade 1	Outstanding	The school is a highly effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are exceptionally well met.
Grade 2	Good	The school is an effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are met well.
Grade 3	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 18 months and the school will be re-inspected within 3 years.
Grade 4	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.