

Diocese of Hallam

INSPECTION REPORT

Saint Bernard Catholic High School

Specialist Schools for the Arts
Herringthorpe Valley Road
Rotherham
South Yorkshire
S55 6BE

DfES Number: 106963

Head Teacher: Mr David Butler
Chair of Governors: Mgr. John Ryan

Date of inspection: January 2007
Date of previous inspection: October 2001

Reporting Inspector: Rita Price

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Bishop of Hallam & inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Description of School

Saint Bernard's Catholic High School is an 11-16 mixed comprehensive school in the Diocese of Hallam. The school's mission begins with 'Christ is our teacher. At Saint Bernard's we believe that all persons are created by God, unique and equal'. The school serves a large catchment area and the school includes approximately 85% of baptised Catholic pupils. The school is well regarded within the wider community and the local deanery. The school gained specialist arts status in 2004. Consequently, art work is well displayed around the building and this enhances the learning environment of the school. Pupils come mainly from the Catholic primary schools. The students are mostly white and of British origin. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the average while the number of pupils with additional learning needs is above the average. The school is well organised and a house system supports a strong sense of community and pastoral care. The school's Catholic identity is very clear to everyone. The school is innovative and positive and there is a strong sense of purpose and direction

The overall effectiveness of this Catholic School

Saint Bernard's is a very successful and effective Catholic school. The key features of the Catholic school are judged to be very good with some outstanding features. In particular, the school gains from committed and outstanding leadership, very good governance and good support from the priests of the parish and deanery. The religious education department is high achieving with specialist staff who are well focussed and commitment to development. The governing body fulfils its role well in supporting and steering the Catholic mission of the school. Governors and leaders have a good knowledge of the school and ensure that as a Catholic school it is well resourced. Staff development is a good feature of the school. The chaplain, the chaplaincy co-ordinator and the spiritual co-ordinator link their work well and this structure offers much potential for development in prayer and spirituality. Senior leadership is effective in supporting the Catholic ethos and in giving witness. Committed leadership is driving up standards and inspiring the school's work and mission.

Since the last Inspection report, the areas identified for improvement have been addressed. Significant improvements have been made through the work of staff in religious education and in standards at Key Stage 4. The school has a policy for spiritual and moral development. Key appointments at strategy level and for chaplaincy are impacting well on the school. The school's self evaluation has been drawn up but it is not yet sufficient. It needs also to be more reflective and evaluative and to determine carefully the key development priorities for the Catholic school.

Given the school's current report, its commitment to the vision of the Catholic school and its continuous improvement, the school shows very good capacity to improve.

Grade 1

What the school should do next to improve further

- Continue the self evaluation process with more attention to impact and effectiveness.
- Select carefully the key priorities for development as a Catholic school for the school improvement plan.
- Increase curriculum links with the primary schools to review coverage and levels of attainment.
- Continue to review and develop religious education in the light of the outcome from the curriculum directory.

The Catholic Life of the School

Leadership and Management of the School's Catholic Ethos.

The school is proud of its Catholic identity and confident in its Catholic ethos. There is a strong sense of community and common purpose. Staff and pupils speak readily of their school as a place of belonging, of trust and mutual care. School leadership gives witness to this, notably, by the level of involvement in religious and social activities and in leading acts of worship. The staffing structure is designed to ensure and maintain the school's Catholic ethos and to develop it strategically. Art work is well displayed around the building and this enhances the learning environment of the school. There are good links between those working in chaplaincy and those leading on spiritual development. The governors are well informed and are vigilant about the school's Catholic identity and self evaluation. More now needs to be done to embed the self evaluation and to determine clear priorities for improvement. The school benefits from purposeful leadership and the deliberate encouragement of staff with good opportunities for training and in-service. Full staff in-service training days on the Catholic school needs to be more regular and developmental. A house structure supports good relationships up and down the school. The staff encourage the pupils to be involved in the community and they respond well to charities and wider activities. Pupils are well supported in their spiritual and moral development and the school actively contributes to social cohesion.

Grade 1

The Prayer Life of the School

There is good provision for prayer and worship The Eucharist is at the centre and is celebrated every week usually by the school Chaplain or by one of the priests from Denary. The chaplain and co-ordinator work hard and encourage staff and pupil involvement in the chaplaincy. Mass is celebrated on holy days and as part of welcome and leaving liturgies. School masses are considered by the school to be well planned with a good emphasis on welcome and participation. Daily acts of collective worship with larger groups are planned in tutor groups and on one day there is an early morning prayer. Staff meetings and other main meetings begin with prayer. Tutors are helped with resource sheets for leading class prayer. Senior leaders and staff contribute to the prayer rota and understand their contribution to the school's Catholic ethos. The school's evaluation of prayer and worship identifies important features but needs to name the key priorities for development, for example, to improve the lay out of assemblies, levels of participation, pupils leading prayers etc. The chapel and sacred space continue to improve and provide a well ordered and attractive area. Staff teaching art have helped this work. More thought is needed on how to increase access to the chapel in the longer term. The inspection finds that the school's provision for prayer and worship is good

Grade 2

Religious Education

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education.

The school is rightly confident that pupils make good and very good progress through the key stages. This is reflected in the school's analysis of their progress and predictions. By the end of Key Stage 4, the department's inclusive approach ensures that every pupil is entered for GCSE. The results over the last three years have been very good and the department is one of the highest achieving in the school. The department is following recent school policy in tracking pupil achievement and predicting attainment by the end of Key Stage 4. Pupils work well in class and enjoy the tasks set for them. The monitoring of pupil achievement and progress at Key Stage 3 mainly is through marking and assessment but the department recognises that

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assessment is a priority for development. This should pay attention to previous learning at Key Stage 2 and to progress through levels of attainment. The department has rightly identified the introduction of levels of attainment as a priority.

Grade 1

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

Teaching is mainly good with some outstanding lessons and confident professional practice. The department benefits from experienced specialist staff and good teacher supply cover. Teaching assistants support the pupils' learning well. Teachers show good regard and the pupils respond well to the positive climate. Pupils are well motivated and enjoy their lessons. Planning takes good account of pupil's needs and interests. Where lessons are outstanding, teachers engage the pupils at a deeper level. They challenge and help them to enjoy good learning. This was very good at Key Stage 4. Other lessons have many good features though some expectations are not as high and tasks are not as productive. This is evidenced in some of the pupils' written work. More attention to gains in religious literacy will help and with personalised learning and thinking skills. However, all of the lessons inspected were well planned and showed good teaching skills. They faithfully followed the schemes of work and were delivered well. Pupils in both key stages 3 & 4 and across the lessons, make good and very good progress. .

Grade 1

Quality of the Curriculum

The school meets the curriculum requirements of the Diocese and the Bishops Conference. The curriculum is well organised and continues to develop through a detailed review of each unit. This is ongoing. The scheme follows on the work of the Catholic primary schools and continues to Key Stage 4. St Mark's gospel is very successfully taught and captures the interest of the pupils. The sacramental features are strong in both key stages. There is good attention to the beliefs of others and to the importance of building good relations with others. The department needs to consider more the recent increase in expectations at key stages 2 & 3 generally, and in religious education. An overview chart of the curriculum would afford an audit of each key stage, for example, to consider the range of scripture taught. The new levels of attainment should now be embedded.

Grade 1

Leadership and management of Religious Education

The strategy leader for religious and spiritual development leads very well a high achieving department. There is a good line management from the leadership team. Staff are very innovative and are given support as they develop new approaches and new learning resources. This increases professional development and the department regularly provides placements for initial teacher training and induction. The teaching staff work hard and assistants make an important contribution in the classroom. There is a link governor for the department. The governors and the head teacher ensure the department is strong and has good resources. The department makes good use of up to date technology and there is good order and display across the suite of classrooms. Subject leadership sets a high standard for teaching and this is demonstrated through some outstanding teaching within the department. Team work is strong and purposeful though there should be more discussion about religious literacy. There is need now for the department to move forward the self evaluation and then to prioritise the department's planning.

Grade 1

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Key for inspection grades: - Grade 1: Outstanding; Grade 2: Good; Grade 3: Satisfactory; Grade 4: Inadequate.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

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| How effective and efficient is the provision of Catholic education in meeting the needs of learners and why? | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>the overall effectiveness of the provision for the Catholic life of the school/college and of curriculum Religious Education and its main strengths and areas for development</i> | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>the effectiveness of steps taken to promote improvement since the last inspection</i> | 2 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>the capacity to make further improvements</i> | 1 |

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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| How effective are leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school? | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>how well the governing body fulfils its role in relation to the school's Catholic foundation</i> | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>how effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality care and education</i> | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>the quality of the leadership of the headteacher and senior staff in leading and developing the Catholic life of the school</i> | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>how effectively leadership at all levels in the school promotes learners' spiritual and moral development</i> | 2 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>the impact of the involvement of the chaplaincy team on the work of the school</i> | 2 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>how effectively the Catholic life of the school is monitored and evaluated</i> | 2 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>how effectively leadership at all levels promotes the school's contribution to social cohesion</i> | 1 |
| How good is the quality of Collective Worship? | 2 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>the frequency and quality of the provision for prayer, Collective Worship and liturgical life of the school</i> | 2 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>learners' response to the school's provision</i> | 2 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>how well Collective Worship contributes to the spiritual and moral development of the learner</i> | 1 |

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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| How well do learners achieve in Religious Education? | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>learners' success in achieving challenging targets including qualifications and learning goals, with trends over time and any significant variations between groups of learners</i> | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>the standards of learners' work</i> | 2 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>learners' progress relative to their prior attainment and potential, with any significant variations between groups of learners</i> | 2 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>the extent to which learners enjoy their work</i> | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>the behaviour of learners</i> | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</i> | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>the extent to which learners' contribute to the school and broader community</i> | 1 |

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| How effective are teaching and learning in RE? | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>how well teaching is used to meet learners' needs and curriculum requirements</i> | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the suitability and rigour of assessment in planning, monitoring and informing learners' progress</i> | 2 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the identification of, and provision for, additional learning needs</i> | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the involvement of parents and carers in their children's learning and development</i> | 1 |
| How well does the Religious Education curriculum meet the needs and interests of learners? | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the extent to which the Religious Education curriculum matches learners' aspirations and potential, building on prior attainment and experience</i> | 2 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>how far the Religious Education curriculum meets external requirements and is responsive to local circumstances</i> | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the extent to which learners are gaining a knowledge and developing an understanding of the teachings, beliefs, values and way of life of other world faiths</i> | 2 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the suitability of family life and sex education, education in personal relationships and citizenship education</i> | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the extent to which the curriculum in Religious Education contributes to the spiritual and moral development of the learners</i> | 1 |
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education? | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>how effectively subject leaders in Religious Education lead and support their staff</i> | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>how effectively performance in Religious Education is monitored and improved through quality assurance and self-assessment</i> | 2 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>how well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve their potential</i> | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are well taught</i> | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the adequacy and suitability of learning resources and accommodation</i> | 2 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>how effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve high standards</i> | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the effectiveness with which governors discharge their responsibilities</i> | 1 |
