

# DIOCESE OF LEEDS



DIOCESAN BOARD FOR INSPECTIONS

## **CANON LAW 806 FINAL INSPECTION REPORT INCORPORATING SECTION 48**

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL  
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC VOLUNTARY ACADEMY  
St Peter's Avenue, Sowerby Bridge. HX6 1BL

School URN

141479

Date of Inspection and OE  
grade

7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> December 2017 - Good (2)

E-mail address

admin@sacredheart.calderdale.sch.uk

Chair of Governors

Patricia Stabler

Headteacher

Sue McManamin

RE Subject Leader

Victoria Skwarek

Date and grade of last S48  
inspection

4<sup>th</sup> December 2012 – Good (2)

Section 48 Inspector

Alan Dewhurst

# INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection Grades: 1 is Outstanding, 2 is Good, 3 requires improvement in order to be good, 4 is Inadequate

**OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:** how effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.

2

*The above judgement on overall effectiveness is based on all the available evidence following the evaluation of:*

- *Outcomes for pupils,*
- *The provision for Catholic Education*
- *Leaders and Managers*

**OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS**

2

**THE PROVISION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION**

2

**LEADERS AND MANAGERS**

1

## Summary of key findings:

### **This is a good school.**

- Sacred Heart Catholic Voluntary Academy is providing a good standard of Catholic education, with some outstanding features, for its pupils.
- The leadership and management of the school is outstanding because the headteacher, staff and governors are fully committed to the Catholic mission of the school, exemplified in the mission statement, “A community rooted in Love, growing in Faith and Truth. Learning with Christ in our hearts”.
- The headteacher plays an exemplary role in ensuring that Religious Education, the school’s Catholic Life and its Collective Worship are at the forefront, and she is well supported by her leadership team, staff and governors.
- The school leadership has an accurate view of its strengths and areas of development, thanks to a well-structured process of self evaluation. Development planning is effective in bringing about rapid improvements.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They play a full part in ensuring that it is an inclusive and united community. They care for each other and engage fully in all the opportunities that the school provides. They like to support each other, and those in need beyond the school.
- The welcome that the school offers to its community is exemplified in the bold sign at the entrance - ‘Welcome to our School’ - and is put into effect by all staff and pupils. Parents acknowledge the “kind, welcoming feel of the school”.
- Collective Worship provision is outstanding. Pupils are given many and varied opportunities to participate in and respond to celebrations under the Catholic tradition, and they engage with them willingly, whatever their faith background. They are beginning to build their skills of preparing and leading Collective Worship, at an early stage of development.
- Religious Education (RE) provision is good. The curriculum is being developed with imagination, utilising a variety of resources and initiatives. Partnerships with other

Catholic schools are helping to further improve its quality, and the quality of teaching and learning.

- Teaching is good overall, with some elements that are outstanding. Creative approaches to the teaching of RE are having a positive impact on the achievement of pupils. Pupil progress is enhanced by the consistent implementation of assessment procedures and the school's marking policy.
- Pupil achievement is generally good, with attainment above average by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils respond well to the imaginative and creative strategies used by teachers to develop their learning. Progress is accelerated where these are well matched to pupils' ages and stages of development, and are multi-sensory. Progress slows where teaching is more narrowly focused on delivering the main RE resource of the school.
- The school has addressed the recommendations of the previous Section 48 inspection. All canonical and statutory responsibilities are fulfilled.

### **What the school needs to do to improve further.**

In order to bring about further improvements, the school should:

- Continue to develop the quality of teaching and learning, and the standards achieved by pupils in Religious Education through
  - the sharing of best practice from within the school and in partnership with other schools.
  - developing pupils' skills in discussing and articulating beliefs at a deeper level.
- Develop pupils' skills and understanding in the planning, preparation and leadership of Collective Worship, with an emphasis on the use of scripture within liturgy.
- Develop the use of pupil voice in evaluating the Catholic Life of the school, thereby leading to further pupil involvement in shaping activities with a religious character.

### **Information about this inspection**

The Inspection of Sacred Heart Catholic Voluntary Academy 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 Diocesan Administrator 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 and the inspection schedule follows the criteria set by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA 2012).

The inspection was carried out by one inspector over one and a half days. During the inspection:

- A sample of 4 RE lessons, a hymn singing assembly, a Forest School lesson and 3 acts of Collective Worship were observed
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, RE subject leader, Chair of governors, parish priest, RE link governor and two groups of pupils.
- A range of the school's policy, monitoring and assessment documentation was scrutinised, including pupils' workbooks. Reviews of the school's self evaluation document, school development planning and academy board minutes were also undertaken.

The inspector reviewed in detail the following aspects:

- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship.
- The quality of teaching and marking and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education.
- The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning.
- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate provision and plan improvements.

### Information about this school

- Sacred Heart is a Catholic voluntary academy, part of the Blessed Peter Snow Academy Trust, serving the parishes of Sacred Heart and St Patrick's, Bolton Brow, and the Good Shepherd at Mytholmroyd.
- The school has one form of entry, with 175 pupils currently on roll.
- Approximately one third of the pupils are Catholic; a smaller proportion (18%) are from other Christian denominations or world faiths. Half of the pupils have no faith background.
- The proportion of pupils with a special educational need or disability is average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- There has been considerable change in leadership and governance since the last Section 48 inspection, with a new headteacher, senior leadership team, parish priest and Chair of governors.
- There are 6 full time and 2 part time teachers on the staff, the majority of whom are Catholic. There are 14 classroom support staff.
- The school was judged as 'good' in its most recent Ofsted inspection in November 2017.

## Full report - inspection judgements

### Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils are good.

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.	<b>2</b>
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	<b>2</b>
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.	<b>2</b>

- Pupils take on responsibilities willingly and enthusiastically in building the caring, Catholic ethos of the school. The 'RE team' assists with the preparation and introduction of liturgies and the distribution of the 'statement of the week'; other pupils take on the support of younger pupils as 'Young Leaders' and 'Lunchtime Buddies'. The school council meets regularly to canvas pupil opinion and bring about improvements, as well as organising events.
- Pupils show an aptitude for reflection, in opportunities arising in Collective Worship or RE lessons. They show interest in religious beliefs and treat religious aspects of the school's environment with respect.

- They have a good understanding of the school’s mission statement – “A community rooted in Love, growing in Faith and Truth. Learning with Christ in our hearts” – and do their very best to ensure that the values it espouses are present in their everyday actions.
- They know about the important feasts of the liturgical year, and how the school links with its parish community, aided by frequent visits to church and through regular contact with the parish priest.
- Pupils are very caring towards each other, considerate to those in need and knowing the importance of forgiveness: “Everyone’s friendly towards each other,” as one pupil stated. They know that this behaviour emanates from the gospel values that the school promotes. Another pupil summed this up: “We are inspired by Jesus, and we’re spreading God’s word.”
- They have enjoyed involving themselves in the school’s charitable work, such as fundraising for CAFOD’s world gifts, as displayed on the ‘virtual village’ in the school hall. At present they are collecting baby clothes in support of the Giana project.
- Although they are interested in religious views and beliefs, pupils can lack confidence in expressing their thoughts in conversation, often struggling to articulate their opinions in any depth, especially older pupils. The school is aware of the need to build pupils’ religious literacy in order to aid them in this regard.
- Pupil Voice, as a means of evaluating the Catholic life of the school, is not yet significantly a feature. The school has plans to use questionnaires in the future to gauge pupils’ views.
- Behaviour is consistently very good, with pupils taking full responsibility for themselves and their actions.
- In Religious Education, pupils are attaining well, with standards generally above average by the end of Key Stage 2. Most pupils make progress that is at least good, with some progress outstanding.
- Pupils enjoy their RE lessons and are keen to do well. They work collaboratively extremely well in pairs or small groups, without hesitation. Work in pupil workbooks is generally presented very well, consistently across all classes.
- They enjoy discussing religious matters, but understanding can often be varied.
- They have very good attitudes to learning, and particularly enjoy the whole school initiatives in the RE curriculum, responding eagerly to more creative ideas and relevant current issues, as well as the trips and visitors organised for them.
- Achievement is most successful where the pitch of learning is carefully matched to the age and stage of development of the pupils, and incorporates a holistic and multi-sensory approach.
- Pupils participate in acts of Collective Worship with great respect and attention. They have a good understanding of the church’s seasons through the liturgies and Masses that are planned for them.
- They understand the importance of ritual within liturgy, exemplified in the placing of the bible, cross and candle in the central focal area of each act of worship.
- Pupils sing enthusiastically, and lead bidding prayers and readings in school and parish Masses. They enjoy taking home the ‘worship bags’ at special times of the year to share with their families. In classroom worship, they particularly enjoy participating actively, in the creation of written promises or art works for instance that are presented as offerings within the liturgy.
- The experience of living and working in a praying community has a positive effect on the pupils’ spiritual and moral development, regardless of faith background. The school’s Catholic population is in the minority, but it is impossible to detect pupils’ faith background in their involvement in Collective Worship or in RE lessons as all are equally involved and engaged.

- The school has started to build pupils' skills at preparing and leading acts of worship, but this is not, as yet, well developed. Further structured support is needed for pupils to grow in confidence and to incorporate all the necessary elements into a liturgy, with the use of scripture a particular priority.

## The provision for Catholic Education is good.

The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education.	2
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning.	2
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.	1

- Teaching is mainly good. Some elements of teaching are outstanding and none of the teaching is less than good.
- Assessment procedures are well used, with teachers focussing the learning objectives of their lessons on the appropriate 'I can' statements. For the most part, pupils' progress is recorded regularly in their workbooks. The school leadership collects and analyses assessment data at the end of each half term.
- Where teachers know their pupils' capabilities well, good planning leads to imaginative strategies for ensuring good progress. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally strong and this further enhances the quality of teaching.
- Consistent application of the school's marking policy is helping to ensure pupils understand how to improve their work, and to challenge them to extend their learning.
- Throughout the school, pupils are keen to learn, and respond particularly well to creative and innovative approaches to learning that give them the chance to participate in a variety of ways.
- The most effective teaching approaches use high quality resources, including technology, role-play models, art and design and relevant artefacts to motivate pupils. These take the themes of the main RE resource – The Way, the Truth and the Life – and interpret them in relevant and interesting ways to ensure good understanding.
- Pupil progress slows where the main resource is used more rigidly, with less imagination. In these instances, pupil response is restricted to a narrow range, with some low level tasks
- Teachers give pupils the opportunity to write at length, and there is evidence of pupils demonstrating good understanding of religious stories through creative writing in a variety of genres. Sometimes, the focus of these opportunities to write can yield high standards of literacy, without the higher levels of religious understanding being demonstrated.
- Teaching assistants support individual pupils and groups effectively. They are unobtrusive, sympathetic, calm and reassuring, enabling the full inclusion of any pupils with particular needs.
- Teachers are consistent in celebrating pupils' achievement and the effort they put into their learning.
- The Religious Education curriculum has been enhanced by imaginative whole-school initiatives. Notable examples within the current term have been the 'Where is God?' focus and the learning emanating from the visits of a CAFOD volunteer and a Muslim parent.
- In the former case, pupils were asked to respond in writing and artistically to the central question, and did so thoughtfully and with inspiration. Their paintings showed God's spirit in different places in creation, and they recognised His presence at difficult times

as well as reflecting on the blessings He brings: "God is all around us", "God is within nature" and "I can always feel Him around me" were typical comments.

- The partnerships that the school has made within its Catholic cluster, and with individual schools, is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and the school's provision, drawing as it does on expertise beyond the school. Opportunities for teachers to access continuing professional development, on Diocesan courses for instance, have also been beneficial.
- The curriculum has a significant impact on pupils' spiritual and moral development. One important positive element within this regard is the school's commitment to its Forest Schools programme. All classes access the outdoors regularly, giving pupils experiences that help them to explore, enquire and collaborate under expert guidance; but also in a context that emphasises the values that the school holds dear. Pupils learn about trust, kindness, the wonder of creation and the importance of the stewardship of god's world.
- Extra-curricular provision is extensive and varied. It includes thriving breakfast and after-school clubs, sporting activities and a Saturday morning forest schools session that is drawing in many pupils.
- The quality of Collective Worship that the school provides is outstanding. Sacred Heart is a worshipping community where prayer is central to its life.
- The celebration of the Eucharist is given a high priority, with classes taking it in turns to participate in Mass at the parish church on a weekly basis. The school also marks important times in the Church's year and in the school's calendar with Mass, or an alternative liturgy. A lead role is taken by staff and pupils at family parish masses on some Sundays; at these, and other celebrations, parents and parishioners are encouraged to join in as part of a united community.
- The school's week starts with a whole-school assembly that introduces a 'statement of belief', carefully chosen to match the liturgical season or other current initiative, and this is reflected on further in classrooms over the next few days.
- Teachers lead Collective Worship in the classroom skilfully and with great thought as to how to involve and engage pupils around a chosen theme. They are helping pupils to take a more active role in preparing and leading worship as they get older, but this is not yet developed sufficiently; pupils understand the relevance of the choice of theme, but not the essential role of scripture within a liturgy. A more structured framework for the development of pupils' skills needs to be implemented to give them the support and understanding they need.
- A comprehensive range of resources help the delivery of Collective Worship in school. The liturgical colours of the Church's year are presented in a variety of ways, through drapes, backcloths, models of priests wearing vestments and 'liturgical teddies'. Each class has a liturgy box – 'things that help us to pray' – with a range of useful artefacts and books.
- The parish priest is a frequent and supportive visitor to the school, contributing greatly to the school's planned provision. He gives of his time generously, for instance after the Friday parish Mass, to ensure that pupils gain understanding of religious rites and issues.
- The school supports prayer within the home, through the use of 'worship bags'. These have recently been used in November, to remember those who have died, and in Advent with the 'travelling crib'.
- Other notable events that highlight the impressive extent of the school's provision are the commissioning service for staff and governors at the start of each school year, and the ceremony of the 'beads', whereby each child and staff member is asked to consider at the beginning of the year what they will bring to the school community, and places a bead representing themselves in a heart-shaped bowl. At the end of the year, those leaving take their bead with them, given within a gold bag alongside a personalised message.

## The Leadership and Management are outstanding.

<b>How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Catholic Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.</b>	<b>1</b>
---	----------

- Leaders and governors' commitment to the Church's mission in education is exemplary. They see the development of the Catholic Life of the school, Collective Worship and Religious Education as their first priority, as exemplified at the forefront of the school's strategic development planning.
- The headteacher leads the school by example. She is dedicated to ensuring the best possible Catholic education for the pupils, and ensuring that the school is a warm and welcoming community where all are included. She is well supported by staff and governors who understand the school's mission extremely well and are actively involved in promoting it.
- The new RE subject leader, in post since May, has worked very effectively to bring about improvements in a short space of time, identifying priorities, monitoring implementation of new policy initiatives and building confidence in staff.
- Governors have a very effective structure, in partnership with the school leadership, for evaluating the school's performance, supporting and challenging as appropriate, and for influencing improvements. The decision to change committee structure so that the mission of the school is focused on more emphatically is a demonstration of their foresight.
- A team, comprising the link RE governor, the Chair, the headteacher, parish priest and RE subject leader, has worked very effectively to initiate improvement. Outside expertise, and that within the governing body, has been used well to identify areas for development, and priorities have been addressed rapidly to good effect.
- A comprehensive planned schedule of monitoring and scrutiny of outcomes and provision in RE has been implemented, shared between governors and leaders. Assessment data is now being scrutinised in similar way to that for English and mathematics, emphasising the subject's core status.
- Leadership of Collective Worship is serving the pupils very well, helping to give them a clear sense of the importance of prayer and liturgy. One significant factor is that the partnership between parishes and school is strong, and growing. The parish priest and school leadership are united in their focus on what will benefit the pupils and are adapting and changing procedures to further augment their joint activities.
- The school has an established programme for relationships and sex education (RSE), utilising the 'Journey in Love' programme as its main resource. Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE) supports pupils' personal development in a variety of ways, particularly through the Forest Schools programme, and the recent emphasis on British Values.
- The school's full participation in developing and implementing a variety of effective partnerships is strengthening its provision. Notable among these is its role within the local Catholic cluster to which it belongs.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They believe that pupils are taught well and are safe. They acknowledge the "sense of community", and the "loving, caring team who practice their faith".



- The school has addressed the recommendations of the previous Section 48 inspection and the latest canonical review appropriately.
- All canonical and statutory responsibilities are fulfilled.