



Archdiocese of Birmingham

INSPECTION REPORT

CARDINAL WISEMAN CATHOLIC TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE BIRMINGHAM

Inspection dates	13th – 14th November 2013
Reporting Inspector	Mrs Bernadette Morton
Assisting Inspector	Mrs Rachel Waugh

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11-16 years
Number on roll	563
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Mr John McCarthy
School address	Old Oscott Hill Kingstanding Birmingham B44 9SR
Telephone number	0121 360 6383
E-mail address	enquiry@cardinalwiseman.net
Date of previous inspection	April 2010
DFE School number	330 4801
Unique Reference Number	103539

Headteacher	Mrs Christina Stewardson
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DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



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 eight RE lessons. In addition the inspectors completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with students to evaluate the impact of teaching on their learning over time. They held meetings with senior staff, the chair of governors, the chair of the governors' pastoral committee and the school chaplain and lay chaplains. They observed a year assembly, attended a class Mass and a student-led liturgical activity with a local Catholic primary school. They looked at a range of evidence related to the school's self evaluation such as RAISEonline (2012), the school improvement plan, departmental planning and chaplaincy planning. Alongside the validation of school self evaluation, the inspectors gathered evidence about the quality of pupil talk in lessons, evidence which will be shared with other diocesan schools.

Information about the school

Cardinal Wiseman Catholic Technology College is a small 11 – 16 school serving the area of Kingstanding in north Birmingham. There are 563 pupils on role 32.5% of whom are baptised Catholics. Numbers have fallen since the last inspection when there were 612 pupils on roll 43% of whom were baptised Catholics. Approximately three-quarters of the pupils describe themselves as from a white background. 10% of pupils have English as an additional language and 14% are on the school's learning support register; of these 11 pupils have statements of special needs. Deprivation is a significant factor in the lives of the great majority of the students; 64% of students are eligible for free school meals, a figure considerably above the national level. Attainment on entry is below average.

Main Finding

In its self evaluation the school judges itself to be good in many areas but requiring improvement to be good in those areas closely connected to attainment. Self-evaluation of the Catholic life of the school is evident. The leadership group have a clear and realistic picture of the quality and impact of the liturgical life of the school. Formal monitoring is in place with honest and positive responses. Students feel their views are listened to and the leadership group, RE department and chaplaincy team alter practice in response, for example student involvement in liturgy has increased; student involvement in planning is embedded; departments being supported through the creation of department prayer books; self-evaluation of the Catholic life of the school has led to a clear vision for future development. Outcomes from religious education in terms of enjoyment and achievement are good which means that the school's judgement that the subject in its teaching and learning require improvement to be good is harsh given evidence to the contrary.

Cardinal Wiseman has vastly improved the quality of its Catholic life in all areas particularly in relation to student involvement. Very considered use of resources has allowed for the appointment of additional lay chaplains who, under clear guidance, are doing cutting edge work. This is allowing pupils to both participate and develop leadership skills within varying aspects of the Catholic life of the school including worship, spirituality and the extensive charity work the school is involved in. Students talk with great enthusiasm about the work undertaken by the chaplaincy team which has contributed to a changing and developing culture which includes examples of outstanding practice. Very effective leadership by the headteacher and her leadership team has established a clear philosophy based on a redemptive approach to pastoral and spiritual work.

School Self Evaluation

Cardinal Wiseman School has a clear vision of what it should provide for all its pupils. This is based on a shared theology that all people are children of God and deserve to be provided with opportunities to develop their talents. To this end there is a real desire to constantly improve. There is an understanding of the role of self-evaluation and how it contributes to development planning. This has been a noted improvement since the last inspection.

The school's evaluation of the outcomes and provision of Catholic life where it judges itself to be good is accurate and reliable and there is evidence of some outstanding practice. It has involved a whole staff prayer audit where all staff confirmed that they are doing something in their department to focus on prayer. Additionally, the value staff place on working with the chaplaincy team on prayer development was affirmed. As part of this audit departments examined how the curriculum in their departments encourages the development of the social, moral and spiritual aspects of pupils' lives. As a result of using this evaluation tool the chaplaincy team will be creating a prayer booklet for each department which will contain prayers and reflective quotes to use in lessons. The next step is that judgements need to be made about the quality of prayer and personal development within the curriculum.

Pupils were also involved in the prayer audit where a significant majority said that they experienced prayer throughout the school not just in religious education and through the chaplaincy team. They confirmed the widespread practice of saying the Angelus in lessons each day at eleven o'clock. On the importance of prayer in lessons one student commented within the audit that prayer was important in all lessons because 'God is with us throughout the day.' This growth in the prayer life of the school is a significant since the last inspection. There is a prayer and Mass policy which helps set a clear agenda for these aspects of school life.

Evidence from pupil voice indicates that they discuss and review both the quality and content of their weekly assemblies. Pupils working with the chaplaincy team are responsible for the creation and leadership of these assemblies. This aspect of Catholic life has been confirmed as outstanding by pupils, senior leaders and HMI. The impact of these assemblies is tangible as it challenges all to live out the school mission of 'Forward in Faith'.

A significant aspect of Catholic life at Cardinal Wiseman is that what might traditionally be seen as pastoral work is undertaken by the chaplaincy team which creates a holistic approach to the care and development of each pupil. Within this philosophy the Emmaus Centre (staffed by behaviour specialists) sits with a brief to help those students whose behaviour is preventing them learning to undertake proactive programmes that allow them to grow and change and return to main stream learning. This inclusivity is at the heart of the Cardinal Wiseman philosophy and its impact has been to almost eradicate exclusions. The newly reconstructed governing body is determined to be an arbiter of good practice within the sphere of the Catholic life of the school for example the chair of the pastoral committee is developing links with the chaplaincy team through their mutual work in a local youth club which is part of the school's Catholic outreach work. The priest chaplain, who is a school governor, has worked with senior staff on the school's summative self-evaluation document as a critical friend.

Self-evaluation of the outcomes and provision for religious education is accurate and reliable and extensive in its scope. The religious education department has been involved in the school wide project of weekly lesson observations which along with targeted weekly staff training sessions has contributed to a rapid improvement in the department. Internal evidence accurately shows teaching to be good or better with an emphasis on very thorough planning with particular attention given to differentiation and literacy.

A strong feature of whole school and departmental self-evaluation is the weekly work scrutiny where a member of the leadership team generates the list of pupils across the school whose work is to be examined. The scrutiny is extensive and its impact has been a well planned improvement in the quality of assessment. While some inconsistencies in the quality of marking remain in RE, overall marking by the department is good. It includes pupil responses to feedback and regular self and peer assessment. Student voice confirms that the attention staff give to their written work motivates them to improve.

A developing culture of self-evaluation has resulted in a department which knows itself and its students, particularly at Key Stage 4, where assessment is carefully planned and moderated. This level of rigour now needs to be extended to Key Stage 3. The analysis of GCSE examination results is thorough and clearly identifies those groups whose underachievement is a priority for developmental work within the department.

The school judges the leadership of religious education to be good. This can be clearly demonstrated by the rapid improvement in teaching and learning in recent years, the impact of which has been significantly improved GCSE results. There is a clear sense of direction and purpose within the department and a knowledge of how to implement developments required to sustain improvement.

Overall effectiveness of the school¹

Outcomes in religious education have improved significantly since the last inspection and compare favourably with other departments in the school and, while below diocesan averages, they compare favourably with similar schools. The school is able to demonstrate that pupils now have a more positive attitude to their learning in RE and that GCSE results for the current Year 11 will continue this upward trend. A whole school focus on all aspects of literacy is having a positive impact on outcomes in religious education. Student voice confirms that outcomes in terms of pupil enjoyment are well established. Religious education classrooms are effective learning environments where students are at ease with themselves and their learning.

Pupils contribute very effectively to the Catholic life of the school and collective worship. They benefit from the school's redemptive and inclusive approach. They willingly involve themselves in the varied opportunities they are given for their vocational, spiritual, emotional and moral development. A particular feature of the school is the scope of the charity work it is involved in; pupils understand the importance of this as living witness to the school motto 'Forward in Faith'. The chaplaincy team are very effective in supporting the prayer life of the school. They have a clear vision of the next steps required to further enhance this.

The leadership team in its present form is comparatively new but has already established a very clear agenda which insists on the very best for each pupil both during their time at Cardinal Wiseman and beyond. They fully understand and put into operation the belief that all aspects of the life of the school are driven by the Catholic ethos which promotes the

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

importance of the spirituality of all pupils at the heart of the curriculum serving their needs and ensuring their overall development.

Collective worship both in terms of pupil participation and quality were judged to be good by the school. This has improved markedly since the last inspection. It is delivered through a combination of many liturgical and spiritual activities, a weekly assembly and prayers in curriculum time (the school does not have a form tutor based pastoral system so there is no daily form time). Examples of outstanding practice were observed during the inspection.

The overall quality of teaching is good with some elements that are outstanding and some requiring improvements to be good. Lessons are carefully planned and include clear differentiation. Good learning environments are evident and teachers have very good relationships with the students. Learning is best when teachers allow pupils to take ownership of their own learning. Where teaching is less effective it is largely due to lack of pace and too much teacher talk. Pupil talk is a feature of the majority of lessons. At its best it is used effectively to both drive and assess learning. Additionally the ability to articulate their learning helps to develop pupils' confidence. A 'no hands' policy contributed to a high level of pupil engagement.

The curriculum throughout the school does allow students to progress and is therefore rightly judged to be good by the school. Religious literacy is good due to an emphasis on key words and literacy development. The Key Stage 4 curriculum is highly suitable for the pupils and does allow them to learn from their faith. The Key Stage 3 curriculum content requires review to more fully meet the requirements of the Bishops' Conference Curriculum Directory. Specifically church theology, the Trinity and the sacraments of initiation are not sufficiently evident.

The school judges itself to be good in its outcomes, leadership and provision for Catholic life and collective worship, the inspection confirms the reliability of these judgements. It judges itself as requiring improvement to be good in teaching and learning, attainment and overall effectiveness. These judgements are too harsh. Cardinal Wiseman is a good school with elements of outstanding practice within the Catholic life of the school.

Recommendations

- Review the Key Stage 3 religious education curriculum in order to enhance closer alignment with the requirements of the Bishops' Conference Curriculum Directory and secure a more developed understanding of AT1 and AT2 within assessment procedures.
- Governors maintain and extend their support and challenge to members of the school community and become more directly involved in self-evaluation of the Catholic life of the school.
- The religious education department should make its development planning more specific to include teaching and learning strategies for its identified underachieving groups.