



DIOCESE OF  
SHREWSBURY

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St James Catholic High School  
Cheadle Hulme

**URN: 106142**

**DfE No: 356 4600**

**21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2012**

**Report on the  
Inspection of Denominational Education**

**Lead Inspector: Mrs Pat Barker  
Link Inspector: Mr Huw Powell**

The inspection of the denominational education of  
St James Catholic High School, Cheadle Hulme,  
was carried out at the request of the Governors of the School  
in fulfilment of their obligation under the requirements,  
and according to the directives of, the School Inspections Act 2005. The  
school was inspected within the framework  
approved by the Bishop of Shrewsbury  
for the conduct of inspection of the denominational education of Catholic  
Secondary Schools within the Diocese.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL

St James Catholic High School, Cheadle Hulme is an 11-16 Catholic, voluntary aided, co-educational comprehensive school. The school is under the trusteeship of the Diocese of Shrewsbury and in the Stockport Local Authority. The school has specialist status in Humanities, with English RE and Citizenship as the lead subjects. The school draws students from the local area and serves the parishes of St Ann, Cheadle Hulme; Christ Church, Heald Green; Our Lady Edgeley; St Ambrose, Adswold and St Chad, Cheadle.

There are 800 students on roll. 82% of the students are baptised Catholics with 0.4% from other Christian denominations and 0.5% from other Faith traditions., and 13.6% with no religious affiliation. The school is a locally designated centre for students who have a physical disability, and the proportion with a statement of special education needs is above average. There are 56 members of teaching staff (Including 1 part-time) of whom 24 are Catholic. There are 3 full time and two part-time members of staff in the RE Department, and one HLTA working in the Department.

## OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

GRADE 1

St James Catholic High School, is an outstanding Catholic School and effective in providing Catholic education. The school's mission is to "promote a Christ centred, caring environment where individuals develop their full potential and achievement is celebrated". The school meets Diocesan requirements in delivering the RE Curriculum and is providing the entitlement for students in accordance with the recommendations of the Bishop's Conference. The school seeks ways in which to support initiatives in the local community. It is a very inclusive establishment and is to be commended for the apparently seamless way in which students with physical disabilities are able to access their entitlement to education in this environment.

## IMPROVEMENT SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

GRADE 1

The recommendations made in the last S48 Report in 2007 were:-

- Continue to develop the use of ICT to assist the students in developing their research skills.
- Provide the students with more opportunities for independent learning
- Ensure the consistent application of its assessment for learning policy.

These were all found to have been more than effectively met.

## CAPACITY FOR SUSTAINED IMPROVEMENT

GRADE 1

The capacity for sustained development is evident from Self-Evaluation document and Raising Achievement Plans for 2011-2012; 2012-2013 provided for the Inspection. The acting Headteacher is line manager for the RE Department and meets with the Director of RE Faculty on a monthly basis. Governors also meet with the Director of Faculty each term, so that the school's leaders and managers are fully aware of the issues faced by the RE staff and the areas of strength and those in need of development. The subject leader has a clear vision for developing the curriculum, and is passionate about enhancing the faith life of the students at St James', as are senior managers and governors.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

1. The Governing Body to pursue ways of securing funding for a full-time lay chaplain and/or build an effective chaplaincy team.
2. The leadership team to fully evaluate the Catholic life and ethos of the school by
  - formally revisiting the school mission statement and provide further training for all staff to embrace and support the Catholic life of the school.
  - exploring ways of encouraging pupils to lead the liturgical life of the school or participate in retreat experiences.
  - seeking opportunities for the local clergy to have further involvement in the life of the school.
3. The RE Department to continue to develop and evaluate religious education units of work at Key Stage 3.

## OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS

### ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

GRADE 1

Achievement of the pupils at all levels is a high priority for the religious education team. At KS3, almost all pupils achieve at L5 or higher. Nearly a quarter of all pupils achieve L7 or beyond. The progress for these levels is tied to the English KS2 SATs as a baseline, meaning that the Religious Education Department is achieving a very high level overall. At KS4, the results are part of a rising trend; over the last three years the number of A\*/A passes have risen from 29% to over 38%, significantly above national averages for Religious Education. Passes at A\*-C are also part of a rising trend, with results rising from just over 70% to over 80%. The percentages gaining A\*-G are also rising. These results are higher than those in Mathematics and broadly in line with those for English at the school.

### QUALITY OF LEARNING

GRADE 1

In comparison to other subjects, pupils do at least one half grade better in Religious Education than their average elsewhere and this has been part of a rising trend for the last three years. A difference in attainment between boys and girls is visible, although there have been strident attempts at KS3, through the KAGAN system, to change this. As these methods filter through from KS3 and the enthusiasm for religious education seen with the boys at KS3, we are sure there will be a greater parity between the results.

Overall, standards are significantly above average and within the diocesan threshold for outstanding. Therefore, the Religious Education Department is graded as outstanding for attainment and progress.

### CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

GRADE 2

Pupils in the school feel valued and cared for and understand what it means to be in a catholic school. They express a great sense of community within the school and feel that teachers know them well and are concerned for their well-being, and they claim "there is no bullying here!"

The students recognise the importance of learning about the views and beliefs of others because "it prepares us to be respectful". They told Inspectors that morals are important.

Students contribute readily to a range of activities both locally and in the wider world. The recent setting-up of a Faith Council where each form is represented is a worthy initiative that looks set to grow and develop the catholic life of the school. The group has already produced a Prayer Book for use in school. An initiative undertaken by the Science Faculty and MFL to provide faculty staff with a prayer resource for the end each day is to be commended, and inspectors expressed the hope that other faculties would follow suit.

Members of the Faith Council spoke of plans to create a memorial garden in the school grounds which sounds interesting and we hope will come to fruition and 'bloom'.

Students respond readily to the needs of others within and beyond the school. An example shared by a number of staff, students and governors concerned the support of prayer and practical help given to a student and her family upon the tragic death of a younger sister. Community work and fundraising are strong features in this school. CAFOD and Water Aid, Samaritans Purse, Shoe Box Appeal and St Ann's Hospice as well as reading support in local primary schools were all mentioned as examples of the school's outreach to others. Other notable examples of outreach work are specialism links with local homes for the elderly and with Heatons Special School. Also – over £4000 raised through Lenten Effort this year.

### COLLECTIVE WORSHIP - QUALITY AND PROVISION

GRADE 2

Students respond with respect and join in community prayers appropriately and confidently. They understand and appreciate what is taking place and recognise the importance of prayer in the daily life of this school. In the Form times and Assembly observed during the Inspection, teachers led the prayer and the pupils were engaged.

Throughout the academic year opportunities to celebrate the liturgical seasons are provided, which enable students to lead as well as participate in meaningful acts of collective worship. Morning prayer every Wednesday is well attended and different groups of students or staff have the opportunity to

lead this. Every half term a voluntary Mass is held and attendance has grown so that a larger space has had to be provided. A School Mass is held at the end of each term and on Holy days of Obligation and it is impressive to see a rolling programme set up to involve all faculties in the preparation of this Mass. Local clergy comment that the participation and attitude of the students is good. It is noted that there are outstanding features in the provision and quality of collective worship at St James when opportunities are taken by staff and pupils, to lead and participate in the assemblies, morning prayer and liturgical celebrations, and this is to be highly commended.

The presence and input given to the school by the local clergy is much valued, particularly in regard to acts of collective worship, and this development is good.

Similarly the presence of the Christian Schools Worker Rev Sue Mayo and her commitment to the students and staff of St James' has been and continues to be a 'blessing'.

## PROVISION

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

### GRADE 1

Five lessons were observed across two key stages by both inspectors. The KAGAN approach to lesson planning and delivery was evident in all lessons. Lessons were well-planned and used resources, ICT and otherwise, effectively. In the best lessons, there was a clear pace and sense of rigour about the lesson content and structure. Pupils were encouraged to share ideas with each other. Discussion and questioning is a strength in many of the lessons. For example, in one year 7 lesson on Sikhism, pupils undertook an effective pair and share exercise, followed by an excellent example of peer teaching and learning. In other lessons, pupils were asked a series of questions at the start of the lesson many of which they were unable to answer. The same questions were asked during the lesson and at the end of the lesson so that students could see the progress that they had made within the lesson. This is an excellent strategy and is used to good effect. Year 8 students were very keen to share with the Inspector the progress they knew they had made during the course of the year. In a year 10 lesson, focussing on the differences among Christians in their attitudes to war 'Find someone who ...' was a strategy that thoroughly engaged the students and provided an opportunity for peer learning. There were opportunities for a variety of teaching and learning strategies and many were used very effectively to enhance learning and interest. Pupils commented in many lessons that they really enjoyed RE lessons because they were interactive and interesting. The level of differentiation was also excellent with tasks set according to pupils' levels, although always encouraging pupils to attempt tasks at a higher level to develop their knowledge and skills further. Displays were excellent in the RE rooms and made reference to the skills needed to improve. Pupils' comments support this view with one pupil saying "RE helps you to see other people's point of view...and respect others". The learning wall in classrooms where students can access extension tasks is commendable.

Overall, the department provides well-structured and engaging teaching that fully meets the needs of the pupils in its care. Therefore, it has been judged as outstanding.

### EFFECTIVENESS OF ASSESSMENT

### GRADE 1

The department has responded effectively to the new whole school Assessment and Feedback policy and put in place a variety of assessment and marking procedures to ensure pupils' attainment is raised. Pupils are aware of their targets and can articulate what they need to do to improve. One pupil gave a detailed explanation of what he needed to do and many – boys especially – were eager to show their books and work and explain the excellent progress they had made. Pupils receive very regular assessment, mostly concerning levelled assessments in KS3 or via examination questions at KS4. These help the pupils to understand the skills they need to acquire and give a clear indication of their current level or grade. Marking is clearly structured and pupils respond to teachers' comments with targets of their own or, indeed, a formal review of their own progress. Pupils' literacy is reviewed and errors dealt with and responded to by the pupils. It is a credit to the Faculty Leader that these policies are applied rigorously and consistently across all staff, with a measure that is rarely seen.

This dialogue of learning between the teacher and the pupil means that the quality of marking and assessment is having a very good impact on attainment and progress. It is therefore judged as outstanding.

## THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE RE CURRICULUM MEETS PUPIL NEEDS.

GRADE 1

The department is currently undertaking a review of the KS3 scheme and has already complemented the existing work with excellent modules on the nature of RE in a Catholic school. The work builds upon pupils' knowledge and staff expertise and really enhances the learning experiences for all pupils, leading to enthusiastic and motivated learners. At Key Stage 4, the resources are equally excellent, following Edexcel units 3 and 8. The schemes of work fully meet the demands of the Bishops' Conference requirements.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

### THE CATHOLIC LIFE AND ETHOS

GRADE 2

Leaders and managers demonstrate a deep commitment to developing the Catholic Life of the school – SLT lead prayer at daily staff briefing, whole staff INSET led by two AH's on role of form teacher in spiritual development of pupils and intro of 'meat free' Fridays. A broad and balanced curriculum is provided which makes the spiritual and moral development of students a priority. It is pleasing to note that Section 5 Inspectors rated this aspect of school life so highly. We would recommend a more rigorous review system that monitors and evaluates this provision in all areas of school life. Every faculty should be involved in the planning and implementation of such provision, thus ensuring that all staff grow in confidence in being able to embrace and uphold the distinctiveness of the Catholic nature of the school.

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE RE DEPARTMENT

GRADE 1

Leadership in RE is outstanding. The director of faculty has a clear vision of where the faculty was, where it is now and where it needs to go. Systems are in place within the faculty that are robust, rigorous and honest. Teaching styles are reviewed and there is expertise across the faculty with the KAGAN techniques which have been embraced and developed by all RE staff. There is a system for mentoring and peer observation and intervention strategies are in place to implement improvement to outcomes for pupils. The rising trend in results bears testimony to this. The gap between boys and girls is addressed by teaching methods.

A review of Key Stage 3 schemes of work has been undertaken so that it will provide a better foundation for Key Stage 4 and at the same time, ensure that pupils learn the basic tenets of the Roman Catholic faith. Well targeted planning ensures that students have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and are very aware of their own progress.

### GOVERNING BODY

GRADE 2

The Governors provide a supportive and challenging understanding to the religious dimension of the school. They have a clear and developing vision of the nature of a Catholic school and have fully supported the recent efforts to engage with local parishes and develop the religious ethos. Their involvement in school activities such as Parents Evenings is excellent – the questionnaire given out during these occasions is an example of good practice other schools would do well to follow. The Governors have trained in Raiseonline and use their knowledge to challenge underachievement where it occurs; the regular meetings with Faculty Heads also contribute to their ongoing support and challenge.

The Governors acknowledge the excellent work the Head of RE has done to involve local priests and engage with local parishes and support the early processes of evaluating and developing the religious life of the school.

Given the nature of the Governors' involvement and their desire to see ongoing improvement in these nascent developments in the Catholic life of the school, this category has been judged as good.

### COMMUNITY COHESION

GRADE 1

The school's commitment to the community is a real strength of St. James. The school's community coordinator facilitates a range of experiences for the young people, including visits to St. Anne's Hospice, The Heaton's and Abbeyfield residential home. Pupils at all levels and of all abilities take a real responsibility for their own commitment to working in the community, planning and evaluating their own involvement and reporting on it to the school environment. There is a real enthusiasm among the pupils to help others and a similar enthusiasm among the leaders and managers for this to be part of

the pupils' experience at St. James. The sense of self-esteem and independence they gain is extremely positive, as well as the innumerable benefits seen in the places they visit. As one pupil commented 'it really helped me become more active in my community'. With the development next year looking at building these activities into a Youth SVP group, the religious underpinning to these activities will be complete.

This shared vision and commitment to the community means Community Cohesion is graded as outstanding.

## Questionnaires

Responses to the parent questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive about the school and the way in which it provides for the Catholic education of the students.

Pupil responses were equally positive and many pupils commented that they felt valued and cared for at school.

## INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Key to judgements: Grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory and grade 4 inadequate	Judgement
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#### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective is the school in providing Catholic Education	1
The school's capacity for sustained improvement	1

#### OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS

How good outcomes are for individuals and pupils	1
How well pupils achieve in Religious Education	1
pupils' standards of attainment in religious Education	1
the quality of pupils' learning and their progress in Religious Education	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the School	2
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	2

#### THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education	1
The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education	1
The effectiveness of assessment in Religious Education	1
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs	1
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	2

#### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic Life of the School	1
How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	2
How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	1
The extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school so areas needing development are addressed decisively and responsibilities met	2
How effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion	1