

Report of the Denominational (Canon 806 & Section 48)  
Inspection of  
(Inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005)

***Notre Dame High School***

DfE No: 926/4605

URN: 137913

For Catholic Diocese of East Anglia



Chair of Governors: Mrs Joanne Warr

Headteacher: Mr Neil Cully

Denominational Inspector: Mrs Kate Pereira

Date of Inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> March 2018

Date and grade of previous inspection: 17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> October 2011 Grade 1

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL**

Notre Dame Catholic high school is an 11 – 18 Catholic comprehensive school in the centre of Norwich. The school is part of the St John the Baptist Multi Academy Trust and has been recently designated as a teaching school and a research school. There are approximately 1462 pupils in the school of whom 65% are Catholic, just over 16% are from other Christian denominations and nearly 2% are from other world faiths. There are six Catholic primary schools that feed into Notre Dame along with others from across Norfolk and North Suffolk. The admission number for the school is 210 with 251 in Year 12. The largest ethnic group is white British at 64%. Just over 22% of the pupil population have English as an additional language and there are 22 pupils with an education, health, care plan. There are 89 teachers at Notre Dame of whom 6 hold RE teaching qualifications and just over 33% of staff are Catholic.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL AS A CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

**Grade 1: Outstanding**

Notre Dame Catholic high school is a highly effective school providing a first class Catholic education for its pupils. Leadership of RE (religious education) and chaplaincy, are highly effective. The beautiful school chapel which is filled with displays of pupil prayers and reflections is a quiet place of prayer central to the school community. The school benefits from the generous time given to the school by a priest Chaplain who celebrates mass every week and leads key liturgical celebrations. This is a beacon school within the community and achieves outstanding outcomes for those it serves. The school is permeated by explicit visible and invisible signs that clearly indicate this is a Catholic school on a mission towards a fullness of life through Christ.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure there is more consistency in the provision of core RE for all students in the sixth form.
- Increase curriculum RE time in Key Stage 3 to as near to the 10% of the whole curriculum time which is the time diocesan guidelines require.

## **CATHOLIC LIFE:**

**Grade 1**

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. Pupils make a significant and sustained contribution to the Catholic life of the school through extensive charity work such as the annual sponsored walk supporting a variety of local, national and international charities for example CAFOD and the youth St Vincent de Paul group taking hampers to those in need. The contribution to the wider community and the common good is outstanding. Pupils have deep understanding of social justice which underpins their charity work and express a deep sense of belonging to this diverse community. This is shown in the way pupils respect and support each other in times of need around school and

through the student wellbeing team which pupils describe as 'an extra support system for younger students.'

The quality of provision for the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. The pastoral care policy of the school reflects its catholic ethos where forgiveness is evident with restorative justice at its heart. Leaders and governors ensure the whole curriculum contributes to the spiritual, moral and vocational development of each child by insisting each department includes these cross curricular aspects in lessons and schemes of work. Professional development is used well to promote very high standards of behaviour and these expectations are evident in and around school. Relationships are excellent and behaviour outstanding. Any incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with swiftly and effectively through the school's policy. Teacher pupil relationships are very strong, positive and respectful. Personal, Social, Health education is age appropriate and in line with diocesan guidelines. Relationship and sex education is taught by specialist RE teachers which ensures the Catholic ethos of the school is upheld.

Leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school well. Leaders are excellent role models of good practice as leaders of Catholic life which is reinforced by pupils and staff. Staff morale is generally high and there is a clear sense of pride in belonging to the community of Notre Dame as shown through the high participation in the recent staff fancy dress competition for world book day. A programme of prayer at staff briefing sets the tone for the day and the week and is led by a variety of staff members. Recent parental surveys express positive satisfaction towards the Catholic life of the school. Monitoring and evaluation is done through a consistent application of internal school quality assurance systems by for example form time drop ins and reporting by senior leaders to governors. Governors challenge these reports robustly to ensure the provision for Catholic life is outstanding. This is supplemented by the Catholic life evaluation team who meet periodically to evaluate the Catholic life of the school. The school development plan is used well to plan improvements in Catholic life.

### **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE):**

### **Grade 1**

Most pupils achieve very good outcomes and enjoy their learning in Religious Education. Achievement has been significantly above the national average for the last three years with 81% of pupils achieving A\* - C at GCSE in 2017 with a value added score of 0.54 and 83% A\* - C in 2016. At A' Level pupils achieved an outstanding progress score of 2 and a Value Added score of 1.04 in 2017 and 1.05 in 2016. Data shows that approximately 52% of pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 exceeded their expected targets in RE, with 20% meeting targets and 25% falling below target. There is a focus across the whole school on closing the achievement gap with certain key vulnerable groups in RE which reflects the general trend nationally.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education is outstanding. In the best lessons a strong coaching approach is used through skilful questioning to facilitate learning for example in a sixth form Philosophy lesson pupils were leading a debate using advanced evaluative arguments and in one year 11

lesson this approach led to pupils asking pertinent higher order questions moving learning on to a significantly higher level. In most lessons relationships, engagement and subject specific knowledge are outstanding leading to highly effective learning and progress as seen in pupils' written work. Some pupils report however that the provision for Core RE in the sixth form can be inconsistent resulting in feeling that they have 'missed out' on the excellent provision experienced elsewhere by their peers. Levels of religious literacy are very high across all key stages. Pupils are able to define and use religious terminology in the correct context. This is supported by strong RE policy on the use of key words in lessons, which are displayed and colour coded in every RE teaching room. In one Year 7 lesson the pupils were able to use a variety of religious words to answer questions with. They were also able to use the Bible effectively to look up and interpret individual passages relevant to their learning. Students respond to feedback and make good progress as a result.

Leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education well. RE is monitored and evaluated robustly and effectively. Marking and feedback across the RE department has improved in consistency and quality since the last inspection and the new excellent RE marking policy is still embedding. The RE curriculum is fully compliant with diocesan guidelines and the curriculum time for RE has been reviewed since the last inspection. Whilst key stages five and four are at 12% and 9.5% respectively, the curriculum time for RE at Key stage three remains at 7.6%. The Diocesan requirement is 10% and therefore curriculum time needs to increase particularly at Key stage three. The RE enrichment programme is excellent and curriculum linked but should not be used as a substitute for taught RE lessons. One particular issue with year nine is that there is not enough time to cover aspects of the new GCSE course which the RE department would like to deliver.

### **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:**

### **Grade 1**

Most pupils respond to and participate in the schools' Collective Worship very well. Pupils enjoy taking part in whole school liturgy, especially at the Cathedral because they feel a sense of belonging. Pupils are well behaved and respectful during collective worship and most participate actively. The newly appointed chaplaincy ambassadors enjoy planning and leading aspects of collective worship such as being trained as special ministers and more recently writing a prayer book to be used in form time. This is also displayed in the beautiful Chapel for members of the school to use in private prayer. Prayer during form time has improved over the past two years and there is a voluntary mass in school every Thursday but the attendance of pupils is low because it is too early in the day. Younger pupils take part in the singing assembly and some pupils read and lead assemblies.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is outstanding. It is led by the Head of RE and Lay Chaplain. There is a wide variety of opportunity for collective worship across school, such as retreats, and experiencing different types of prayer which are linked to the weekly themes across school. Opportunities for Reconciliation take place during Advent and Lent. There are whole school Masses at key points of the year at the Cathedral of St John the Baptist where there is also a carol service during Advent. Collective worship is fully inclusive of all pupils regardless of their background. School council meetings and other staff meetings always start with a prayer and the sign of the cross is visible during acts of collective worship.

Leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship very well. Senior staff lead many acts of collective worship and through their presence promote its importance. Assemblies are also led by senior and middle leaders and pupils report that one head of year regularly promotes the school mission through the words, 'be kind, be caring and help each other.' Form time prayer has become more consistent since the last inspection because leaders now regularly monitor form time prayer and evaluate its effectiveness through team meetings. The Chaplaincy team is representative of all sectors of the staff body and provides excellent support and challenge to the quality of collective worship leading to swift improvements and rich experiences for staff and pupils. Although there is no longer a link governor for RE or Chaplaincy, governors are still able to evaluate these areas by receiving reports from the headteacher and Head of RE at governor meetings. As an area for improvement, including a governor on the Chaplaincy team would enhance the governors reach in monitoring and evaluating RE and Catholic Life.



## **EAST ANGLIA DIOCESAN SCHOOLS' SERVICE**

*Director of Schools' Service: Mrs Julie O'Connor  
The White House, 21 Upgate,  
Poringland, NR14 7SH  
Tel: 01508 495509 Fax: 01508 495358*

### **Letter to pupils explaining the findings from the Diocesan Inspection**

14<sup>th</sup> March 2018

Dear Pupils

#### **Diocesan Inspection of**

Thank you very much for welcoming me into your school to look at religious education and Catholic life. It was a pleasure to speak to a number of you and to look at how you are learning in your RE lessons.

I especially like the strong sense of community and support across the school and the way your leaders encourage you to take part in charity events, raising awareness for those who are in need across the world. In addition I also like the way you help your teachers and leaders prepare for assemblies and special celebrations such as Mass. I also like the way your RE teachers help you to improve your work and the way they encourage you to think deeply in lessons.

I have asked your leaders and teachers to consider increasing the time spent learning RE, especially at Key Stage 3 so you can prepare well for GCSE RE and to improve the quality of core RE in the sixth form so that each student has the same good experience.

Thank you again for making me feel so welcome and for the contribution you gave on the day of the inspection

Yours sincerely,

Kate Pereira  
Diocesan Inspector