

DIOCESE OF LEEDS DBI



# SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL  
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ST. CATHERINE'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL  
Holdsworth Road  
Halifax  
HX2 9TH

School URN	<input type="text" value="107581"/>
Chair of Governors	<input type="text" value="Mr T Miskell"/>
Headteacher	<input type="text" value="Mrs P Sheard"/>
RE Subject Leader	<input type="text" value="Mrs R Horsfield"/>
Date of Inspection	<input type="text" value="27&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; &amp; 28&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; January 2009"/>
Section 48 Inspector	<input type="text" value="Dr J Hagerty"/>

## INTRODUCTION

The Inspection of St Catherine's Catholic High School, Halifax, 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.

### Description of the school

---

St Catherine's Catholic High School is a co-educational, 11-18, six-form-entry comprehensive school located in the north Halifax area of Calderdale.

The school has recently been taken out of the 'Special Measures' category. The previous Governing Body was replaced in 2006 by an Interim Executive Board (IEB). The majority of the IEB are Catholic.

St Catherine's is a National Challenge School and a designated Specialist Technology College. There has been substantial investment in premises and resources resulting from specialist status. Refurbishment is currently taking place in some areas of the school. The school has retained its Investor in People status.

There are 788 students on roll of whom 308 are baptized Catholics. The school has 5 Roman Catholic feeder schools but students are admitted from 14 primary schools. Students from ethnic minority backgrounds account for 4% of the school's roll. There is an increasing number of Catholic students from Eastern Europe. There are 57.5 fte teachers. Of these 25 are Roman Catholic. 8 teachers hold the CCRS or its equivalent.

The school has an extensive catchment area. The intake demonstrates a wide range of abilities and socio-economic backgrounds. A higher than average number of children are from areas of serious deprivation. 67% of the students are from areas in the bottom 30% of the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). 33% are from areas in the bottom 10% of the IMD. 22% of the students entitled to free school meals. 52 families qualify for the Government's Computers for Schools initiative.

Overall, the attainment of students on entry is in line with the national average. The proportion of higher attainers in the current Year 9 is low. The low standard of literacy among current KS3 students is a major issue. The current year 11 had a lower than average KS2 point score.

Attainment in GCSE RE in 2008 was good with a 70% \*A-C pass rate and a 95% \*A-G pass rate. There are no significant gender differences relating to attainment in RE at Key Stage 4. 83% of students in Year 9 achieved level 5 or above at Key Stage 3 in 2008. A slightly higher percentage of boys than girls achieved level 5 or above at this Stage.

St Catherine's has a joint 6<sup>th</sup> form arrangement with the neighbouring Holy Trinity Church of England School. The number of students in post-16 education is 88. Entry figures from the school itself are low; 29% of last year's 16 year olds entered the 6<sup>th</sup> form. Attainment levels at AS and A2 RE were low in 2008.

There are 10 students with Statements of Special Educational Needs, which is below average for a school of this size. There are 185 students on the SEN register. There are a number of comprehensive intervention strategies. Data systems are employed to analyze student performance and monitor student progress.

## OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

### **The overall effectiveness of the provision for the Catholic life of the school, of curriculum RE, and the school's main strengths and areas for development.**

---

The Catholic ethos of St Catherine's Catholic High School is good.

Governance, leadership and management of the school are good. Governors and the extended leadership team ensure close adherence to the school's Mission Statement and actively foster and enhance the Catholic life of the school. There is good support from local clergy and parish communities.

The RE curriculum is well planned and is generally delivered effectively. Good use is made of staff skills and professional experience. Resources and accommodation are of a good standard. The needs of all learners are addressed but with varying degrees of commitment and success. The majority of learners make good progress. Attainment at Key Stage 5 is poor; at Key Stage 4 it is good; at Key Stage 3 it is good.

The quality of collective worship is good. There are opportunities for retreats, prayer and reflection.

There are many opportunities for students and staff to participate in extra-curricular and charitable fund-raising activities.

Procedures for quality assurance are being developed and are beginning to have a positive impact on teaching and learning. Structured but sensitive pastoral support for students is a good and developing feature of the school. There are effective induction programmes for staff and students.

Staff, students, governors, priests and parents support each other in the fulfillment of the school's Mission Statement. The atmosphere in the school is friendly and welcoming.

Areas for **overall development** should include:

- strategies to enhance the Catholic life of the school
- supervision of the RE Department by IEB and Leadership team
- the relationship between inclusion strategies and classroom practice
- peer observation and performance management
- the Chaplain's role in the religious life of the school

### **The effectiveness of any steps taken to promote improvement since the last inspection**

---

A number of developments have taken place since the last S48 inspection in 2006.

The school's Mission Statement is being reviewed and revised in order to make it an even greater factor in influencing the Catholic life of the school.

The newly-constituted Leadership Team has successfully addressed the school's Catholic ethos and the teaching of RE. A Deputy Headteacher has been assigned to develop and monitor the Catholic life of the school and act as Line Manager for the RE department. There is a formal system of departmental reviews. An Interim RE Departmental Review was produced in September 2008.

A new Head of RE has been appointed. New systems of assessment, monitoring and tracking have been introduced and are being developed. Intervention strategies have been introduced and

are being developed. Links with the SENCO and Teaching Assistants are being developed. The Head of RE is an active member of the school's Teaching and Learning Group.

The Chaplaincy Team is well-established and is a strong force for the development of the Catholic life of the school. The quality of Collective Worship has improved and there is active staff and student participation.

The school was advised to monitor the time devoted to the teaching of RE. It remains at 8% of a student's timetable. This is below the 10% expected by the Diocese. At post-16 it is 16% of a student's formal timetable.

### **The capacity to make further improvements**

---

There is very good capacity for the school to make further improvements.

The IEB and the Leadership Team are firmly committed to fostering and promoting the Catholic life of the school. Opportunities are provided for the development of the school in general and the students in particular. The IEB and Leadership Team support the continuing professional development of the staff and ensure that effective measures are in place to facilitate whole school and departmental effectiveness and student progress. There is good cohesion between the Leadership Team, the RE department and the Chaplaincy Team. Departmental planning and review procedures are well established. These facilitate further developments and enhance provision. The Joint Action Plan refers to current and future strategies designed to raise attainment, support independent learning, refine assessment, recording and reporting procedures, and develop the RE curriculum.

### **What steps need to be taken in order to further improve the provision of Catholic education?**

---

The school should:

- address any issues arising from the recent OFSTED inspection relating to RE
- address funding discrepancies between RE and other core subjects
- ensure the production of an RE Departmental Handbook
- continue with peer observation to develop teaching skills and strategies
- ensure the continued development of RE courses and related assessment criteria
- continue to develop intervention strategies
- develop the role of the Chaplain and the Chaplaincy team
- consider the provision of a smaller chapel-oratory arrangement
- develop a more structured and effective General RE programme at post-16
- continue to develop the involvement of the wider Catholic community in the life of the school
- increase the contribution of Music to the religious life of the school.

## **THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL**

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

#### **How effective are Leadership and Management in developing the Catholic life of the school?**

---

Leadership and management at school and departmental level are good.

In general the Leadership Team has a very positive impact on the Catholic life of the school. There is close adherence to the school's Mission Statement and senior managers have a clear vision of the nature of a Catholic school and their own role in its continued development. There is firm evidence of shared values among staff and students and social cohesion is developing strongly.

The Leadership Team and the Head of RE are working hard to ensure a consistency of delivery of the RE curriculum.

In order to consolidate on recent successful developments the Leadership Team should

- continue the Departmental Review system in order to ensure that the Joint Improvement Plan has a beneficial effect on teaching and learning and the general life of the school
- ensure that the Inclusion Plan is effectively implemented
- strengthen the place of PHSCE in the RE curriculum
- ensure the development of a more meaningful Post-16 General RE programme
- clearly define the role of the Chaplain and subsequently monitor and evaluate his effectiveness
- take steps to address the poor state of the school chapel
- Increase the contribution of Music to the religious life of the school.

### **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

#### **How good is the quality of Collective Worship?**

---

The quality of collective worship is good. There is a Collective Worship Policy in place and an assembly calendar based on the liturgical year. The calendar, and other relevant information to support the staff, is included in the Staff Handbook and in staff bulletins. There is a class Prayer Book.

There are varied and sufficient resources to facilitate meaningful assemblies but the chapel is particularly cheerless place and not conducive to meaningful worship. There are opportunities for staff and students to be involved in assemblies and class prayer. A few prayers are included in the Student Planner. Student participation in assemblies and class prayers is respectful. Assemblies are linked to commemorative events and other special occasions whether liturgical, personal or communal. The spiritual, social and moral development of students is enhanced through a programme based on the teachings of Jesus Christ but this should be given greater emphasis.

The chaplain is actively involved in the life of the school and continues to develop his role with the help and support of the Leadership Team, the IEB, the RE Department and the Chaplaincy Team. Students attend voluntary Masses in large numbers and take advantage of the sacrament of the Reconciliation. The Chaplaincy team is very active and effective.

In order to consolidate on recent successful developments the IEB, Leadership Team and local clergy should

- ensure the continued development of the critical aspect of the school's religious life
- ensure that all tutors adhere to school policy on Collective Worship
- address the contribution of Music to the development of Collective Worship.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

### **ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RE**

#### **How well do pupils achieve in RE?**

---

At Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 achievement in RE is generally good.

In 2008 83% of students in Year 9 achieved level 5 or above at Key Stage 3. A slightly higher percentage of boys than girls achieved level 5 or above.

In 2008 attainment in GCSE RE was good with a 70% \*A-C pass rate and a 95% \*A-G pass rate. There were no significant gender differences relating to attainment in RE at Key Stage 4. All students are entered for GCSE RE and this is to be commended.

Student achievement is poor at Key Stage 5. Classes are very small, although there are 10 in the 2008-9 AS class. Over the past two years grades at AS and A" have ranged from C to U. There was a good and mature response from the students observed in the current AS class.

Students generally respond well, apply themselves conscientiously and make good progress. An examination of student work and conversations with students demonstrates varying levels of application, skill development and conceptual understanding across the areas of attainment in RE.

Students are made aware of lesson objectives and intended outcomes. Good use was made of teaching assistants to help those with learning or other difficulties. Students respond well to the support provided. Student attitudes to RE are positive.

Lessons are conducted in a purposeful and pleasant manner and at a lively pace. There is a common planning format and a close adherence to schemes of work but in most cases the lessons were not sufficiently challenging to stretch the more able students. Outcomes tended to be general rather than student specific. Extension exercises were un-graded in levels of difficulty.

The thorough marking and monitoring of student work needs to be addressed very urgently. There was evidence of books unmarked or marked only superficially. This does not contribute to student progress.

### **THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN RE**

#### **How effective are Teaching and learning in RE?**

---

Six lessons were observed and the teaching in four was good. Two were judged satisfactory. Lessons were well planned and in accordance with schemes of work.

Teachers employed a range of classroom strategies in order to enhance student knowledge, skills and understanding. Lessons were well planned with objectives clearly stated. In almost all cases these were fulfilled. Lessons were conducted in a purposeful manner and at a good pace. Teachers had high expectations of student behaviour, application and achievement. In two lessons class control and direction was only just satisfactory and prevented student progress. A reward system recognizes good effort and achievement. Good support is given to those students with special needs.

Despite the availability of text books there was a dependence on worksheets and handouts. Effective use was made of ICT resources.

Some Key Stage 4 classes are taught on a 'carousel' system. This does not appear to be effective. This situation has led to serious issues of continuity and the marking of student work.

Differentiation is generally by outcome rather than by specific exercises and the testing of individual student progress during lessons. Extension work was applied generally rather than being designed to suit student needs and abilities. The presentation of student work was variable as was the marking of it.

Students generally responded well in RE and were attentive and engaged. Some made good progress and demonstrated levels of understanding appropriate to their age and aptitude. There was good use of subject-specific terminology and an extended vocabulary. Students' spiritual and moral formation is clearly rooted in the doctrines of the Catholic Church. Students generally have a good understanding of the teachings of Jesus and can apply these to their own personal situations. Many students are able to articulate how the school's religious ethos has affected their lives and faith development. Staff-student relationships are harmonious and are based on mutual respect.

In order that teaching and learning continue to be effective and successful the RE department should

- deliver well planned lessons with measurable outcomes
- introduce differentiation by activities and outcomes
- ensure greater consistency in the marking of student work
- ensure that the Inclusion Register informs classroom strategies
- ensure that all lessons are challenging for all students
- comply with student target setting and tracking procedures
- share teacher experience and expertise
- undertake appropriate Continuing Professional Development

### **How well does the RE curriculum meet the needs and interests of pupils?**

---

The RE curriculum at Key Stage 3 (*The Way, The Truth and The Life*) and at Key Stage 4 AQA Specification B (Unit 1: *Key Beliefs* and Unit 4 *Truth and Spirituality*) relates directly to the Catholic Curriculum Directory. Appropriate texts are available. The time allocation for RE is 8% of the 25 hour week timetable. Schemes of Work for Key Stages 3 and 4 are clear and concise and contain sufficient guidance to facilitate effective delivery.

The RE curriculum at Key Stage 5 is based on the OCR Religious Studies syllabus (*AS Philosophy of Religion and Developments in Christian Thought; A2 Philosophy of Religion and Connections In Religious Studies*). Schemes of Work for Key Stage 5 courses are being developed. Post-16 General RE is loosely structured and neither particularly informative nor challenging. The Roman Catholic dimension to this course is not immediately obvious.

Provision for gifted and talented students is being developed. The opportunity to sit GCSE RE at the end of Year 10 motivates the more able students. There is substantial physical and pastoral assistance for students with disabilities. A very comprehensive Inclusion Register specifies the intervention and classroom strategies designed to assist individual student progress. There is a good working relationship between the RE department, the SENCO and Teaching Assistants who are deployed effectively. Some students benefit from attendance at the school's Learning Support Unit.

The school's PHSCE policy is implemented in accordance with Catholic teaching. The course contributes significantly to the spiritual and moral development of students at Key Stage 3.

Elements of *Every Child Matters* are fully integrated into the school's curricular provision. PHSCE is seriously weak at Key Stages 4 and 5.

Some lessons demonstrated challenging learning situations. Differentiated exercises need to be introduced and developed. There are procedures in place for student tracking. There is a Student Planner and an effective rewards system. The marking of student work is inadequate in some cases.

Students generally respond positively to the demands imposed upon them. They enjoy RE and see the relevance of the subject and the positive influence it can have upon their lives. Students gain an understanding not only of their own faith but also of other faith traditions.

There are strong links with the school's wider faith community. Students are actively encouraged and given every opportunity to participate in spiritual, charitable and community activities. The curriculum provides opportunities to learn about and debate issues of contemporary relevance. There is active student involvement in diocesan activities such as the Lourdes Pilgrimage and Catholic Care. A number of other charities are supported and students raise substantial amounts of money for the disadvantaged.

In order to ensure that the RE curriculum continues to meet the needs of all learners the school should:

- increase the opportunities for Gifted and Talented students
- ensure the full implementation of the Inclusion Register
- develop a wider range of classroom strategies
- develop PHSCE in accordance with the Church's teaching
- further develop PHSCE at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5
- improve the quality of the post-16 General RE course.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF RE**

### **How effective are Leadership and Management in raising achievement and supporting all pupils in RE?**

---

Leadership and Management in RE is good.

There is good support from the Leadership Team for the Head of RE. The Head of RE receives a responsibility allowance commensurate with the Heads of Maths, English and Science.

The new Head of Department leads a team of experienced and committed teachers. There is mutual support and encouragement. Departmental minutes are calendared and minuted. Departmental administrative procedures are being developed.

Good facilities are provided for effective teaching and learning. Accommodation is fit for purpose and wall displays are subject related. Resources are effectively utilized.

With the exception of time allocation, the department complies fully with Diocesan guidelines relating to curriculum provision. It complies fully with the school's guidelines. Departmental policies are implemented and are reviewed regularly. Schemes of work are being developed and refined. A Departmental Handbook is being prepared.

The monitoring and evaluation of student work is being developed in line with school policy. In some cases the marking and annotation of student work is inadequate. There is a good student database.

In order that leadership and management of RE continues to develop effectively and efficiently, the IEB and Leadership team should

- provide opportunities for appropriate continuing professional development
- monitor, evaluate and support the leadership and management of the RE Department
- ensure that resource provision is commensurate with other core subjects

In order that the leadership and management of RE continues to develop effectively and efficiently, the Head of RE should

- obtain support and guidance from the Diocesan Coordinator of Religious Education
- develop departmental administrative procedures
- monitor assessment, marking and tracking procedures
- monitor the implementation of the Inclusion Register
- develop PHSCE at Key Stages 4 and 5.

## INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS SUMMARY

ASPECT	GRADE	DESCRIPTOR
<b>OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS</b>		
	<b>2</b>	Good. The school's Catholic ethos underpins its life and activities. Leadership at all levels is very effective. Teaching is generally good. There is a strong community spirit. The school has identified its strengths and areas for development. The capacity for further improvement is very good.
<b>THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL</b>		
How effective are Leadership and Management in developing the Catholic life of the school?	<b>2</b>	Good. The IEB and staff have a clear vision of the nature and role of a Catholic school. There is firm adherence to the Mission Statement. Very strong senior leadership; determined implementation of policies; consistent attention to school's Catholic ethos; determination to raise student achievement. Strong emphasis on importance of spiritual and moral formation of students and also on importance of RE as both an academic and an all-pervasive subject.
How good is the quality of Collective Worship?	<b>2</b>	Good. Wide range of formal and informal opportunities for worship, prayer and reflection. Worship and prayer are integral to the Catholic life of the school. Assembly programme well planned and effectively delivered. Staff and students actively involved. Good use of Prayer Book. Good contribution by chaplain and other priests. Chapel in need of refurbishment.
<b>RELIGIOUS EDUCATION</b>		
How well do pupils achieve in RE?	<b>2</b>	Good. In most cases good levels of student achievement. Students generally conscientious. Staff expectations of students are high.
How effective are Teaching and learning in RE?	<b>2</b>	Good. Curriculum delivered effectively. Good use of staff experience and skills. Limited range of teaching styles. Teachers have good command of subject knowledge.
How well does the RE curriculum meet the needs and interests of pupils?	<b>2</b>	Good. All students provided with opportunities to make good progress in knowledge, skills and understanding. Students learning to think effectively, and in some cases maturely, about spiritual, moral and ethical issues.
How effective are Leadership and Management in raising achievement and supporting all pupils in RE?	<b>2</b>	Good. Strongly related to the school's Catholic mission, on raising standards, and promoting the faith development of students. Administrative arrangements and student monitoring procedures are developing

## INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS ANNEX

### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

<b>How effective and efficient is the provision of Catholic education in meeting the needs of pupils and why?</b>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the effectiveness of steps taken to promote improvement since the last inspection</li> <li>the capacity to make further improvements</li> </ul>	Good Very Good

### THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

<b>How effective are leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school?</b>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>how well the governing body fulfils its role in relation to the school's Catholic foundation</li> <li>how effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality care and education</li> <li>the quality of the leadership of the headteacher and senior staff in leading and developing the Catholic life of the school</li> <li>how effectively the Catholic life of the school is monitored and evaluated</li> <li>how effectively leadership at all levels in the school promotes pupils' spiritual and moral development</li> <li>how effectively leadership at all levels in the school promotes and provides opportunities for the spiritual development and prayer life of the staff</li> <li>the impact of the involvement of the clergy and/or chaplaincy team on the work of the school</li> <li>how effectively leadership at all levels promotes the school's contribution to social cohesion</li> <li>how effectively leadership at all levels encourages the positive behaviour of pupils</li> <li>the extent to which pupils' contribute to the school and broader community</li> </ul>	2 2 2 2 2 2  2 2 2 2

<b>How good is the quality of Collective Worship?</b>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the frequency and quality of the provision for prayer, Collective Worship and liturgical life of the school</li> <li>pupils' response to the school's provision for prayer and worship</li> <li>how well Collective Worship contributes to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils</li> <li>the inclusive nature of the provision for prayer, Collective Worship and liturgical life of the school</li> </ul>	2 2 2 2

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

<b>How well do pupils achieve in RE?</b>	<b>2</b>
• <i>the standards reached by pupils in RE</i>	2
• <i>how well pupils make progress in RE, taking account of any significant variations between groups of pupils</i>	2
• <i>how well pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress in RE</i>	2

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in RE?</b>	<b>2</b>
• <i>the adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that pupils are well taught in RE</i>	2/3
• <i>how well teaching is used to meet the full range of pupils' needs in RE</i>	2
• <i>the effectiveness of planning, monitoring and assessment in RE</i>	2/3
• <i>the extent to which pupils enjoy their work in RE</i>	2
• <i>the involvement of parents and carers in their children's learning in RE</i>	2

<b>How well does the Religious Education curriculum meet the needs and interests of pupils?</b>	<b>2</b>
• <i>how far the RE curriculum meets external requirements</i>	2
• <i>the extent to which pupils are gaining a knowledge and developing an understanding of the teachings, beliefs, values and way of life of other world faiths</i>	2
• <i>the suitability of family life and sex education, education in personal relationships and citizenship education</i>	3
• <i>the extent to which the curriculum in RE contributes to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils</i>	2
• <i>how far the RE curriculum promotes social cohesion</i>	2

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all pupils in Religious Education?</b>	<b>2</b>
• <i>how effectively subject leaders in RE set clear direction and provide support leading to improvement</i>	2
• <i>how effectively performance in RE is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets</i>	2/3
• <i>how well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all pupils achieve as well as they can in RE</i>	2
• <i>how effectively and efficiently RE resources are deployed</i>	2
• <i>the extent to which governors discharge their responsibilities in RE</i>	2