

DIOCESE OF HALLAM SCHOOLS'  
DEPARTMENT



**SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT**

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL  
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  
AT  
THE McAULEY CATHOLIC HIGH  
SCHOOL

CANTLEY LANE, DONCASTER DN3 3QF

School URN	106810
Name of Chairman of Governors	Rev John McNamee
Name of Headteacher	Mrs Mary Lawrence
Date of Inspection	28-29 March 2006
Section 48 Inspectors	Mr D Corey, Mr G Dunn

“... an enthusiasm for the things of God.”

## Introduction

The Inspection of The McAuley Catholic High School has been carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Diocese of Hallam Framework and Schedule for Section 48 Inspections as approved by the Bishop of Hallam.

The process of inspection in the Diocese of Hallam has been developed as an activity of the Church to support schools in further deepening the quality of Catholic education provided.

## Information about the school

<b>Type of School</b>	<b>Secondary, Voluntary Aided, Co-educational, Comprehensive</b>
<b>Age profile of Students</b>	<b>11 – 19 years</b>
<b>Number on roll</b>	<b>1731</b>
<b>Number of Students on Special Educational Needs Register</b>	<b>163</b>
<b>Number of Students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Number of Catholics on roll</b>	<b>1370 (79%)</b>
<b>Number of Other Christian Denominations</b>	<b>296 (17%)</b>
<b>Number of other Faiths</b>	<b>37 (2%)</b>
<b>School address</b>	<b>Cantley Lane, Doncaster, DN3 3QF</b>
<b>Telephone Number</b>	<b>01302 537396</b>
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<b>Website</b>	<b>www.mcauley.org.uk</b>

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **How effective and efficient is the provision of Catholic education in meeting the needs of learners?**

The McAuley Catholic High School is an outstanding Catholic school. The lead given by the Governors, the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Group, and the involvement of priests, staff and pupils ensures a vibrant and highly successful Christian community. The opportunity for pupils to flourish and at the same time to be prepared to help others is an outstanding feature of the school.

Religious education is managed and taught by a strong, well qualified and enthusiastically committed group of teachers. The religious education curriculum has been carefully selected and structured and is presented through inspirational teaching.

#### **Areas for development:**

- The department has already recognised the need to improve overall performance in GCSE results.
- The school should continue with its development plans to maintain and enhance Catholic education.

### **The effectiveness of any steps taken to promote improvement since the last inspection**

Significant steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection, for example:

- a full time Chaplaincy Co-ordinator who, with the guidance of the Governors, Headteacher and Senior Leadership Group manages an invigorated team whose witness to the whole school community is outstanding;
- the excellent planning and evaluation of the prayer life of the school, producing a cohesive stimulating annual programme for the whole school community;
- the reorganisation of the religious education curriculum and teaching styles to a wholesome coherent system which effectively caters for the needs and interests of the current students;
- a highly effective team of specialist religious education teachers, who are motivationally led to further improve teaching and learning;
- a programme of professional development has been introduced within the religious education department which is in keeping with the whole school model;
- the development of constructive links with primary schools to ensure greater continuity of learning in religious education.

## **The capacity to further deepen the quality of Catholic education**

The leadership and witness given by the Governors, Headteacher and the Senior Leadership Group and the whole hearted participation of the school community in delivering a distinctive Catholic education which is appreciated by parents and recognised by the wider community points to an outstanding capacity for the school to continue to deepen the quality of Catholic education.

The Religious Education department leadership team has the skills, the competence and the commitment to develop further the excellent practice which has been achieved.

### **Areas for development:**

- The department should continue to encourage the use of kinaesthetic styles of learning at appropriate times in the curriculum through professional development activities.

## **THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **How effective are leadership and management in the development of the Catholic life of the school?**

The evidence gathered during inspection supports the school's own self evaluation that the effective leadership and management, in developing the Catholic life of the school, are outstanding.

Interviews with the Chair and Vice Chair of Governors testified to their exemplary knowledge and involvement with the school's daily life and its commitment to the future. Leaders and managers at all levels promote a very high quality of care and education as role models and as curriculum and pastoral leaders. The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Group are outstanding in the way that they lead the school with an approach that is both supportive and challenging.

The depth of support from the parents to this heavily oversubscribed school is clear from an examination of the evidence contained in the latest parent / carer questionnaire and in the Joint Area Review led by the LEA. The extensive and vibrant outreach work of staff and pupils in the parishes is a hallmark of this Catholic community and the generous support offered by a number of priests to the life of the school is an outstanding model for parish / home / school links.

Interviews with two groups of pupils confirmed their recognition of and pride in the numerous opportunities and invitations offered to them to develop spiritually and morally. A few examples must suffice:-

- the large number of thriving charities led by staff, supported by parents and engaging many pupils e.g CAFOD, St Vincent de Paul, Cancer

Charities, Good Shepherd Fund.

The school's commitment to the wider community can be affirmed by three examples:

- the Amnesty International group;
- the Justice and Peace group;
- the Fair Trade group.

The school is determined to live out its mission;

*“Our Christian community is not judged by words but by how well we bring out the best in each other.” [Sixth Form Brochure p2]*

This is witnessed in the structures and activities of the school's daily life and is highlighted in the 'Buddy Group' led by Year 10 pupils, the 'Rainbows' programme, and in the work of the Inclusion Unit where pupils who are experiencing difficulties can be supported. Parents, teachers and other pupils are involved in this project.

The work of the Chaplaincy Team is a significant strength in the Catholic life of the school. This team is made up of a large group of staff and parish priests and is managed by a full time lay Chaplaincy Co-ordinator. The witness offered by the Co-ordinator and the Head of the Religious Education Department is outstanding. The carefully planned, well communicated and enthusiastically carried out activities offer the opportunity to everyone in the community to take part. Interviews with pupils confirmed their appreciation for and trust in the personal support given to them throughout their school journey.

## **THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL: COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

### **How good is the quality of Collective Worship?**

The quality of collective worship in The McAuley School is outstanding. The inspectors' evidence agrees with the school's own self evaluation. A number of interviews, observation and an examination of the school's extensive and careful planning highlight the many opportunities available to staff and pupils to pray, honour and celebrate.

*“ I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.”*

*[John 10:10 School Mission Statement.]*

- There is a well planned liturgical schedule using the liturgical calendar and responding to the needs and wishes of the school community;
- There are daily acts of worship which follow the themed assembly rota and there is guidance offered to form tutors in the School Prayer Book.
- Each year group has the opportunity to be involved in a retreat. Throughout the school pupil involvement is outstanding. The sixth form pilgrimage to Lourdes is a high point of the school year and the school

- tries hard to accommodate the large number of staff and pupils who wish to take part.
- The school mission in 2005 was so thought provoking and enjoyable that it was still being talked about at the time of the inspection in March 2006.
  - The opportunities for reflection and prayer are numerous e.g 'time out with God'; Lenten reflections; vigils; remembrance prayers; the rosary, staff meetings; each classroom having its own 'prayer corner'.
  - Mass is celebrated every week, on Holy Days and on special occasions e.g at the end of the school year. As a specialist school for the performing arts, the school is exploring ways to enhance the use of music, dance and drama in its religious life.
  - The leadership given by the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Group, the commitment of the Chaplaincy Team and the parish priests and the involvement of staff and pupils is recognised within the diocese.

*"... how fortunate the Catholic community is in Doncaster to have such a good school as part of the mission of the local Church"*

*[Diocese of Hallam Review Visit 2003 p2]*

- The home / parish / school links evident in joint celebrations are an example to other Catholic communities.

#### **Areas for development:**

- The quality of collective worship can be further enriched by the enhanced use of music, dance and drama.
- The school should continue with its plans to strengthen the procedures for monitoring its daily life as a Catholic community

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS**

### **How well do learners achieve in Religious Education?**

Inspection evidence supports the school's own self evaluation that achievements and standards in religious education are good. However, there are outstanding areas of achievement, particularly at AS and A2 in Key Stage Five. The consistent progress in standards demonstrated across key stages is not reflected in the declining trend of GCSE results at Key Stage Four where a significant number of students have failed to reach their targets. The majority of students achieve well in line with their ability. Standards and skills in religious knowledge, understanding and evaluation can be identified at appropriate levels across key stages with some students achieving the highest possible standards. In sixth form religious studies lessons the quality of written and oral expression, the understanding of religious and philosophical concepts, and the use of terminology are exceptional.

Most students spoken to during inspection expressed enjoyment in religious education and appreciated the contribution it makes to their personal development and to the good of the life of the community. Behaviour in lessons was observed to be excellent on all occasions.

**Areas for development:**

- The school has already acknowledged the weakening trend in GCSE results, has addressed it with thoroughness and recent evidence suggests early signs of improvement. The school should continue to monitor this progress.
- Consideration should be given to extending the challenge for more able students in religious education lessons at Key Stage Three.

## **QUALITY OF PROVISION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

### **How effective are teaching and learning in Religious Education?**

The inspection concurs with the school's evaluation that the quality of teaching and learning is overall outstanding in religious education. This is a consequence of teachers' meticulous planning, imaginative use of resources and innovative application of teaching styles which meets the needs of students with awareness and sensitivity. Teachers conduct their lessons with a professional enthusiasm in an atmosphere of mutual respect between students and teacher and amongst the students. Some outstanding teaching was observed during the inspection and the school's established, thorough and consistent process of classroom observation confirmed this judgement.

The assessment system in the department is highly structured, in keeping with the whole school assessment policy, and used primarily to improve teaching and learning. The school has recognised that the system needs to be embedded further to achieve consistency across the teaching staff and particularly at Key Stage Three. The complexity of the assessment process is not always fully understood by students and efforts should be made to clarify it for their benefit.

The religious education department is adept in catering for the needs of less able students. A variety of methods of differentiation and support have been devised through the department's excellent practice of consultation and sharing. These are effectively applied in the classroom and appreciated by the students.

**Areas for development:**

The religious education department should:

- continue to develop teaching styles which engage all students more actively in learning experiences and activities;
- review and refine the assessment system to improve its clarity for students.

## **How well does the Religious Education curriculum meet the needs and interests of the learners?**

The manner in which the religious education curriculum has been chosen and arranged is outstanding and is a particular strength of the department. Students needs and interests at all key stages have been given the fullest consideration and schemes of work and syllabuses have been fashioned to provide the best possible learning experiences. The time allocated to religious education is in line with the recommendations of the Bishops' Conference and the curriculum in all key stages meets the requirements of the Catholic Curriculum Directory.

At Key Stage Three the department has devised its own, interesting and challenging scheme which is supported by well chosen and effective resources. The school follows the Edexcel GCSE programme at Key Stage Four providing a suitable set of topics and issues for this age group. As is the case in all areas of its work the department has this programme under review in order to ensure the needs of the full ability range are being appropriately met.

In the Sixth Form the department has been most successful in attracting a significant number of students to follow the course in Religious Studies to both AS and A2 level. This is due, not only to the enthusiasm which religious education staff impart for the subject, but also to the interest and relevance which the course has for young adults. In addition, a general religious education curriculum is presented to all sixth form students who enjoy attending these lessons both for their interest and for the value they have for their personal development. Students' successful participation in this course is recognised by the award of The Bishop's Certificate which 124 Year 13 students achieved in 2004/05. The school rightfully takes account of the multi-cultural society within which it is located and has included elements of faiths other than Christian in its curriculum at all stages. Students expressed the value of this during inspection and those of other faiths were praising of school's approach to this both in its curriculum and in its ethos.

The religious education curriculum addresses topics in breadth and depth which in turn make a considerable contribution to the sex and relationships strand of students' development. Similarly, the content and method of delivery of the religious education curriculum markedly promotes spiritual and moral development.

### **Areas for development:**

- The department should monitor the effectiveness of the Edexcel course in meeting the needs of all its students at Key Stage Four, and proceed with its plan to review the sixth form general religious education course.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

### **How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education?**

The effectiveness of leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in religious education at McAuley is outstanding.

The Head of Religious Education gives an excellent lead in the motivation of staff, the provision of resources, the constant review of the curriculum and acting as a role model in classroom teaching. She is most ably assisted by two enthusiastic and very capable seconds in department and supported by a strong and well qualified staff. Religious education staff are well supported, given regular guidance and encouraged to take up opportunities for continuing professional development.

The department is well resourced as a core subject and plans are in place to extend the ICT resources further.

The culture of open consultation and regular observation has led to the establishment of sound systems for monitoring and evaluation. This in turn is enhanced by the close professional and personal links with governors and the senior leadership group who regard the department as central to both the academic and Catholic life of the school.

#### **Areas for Development:**

- The department should: see through its plans to extend ICT resources, continue the excellent practice of sharing and evaluating, and be adventurous with teaching methods and experiences for learning.

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<b>Summary of Inspection Judgements:</b>	
<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>The Catholic Life of the School</b>	
How effective are leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school?	<b>Outstanding</b>
How good is the quality of Collective Worship?	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Religious Education</b>	
How well do learners achieve in Religious Education?	<b>Good</b>
How effective are teaching and learning in Religious Education?	<b>Outstanding</b>
How well does the RE curriculum meet the needs and interests of learners?	<b>Outstanding</b>
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education?	<b>Outstanding</b>

Further copies of this report are obtainable from The McAuley Catholic High School or from the Diocese of Hallam Schools' Department, The Hallam Pastoral Centre, St Charles Street, S9 3WU Tel: 0114 2566440.