

DIOCESE OF LEEDS



DIOCESAN BOARD FOR INSPECTIONS

SECTION 48 FINAL REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ST. BEDE'S CATHOLIC GRAMMAR SCHOOL FOR BOYS
Highgate Heaton
Bradford
BD9 4BQ

School URN	107423
School DfE Number	4603800
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Chair of Governors	Peter May
Headteacher	Frank Ashcroft
RE Subject Leader	Andrew Doherty
Date of Inspection	16 th -17 th February, 2011.
Section 48 Inspector/s	Mr. J Aitchison Miss M. Mollicone

INTRODUCTION

The Inspection of St. Bede's Catholic Grammar School, Bradford was carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Leeds Diocesan Framework and Schedule for Section 48 Inspections approved by the Bishop of Leeds. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. This process begins with the school's own self – evaluation. The inspection schedule follows criteria set by the National Board of Advisers and Inspectors.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Bede's Catholic Grammar School is an average sized voluntary aided Catholic school for boys, which has been part of a Federation of the Bradford Catholic Schools under a single governing body since September 2008. The Federation has one Co-educational Sixth Form across St. Bede's and St. Joseph's sites. The school has specialisms in science, sport and applied learning. In the reorganisation of Catholic, secondary education in Bradford, St. Bede's and St. Joseph's Catholic College for girls, joined in a 'hard federation' and merged their sixth forms. Yorkshire Martyrs closed in the summer of 2010; the boys joined St. Bede's and the girls went to St. Joseph's but the 108 Year 11 students have remained at Yorkshire Martyrs site to complete their studies.

An Executive Headteacher was appointed in September 2009 to lead the Federation and to be Headteacher at St. Joseph's. A new Headteacher was appointed at St. Bede's in September 2010, and the process of assimilating and appointing staff from the three original schools to a new staffing structure at St. Bede's and St. Joseph's was completed in March 2010. Almost a third of the staff are new to the school; a quarter of these previously worked at either St. Joseph's or Yorkshire Martyrs. The School is also part of the Bradford Central Confederation, which comprises 14 other local Secondary Schools together with Bradford College and Shipley College.

A higher than average proportion of pupils is from a minority-ethnic background, predominantly British Pakistani, and slightly more than average speak English as an additional language. Attainment on entry is broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils on Free School Meals (11.5%) is below national average but School Deprivation Indicator (0.27) is above national average and rising. The number of pupils with special educational needs (23.5%) is rising rapidly. The percentage of baptised Catholic children is declining from 80% in Year 11 to 59% in Year 7. Lower years have a larger proportion of Muslim children.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection Grades: 1 is Outstanding, 2 is Good, 3 is Satisfactory, 4 is Inadequate

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

2

This is a summative judgement based on the 2 judgements below: Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils, provision for Catholic education (includes effectiveness of leaders and managers) and capacity for sustained improvement.

OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS, PROVISION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

2

CAPACITY FOR SUSTAINED IMPROVEMENT

2

Main findings

At St Bede's Catholic Grammar School, outcomes for pupils, aspects of provision, which includes the effectiveness of leadership and management, and the school's capacity for sustained improvement are good. The school's overall effectiveness in providing Catholic education is good.

The school has addressed the areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection. The work of the Spiritual Life Group has advanced and led to a deeper moral development of pupils as well as assisting staff in their preparation for leading worship. Chaplaincy provision has been reviewed in the context of the needs of the federation and a Lay Chaplain appointed. Pupils are involved in acts of worship but work is needed to further encourage and empower pupils to plan and lead acts of worship. Work has begun to raise standards in RE by identifying clear objectives and assessment of learning outcomes. The process of enhancing the quality of teaching and learning is taking place but further development is required. The school has begun to develop rigorous systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the department. Although there is no dedicated LSA within the department, vulnerable pupils receive 27 hours of classroom support in RE.

Self-evaluation is honest and rigorous. The capacity for sustained improvement is good. The new leadership team know the strengths of the school and are working together on the areas they have identified as being vital to improve the quality of Catholic Education for their pupils. There is a clear awareness of what needs to be done to improve further and a realistic strategy to achieve this; this applies to both the work of the RE Department in raising achievement and the school as a whole. There are comprehensive School and RE Development Plans and both outline the priorities for the school in improving teaching and learning and enhancing the Catholic life of the school. It is clear from the discussions with the Chair of Governors, Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team, Head of RE, staff and pupils that the school is determined to effect further improvements and has a good capacity to do so.

WHAT THE SCHOOL NEEDS TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

- Improve pupils' achievement and progress in RE by developing teaching, learning and assessment particularly at KS4.

- Improve the quality of teaching to incorporate more active-learning strategies and assessment for learning by sharing good practice across the two schools.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to plan and deliver Collective Worship and thus give pupils ownership of their spiritual development.
- Introduce sharper and more rigorous procedures to evaluate and monitor provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- Increase the extent to which parents from different backgrounds are involved in the life of the school.

PUPILS

How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups.

2

The outcomes for pupils, taking account of variations between different groups, is good. Although pupils' achievement and enjoyment in Religious Education is satisfactory, the extent to which pupils contribute to, and benefit from, the Catholic life of the school and their participation in, and response to, Collective Worship are good.

The school judges pupils' learning, progress, and their attainment as satisfactory. Analysis of the school's data and documentation, lesson observations, work scrutiny and meetings with staff and pupils during the inspection support that judgement. Pupils show a positive attitude to their work and clearly participate in the lessons. Behaviour is good. Opportunities are provided to enhance the academic, spiritual, moral and personal growth of pupils and develop key RE skills. In surveys conducted by the department, pupils would like to see more active teaching and learning strategies employed in lessons and believe this will enhance their learning in the subject. Pupils mentioned the lack of tangible rewards used in lessons. In the meetings with pupils during the inspection it was evident that some pupils enjoyed their RE lessons, but for others it was not such a positive experience. Pupils' work, demonstrating what they had learned, was displayed on the boards in most classrooms although some rooms were better than others.

A range of lessons was observed across all key stages. A variety of teaching styles were used to satisfactory effect. Learning Support Assistants were well deployed and able to support the learning objectives. Differentiation was largely by outcome. Pupil progress is recorded on the front of exercise books. Targets were recorded on some but not all books. When questioned in class, not all pupils were able to say what their target grade/level is. Pupils are developing their knowledge and understanding of key Christian concepts; they are able to think spiritually and ethically and to communicate them verbally in RE lessons and in discussion. Discussions and debates are used frequently with Year 12 and the level of enjoyment has been enhanced by the exploration of other faiths and religious attitudes.

A Baseline Assessment was produced for Year 7 to measure progress over KS3. In September 2010, a supplementary baseline assessment was introduced because pupils from different faith backgrounds were not able access the full range of attainment levels due to gaps in their knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. This assessment focused more on skills than content and included knowledge and understanding of both Islam and Christianity. Data supplied by the school indicates that pupils make good progress in KS3, with the majority of pupils attaining Level 5 or above in RE, which is on a

par with English. This progress needs to be maintained and built on at KS4. All pupils are entered for the full course G.C.S.E. but A* - C results have fallen over the last 3 years from 54% in 2008 to 47% in 2010, and are now below the national average. Most pupils are taught in mixed ability classes except for a top set. Pupils with Special needs and those on free school meals make satisfactory progress, broadly in line with English. The data for the top set in 2010 show that 10.1% achieved A* and A grades which was higher than the results in English. However, 12 pupils did not achieve a grade at G.C.S.E. level. A new GCSE specification has been introduced and the first examination will take place this summer for Year 11 pupils. Year 10 pupils will sit a modular exam, worth 50% of their final G.C.S.E. grade, at the end of the year. This should benefit the majority of pupils as the exams are staggered over the two years. This also enables the department to target pupils who have underperformed in the previous exam and help them to prepare for a re-sit.

Any significant variation in the performance of different groups of pupils is highlighted through departmental tracking and whole school analysis, and this data is then scrutinised by the HOD and his SLT link. SIMS is used to record pupil attitude every half term and attainment every term. This information could be used even more effectively across the department to inform planning, assessment and lead to higher achievement.

Pupils actively participate in, and, benefit from the Catholic life of the school. They take advantage of the academic, spiritual and social opportunities available to them from lessons to retreats, the Papal visit and liturgy, the Lourdes Pilgrimage, Charity fundraising and volunteer work in the community. Pupils are proud of their faith and the history of the school as is witnessed in their rendition of the school hymn. The Catholicity of the school was commended by OFSTED in 2010. 'The strong Catholic ethos which permeates the school supports good spiritual, moral social and cultural development.' (OFSTED December 2010).

A sixth form pupil commented, "Everything we do has a religious undercurrent." The mission statement, 'Together we Love, Pray and Learn', underpins the work of staff and pupils. Pupils are respectful of one another and the wider community. Charity fundraising is excellent; pupils are very generous in fundraising for local and global needs. They support a school in Kenya as well as local charities. They have raised in the region of £20,000 for the Marigat Project in Kenya. Pupils also give of their time to support good causes, for example, the music group has played in the community at the Lord Mayor's Show, Veterans' Day, Heaton Gala and a Christmas party for the elderly and disabled in Cottingly.

Pupils are actively engaged in community projects such as gardening and working as volunteers at the Marie Curie Cancer Unit and as marshals at the 'Race for Life'. As part of the Sports Leadership Award Programme, pupils have the opportunity to volunteer to help with PE lessons in the local primary schools, including working with pupils with disabilities. For the last three years, Sixth Formers have been involved in a 'Guardian Angel' scheme, which involves allocation to a form group as a 'big brother figure' and also involvement in a better reading scheme to support students with literacy difficulties.

Worship and prayer is important at St. Bede's, pupils and staff willingly participate in meaningful daily acts of worship by reading, playing musical instruments and one Sixth form student sang a solo in assembly which clearly enhanced the quality and depth of reflection. Acts of worship are given a high profile and the timetable is altered to accommodate sacraments and services throughout the liturgical year. Pupils show reverence and respect during worship. Liturgical celebrations are fully inclusive and all

pupils participate, those of other faiths are respected and included in these services. It was evident during the inspection that prayer and reflection are an integral part of all residential trips.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	3
Taking into account:	
• the quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
• the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
• pupils' attainment in Religious Education	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school.	2
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.	2

PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic education.

3

There are four specialist RE teachers in the newly formulated department as a result of the amalgamation with Yorkshire Martyrs. All teachers were observed and the teaching was satisfactory with some good features. One lesson was judged outstanding. Teaching has the potential to be good if all staff implement the strategies in the Development Plan. There has been increased collaboration with the RE department at St. Joseph's, since the federation. Teachers display good subject knowledge. They make effective use of questioning techniques to draw out learning. Sampling of exercise books at KS3 and KS4 suggest that the department still needs to work on ensuring that objectives and learning outcomes are appropriate. Skills based learning takes place throughout KS3 and KS4. Examples of extended writing are more evident in KS4 samples of work, as is diagnostic marking. KS3 exercise books provided evidence of different practices with regards to marking. Written tasks concentrated on AT1 (*'Learning about religion'*). AT2 (*'Learning from religion'*) tasks were limited and appeared more frequently in KS4 books.

The RE department has worked together to ensure consistency in the use of attainment levels at KS3. The department recognises the need to continue this through moderation and standardisation in the coming months. Summative assessments are regularly made, however, formative assessments are not regularly used in lessons and embedded into schemes of work. The department recognises that peer and self-assessment require further development and the Development Plan highlights the use of Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies in all lessons. The NOCN VI Form course is well managed and all internal assessment procedures are externally monitored. The sampling strategy employed in the department is effective and marking is consistent with NOCN guidance.

The RE curriculum is satisfactory: all schemes are in place and provide a holistic education catering for the academic, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Currently 8% of curriculum time is devoted to Religious Education although there will be an increase to 10% at KS4 come September 2011. The school is concerned about

provision for those pupils who are underachieving but the focus on teaching and learning and the increased curriculum time should address this.

Part of the RE syllabus includes the study of different religions in each Year group. Greater collaboration with the Interfaith Centre in the future will support any changes made to the RE curriculum. The school's virtual learning environment (VLE) exists but is not effectively used. Plans are in place to improve it and for RE to maximise its potential in order to meet pupils' needs. Interactive whiteboards are installed in RE rooms and activities suggested in schemes of work. However, in one observed lesson, the use of the interactive whiteboard was abandoned due to inadequate lighting conditions in the classroom. The RE curriculum requires further development in the use of ICT and active teaching and learning. Sex Education is taught within PSHCE, which is delivered primarily by the RE staff.

Provision for Collective Worship is good; year and form assemblies are well organised and pupils show respect during worship. IT facilities in the Chapel are used to good effect and enhance the quality of religious services. Each year group has a Mass every half term and pupils help with the planning and preparation. Many staff contribute to religious services and local priests support the Chaplain and the Lay Chaplain. Holy Days and the Patronal feast of St. Bede are celebrated with Mass. There is also an annual Mass of Remembrance for the school's 'Old Boys' lost in wars as well as a Mass every year for a Sixth form pupil lost in tragic circumstances. It is a custom of the school to pray for the sick, those who have died, and the families of the bereaved. Funerals of people closely associated with the school are often attended by pupils who form a guard of honour.

There are services of Reconciliation in Advent and Lent, when priests come into school to offer the sacrament to the pupils. There is a good programme of retreats: KS3 pupils are given the opportunity to attend a day retreat, which is accessible to all as the school meets the travel costs. There are separate pilgrimages to Lourdes for Year 10 and Year 12 pupils. The success of these visits is the result of great effort and co-operation from staff, pupils, and parents/carers. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about these visits. This programme makes a huge contribution to the development of the pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development as well as demonstrating community cohesion in action. There is a policy document on Collective Worship but there is room and need for this to be developed further.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching in Religious Education.	3
The use of assessment to support learning in Religious Education.	3
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs.	3
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.	2

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the School.

2

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are good; pupils demonstrate spiritual awareness and high moral values, reflecting the school's strong Catholic ethos. There are good standards of behaviour. Pupils are confident and able to express their views clearly. The school provides a safe and supportive environment. One pupil said, "The teachers care about us." Pupils understand the mission of the school, and through their charitable works are involved in supporting it. Pupils see staff as good role models. The newly appointed Headteacher is clearly determined to implement the Mission Statement and the Senior Leadership Team and the Governors support him. It is clear that leaders at all levels are committed to Catholic Education. There is an impressive staff professional development programme, which ensures all staff receive training on Catholic Ethos. The meaning behind the slogan 'Two Schools - One School Thinking' is evident in the strong partnership which is developing between St. Bede's and St. Joseph's Catholic College. The school has an accurate view of its own strengths and areas of development.

The RE department has evidence of planning, monitoring, tracking and evaluation of pupil progress, but this needs to be sharper to ensure a higher level of engagement and achievement particularly at KS4. Short term and long term planning is evident across the subject, although medium term planning was limited. A more consistent approach is required to monitor pupil progress and to plan for any variations required in teaching and learning i.e. skills based learning; content-based learning; adjustments made to schemes of work; and to identify intervention strategies. All teachers observed during the inspection provided lesson plans but they varied greatly in style and detail. The school is standardising lesson plans which will be monitored by HODs as part of routine observations. The Head of RE has highlighted significant areas for improvement in the Development Plan, which will allow, if prioritised and addressed systematically, the department to build on its strengths, raise standards and enhance the quality of teaching and learning. The Head of RE has a vision for staff and pupils and he will benefit from the continued support and guidance of the senior team to ensure he is able to deliver that vision.

The school benefits from a committed Governing Body, who take their responsibilities seriously and have the expertise to meet the school's needs and influence the direction of the Catholic life of the school. Governors have a structured meeting cycle, which covers all areas of school life, and they scrutinise documentation. They are involved in the appointment of new staff and discuss key issues such as pupil progress and the attainment of different groups within the school. The School Development Plan is discussed with the Governors. Pupils from the School Council from each of the year groups are invited to Governors' meetings and as the Chair of Governors said, "They are a wonderful resource." Governors are knowledgeable about the work of the school and fulfill their obligations by monitoring and evaluating the Catholic life of the school. As part of the Federation with St. Joseph's College, there is a programme of formal and informal opportunities to meet and share good practice regarding curriculum RE and the Catholic life of the school. The school works with the diocese to promote and develop the Catholic life of the school; the diocese is to provide two days of staff development to further this and the diocese supported the school in the appointment of a lay Chaplain.

'The Year of Catholic Education', formulated by staff at St. Bede's and St. Joseph's following the call of the Pope during his state visit, is a series of events designed to celebrate and raise awareness of the Catholic identity and create opportunities to explore Catholicism. The events will include a celebration of Catholic Education in the presence of parents and invited guests from all the Catholic Schools with an input from Marigat. St. Bede's has also organised a sporting event at the end of the school year in response to Pope Benedict's launch of John Paul II's Foundation for Sport, where Year 7 teams will be invited from all Catholic Secondary Schools in the diocese to compete in a number of different sports. If all schools take part, 224 students from across the diocese will compete on that day. All participants will receive a medal in Pope John Paul's name. The day will be set in a religious context.

Following an audit of the professional learning skills of staff, St. Bede's in collaboration with St. Joseph's have devised a comprehensive and professional learning framework for securing continuous improvement for all staff, focusing on seven key areas. Staff will choose and attend five sessions over the year. This will promote collaborative working between staff, and sharing of good practice and resources.

The school has good links with various outside agencies, particularly Catholic Care, which support a number of vulnerable boys and do a lot of preventative work. The Catholic Care Worker, who was appointed in October 2010, has already forged close links with the Chaplain and is setting up a faith-based group to support needy pupils. Community cohesion is supported by the school's strong Catholic ethos and the inclusion of all. Within school, the 'Nurture' group of pupils who are significantly underachieving in key areas of the curriculum benefit from the calm nature of the learning in the achievement centre. This promotes community cohesion by catering for their individual needs. Without these groups, these pupils would be at risk of becoming marginalised socially and academically and many would be in danger of being excluded. Within the school, relationships are good; there is respect and concern amongst all groups; and pupils are confident that bullying and discrimination are dealt with quickly and effectively. The willingness of pupils to volunteer to work in the community demonstrates they have the skills to develop relationships with people from different backgrounds. Sixth Form pupils are proud to be involved in the organisation and running of a five –a-side junior football tournament hosted by the school under the heading 'Kick Racism out of football; lapel badges are worn throughout school sporting this logo.

These are the grades for leadership and management

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.	2
How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.	3
The extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school so areas needing development are tackled decisively and statutory and canonical responsibilities met.	2
How well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and pupil well-being.	2
How effectively leaders and managers promote Community Cohesion.	2