

Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for Cardinal Newman Catholic School

URN: 401823

Carried out on behalf of the Most Rev. Mark O'Toole, Archbishop of Cardiff on:

30-31 March 2023

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

2

Catholic life and mission (p.3)

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission

2

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education.....

2

Collective worship (p.7)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.....

2

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

✓

✓

Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- Students, staff and governors use a common language to articulate the mission of the school and understand fully how Catholic virtues are applied to their everyday lives.
- The level of pastoral care provided for all members of the community is excellent. It is a living example of the school's mission and contributes significantly to the happiness and well-being of all.
- Religious education underpins students' spiritual and moral development. All leaders and members of the department make an invaluable contribution to this.
- Prayer provides a variety of meaningful opportunities for all students to grow in faith.
- Leaders model the caring Catholic ethos which permeates all aspects of the work of the school.

This Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection was carried out under canons 804 & 806 of the code of canon law. For maintained schools and academies in England it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.48 of the Education Act 2005. For maintained schools and academies in Wales it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.50 of the Education Act 2005.

What the school needs to improve:

- Further develop opportunities for students to plan, lead and deliver prayer and acts of worship.
- Continue to develop strategies to narrow the gap in attainment of boys at key stage 4.
- Ensure governors formalise the systematic monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of Catholic life and mission, and collective worship.

Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Catholic life and mission key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

2

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

2

The caring Catholic ethos permeates all aspects of the work of the school. Students are immensely proud of their school and speak enthusiastically about the school's distinctive Catholic nature. They understand and fully embrace the school motto 'heart to heart speaks' and how this applies in their everyday lives. Students contribute to the review of Catholic virtues and feel that the school responded well to their suggestions. They best understand the school's mission by the emphasis placed on Gospel values through morning prayer which has a specific focus every two weeks. Students are encouraged to demonstrate these values every day and consequently talk confidently about when, for example, they have been 'kind' and 'tolerant' or have shown 'service' or 'justice' to others. Students value opportunities to take on leadership responsibility through the student council and act as ambassadors during open evenings, transition events and organised charitable activities. Students participate in numerous fundraising events including those for Cafod, Ukraine and the Marfan Trust. This enables them to respond to Catholic Social Teaching in a practical and enjoyable way. As a result, students share a growing awareness of their responsibility to others which also demonstrates their moral development well.

Staff, governors and students use a common language to articulate the mission of the school. Catholic life is clearly expressed on the website, in its documentation and in its recruitment procedures. Departments understand how their subject contributes to the Catholic ethos and supports the students' spiritual and moral development well. Pastoral leaders are supportive and actively encourage students to be the best they can be which underpins the belief that each student has gifts and talents which are unique only to them.

The school's environment reflects its mission and identity through effective signs and images which are clearly visible throughout the school. This initiative was led by students who played an important role in its development and implementation. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is delivered by a dedicated team of teachers on a carousel and the focus is on 'move, mind and make'. Lessons are effectively supported by the well-being team and students benefit from initiatives such as the 'Moondance' charity in order to raise awareness of particular issues such as bowel cancer. The religious education department leads the relationships and sex education programme (RSE) supported by the science and well-being departments. Students benefit from themes being mapped and 'A Fertile Heart' and 'Ten Ten' are the programmes used to develop knowledge and understanding. As a result students make informed choices about remaining safe and have a strong sense of right and wrong.

The level of pastoral care provided to all members of the community is excellent. It is a living example of the school's mission and contributes significantly to the happiness and well-being of all. Students respond well to chaplaincy provision, particularly the SVP group. Plans are in place to develop this so that all students take on more responsibility for student-planned prayer in school. Excellent relationships exist particularly between students and staff and parents have high regard for the school with responses to the parental questionnaire being overwhelmingly positive. Leaders and governors ensure there are good working relationships with the archdiocese and includes the promotion of the Archbishop's food voucher scheme. The relationship between the parish and the school is promoted through collaboration and the local priest visits once a week. There is an annual Mass celebrated by the parish, the school and the local Catholic primary school which develops the sense of belonging further. Students contribute to the evaluation of Catholic life and mission through questionnaires and governors are kept fully informed through the headteacher's report to governors. However, governors need to formalise their processes for the monitoring and evaluation of Catholic life and mission to ensure that they are able to contribute fully to future development planning.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.....

1

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education.....

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for religious education.....

2

Students respond well to a variety of engaging activities which are delivered consistently by experienced and highly skilled staff. Students enjoy their religious education lessons and high levels of engagement are evident in all lessons observed. Students at all key stages make excellent progress. This is evident in books and effective planning builds on prior learning and enables knowledge to become embedded. Work is scaffolded when appropriate and writing frames are available to ensure that all students succeed in their learning. Students at key stage 4 are thoroughly prepared for examination by making regular reference to exam criteria and techniques in lesson activities. They respond well to opportunities for practice questions. As a result of the strategies used attainment at key stage 4 has shown continued improvement and is now above average when compared to national and diocesan outcomes. Despite being amongst the best results in the school, a gap remains in the attainment of boys when compared to that achieved by girls. The quality of work and presentation in books is consistently high and compares favourably with other core subjects. Nearly all students are able to explain their responses and use appropriate vocabulary and expression fluently. Religious literacy is a key feature in lessons and allows students to reflect spiritually and ethically on what they have learned.

Religious education is at the centre of the curriculum and the director of learning for religious education has a clear vision which inspires all members of the department. Students are encouraged to live up to Gospel values and aspire to be Christ-like and the best that they can be. They are reminded of this at every opportunity by the committed religious education staff. The whole school approach to planning and teaching using 'HEARTS' is evident in observations and discussions with staff, and is a strength. Lessons are well planned using a variety of tasks

to secure the engagement of all groups of learners. However, opportunities for creative work at key stage 3 are limited and need to be developed further to ensure that all students are motivated to achieve. Where questioning is used effectively it provides appropriate challenge and encourages students to think deeply about what they are learning and helps them to develop their specialist vocabulary. This was evident in nearly all lessons and used appropriately to identify precisely where students are in their learning. Feedback is effective, particularly at key stage 4, and adheres to whole school policy. However, some teachers at key stage 3 use additional strategies including 'evaluation champions' and 'whole class letters' which are not consistent with whole school policy.

The curriculum in religious education is planned coherently to build knowledge and skills and takes full account of the Curriculum Directory. The resourcing of religious education is comparable to that of other core subjects in curriculum time, staffing and accommodation. Students perform well when not being taught in specialist rooms as some rooms are in a poor state of repair which does not support learning well. Teachers work incredibly hard to overcome this. Additional funding is made available for faith development and forms part of the budget allocation for religious education. Department improvement planning is detailed, systematic and reviewed annually with an interim review taking place in March. The director of learning for religious education meets with the raising standards leader every two weeks and progress against targets is analysed and reported at full governors meetings. The link governor has strong links with the department and meets with the director of learning before governors' meetings to discuss any issues and areas for development. Discussions are then reported to meetings of the full governing body at the subsequent meeting. Learning walks, book scrutiny and student questionnaires are all used effectively to inform evaluation and future development planning across the department. Training opportunities are available to all teachers to support the development of subject knowledge, teaching and learning.

Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

2

Prayer is at the heart of the life of the school and there are a number of different opportunities for students and staff to experience prayer. Staff prayer is available in the chapel at the beginning of each week. Students are respectful and engage in prayer and liturgy reverently. They reflect silently and meaningfully which allows them to make connections between current issues being experienced by communities around the world and the impact this has on their daily lives. Form tutors acknowledge the importance of taking into account the different experiences of prayer students have in order that everyone feels able to contribute. Students are aware of different ways of praying and appreciate the opportunity to participate. This enhances the welcome that students experience when they first join the school and adds to the inclusive nature of the community as a whole. Masses, retreats to St Helen's Catholic Church and Kintbury, and important celebrations in the church calendar are all provided. A group of students benefitted from the recent trip to 'Flame' in order to deepen their understanding of faith. All religious education classes participated in guided Lenten walks during the inspection week as part of students' preparations for Holy Week.

Worship is central to the life of the school and is a core feature of the school's Catholic identity. The director of learning for religious education provides well planned and structured resources to support students' experience of prayer. Staff and students are aware of the school's structure for prayer including 'gathering, reflection, scripture, reflection, response and action and going forth'. As a result of this, prayer and worship is delivered consistently across the school. The chaplain serves as an excellent role model to students and staff who appreciate the support she gives them in developing their own practice. Much work has been done to support form tutors in delivering prayer and there is growing confidence amongst staff in personalising the prayers that are provided each week. Prayer is always in keeping with

the Catholic tradition and scripture is routinely referred to. All staff are models of good practice regarding prayer and are keen to demonstrate high standards to students and each other in the way they participate. Clear routine is embedded in their practice. The chapel is always open for students to pray during the day and is used for class Masses throughout the year.

Leaders have a collective worship policy that clearly sets out their expectations in terms of prayer. They are aware of the diocesan prayer and liturgy directory and plans are in place to incorporate this further to enhance the prayer experiences of the whole community. Leaders work effectively with the parish priest to ensure that all Holy Days of Obligation and other significant days are celebrated in school when appropriate. The Sacrament of Reconciliation was available to students during their Lenten preparations and non-Catholic students were also encouraged to speak with the priest during this time as well. Leaders and governors place a high priority on the prayer life of the school and provide time and space for this to be developed. Governors resource worship well, demonstrated by the newly appointed lay chaplain and additional funding is made available for faith development. The prayer life of the school is monitored by the director of learning for religious education, the raising standards leader for religious education and key stage directors of learning. Governors are encouraged to visit the school for key celebrations and to experience the worship available. However, governors' monitoring and evaluation of collective worship is not fully embedded and procedures need to be formalised.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Cardinal Newman Catholic School
School unique reference number (URN)	401823
Full postal address of the school	Dynea Road, Rhydyfelin, Pontypridd, CF37 5DP
School phone number	01443 494110
Name of head teacher or principal	Mr Justin O'Sullivan
Chair of governing board	Mr Rory Simmonds
School Website	https://www.cardinalnewman.co.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Not applicable
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age-range of pupils	11-18
Trustees	Archdiocese of Cardiff
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	21-24 November 2011
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Mr Garry Maher	Lead inspector
Mr James Torrance	Team inspector
Name of inspector	Lead/team
Name of inspector	Lead/team

Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement