



Archdiocese of Birmingham

INSPECTION REPORT

STUART BATHURST CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL COLLEGE OF PERFORMING ARTS

Wood Green Road, Wednesbury, West Midlands, WS10 9QS

Inspection dates	18 th - 19 th November 2015
Reporting Inspector	Mrs Janet Mellor
Assisting Inspector	Mr Chris Martin

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	11-19 years
Number on roll	892
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governing body	Mr Sean McMulkin
Telephone number	0121 556 1488
E-mail address	admin@stuart-bathurst.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	November 2010
DFE School Number	333/4600
Unique Reference Number	104020

Headteacher	Mr Jeremy Harris
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Previous inspection:	2
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This inspection:	1
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DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



MAKING CHRIST KNOWN TODAY

Evidence

- The inspection was carried out by 2 Diocesan Inspectors.
- The focus of the inspection was on the effectiveness and use of the school's self evaluation of religious education (RE) and Catholic life.
- To validate the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation of teaching and learning, the inspectors observed 12 part RE lessons.
- The inspectors completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with students to evaluate the impact of teaching on their learning over time.
- Meetings were held with the chair of the governing body and other governors, staff, and parents.
- The inspectors observed 2 assemblies and 2 form worship periods, and a lunch time liturgy.
- Other documents such as RAISEonline, the improvement plan, whole-school, faculty and departmental planning, and teachers' planning were examined alongside the self evaluation.

Information about the school

- Stuart Bathurst is a smaller than average size Catholic secondary school in the parish of St Mary Wednesbury.
- The school serves an area of high social deprivation.
- The number of Catholic pupils is currently 25%.
- The proportion of ethnic minority pupils is 48%.
- The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above national average.
- The proportion of pupils with special needs and/or disabilities is well below national average.
- Attainment on entry is broadly in line with the national average overall.

Main Findings

- Stuart Bathurst School's judgement that it is outstanding in the overall effectiveness of its RE, Catholic life and collective worship is accurate and reliable as it is based on a robust approach to self evaluation which has led to rapid improvement since the last inspection.
- Because of the outstanding strength of senior leadership in the school, and especially of the headteacher, there is a highly focused and regular process of monitoring and action planning for improvement in Catholic life, some of which is immediate and some of which results in more strategic planning.
- The focus on Catholic values has led to a harmonious community which responds in respect and support for others, bringing together students from all faith traditions.
- The commitment to thorough analysis of provision and outcomes for students, and to planning for improvement, indicates a strong capacity to continue along the path of growth in Catholic life, collective worship and RE.
- Governors are fully committed to the support and challenge which they offer to the school, and are aware of their own training needs in order to grow constantly in effectiveness.

School Self Evaluation

Catholic Life and Collective Worship

- The school justifiably regards its motto 'steadfast faith', as the embodiment of all that drives provision for education of the whole person within Catholic values. As a highly reflective school the concept of developing young people to serve in 21st century Britain in a manner that is both tolerant and respectful features highly in all planning.
- The monitoring, evaluation and forward planning for Catholic life in the school is undertaken through surveys, qualitative enquiry and overall observation of impact and student response. Issues which arise are an immediate focus for action planning with staff clearly designated for implementation, whilst long-term issues are included in the annual school improvement plan. This is regularly revisited and includes milestones for tracking progress as well as criteria for identifying success.
- The headteacher's empowering of staff to take leading roles in the Catholic life of the school has led to wider participation in its provision and evaluation. This is resulting in very effective engagement in forward planning.
- The needs of staff in delivering the weekly Catholic values lesson are acknowledged and staff are supported with training and excellent resources. In order to involve all staff in the development of the Catholic ethos of the school, performance management includes targets related to its Catholic life.
- The school is hampered in its provision for aspects of Catholic life because of a current lack of priest chaplain, though it has successfully and recently recruited a lay chaplain.
- Parental surveys and interviews show that the overwhelming number of parents feel welcome in the school and at Masses and liturgies. They indicate that they are pleased with their children's education at the school and the way in which the school communicates with them.
- Students participate in the process of forward planning through surveys. Also the recently formed student council considers improvements to student facilities and how they can be effectively realised.

- Regular monitoring of collective worship, both of assemblies and form time prayer has led to some improvement but there are identified areas which still need attention, including the prioritisation of the 'Thought for the Day' and other resources.
- Provision for Mass and the sacrament of reconciliation is limited by the current lack of a permanent priest chaplain. Interim arrangements are prioritised and priest governors are able to assist the school in celebrating Mass.

Governance

- Governors are very aware of the nature of their responsibilities to support and challenge. They have undergone an external review which has both affirmed strengths and indicated areas for development. They work with the headteacher to streamline their monitoring role.
- Governors hold the school to account for its Catholic life, receiving and discussing regular reports including about students' progress and performance in RE. Governors seek feedback from other sources, including from visits to the school involving learning walks, and data for attendance and behaviour. They have responsibilities for aspects of the school's improvement plan and undertake appropriate training.
- Evaluation of the school's Catholic life and RE is shared with the governing body who offer appropriate challenge. Governors share in the Catholic life of the school and are able to assess its impact through the quality of community life.

Religious Education

- The school's judgement of provision for RE and outcomes for the students is rightly judged to be outstanding in Years 7 to 11. The school knows this because of rigorous systems of monitoring and analysis, leading to realistic evaluations and appropriate forward planning. In the sixth form it is seen to be good but this is improving rapidly.
- Analysis of examination results and progress data is forensic and accurate. It is reported clearly and with a focus on identifying areas for improvement. This has led to an outstanding and rapid rise in progress and outcomes for students, because of the firm planning to address any shortcomings which have been identified.
- Monitoring of the quality of teaching by the school is frequent and accurate. The quality of some of the teaching is exceptional and inspirational, setting high standards within the department. Students overwhelmingly report their enjoyment of RE which has led to a rise in recruitment for the Sixth Form course.
- Marking is scrutinised on a regular basis and the judgements are clearly itemised for the attention of staff. This includes checking on a response from students and whether the requirement for time for student reflection on their teacher's comments has been fulfilled. Whilst the regularity and consistency of marking has been achieved, there is still room for the development of the quality of student reflection.
- The RE curriculum is very clearly set out with assessment tasks and this is regularly reviewed in departmental discussion with an emphasis on inclusivity and impact. There is strategic planning in place for the extensive changes to examination specifications.
- The school uses internal and external moderation very effectively with the result that there is an overall consistency in the processes and accuracy of judgements within the department.

Overall effectiveness of the school

- Under the outstanding leadership of the headteacher, the school is truly reflective.
- The decision to enter by far the majority of students for GCSE in 2015 was motivated by the desire to afford them the opportunity of a GCSE grade and to create a united approach to the work in Years 10 and 11. The firm commitment to raising attainment and progress rates has resulted in a pass rate which is above diocesan averages and represents a rise of 26% from 2014 when just over three-quarters of students were entered. The most able students are being challenged to achieve A*-A grades with very good success in 2015. Progress data for the current Year 11 indicates a projected further rise in attainment.
- Students are set very challenging and aspirational targets based on baseline data. Teachers have planned for success and a culture of aspiration has further raised the motivation and expectation of students.
- In the Sixth Form, RE enjoys a high profile and is amongst the highest attaining and popular subjects. Over time there has been a 100% success rate at A2 with students continuing to study Theology or Philosophy at leading universities. After a careful recruitment process numbers of students studying the AS level course has continued to rise, and 50% of those entered for AS level in 2015 attained A or B grades.
- The quality of teaching is overall at least good with many examples of exceptional and outstanding work with excellent subject knowledge which is motivating and inspiring. The rise in standards in RE stems from this. Students know that their teachers want them to succeed and have high aspirations for them. They go the extra mile for their students, using a wide range of data to excellent effect.
- Assessment in RE has a sharp focus on praise and advice for improvement. Students know their projected grade, the standard of their current work and what they need to do in order to improve. There are regular assessments which enable students to focus on short steps to consolidate learning.
- The curriculum in RE includes a study of a range of world religions and students learn from this to appreciate and value faith in others and in the community.
- Leadership at middle and senior levels inspires robust links between the RE department and the Catholic life of the school. Students learn from the RE curriculum as well as from Catholic values lessons how to live a life of treating others as you would wish to be treated, and this leads to harmonious relationships within the school community as well as a concern for those less fortunate. The school supported 25 local, national and global charities in 2014-15, mostly as a result of student initiative.
- Catholic values are seen in the school to embrace British values to the extent that a sixth form student during an interview in the inspection spoke of 'tolerance' being replaced by 'love'. Leaders have successfully created a family community where each is valued and the members come together to support each other, for example in times of intense tragedy. Future planning includes a focus on the Beatitudes as an expression of Catholic values. Catholic life in the sixth form is richly encouraged by the compulsory weekly lesson in Catholic values.
- The school's recently appointed lay chaplain is already making an impact on the school community and a liturgy led by her and a Year 7 form group during the inspection focussed very successfully on the terrorist attacks in Paris and prayers for peace. The two Masses on the occasion of the school's 50th Jubilee were celebrated by diocesan bishops, and many present remarked on the excellent participation of students.

- Collective worship is of a high quality and ensures the participation of students. They are confident to take leading roles. Prayers are said at the start of RE lessons.
- Behaviour around the school was seen to be excellent, with students engaged in learning and teachers working with a variety of teaching styles. Students know how to make moral decisions. They value their community and the school council is seeking ways to improve facilities by analysing student needs.
- A recent curriculum audit of spiritual and moral development has ensured that each department is aware of its role and potential in contributing to the overall input. Vocational days include marriage, the religious life and priesthood as well as a full range of other careers. The visits of inspiring speakers and former students contribute to raising aspirations and students are ambitious, often not for monetary gain but in order to contribute for good in the world.
- Performing Arts plays a key role in the liturgical life of the school. Throughout their time in the school, students are provided with opportunities to express their faith to a variety of audiences. A particular highlight was the performance of 'Born for This' at St Chad's Cathedral last Easter. Music and drama are not only the means whereby students become confident in expressing their beliefs but also of allowing those who participate to explore their faith more deeply.

Recommendations

In order to ensure that the school continues to make rapid progress in its Catholic life, collective worship and religious education, it should:

- create a firm on-going programme of formation for staff in the life of a Catholic school;
- give a sharper focus to the evaluation and monitoring of collective worship to enable reliable implementation of recommendations;
- prioritise careful training and planning time for preparation of new and rigorous schemes of work in RE;
- ensure that there is a consistent response by students to teachers' marking in a way that allows for dialogue and deeper reflection.