



DIOCESAN CANONICAL INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL, RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Sacred Heart Catholic Voluntary Academy

Beacon Road, Loughborough, LE11 2BG

School URN:	138294
Inspection Date:	13 November 2019
Inspectors:	Mrs Ann King and Mrs Kate Mann

Overall Effectiveness	Previous Inspection:	Good	2
	This Inspection:	Requires Improvement	3
Catholic Life:		Good	2
Religious Education:		Requires Improvement	3
Collective Worship:		Good	2

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

Sacred Heart Catholic Voluntary Academy is a Catholic school that requires improvement.

- Sacred Heart Catholic Voluntary Academy is a caring school community which actively follows its mission to *'strive for excellence in all we do by following the teachings of Jesus in our worship, learning and play'*. Leaders' self-evaluation is still in development with a number of key strengths and weaknesses omitted. Plans for improvement are vague and lack strategic direction, measures for success are not well enough considered.
- The Catholic Life of the school is good. Links with home, school and parish are strong with many good features. The headteacher, staff and local governors are committed to implementing new paths in order to promote pupils' faith journey within the teachings of Christ. The Catholic Life is cemented into everything that the school embarks upon.
- The quality of Religious Education requires improvement. Teachers work hard and are open to guidance and support. There is some evidence of high-quality teaching and learning of Religious Education, but this is not a consistent picture across the school. Consequently, rates of progress are not adequate within individual lessons and over time. As a result, pupils fail to reach the standards of attainment in Religious Education that they are capable of.
- Collective Worship is good. Prayer is a central focus of the school where it is totally embedded in the day to day life of the school. Pupils are enthusiastic and can identify what works well in Collective Worship and their desire to make it happen is highly commendable. Pupils now need to be further empowered to take an increasingly independent role in the planning and leadership of worship.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. It is part of the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust. It serves the parishes of Sacred Heart, Loughborough and St Gregory's, Sileby.
- A very large proportion of pupils on roll are baptised Catholics (89%) with a small minority from other faith backgrounds (8%).
- The proportion of pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support is below average (8%). This is additional funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those pupils who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average; the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or a disability is below average.
- The headteacher has been in post for 5 years having been appointed in September 2014. A new Religious Education subject leader took up post in September 2019. Other than the headteacher, no members of the senior leadership team were in post for the last inspection.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Leaders must be more rigorous and accurate in their self-evaluation of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship planning so that improvement is more strategic with measures for success and impact being carefully considered, measured and communicated to key stakeholders.
- Develop pupil involvement in shaping the Catholic Life of the school as they clearly have the capacity to contribute effectively to this.
- Further develop pupil ownership of class and whole-school worship so that all pupils participate and evaluate Collective Worship on a regular basis.
- Ensure that teaching and learning in Religious Education are at least good in all classes and outstanding in some classes by:
 - Implementing a robust system of monitoring and evaluation for every aspect of Religious Education; ensuring that monitoring and evaluation are evidenced and that these have a direct impact on the quality of teaching and learning;
 - Increasing the consistency of the quality of teaching and learning across the school through sharing the best classroom practice;
 - Ensuring that further attention is focused on differentiating learning tasks to the needs of all groups of learners, in every class, including for the most able;
 - Providing opportunities for pupils to write at length and produce work relative to their age and ability throughout the school so that by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils can regularly produce extended pieces of work in Religious Education;
 - Enabling local governors to fulfil their role effectively in holding the school to account for standards in Religious Education, by inviting them to accompany the headteacher or Religious Education leader on some of their visits to Religious Education classes so that they have a more rounded and accurate understanding of the quality of provision for pupils.

As the school has been judged to require improvement, a monitoring visit will be carried out within 18 months from the publication of this report.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL	2
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- 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 leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school – good

- There is an overall view that all pupils feel happy, valued and appreciative of the opportunities that they are given by the school.
- Pupils are proud to be part of Sacred Heart Catholic Voluntary Academy and clearly follow the mission statement 'Live Learn Love' through their commitment to the Catholic Life of the school.
- The chaplaincy team is passionate about its role and responsibilities in school. The team recognises that the application process is valid as it identifies the skills needed to be a chaplain. The chaplains begin their role at Easter and when asked why, one child said, 'I guess it represents a new life for the chaplains'.
- The chaplaincy team enjoys the responsibilities it is given and pupils feel that they are valued members of the school community. Pupils in the school actively participated in the Rosary led by the team; the Wednesday lunchtime meditation sessions have also been organised by the team. Pupils did say that, recently, attendance was not as good as it has been but that they would persevere.
- Within their appropriate age groups, most pupils have a good understanding of a loving relationship and sexual development using the resources available from the diocese.
- Most pupils have respect for the Catholic ethos of the school and involve themselves with as many opportunities as possible to share their faith with the parish community and their neighborhood. They have contributed to many charities for example the local Rainbows hospice, CAFOD, the MacMillan nurses and their commitment to help the homeless. Staff and local governors have drawn pupils' attention to local initiatives for example – the Carpenter's Arms food bank to which pupils and families donate items.
- Most pupils embrace the variety of opportunities in which to explore and promote the Catholic Life of the school. As a result, they are happy, secure, confident and true ambassadors of the school. A past pupil said, 'I have really enjoyed my time at this school because of the strong dedication to God and the loving environment and would never give it up for anything'.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school – good

- Staff are very committed to the Catholic Life of the school as every aspect is seen as a priority of the school. There is a real sense of community spirit as every space within the school celebrates the Catholic Life and the Social Teaching of the Church.
- All pupils can access the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant Programme as staff recognise that there may be times when pupils will face challenges in life that may reduce their ability to engage in their learning. Pastoral care is a key priority and is a strength of the school.
- The chaplaincy provision has been strengthened by the appointment of the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust lead lay chaplain. The pupil parliament has enabled pupils to search and discuss environmental issues such as global warming and the impact that it is having on God's creation.
- Parents' engagement within the school is evident through the work of the Friends of Sacred Heart Association and parents that volunteer to help with the school choir and other activities. Parents say that the school is an extension of their family; staff are approachable and that they go above and beyond to help the pupils and their families.
- The extent to which pupils were able to reason and search for clarification with questions related to their faith in Year 6 was excellent. Every pupil's contribution was acknowledged in order to cultivate a love of their own personal spiritual growth.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school – good

- The headteacher and local governors recognise their role in shaping the vision of the school and the mission of the Church. The headteacher is held in high esteem by governors, staff, pupils and parents through her commitment and passion for the Catholic Life of the school however, her self-evaluation of the Catholic Life of the school and plans for improvement lack clarity and measurable steps for success; this is now being supported by the local governing body.
- The school has undertaken many of the Bishop's initiatives; for example, pupils have participated in Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, the Rosary, helping the homeless, and the diocesan spiritual themes of encounter, discipleship and missionary discipleship. Pupils are also involved in sponsoring the education of one child for a year in a Catholic school in India.
- The commitment of the headteacher in providing opportunities for staff development through spiritual retreats, support from the Diocesan Youth Service, the induction of new staff and support from the diocese have led to positive feedback from the staff.
- The local governing body is totally committed to the Catholic Life of the school; it has given precedence to this area on the agenda of their meetings. The recently appointed chair of governors has participated in a learning walk with a focus on Catholic Life which enabled governors to ask challenging questions of the headteacher. They have made a recent appointment who is the subject leader for Religious Education and who has already made a positive impact in the school.
- The parish priest is delighted to be part of the working group for Catholic Life; on speaking to the pupils, he feels a sense of community and that the Catholic Life of the school is very strong. The school has embraced the support offered by the lead lay chaplain.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education – requires improvement

- Visits to lessons and scrutiny of work in pupils' books suggests that progress overall in Religious Education is below the considerable capability of pupils.
- The majority of pupils are well behaved in Religious Education lessons but, within some lessons observed and also reported by the pupil parliament, there are occasions when individuals or groups of pupils disrupt the flow of the learning by 'shouting out'. Attempts by teachers to manage these disruptions are mostly successful.
- The quality and quantity of pupils' current written work in Religious Education, although improved from last year, still requires improvement in terms of content and detail but also presentation. Teachers must alter their planning to allow more opportunities for pupils to write at length and always at a standard comparable to the work produced in English books.
- Pupils spoke passionately and thoughtfully about their lessons and gave many reasons as to why they enjoy their Religious Education lessons stating, 'we enjoy the different activities that the teachers plan for us', 'we learn a lot from the visitors we have into the school who tell us all about their religious life' and 'we like working in groups as this makes us secure in our thoughts'.
- In the older year groups, pupils can make links between their work in lessons, their day-to-day lives and the lives of significant people, such as the link between promises made at Baptism and Confirmation and the commitment that some make to living a life in a religious order. Pupils are enthusiastic when learning about other faiths. Year 6 pupils were proud and keen to share details with the inspection team about the recent Act of Worship which they delivered on diversity. Relative to their age, pupils recognise and value difference across religions and cultures.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education – requires improvement

- Over time, teaching and learning in the Early Years and Key Stage 1 has been inconsistent. The quality of teaching has been variable and has lacked support and the necessary action from senior leaders; this has resulted in standards of attainment in Religious Education being below diocesan averages at Key Stage 1. The new Religious Education subject leader, along with support from leaders at the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust have been quick to identify these inconsistencies and to begin to address some of the areas for improvement.

- Where teaching and learning were strong, activities were carefully planned to meet the learning needs of most pupils. Astute questioning and extending pupils' responses led to a deepening of pupils' understanding within the lesson. Teacher subject knowledge was imparted expertly and pupils were clear at every stage what was expected of them.
- Where teaching and learning were less strong, valuable learning time was lost going over learning that many pupils had already mastered or teaching skills which related to English lessons rather than specifically to Religious Education. In some classes, particularly in the very youngest classes, pupils' behaviour slowed the rate of learning and became a distraction for others.
- Over recent years, teachers have worked hard to employ a range of strategies to engage pupils, including the use of diagrams, art and IT, however in many examples seen within pupils' books and observed during lesson visits, the Religious Education learning is superseded by the completion of low-challenge tasks such as drawing, colouring-in or creating a poster. This is inconsistent with the diocesan expectation that Religious Education is the core subject of the entire curriculum and that it is recognised as an academic subject.
- During the inspection, there were additional adults supporting in all lessons observed. Additional adults were used to support groups and individuals with identified needs. Overall, this support was effective with the adults demonstrating skills to enable pupils to remain on task and promote learning for those pupils with special educational needs and/or a disability.
- Work within pupils' books is well marked. Comments by teachers are positive; almost all pieces of work have a target which is sometimes responded to by pupils. The most successful marking developed pupils' thinking in Religious Education Attainment Target 2 or Attainment Target 3 where pupils are encouraged to think more deeply or relate their feelings to what they have learnt.

The extent to which leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education – requires improvement

- Monitoring and evaluation of standards and provision in Religious Education requires improvement. There is a lack of a systematic approach to plan for improvements in the teaching and learning of Religious Education. There is some evidence, from last academic year, of activities such as work scrutiny, lesson observations and pupil voice interviews taking place, however, there is no evidence to demonstrate that these monitoring activities led to any change and most importantly, improvement. The school's self-evaluation provided to inspectors was inaccurate for this area; it lacked detail and sufficient evidence. Key initiatives introduced were omitted from the form and their impact has not yet been evaluated.
- The newly appointed Religious Education subject leader, along with senior leaders, value and engage with diocesan and St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust training. In the short period of time since appointment, the new subject leader has managed to cascade key diocesan initiatives back at school level. Leaders and local governors ensure that the episcopal requirement to provide 10% of curriculum time to Religious Education is followed.
- Leaders from the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust have an accurate picture of the school and know what necessary actions are required to improve Religious Education.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP	2
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- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.
- The quality of provision for the Collective Worship.
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

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How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship – good

- The Act of Worship observed during the inspection showed that pupils were reverent and respectful throughout. The chaplains who led the worship were able to use the resources with confidence. It is clear that the regular Acts of Worship have a positive impact on pupils as they could recall the previous week's Gospel.
- Pupils enjoy their weekly whole-school Acts of Worship and praise; they perceive that active engagement is better and something that they are keen to continue. In Key Stage 1, pupils learn about spontaneous prayer and how to articulate their thoughts. Pupils' outcomes in writing prayers was also good.
- Most pupils have a good understanding of the liturgical year and can make links to their liturgies and Acts of Worship. They enjoy singing and music using both traditional and contemporary styles which are embedded into their daily Acts of Worship and prayer. The school choir has enhanced the Acts of Worship and is developing another role for pupils in which to lead worship. There is always reflective music played in the reception area of the school which has an immediate impact when you enter the school.
- Most pupils have a good understanding of other faiths which is evident in pupils' books and in pupils' responses; they were able to articulate the differences and similarities of different faiths and cultures. The diversity of our diocese and local community is embraced and used to promote God's love for all.
- Worship is central to the life of the school as pupils were keen to inform the inspectors of the format of worship and how it can be quite spontaneous. For example, on occasions the headteacher will use a religious painting to stimulate pupils' thoughts, reflections and spiritual growth.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship – good

- An annual schedule is in place for the liturgical year with centrality of prayer and meditation at the heart. Pupils have gained confidence with prayer and Christian meditation under the instruction of Sister Anna Patricia in which they take a leading role. Prayer is part of pupils' everyday encounters with God.

- The school's Collective Worship policy has recently been reviewed with the support from the Director of the Nottingham Diocesan Catholic Youth Service along with a range of resources including the Ten: Ten resources. The impact of this can be seen in the way that pupils positively approach and apply these new resources and ideas.
- The travelling cribs and Lenten travelling bags have helped to promote family worship, the impact of these initiatives can be seen in the evaluation booklets written by pupils and parents. Pupils participate in Christian meditation with such enthusiasm that a foundation governor has suggested that they have some form of kit to be used at home.
- The calendar of school events includes the times and days of Collective Worship so that any parents, or extended family members have the opportunity to attend. One grandmother said that she felt that the Acts of Worship and liturgies were fantastic and that she felt very included in the school community. Another parent felt that the interactions with staff, pupils and priest during worship and the Mass were positive and that the pupils gave their full attention and listened really well.
- The whole-school act of worship observed on the day was led by the headteacher and the chaplaincy team. The chaplaincy team successfully engaged all the pupils which included a 'Sacred Heart News Feed'. However, the inclusion of too many approaches and strategies inhibited the flow and it became disjointed. All pupils were engaged in the feedback using thumbs up/down in which the pupils were very keen to participate.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship – good

- Local governors have observed the good behaviour of pupils at Mass and other liturgical Acts of Worship. Local governors are keen to show their presence at the school especially where they can share prayer and scripture with pupils.
- Pupils' search for meaning and purpose in life, is nurtured by staff as they begin their journey towards becoming closer to God. The impact of this is manifested in how the pupils are more considerate and concerned about each other's welfare which is evident in their prayers.
- Leaders have good knowledge and know how to plan and deliver Collective Worship. New staff are mentored by more experienced staff so that they have a good understanding of the different aspects of liturgy and the Mass.
- Leaders encourage pupils to have ownership of class and whole-school worship through pupil voice conferences. The staff support pupils in the evaluation and monitoring of worship but this does need further development in order for it to be more effective. This can be accomplished through collaboration with the new lay chaplain appointed by the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust.
- The new Religious Education subject leader has the aptitude to influence and support staff in delivering high quality worship through her excellent leadership and management skills. Local governors will need to ensure that they are effective in holding the senior leadership to account for this aspect. The use of challenging questions is an effective tool that the governors are using but learning walks and focused meetings with link governors and staff will enable the school to improve at a faster rate.

SCHOOL DETAILS

School Name	Sacred Heart Catholic Voluntary Academy
Unique Reference Number	138294
CMAT	St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust

The inspection of this school was carried out on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham under Canon 806 of Canon Law in accordance with the *Evaluation Schedule* (September 2018) for diocesan canonical inspections in the Diocese of Nottingham. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. The process begins with the school's own self-evaluation and the inspection schedule is in line with the criteria set by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA).

During the inspection, the inspectors observed 7 Religious Education lessons and 1 Act of Collective Worship.

Meetings were held with the headteacher, the subject leader for Religious Education, the chair of governors and the parish priest. Discussions were also held with pupils and parents.

The inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including reports of the governing body, action plans, the college development plan, monitoring forms, assessment information and parental response forms. Inspectors also examined the work in pupils' Religious Education books.

Chair of Governors:	Mr Bernard Monaghan
Headteacher:	Mrs Lisa Atkins
Date of Previous School Inspection:	09 June 2015
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WHAT INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS MEAN

Within the report, the following grades are used:

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires Improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

In the context of the whole school, the overall effectiveness grades have the following meaning:

Grade 1	Outstanding	The school is a highly effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are exceptionally well met.
Grade 2	Good	The school is an effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are met well.
Grade 3	Requires Improvement	The school is not yet a good Catholic school, it is not inadequate however, and there are aspects that require improvement. There will be a monitoring visit within the next 18 months and the school will be re-inspected within 3 years.
Grade 4	Inadequate	There are features in need of urgent and immediate attention. The school is not meeting the basic minimum requirement for adequacy as a Catholic school. The school will receive an annual monitoring visit and will be re-inspected within 3 years.