



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **CARDINAL WISEMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL AND LANGUAGE COLLEGE COVENTRY**

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Inspection dates	13 <sup>th</sup> -14 <sup>th</sup> November 2013
Reporting Inspector	Janet Mellor
Assisting Inspector	Christopher Martin

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Type of School	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11-19 years
Number on roll	1292
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Mrs Pat Garner
School address	Potters Green Road Potters Green Coventry CV2 2AJ
Telephone number	024 76 617231
E-mail address	admin@cardinalwiseman.coventry.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 <sup>th</sup> -29 <sup>th</sup> November 2010
DFE School number	3314710
Unique Reference Number	103744

<b>Headteacher</b>	<b>Mrs Helen Knight</b>
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DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two diocesan inspectors. The focus of the inspection was on the effectiveness and use of the school's self evaluation of Catholic life and religious education (RE). To validate the school's self-evaluation of teaching and learning, the inspectors observed one whole lesson and nine part RE lessons, one of which was observed jointly with the headteacher. In addition the inspectors completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils and sixth form students to evaluate the impact of teaching on their learning over time. They held meetings with senior staff, the lay chaplain, the priest chaplain, pupils and governors. They observed a Mass, tutor group worship and a year assembly. They looked at a range of evidence related to the school's self evaluation such as RAISEonline, the school's development plan and whole school audits, a departmental review, and teachers' planning. Alongside the validation of school self evaluation, the inspectors gathered evidence about the quality of work with pupils who have low prior attainment and special needs, evidence which will be shared with other diocesan schools.

## Information about the school

Cardinal Wiseman School is an above average sized Catholic secondary school serving parishes in the north east of Coventry, an area of well above national average levels of social and economic deprivation. The proportion of baptised Catholic pupils is currently 71%. About two-thirds of the pupils are of White British heritage with an increasing number from ethnic minority households, and also increasing numbers with English as an additional language, especially from Poland. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals and additional support is well above average. Increasing numbers of pupils enter the school with special needs. Attainment on entry at 11 and for the sixth form is below the national average. The school works in partnership with other providers in order to cater for a variety of needs for post-16 and the number of students has increased rapidly.

## Main Finding

In its self evaluation Cardinal Wiseman School judges itself to be a good Catholic school. In respect of provision for sound teaching in the RE faculty and progress of pupils, together with leadership of Catholic life and the emphasis on prayer and service throughout the school, this judgement is fully justified. The school has mostly good systems in place for monitoring and evaluation, and recognises from them how it can improve, and plans accordingly. The headteacher and her senior staff know the school and its pupils well. They are totally committed to the improvement which has been invigorated by key appointments and decisions, and to the provision of the best learning opportunities for each and every pupil in the school. Governors offer a high level of support and challenge, and are also key players in the development of the school's Catholic ethos. Pupils grow quickly in their appreciation of the strengths of the school and are proud to belong.

## School Self Evaluation

The major part of the school's self evaluation of RE lies in its exploration of the extent to which it is matching demanding external criteria for teaching and learning. Documentation shows judgements about the achievements of the faculty, the impact of the initiatives and how they have been evaluated, and finally how they lead to next steps. The monitoring of teaching has led since the last inspection to decisions about staffing resulting in the appointments of well qualified staff. Continued monitoring has led the school to judge present teaching as good with some outstanding examples, and this was seen in the inspection to be fully justified. The newly formed team of RE teachers is driven by self assessment of teaching and learning and uses scrutiny of written work and feedback from pupils after each section of work as a basis for adjustments to teaching programmes, for example in finding the best ways of presenting new topics. The engagement of pupils as stakeholders in their own learning has been evaluated as an important contribution to the rise in attainment. Their views have further assisted the development of the reward system, with a positive impact on the quality of learning. Outcomes in examinations and progress are closely analysed, with the result that teachers plan for improvement in addressing individual needs, and initiate interventions. The improvement in examination results stem from this careful tracking of progress. Teachers know the potential of their pupils and have the expectation that they will achieve or exceed target grades. The evaluation of the needs of a small group of pupils in the Key Stage 4 year groups has led to innovative provision, and excellent progress and attainment. There is a sense of urgency within the faculty to make sound and rapid progress. Governors

challenge the faculty through questioning following their observation of lessons and attendance at faculty meetings. They monitor the self evaluation documentation at meetings.

The school monitors Catholic life and collective worship through surveys, observation and feedback from staff and pupils. Leaders in the school show a strong commitment to the provision of collective worship and ensure by monitoring that pupils have a role in the planning and delivery of assemblies. Evaluation however does not include a full Catholic understanding of the values which are promoted. Similarly leaders ensure that collective worship in tutor time, in the form of prayer and reflection, takes place, and having evaluated the need for resources, these are provided, together with appropriate professional development sessions for staff. Feedback from this has led to some adjustments in provision and sessions have been well received particularly by staff new to teaching in a Catholic school. The school judges evaluation of tutor time to have made an impact with 40% of pupils having led prayer which can have included reference to the lives of saints or to scripture. A schedule for tutor time observation has recently been developed as a clear evaluation tool, and this covers Catholic ethos in terms of attitudes to prayer and pupil engagement, as well as checking for an activity leading to spiritual, moral, social or cultural development.

The school enjoys huge strength in the determination and commitment of a range of key players for the development of the Catholic life, and they work from analysis and diagnosis towards appropriate action. For example the governors analysed the need for the refurbishment of the chapel, as well as its potential uses, with the result that a sacred space of inspiring great beauty has been created with an area which can be separated and used imaginatively. Feedback from pupils, collected through the formal structures of pupil leadership groups and annual student voice conference enables improvements to be made for instance to the flexible learning days. The school evaluates its work to promote charity fund raising as highly successful because of the large amounts raised and the immediate independent response of pupils to local, national and global need. The audit of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions of the curriculum has shown how a range of faculties are involved and this could form the basis for greater whole school awareness. The school already links behaviour tightly to the Catholic ethos. By defining 'spiritual' in Catholic terms, a clearer basis for the evaluation of collective worship may emerge. There has not yet been an analysis of vocational aspects, though the emphasis on action and service, stemming from the headteacher and highly prevalent throughout the school, will enable this to be an addition to the existing audit.

### **Overall effectiveness of the school<sup>1</sup>**

Outcomes for pupils in religious education show a very positive trend at both GCSE and Advanced level. Results at age 16 have risen over the three years since the last inspection to approaching the diocesan average. Progress of pupils with low prior attainment has risen the most significantly, including some from a group with special curriculum provision whose achievement in 2013 was exemplary. The school made a successful decision in moving them from the short GCSE course to the full course. Overall about two thirds of pupils made expected progress in religious education in 2013, representing a rise from the previous year. Those pupils with special support made less progress than the rest of the cohort, but those with English as an additional language made significantly better. The proportion of A\*-A grades rose by a small amount. Girls still achieve better than boys, though the gap has narrowed since the last inspection. Sixth form students entered for A2 examinations achieve better than those entered for AS level. Numbers of those gaining the highest grades at each stage has remained small and the retention of students from the AS course to A2 is low. Entry requirements for the AS level course have recently been raised as a result of analysis of performance data.

Outcomes from the Catholic life of the school are strong primarily in terms of faith in action. The school is committed through the inspiring leadership of the headteacher to a 'Martha' approach, which is interpreted as service to others and flows through the very life blood of the school. Pupils respond spontaneously to need and are regularly engaged in fund raising, including over £23,800 raised in the last two years for the school's own Malawi trust. This charity provides an opportunity for sixth form students to work in that country as a life changing experience and younger pupils aspire to be chosen to participate in the future. In lessons pupils were observed showing concern for those caught up in the disaster in the Philippines, including family relatives. The school places emphasis on the 'Wiseman

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<sup>1</sup> As the quality of the school self evaluation has been affirmed, the judgements in this section of the report conform largely to those of the school.

values' including faith and respect, and 'habits of the heart'. These are programmed into the planning for collective worship, and supported by displays, liturgies and rewards. The recently inaugurated house system has introduced role models including Nelson Mandela, and house charities, both chosen by the pupils. All pupils take part in the programme for planning and delivery of an assembly and of tutor group prayer. Prayer is an integral part of the RE scheme of work. The lay chaplain's role includes the planning of flexible learning days for year groups, some of which are retreat days intended to enhance spiritual growth and are much appreciated by pupils. A Year 7 day involving a range of teachers with the title 'you are made for greatness', a quotation from Pope Benedict, incorporated themes of self-esteem and awareness of talents, and ended with a Mass in affirmation of the family of the year group. The lay chaplain, the priest chaplain and the head of faculty each offer valued support to staff for aspects of Catholic life. The priest chaplain celebrates Mass in the school regularly and provides opportunities for the sacrament of reconciliation, which is well received. He makes a significant contribution to the school community. In November Mass was celebrated in remembrance of the departed with a Year 8 class and was a moving spiritual experience, due to excellent and sensitive preparation by the teacher and the head of faculty, and the support of the chaplains. Pupils are very respectful of prayer and worship and they participate well, as was evident in the tutor group prayer time which was observed.

The headteacher and senior leaders of the school are robust in their commitment to the Catholicity of the school. The headteacher leads prayer in the school chapel for all staff on a weekly basis. The head of the RE faculty oversees the whole school curriculum in terms of spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions and is included in senior management. His portfolio of responsibilities has recently also extended to head of house, and he delivers highly appreciated in-service support for teachers new to Catholic education. Within the faculty he is well supported by the team of specialist teachers whose commitment to the Catholic faith is immediately evident in their lessons. They work together to share resources and teaching techniques. Work scrutiny and lesson observation are carried out regularly. Teachers have high expectations of themselves as well as of their pupils, and are keen to innovate, for example in the introduction of meditation as a way of easing the perceived tension between the requirements of examinations and the spiritual benefits to be derived from the study of RE. Pupils are beginning to relate to Cardinal Wiseman as a talented linguist. They value opportunities for trips, including abroad, and for the many clubs organised for them. Governors have a clear perception of their share in the leadership of the Catholic life of the school and are rightly proud of the beautiful refurbishment of the chapel, standing at the heart of the school and providing a link between the school's foundation by the Sisters of Charity of St Paul the Apostle and the school's current mission in the area.

Teaching throughout the RE faculty is at least good with numerous examples of outstanding practice. Classrooms are well organised with stimulating displays, excellent ICT facilities and a prayer focus. Teachers use a range of data to plan lessons and evaluate learning. The recommendation from the previous inspection that there should be greater consistency in the use of assessment for learning has been fully implemented, and range of techniques is in place. In lessons pupils are engaged in their learning. The RE faculty has pioneered rewards for good behaviour and this is respected greatly by pupils. Lessons have good pace and include a variety of tasks, but pupils speak most highly about the quality of relationships and the opportunity for discussion, as well as the quality of the support they are given. Pupils in the early stages their GCSE course in Year 9 contribute with great interest to discussion, for example, about the ethics of warfare and the sanctity of life. There is an atmosphere of respect for others' views and a constant encouragement to make a point, give evidence and extend the viewpoint. There is extensive use of quotations from the Bible. Pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 know their targets and current working grades, as well as how to improve. Pupils with extra support and with special needs are achieving well, as are those with the highest target grades. They are suitably challenged in questioning. In the sixth form students' performance is often excellent due to the teachers' outstanding subject knowledge and skilful teaching ability.

Curriculum provision is very good in Key Stage 3 and throughout the faculty for examination courses. The schemes of work have been thoughtfully adapted to meet the needs of the pupils and as a result of feedback from them. They are in line with the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and include study of other faiths as well as other Christian churches. Provision for a small group of pupils with special needs has resulted in excellent outcomes, in no small part due to the high standard of teaching and support. The school still does not offer a General RE course in the sixth form but considers that the combination of tutor group time and flexible learning days covers the 5% requirement. More consideration is being given to this issue, which is made complex by the school's involvement in consortium arrangements.

## Recommendations

- Conduct an audit of the vocational aspects of the curriculum as a basis for establishing the next steps in the promotion of an awareness of vocation
- Employ existing evaluation tools to develop explicitly good practice in the spiritual, moral, social, cultural and vocational dimensions of the curriculum, and use to evaluate its impact on collective worship
- Consider innovative ways of delivering General RE in the sixth form in accordance with the requirement for 5% of curriculum time.
- Consolidate and embed current teaching strategies in RE in order to secure outcomes in line with diocesan averages.



November 2013

Diocesan Education Service,  
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Coleshill,  
B46 3EA

Dear Parents and Carers

**Section 48 (Diocesan) Inspection of Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School and Language College, 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> November, 2013**

I am writing this letter to share with you the findings of the diocesan inspection of your children's school. Diocesan inspection now explores in detail the school's own view of itself as expressed in its self-evaluation. For this reason, much of the report is more technical than used to be the case. You are still entitled to have a copy of the full report should you want one and it will be available on the school website or by request from the school office.

Cardinal Wiseman is a good Catholic school. It provides very well for the Catholic life of the school, for collective worship, and for religious education. Outcomes for the pupils are also good and they benefit well from the provision. The school judges itself accurately on the basis of its monitoring and evaluation. Having studied carefully the data and documentation, visited religious education lessons and tutor groups, an assembly and a Mass, as well as talking to the pupils, inspectors found the school's judgements to be reliable. The school has made significant progress in the teaching of religious education and in its examination results since the last inspection. Teaching is good with some that is outstanding. The team of teachers is constantly engaged in analysing how successfully it is performing and how best it can meet the needs of each pupil so that all can achieve well. The team is very well led and works with the senior leadership of the school, its chaplains and its governors to provide for Catholic life and measure the impact. This is how the school finds ways of improving. It has made significant steps forward, notably in the refurbishment of the chapel and in the involvement of pupils in the prayer life. The school's emphasis on the value of service to others has led pupils to respond in a most generous and impressive way to need in the world. In all of the self-evaluation pupils make a major contribution.

We have recommended that the school examines how it is helping pupils to develop a sense of vocation in their lives. We have asked for all assemblies and tutor time prayers to develop a clearer focus on spiritual, moral, and vocational issues linked to the school's ethos. The school should also reconsider how it can provide religious education for all in the sixth form.

We wish to thank pupils for their contribution to what the school achieves and also for their work with inspectors during the two day visit.

Yours sincerely

Janet Mellor  
Diocesan Inspector