



DIOCESE OF
SHREWSBURY

DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT:

**THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

School: Cardinal Newman Catholic High School
Address: Bridgewater Avenue
Latchford
Warrington
WA4 1RX

Tel No: 01925 635556

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Headteacher: Ms J Langstaff

Chair of Governors: Mrs J Johnson

Date of Inspection: 4 & 5 May 2022

Inspectors: Mrs J Beaver
Mrs AM Appleton

CARDINAL NEWMAN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

Our school's Mission is:

To place Christ at the centre of all we do in order to inspire our young people to enable them to 'have life and have it to the full.'

Our School's Values are:

Service, Compassion, Forgiveness and Truth
so that 'Heart speaks to Heart'

SCHOOL: Cardinal Newman Catholic High School

DATE OF LAST INSPECTION: October 15th 2015

JUDGEMENT FROM PREVIOUS INSPECTION: GOOD

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT FROM PREVIOUS INSPECTION

Areas for development since the last inspection:

1. Establish effective strategies to raise the standard of teaching from good to outstanding
2. To ensure sustained improvement in GCSE through effective monitoring, intervention and aspirational target setting
3. To appoint a Chaplain to further enhance the provision for Worship and the Catholic life of the school
4. To develop more consistency in the development of form based prayer and reflection

PROGRESS MADE WITH AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT FROM THE PREVIOUS INSPECTION

1. There have been consistent and more recently strong and effective strategies which have had a direct impact on standards of teaching and learning
2. Monitoring and intervention have had an impact on outcomes and will continue to do so
3. A Lay Chaplain was appointed in 2017
4. There is a clear and well supported structure for form-based prayer and reflection most recently reviewed in September 2021

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

2

This is a good Catholic school

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

CATHOLIC LIFE

1

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

1

Summary of key findings:

- The quality of Catholic life for pupils is very strong and the values are a rich and evident thread that is woven across all aspects of school life
- There are ample examples of the school's clear and strong mission as a Catholic school, and the visual presentation of the values around school reflects the core of the school whereby St John Henry Newman's "Heart speaks to heart." and the values of forgiveness, compassion, truth and service are celebrated in daily life
- The example of the Headteacher in modelling these values, serving the school with purpose and with humility stands out. She is, as one governor put it, "relentlessly bothered" and leads the school by example
- Governors are highly ambitious for the pupils, know the school well and challenge the leadership to ensure that excellence permeates all aspects of school life and that the Mission Statement is lived and real. They know the school well, are proud of it and are keen for it to continue to flourish
- The Head of Department has a clear vision of what a Religious Education department should be like in a Catholic school and is putting that vision into action
- In all lessons observed all pupils' behaviour and attitude to learning were very good
- Collective Worship is well thought out, structured resourced and there are appropriate quality assurance measures in place, including governor learning walks. The liturgical calendar makes clear the opportunities to be celebrated and the detail and meaning of each season. The Lay Chaplain has responsibility for this aspect of school life and in each classroom there is a prayer space
- This is a genuine, loving and happy community in which each person is known and valued.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Ensure greater consistency across the department in the quality of marking in pupils' books
- Continue to develop opportunity for pupils to respond to feedback, as this is making a difference to their achievement in Religious Education
- Add to the strong opportunities for Collective Worship with the planned introduction of Form Masses.

Information about the Inspection

The Inspection of Cardinal Newman Catholic High School was carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Shrewsbury Diocesan Framework and Schedule for Denominational Inspections approved by the Bishop of Shrewsbury. 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 2017).

The inspector reviewed in detail the following aspects:

- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school
- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school
- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education
- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship
- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education, Collective Worship, and the Catholic Life of the school.

The inspection was carried out by two inspectors over two days during which the inspection team:

- Held two preparatory phone calls with the inspector before the inspection
- Met the Headteacher and leadership team members, the Chair of Governors and members of the governing body, a local priest, a range of teaching staff with different responsibilities both pastoral and curriculum, the Designated Safeguarding Lead, associated staff, and staff at early stages of their careers
- Met with Local Authority lead and a partner primary Headteacher via telephone
- Met with pupils from all Key Stages
- Observed all members of the Religious Education department across all key stages and abilities
- Scrutinised a wide variety of documentation made available both before and on request during the inspection, including the Diocesan Self-evaluation report (DSEF), School Development Plan, Catholic Life of the School development plan, Collective Worship Policy

- Scrutinised a selection of Religious Education books, progress and assessment data and quality assurance evidence
- Received responses to staff, pupil and parent questionnaires which were collated and analysed
- Observed pupil conduct in and around the school
- Took part in staff morning prayer in the Chapel.

Information about this school

Cardinal Newman Catholic High School has a pupil number of 817. 53% of all pupils are baptised Catholics, 20% of other Christian denominations, 2% are of other faiths, 25% have no stated religious affiliation.

83% of all pupils are of white British heritage with 27% of learners from ethnic minority groups.

28% of all pupils are from disadvantaged backgrounds and 15% of the pupil body are registered as having special educational needs.

There are 53 teaching staff, of whom 53% are Catholic. There are 5 teachers of Religious Education. Not all teachers are full time.

The parishes served by Cardinal Newman are St John Henry Newman, St Peter and St Michael, Blessed James Bell, St Monica's, St Stephen's, and St Bridget's.

During the periods of lockdown the school continued to provide a full curriculum offer for all pupils, including the significant number unable to have immediate access to technology. The school ensured the thorough provision for the prayer life of the community and a shared commitment to the wellbeing of all throughout.

Full report – inspection judgments

CATHOLIC LIFE

The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding

1

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	1
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school	1

- The quality of Catholic life for pupils is very strong and the values are a rich and evident thread that is woven across all aspects of school life
- There are ample examples of the school's clear and strong mission as a Catholic school, and the visual presentation of the values around school reflects the core of the school whereby St John Henry Newman's "Heart speaks to heart." and the values of forgiveness, compassion, truth and service are celebrated in daily life
- The values of Service, Compassion, Forgiveness and Truth are celebrated and evidenced across the school
- The example of the Headteacher in modelling these values, serving the school with purpose and with humility stands out. She leads the school by example.
- The Catholic Life Development Plan, the School Development Plan and associated Quality Assurance paperwork puts the school mission at the heart
- Since taking up post in 2017, the Lay Chaplain has been a significant person in the community. She clearly fulfils her role and works extremely hard and with energy to enable effective worship and opportunities for spiritual development of the whole community. There is something going on at lunchtime every day in Chaplaincy
- Pupils feel that being part of the school makes them better people and that they are supported and challenged to achieve their potential
- There is a mechanism in place at governor and whole school level to celebrate, witness to and hold school to account in terms of the Catholic Life of the school. It is both rigorous and intentional and the Catholic Life of School Committee led by the Headteacher began a full and in-depth review of the Mission Statement in 2019. This led to a reenergising of the Mission Statement and a more visible witness to the school's core purpose as a Catholic school
- Governors are highly ambitious for the pupils, know the school well and challenge the leadership to ensure that excellence permeates all aspects of school life and that the Mission Statement is lived and real. They know the school well, are proud of it and are keen for it to continue to flourish. They take a full strategic involvement in the Catholic Life of the school
- The gospel chosen to underpin the mission "have life and have it in all its fullness" (John 10.10) was deliberate and considered and this is evident in relationships, attitudes, in the paperwork and policies observed and in the feedback from various groups within the school and wider community

- All pupils feel included in the school community. Pupils feel that the values make them “better people” and that they are pushed to their potential. They believe that the values will continue to shape them in their future life
- A review of the form patron saints led to a change in September 2021. This change was a direct result of a whole school pupil voice activity and recognised a more diverse group of saints
- Those who were members of the chaplaincy team really enjoyed their involvement and the opportunities to raise monies. Pupils are aware of their responsibility to care for those less fortunate than them and recognise their role as a “link in a chain”
- The strength of the work of the pastoral team is a practical example of the values in action but not an exclusive example. The relationships between staff and pupils, amongst the staff community and in the broader community support this. As one pupil said “the pastoral care in the school really stands out”
- Cardinal Newman is unique in its position of serving primary schools and parishes across two dioceses and senior staff and governors have worked positively to embrace this and encourage partnership. The school seeks to play its part in the wider Catholic community, and this includes work with the SVP of two local parishes and support for preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation
- Equally the school has engaged in positive relationships with the Local Authority, who recognise Cardinal Newman as a school which fulfils its mission for those in its care to “live life to the full” and its true inclusive nature, seeking to support each child in its care. Cardinal Newman does not just talk about the values, it lives them
- Partnerships cross phase have flourished since the last inspection and there is a positive transition process from Catholic primary school to secondary school. One Head described her confidence that her pupils go on to flourish at Cardinal Newman through this effective transition. Partnership opportunities are explored in numerous ways and there has been real engagement by Cardinal Newman. The school has opened its doors so that it enables pupils to succeed, and primary school pupils and parents see Cardinal Newman as the natural school of choice
- Governors and parents are confident that the school is in the best shape ever. The school’s mission states that it is “a community with high morale, to which all stakeholders are proud to belong”. This is clear in the genuine loving and happy community in which each person is known and valued.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious Education is good

2

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	2
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	1

- The Head of Department has a clear vision of what a Religious Education department should be like in a Catholic school and is putting that vision into action
- Over the inspection 11 lessons were observed. All Religious Education staff were observed across both key stages. The teaching seen over the inspection was good with numerous examples of highly effective practice
- In all observed lessons there was stretch and challenge; the teachers have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve
- Pupils enjoy their Religious Education lessons; this was clear in lesson observations, from the pupil questionnaires and with meetings with pupils from Key Stage Three and Four
- The pupils were very positive about their Religious Education lessons and said that teachers made their learning engaging. In all lessons observed the pupils' behaviour and attitude to learning was very good
- The GCSE results had improved over time, in 2018 73.6% pupils gained 9-4, with the highest number of grade 9's in the school. Although there was a slight dip in results in 2019, the pupils progress score was still in line with the national average. The Religious Education department is one of the top performing departments in the school
- All lessons were extremely well planned, resourced and there is a consistency across the department about what is being taught and when. To this end, all pupils gain a very similar, positive learning experience
- The Head of Religious Education has worked hard with her department to establish high quality lessons and robust assessment in all units of work. The feedback on assessments was excellent and pupils responded to advice given to improve their work further. When asked, most pupils knew where they were working at and how to progress even further
- During the work scrutiny we were able to look at a vast range of books; boys/girls, ages, abilities, SEN, and PP (Pupil Premium). There was a selection of books from each member of the department. The quality of the pupils' work was very good and it was evident that there is a culture of pupils being encouraged to take pride in their work
- The school meets the Religious Education provision requirement of 10% across all year groups.
- The Head of Religious Education closely monitors the department through lesson observations, moderation meeting and work scrutiny. She knows the strengths, and areas of required development. This knowledge informs her development plan and departmental meetings. The Head of Department is supported by the governors and her line-manager, (the Headteacher) and she has regular meetings with her to monitor and evaluate the department
- The Head of Department is an outstanding teacher and leader. The Religious Education department is led enthusiastically and effectively. The Head of Religious Education leads by example. She is taking the department team on a journey of further improvement, and they are responding positively and proactively

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Collective Worship is outstanding

1

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	1
The quality of provision for Collective Worship	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	1

- Collective Worship is well thought out, structured resourced and there are appropriate quality assurance measures in place, including governor learning walks. The liturgical calendar makes clear the opportunities to be celebrated and the detail and meaning of each season. The Lay Chaplain has responsibility for this aspect of school life and in each classroom there is a prayer space
- The framework for Collective Worship is provided by the Lay Chaplain who adapts it accordingly to suit the needs of a given year group or context
- Inspectors observed two assemblies and a variety of form times across the two days. The assemblies were a very thoughtful and interactive experience based on the Sunday Gospel and describing God's unconditional love. Each pupil was given a wooden heart at the beginning of the assembly. Supported by pupils who led prayer and readings, the Year coordinators enabled a very prayerful experience for all pupils, including reflection on the meaning of God's unconditional love. The assemblies finished with pupils being asked to reflect on their actions and mission
- A lovely moment was observed when the Head of Year asked pupils to place the wooden heart in their palm and think about who they love. Then, pupils were asked to reflect on how others know that they love them. The mission element was then to go out and show that love, through action throughout the day
- Commissioning prayer was observed in other year groups and in the form time for Thoughtful Thursday – in all rooms observed the use of a prayer journal was a reflective tool for pupils. For pupils not in mainstream classrooms the commissioning prayer still takes place and is equally valued by staff and pupils alike
- From observations, almost all pupils were engaged in purposeful, reflective worship experiences and staff were clearly confident in enabling this opportunity
- Training in the Collective Worship of the school has been regular and the most recent ethos day in January was highly valued by all. For colleagues new to school, staff induction is clearly planned and opportunities for continued support are offered and taken up by colleagues.
- The renewed Collective Worship programme was put in place in September 2021. It is underpinned by the Liturgical calendar and across a weekly cycle there is a clear programme including a daily commissioning prayer, Thoughtful Thursday and Faithful Friday. It is appreciated by staff and pupils alike
- For staff there are many opportunities for prayer and reflection, including a commissioning prayer on Mondays, morning prayer on Wednesdays and a well-attended voluntary weekend staff retreat. The morning prayer time for staff on Wednesdays is a valued opportunity to start the day and the newly refurbished Chapel space is cherished

- The school plan to further develop Collective Worship through the use of pupil prayer leaders. This is a very positive development
- Retreats are a positive experience and the numbers of pupils attending external retreats are growing. Community Masses are a positive element of school life and again, numbers attending are growing