



DIOCESE OF  
**SHREWSBURY**

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**REPORT ON THE  
MONITORING INSPECTION  
OF OUTSTANDING SCHOOLS**

**The Catholic High School, Chester**

**URN: 139343**

**8<sup>th</sup> February 2017**

**Inspector - Mr J R Wilbraham**

The areas of focus in this monitoring inspection were :-

1. **OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS** - How well students achieve and enjoy learning in RE and RS.
2. **LEADERS AND MANAGERS** – How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvement of outcomes for pupils.
3. **PROVISION** – The quality of Collective Worship

This inspection confirms the school's self-evaluation which judges itself **outstanding** in all areas of its provision for Catholic Education.

## 1. OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS

Outcomes for students are consistently high in all three key stages. This is evidenced by the examination results at AS and A2, with consistent performance from the time of the last inspection in 2011, with 79% of students entered gaining grades A\*-C at AS, and 91% at A2 in 2016; these outcomes are measured by the ALPS analysis as levels 2 and 3 respectively, the former in the top 25% nationally and the latter the top 20%. GCSE results in Religious Studies are equally consistent and strong, being among the school's highest performing subjects, with A\*/A grades ranging from 30% to 41% (from 2013 to 2016) and A\*-C ranging from 60% to a high of 79% in 2016. The subject made a significant contribution to the school's *Progress 8* positive indicator of 0.23, which made the school the highest performing comprehensive school in Chester.

The General Religious Education programme in the Sixth Form is well received by the students and is well organised and successfully delivered by specialist teachers.

At Key Stage 3 the Diocesan Scheme for Religious Education is effectively implemented with enhanced assessments to prepare students to cope with the demands of the new GCSE. High standards of achievement are indicated by the latest levels reported at the end of the key stage, with 46% achieving level 6, 25% level 7, and 8% level 8. (For comparison, Mathematics achieved 32%, 17% and 22%).

The standard of teaching throughout the department is consistently high, with effective strategies in place for monitoring and quality assurance. Assessment policies are effectively implemented, underpinned by strategies such as 'STAR' (*Strength, To move on, Action, Response*). The use of data and aspirational targets is applied sensitively and effectively focuses on individual needs and development. Students value and enjoy the subject in all key stages.

## 2. LEADERS AND MANAGERS

The Headteacher provides outstanding leadership and inspiration, and he is supported by the Deputy Head, Assistant Heads, Governing Body, Chaplain, RE team and the other managers and staff of the school, who are deeply committed to the school's clearly declared Catholic values. The RE department is very well led and managed. The two governors interviewed demonstrated full understanding of their roles and responsibilities and firm commitment to the school's value and mission. There is clear evidence that these values are not only stated in policies but are firmly embedded in the consciousness and daily practices

of the whole school community, indicated by the attitudes and behaviours of the students. The Headteacher and other leaders consistently monitor the development of these values and ensure their application to the whole life of the school. Regular parental feedback provides positive evidence that the school lives out its values in its provision, ethos and culture. It successfully provides a community which does all it can to provide for the needs of students of all abilities and backgrounds. The school provides opportunities for training of staff in aspects of the religious life of the school, not only in respect of curricular Religious Education but also in its biennial whole-staff ethos days.

### **3. PROVISION FOR COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

Collective Worship and prayer are treated as a vital and integral component of the daily life of the school, and are facilitated by the recently appointed Chaplain, supported and developed by the staff as a whole. Daily prayers and reflections and assemblies have coordinated themes, with supportive resources provided to all staff. Students participate in and respond well to assemblies and classroom prayer and reflection. Student ownership and participation in wider faith development activities are additionally supported and encouraged by the *Christo Fidelis* and *Frassati* groups, involving students and staff who aim to enhance student ownership and engagement in the religious life of the school and the living out of the practical implications of faith. Worship and Prayer are clearly linked to practical activities and enrich the students' spiritual, moral and cultural education. Examples of this are the many activities and experiences provided by the school, such as a variety of charitable fundraising activities, an SVP group, a Lourdes group, regular retreats and other faith-related activities. The Catholic ethos of the school is palpable in relationships and is supported by inspirational images and quotations, which are displayed throughout the building. Local priests lead the celebration of Mass for a variety of events such as welcoming new students or special feast days, with a regular weekly rota to provide students with a positive experience of celebration of mass.

### **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**

Outcomes for students, the provision for Catholic Education, leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school and the RE department are all confirmed by this inspection as **outstanding**. The values of the school are clearly to be seen throughout in terms of aspirations, relationships and student outcomes. Not only does the school provide success in academic terms, but ensures that this success is based upon an effective provision for the education, welfare and spiritual well-being of students of all ages and needs.

### **IMPROVEMENT SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION**

All issues from the last inspection have been addressed successfully.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- There are no issues to be resolved; therefore the recommendation is that the school continues its commitment to providing a community based on the Gospel, where students are valued and supported in their journey to personal and academic success; and that it continues to build closer links with its partner parishes and primary schools.