

Diocese of Wrexham



SECTION 50 INSPECTION REPORT

St. Richard Gwyn Catholic High School

Flintshire

Head Teacher: Mr. R. Keating
Chair of Governors: Mr. J Quinton

Date of Inspection: May 2016

Inspectors: John Wilbraham and Bernard Stuart

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Bishop of Wrexham and
inspection of Denominational Education under Section 50 of the Education Act 2005

INSPECTION REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The Inspection of Saint Richard Gwyn Catholic High School has been carried out in accordance with the Framework and Schedule for Section 50 Inspections (2010) issued by the Diocese of Wrexham and approved by the Bishop. The process of inspection in the Diocese has been developed as an activity of the Church to support schools in both maintaining and developing the quality of Catholic education provided.

The inspection of the school was carried out by two diocesan appointed Inspectors. They visited the religious education lessons and held meetings with the Head Teacher, the Chair of Governors, members of staff and students and attended the parents' meeting, organised as part of the ESTYN inspection. They observed the school's work and provision, including prayer and collective worship. They looked at a range of evidence, including in particular, the school's own self-evaluation, the school's development plan and the students' recorded work.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL

Saint Richard Gwyn is a voluntary aided 11-18 Catholic and comprehensive secondary school serving families and parishes in the Diocese of Wrexham, nearly all of which are located in the Local Authority area of Flintshire. The school is highly regarded in the local and wider community and has extremely close links with its partner Catholic primary schools, which it regards as part of its wider family. There are 811 students, 122 of whom are in the sixth form. It is an English medium school attracting a broad ability range from a wide socio-economic background. A minority of pupils come from other Christian denominations and religious backgrounds. In recent years the school's population has been affected by the withdrawal of discretionary transport from pupils who are not baptised Catholics. The population of children coming from minority ethnic groups has increased significantly in the last four years to nearly 10% of the school population.

The school's mission statement, 'Dysgu â'n gilydd yng Nghrist' – 'Learning together in Christ' aims to place Christ at the centre of everything the school does.

The school has faced various challenges over several years, not least of which has been the impact on pupil intake, and consequently the budget, as a result of changes in the transport funding policy of the local authority. The school tries at all times to be inclusive and to respond to Catholic parents and other parents who desire a faith-based education for their children. The school seeks to provide them with a foundation in the teachings of Christ whilst preparing them to be fully integrated into, and equipped to flourish in the communities in which they live.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL AS A CATHOLIC SCHOOL

St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School succeeds in providing a Catholic education for its students in an environment which is safe, supportive and well-ordered and which enables students to develop as responsible individuals. The large majority of parents praise the school for its caring, supportive and safe environment and for its clear Catholic ethos. Similarly, the majority of students appreciate the distinctiveness of the school and can explain how the Catholic faith and mission of the school underpin the day to day life of the school. Students are proud of their school and feel welcomed and supported. Community cohesion is at the forefront of the school's mission. Student behaviour, attitudes and relationships are excellent. Students engage to a high level in school prayers and religious activities and students and staff are involved in planning for prayer and leading collective acts of worship. They show respect, involvement and appreciation of the religious character of the school.

However, the school needs to address aspects of attainment in Religious Education in each key stage to ensure that every student is appropriately challenged and motivated to achieve at their highest level. Outcomes in the first part of the GCSE taken by the current Year 11 (at the end of their Year 10) indicate improvement. The school benefits from the commitment of governors including some long-serving members who continue to work for the school's mission and purpose. The Head Teacher and senior leaders provide the commitment and industry to provide a supportive and well-ordered environment that ensures the personal welfare and the spiritual and moral development of pupils. They have also supported changes to line management and staffing arrangements in Religious Education to address the challenges of recent years.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

- Leaders, managers and governors should develop more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the academic standards and outcomes across the curriculum in Religious Education.
- Leaders, managers and governors should regularly and rigorously review all aspects of assessment and levelling of work to enable consistency and meaningful, challenging target setting.
- Further develop 'Assessment for Learning' so that it empowers students to improve the quality of their own learning and is consistent across the department. The school is encouraged to work in partnership with other Catholic schools to achieve this.
- Consider ways of further developing chaplaincy provision within the school to consolidate and enhance the work of the Chaplains.
- Ensure that students in all years receive the required curriculum time allocation for Religious Education specified by the Bishops Conference of England and Wales.

1. HOW GOOD ARE THE OUTCOMES OF THE SCHOOL?

The vast majority of students appreciate the distinctiveness of the school and can explain how the faith and mission of the Catholic faith underpin day- to -day school life. Students are proud of their school and all students feel welcomed and supported. Community cohesion is at the

forefront of the school's mission. Achievement and enjoyment of learning by students in Religious Education is generally adequate with some good to excellent aspects. Many students show enthusiasm for the subject by their participation in all aspects of class work. Some of the lessons observed had good pace with good progress made by students. Evidence was seen of developments in literacy, bilingualism, thinking skills and working with others. In most of the lessons seen, reference was made to techniques and skills for GCSE examinations.

The attainment and progress of students in Religious Education is judged to be adequate. GCSE results in the subject are deemed to be consistently below the Welsh national average for all schools over the past four years. In 2015, 53% of students achieved a C grade or better, against a national average of 75%. However, following the modular results achieved at the end of Year 10, the current Year 11 cohort is expected to achieve a much improved result. In order to ensure a continued improvement it would be important for the department to improve both the level and the rigour of its data analysis.

The extent to which students contribute to, and benefit from, the Catholic life of the school is good with some excellent features. Students play an active role in the Catholic life of the school and benefit from the opportunities offered and the supportive and welcoming environment provided. This will be enhanced as the new chaplaincy department becomes fully embedded in the life of the school. There is open access to the school chapel and this facility is respected and well used by students. The chaplaincy team offers students a role in planning and leading prayer and charity projects. The school incorporates the Welsh dimension into its daily activities with prayers being said in Welsh. During the year Emmaus days are offered to all students in year 7, a significant number of year 10 students take part in retreat experience at Savio House, and respond very positively to such opportunities. Major feasts, such as St Richard Gwyn's and St David's, are marked with the celebration of full school Mass. Other liturgical feasts and celebrations mark the students' rites of passage.

The manner in which pupils respond to, and participate in, the school's prayer and worship is good. Students know how to take part in the prayer life of the school, in classrooms, in the chapel and during Mass. They are becoming more confident in leading and preparing acts of worship and they respond well to the resources of prayers and reflections which are linked to prescribed themes. There is a good range of opportunities provided by the school to enable students to develop their prayer life.

2. HOW GOOD IS THE SCHOOL'S PROVISION AS A CATHOLIC SCHOOL?

Since the last inspection staffing in the Religious Education department has been increased from three to four specialist teachers. The quality of teaching is judged to be good with some excellent practice and, in general, lessons are well structured and purposeful. It was noted during the inspection that innovative practice is being introduced in order to enhance teaching and learning with evidence of good strategies being used to interest and engage students. However, assessment strategies currently in place are judged as adequate, as they lack the clarity to ensure that students know what they need to do to improve their learning. Student tracking and assessment lack sufficient rigour and require urgent attention in order to introduce clarity of purpose and diagnosis of progress. Students enjoy their learning and respond well to what teachers expect of them in both their work and their behaviour. However, the department could expect more in order to raise the current level of student

attainment. Curricular time allocation for Religious Education in years 7, 12 and 13 are in need of review to ensure full compliance with the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

Pupils respond well to the interest that teachers show in them. There is good pastoral support for the pupils and the school also provides good opportunities for retreats, such as those at Pantasaph and Savio House, work for charities, such as the SVP, and many other activities involving social action, concern for the Common Good and interest in Welsh culture.

Attitudes to prayer and worship across the school are excellent, with prayer held at the start of meetings, staff briefings and all lessons and there is a consistent approach to the afternoon prayer during the academic review period. An assembly rota has named leaders and themes for assembly and students and staff are helped with resources and guidance, enabling more staff to contribute. The assembly rota is inclusive, and teachers and students lead prayer both in assemblies and in classrooms. Prayer contributes to the calm atmosphere and excellent pastoral relationships. The Chaplain, the local Parish Priest and the Bishop variously lead the liturgy for the school on regular and special occasions. The school benefits increasingly from the chaplaincy within the school.

3. HOW GOOD ARE THE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT?

Leadership and management are judged to be good in providing a very supportive and well-ordered environment in which students demonstrate excellent standards of behaviour and attitudes to their peers. However, in the area of academic planning and in the review of religious education the school is judged to be adequate. The Governing Body and Headteacher are fully committed to developing the Catholic character and ethos of the school and providing an environment in which students can flourish and learn effectively. They are ambitious and fully committed to the aim of providing excellent Catholic education. The religious character of the school is given due prominence in policies, development planning and review.

While the school has succeeded in providing much that is good and excellent in respect of the Catholic ethos and environment, with effective support for spiritual, moral and social development, leaders and managers have not been sufficiently rigorous in their self-evaluation and strategic planning to ensure that academic achievement matches the high standards they have established in the broader life of the school. The Headteacher's direct intervention in the Religious Education department has begun to generate improvement, but the need to raise achievement further remains. Achievement in Religious Education should be at least as good as that other high achieving core subjects in the school with the time and resource to do so.

The school leadership provides good links with others beyond the school, including parishes and a nearby high school (providing A level courses for them). Students are generous and they respond quickly to take part in diocesan youth and social action, SVP and many other charitable activities. They benefit greatly from retreats and days of recollection and trips abroad. Provision for pupil needs, with use of teaching assistants and available support

agencies, (for example for increasing numbers of EAL students), ensures inclusivity and community cohesion. The regular 'Gwyn News', 'The Friends of Richard Gwyn', and the use of technology, enhance communication with parents and the wider community.

SUMMARY OF KEY QUESTION JUDGEMENTS

KQ 1. How good are outcomes?

1.1	How well pupils achieve, and enjoy learning, in Religious Education	3
1.2	How well pupils make progress and attain in Religious Education	3
1.3	The extent to which pupils contribute to, and benefit from, the Catholic life of the school/college.	2
1.4	How well pupils respond to, and participate in, the school/college's prayer and worship.	2

KQ2. How good is provision?

2.1	The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education	2
2.2	The effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education	3
2.3	The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
2.4	The quality of prayer and worship provided by the school/college	2

KQ3. How good are leadership and management?

3.1	The extent to which the governing body promotes the strategic development of the Catholic life of the school/college and curriculum Religious Education	3
3.2	How well leaders and managers promote, monitor, evaluate and review the provision for the Catholic life of the school/college and plan improvement to outcomes for pupils.	2
3.3	How well leaders and managers promote, monitor, evaluate and review the provision for Religious Education for improvement to outcomes for pupils/students	3
3.4	How well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote learning, pupil well-being and community cohesion.	2

Description of Judgements

- 1= **Excellent:** Many strengths, including significant examples of sector- leading practice that is both significant and highly effective
- 2 = **Good:** Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
- 3 = **Adequate:** Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
- 4 = **Unsatisfactory:** Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths