



Archdiocese of Birmingham

INSPECTION REPORT

HAGLEY CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL WORCESTERSHIRE

Inspection dates	15 th - 16 th November 2011
Reporting Inspector	Dr John Lally
Assisting Inspector	Ms Fionnuala Hegarty

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11-18 years
Number on roll	1057
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Mrs Elaine Yates
School address	Brake Lane Hagley Worcestershire DY8 2XL
Telephone number	01562 883193
E-mail address	admin@hagleyrc.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	October 2006
DFE School number	885/4800
Unique Reference Number	116994

Headteacher	Mr Terence Hammond
--------------------	---------------------------

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 13 part RE lessons, all together with members of the senior leadership group or the subject leader. In addition the inspectors completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils and sixth form students to evaluate the impact of teaching on their learning over time. They held meetings with a staff governor, senior staff, and the chaplain. They observed a Mass, class worship and a year assembly. They looked at a range of evidence related to the school's self evaluation such as RAISEonline, the development plan, a departmental review, and teachers' planning. The inspection was a pilot for a new approach to diocesan inspection and, alongside the validation of school self evaluation, the inspectors gathered evidence about the quality of the provision for general religious education in the sixth form, evidence which will be shared with other diocesan schools.

Information about the school

Hagley Catholic High School is an average sized Catholic secondary school serving parishes in North-East Worcestershire, Dudley and parts of Birmingham. The proportion of baptised Catholic pupils is currently 95%, well above the diocesan average. The pupils are mainly of White British heritage with fewer than 10% from ethnic minority households. This is well below the national average as are the number of pupils eligible for free school meals and having special needs and/or disabilities. Attainment on entry is above the national average. At sixth form level the school works in partnership with six other providers.

Main Finding

In its self evaluation Hagley High School judges itself to be an outstanding Catholic school. In respect of its Catholic ethos, provision for and response of the students to liturgy, and the outcomes of public examinations in religious education, its judgement is fully justified. The senior leadership group has vast experience in the school and knows it intimately; governors also know the school well with a long-serving chairperson; and pupils and parents hold the school and the provision for RE in very high regard. There are aspects of Catholic life and RE that stand in need of development: time for form collective worship is too limited to allow opportunities for pupils to organise and lead an extended prayer or other form of worship; excellent practice in assessment in Key Stage 3 is not matched by that in Key Stage 4 in RE; and more formal monitoring and evaluation processes would provide more secure evidence of the Catholic life.

School Self Evaluation

The strength of school self evaluation rests in the senior leadership group's extensive and thorough knowledge of the school's Catholicity coupled with a recently introduced process of subject review in religious education. There is a consistency in judgements about the quality of the ethos of the school between senior leaders, staff, pupils, chaplain, and parents, a consistency that gives confidence that judgements are reliable. Pupils have opportunities through pupil voice to contribute to evaluation of aspects of the school's Catholicity, notably retreats and pilgrimages. In discussion, they are clear about the benefits that the Catholic ethos of the school brings for them. They understand and are able to articulate why they value and respect each other as created equal and how the spiritual life of the school helps them to understand their vocation in life. They express a strong sense of belonging to the school and are able to relate this to the school as a Catholic community.

Leaders' knowledge of the strengths and areas for development in the school informs planning for improvement. The school's summative evaluation at all points identifies ways in which improvements can be made including where the school considers that it has particular strengths. For example, while judging that leadership of the spiritual life of the school is outstanding, a judgement for which the school ethos would provide evidence, plans are that professional

development should be undertaken by leaders on spiritual accompaniment. Similarly the school is planning to participate in the diocesan programme aimed at encouraging spiritual and vocational development across the curriculum.

Planning in respect of the Catholic life of the school would be more effective, however, with a more formal diagnostic approach to its evaluation. Summative judgements tend to be descriptive rather than analytical and evaluative with the result that plans are not always based on the most important issues. Collective worship in form groups, for instance, is evaluated by the chaplaincy committee from the point of view of what is happening and whether they are happy about it. A more general question is not being sufficiently addressed; that is whether the provision for class worship is as good as it could be. At present there is inadequate time available for extended worship, whether as prayer, reflection and meditation, or other form, and no opportunity for pupils to organise and lead worship other than in saying a prayer. This limitation is compensated for by the outstanding provision of liturgy in the school and opportunities for retreats and pilgrimages, but for each individual pupil class prayer is daily while Mass is twice termly and retreats are necessarily occasional and do not embrace all pupils. The school should explore whether it is possible to extend form time and develop themes for class worship, perhaps related to the Church's liturgical seasons.

Evaluation of religious education has improved significantly since the last inspection. In addition to the annual analysis of the examination performance, an in depth review has been undertaken by the senior leader who line manages RE. It embraces the same areas as those inspected under the section 48 diocesan framework. The findings are consistent with those in inspection and show an excellent ability to stand back from the department and review it objectively. Judgements about teaching and learning both in the review and those made by senior leaders during the inspection were accurate and soundly evidenced. The review made clear recommendations about improvement and the department is taking action to implement these with some success to date, though other issues are yet to be addressed in detail. Perhaps only the plan to engage in in-depth reviews every five years might be reconsidered as that is quite a long period. Within the department, self evaluation is good but there are two areas where improvement could add to effective analysis of its work. While data analysis is strong and progress is measured well in relation to data, little is said about the quality of learning. Secondly, successful action has been taken in Key Stage 3 on the recommendation in the in-depth review to improve the quality of feedback to pupils, but the awareness of weaknesses in guidance on improvement at Key Stage 4 is limited. This is in part because the results at GCSE are high and pupils also learn much about the Faith. However, attention to these two areas will help to raise standards further. The department has also identified the difference between the performance of boys and girls, but this remains an issue which they have yet to tackle. Boys, do, however, perform above the diocesan average in GCSE RE.

The school judges that its capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding. If the measures instituted to monitor and evaluate religious education are extended to a more formal process for evaluating the Catholic life, including collective worship, it is likely that the capacity is present when coupled with the deep knowledge of the school of the leadership group and the governors. It will be secured by the adoption of a more analytical and diagnostic approach to spiritual, moral and vocational development, to the impact of the Catholic ethos, and when the opportunities for pupils to lead in ways are comparable to those they are given through the liturgy.

Overall effectiveness of the school¹

Outcomes for pupils are outstanding at GCSE and Advanced Level. Results in religious education are well above the diocesan average at age 16 and above those in most other schools in the sixth form. While all pupils performed well in GCSE examinations in 2011, the proportion scoring A*/A grades was very high giving confidence that the more able are being appropriately challenged. In addition no pupil scored lower than an F grade indicating good achievement for those of lower ability. The context of the performance is that a higher proportion than average achieve well prior to

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

joining the school in Year 7, but progress for all by the end of Year 11 is outstanding in RE. There is a marked difference between the achievement of boys and girls and the department recognises that it needs to adopt strategies to raise boys' achievement. At Advanced Level in 2011 three quarters of the students achieved higher A*/B grades, though results at AS level were less good. In the Extended Project course which all Year 12 students take as their General RE programme, 80% achieved an AS pass, an extremely good outcome. Achievement in Key Stage 3 is good as is the progress made by the pupils and, up to Year 9, they develop a very sound basis for later studies.

Outcomes from the Catholic life of the school are strong in some large measure through the provision of liturgy with weekly Masses, retreats and vocations day. The Masses are offered in curriculum time with a rota of year groups attending and this contributes significantly to the building of a Catholic communion in the school. But it is the communion that is characteristic of Hagley High: the pupils and staff have a powerful sense of belonging to a Catholic community and parents value it highly for their children. Pupils have good opportunities to contribute to the liturgies, but the school acknowledges that, they could be given more opportunities to organise, and evaluate their participation in, collective worship. Much of the responsibility for the quality of the school's Catholic ethos belongs to the pupils: they, with the leadership and staff, make the school what it is.

The commitment of the headteacher and senior team to the Catholicity of the school and their placing it at the heart of all that the school does is excellent. The headteacher is robust not merely in defence of the school's Catholicity, but in extending it where possible. In the partnerships with community schools for sixth form provision, the Catholic character of the school is challenged, but sustained. Leaders keep the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and vocational development under regular review. Current planning is focused on extending the team's own spiritual leadership and introducing the diocesan whole curriculum innovation centred on vocation with the theme of "what kind of person is God calling me to be?" Spiritual development in the school is remarkable and, in the light of the proposed curriculum development on vocation, would benefit from a cross-curricular audit to identify how and where further development can take place. Leadership of the RE department has grown rapidly in the two years since the appointment of the head of department. His leadership is excellent in almost all respects and needs only a little more development in relation to monitoring and evaluating the full range of his responsibilities to be truly outstanding.

While in Key Stages 3 and 4 teaching is good overall, there is excellent practice. In the sixth form it is consistently outstanding both in the Advanced Level course and in General RE. The department has successfully adopted the accelerated learning model for its teaching, supplemented by a very effective assessment for learning strategy. Both are currently being developed in the department and the head of department is being used to coach staff in other curriculum areas. All of the features of challenging teaching are in evidence in the department: high expectations to which the pupils respond very well, effective questioning both to develop pupils' learning and to test their understanding, fostering of independence in learning, and support of pupils with different learning needs and abilities. The one key area for development is in the setting of a wider range of tasks and more effective feedback on how to improve in Key Stage 4.

Curriculum provision through the department is very good with the Key Stage 3 curriculum currently under development with support from the diocesan adviser. Spiritual enrichment through the RE curriculum is outstanding and the subject plays a crucial role in securing and extending the school's Catholicity in close collaboration with the senior leadership group, most of whom teach some RE.

Recommendations

Develop more formal approaches to monitoring and evaluation of the Catholic life of the school and collective worship

Explore whether it is possible to find more time for form collective worship to enable it to contribute more effectively what is provided through liturgy and retreats

Extend the monitoring and evaluation of religious education to identify more clearly the learning of the pupils and to look more critically at the assessment of pupils' work in Key Stage 4.