

DIOCESE OF **Hexham & Newcastle**
SPIRITUALITY, FORMATION & EDUCATION SERVICE



S48 Inspection Report

**The English Martyrs School
and Sixth Form College,
Hartlepool**

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

**THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE
SCHOOL AND RELIGIOUS
EDUCATION**

School: The English Martyrs School and Sixth Form College

Address: Catcote Road
Hartlepool
TS25 4HA

Telephone Number: 01429 273790

Email address: mlee@ems.hartlepool.sch.uk

School URN: 111756

Headteacher: Mr Michael Lee

Chair of Governors: Mrs Maria Mekins

Lead Inspector: Barry Parkin

Team Inspector: Dan Murray

Date of Inspection 7 and 8 February 2012

This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt. Reverend Séamus Cunningham the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle Diocese, (c.f. Code Canon Law, 804, 806), and for the Governing Body of the school (Education Act 2005, Section 48). The inspection reviews, evaluates and plans further improvements in the school's witness to the Catholic faith and Curriculum Religious Education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation.

The inspection schedule follows criteria set by the National Board of Advisers and Inspectors.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The English Martyrs School and Sixth Form College is a large comprehensive school which serves the Catholic community of Hartlepool. Students come from a wide range of backgrounds from seven feeder schools. The vast majority of students are White British. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is below average. The number of students with learning difficulties and or disabilities is below average as is the number who has statements of special educational needs. The school has a high percentage of Catholic students. Entry into the school over the last five years is above average. The school gained Art College status in 2000 and the International School Award in 2009.

Pupil Catchment

Number of pupils on roll:	1665
Planned Admission Number of Pupils:	260
Percentage of pupils baptised RC:	79.16%
	11-16 - 85.7%
	16-19 - 67.04%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	16.10%
Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths:	1.41%
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	3.60%
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups:	6.06%
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	14.89%

Staffing

Full time teachers:	127
Part time teachers:	5
Percentage of Catholic teachers:	37.88%

RE Department Staffing

Number of full time RE teachers:	8
Number of part time RE teachers:	0
Percentage of Catholic teachers:	100%
Percentage of teachers with CCRS:	87.5%

Percentage of learning time given to Religious Education

Year 7	7.5%
Year 8	7.5%
Year 9	7.5%
Year 10	10%
Year 11	10%
6 th Form	20% (AS/A level)
	5%

Parishes served by the school

St Cuthbert's, Hartlepool
St John Vianney, Hartlepool
St Joseph's, Hartlepool
St Mary's, Hartlepool
St Patrick's, Hartlepool
St Teresa's, Hartlepool
St Thomas More, Hartlepool

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic education

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

MAIN FINDINGS

The English Martyrs School and Sixth Form College is a good Catholic school with many outstanding features. The headteacher and his staff passionately articulate the mission of the school and it is undeniable that the Catholic character of the school permeates every aspect of school life. Numerous opportunities exist for students and staff to deepen their faith and this provision is highly valued by all members of this worshipping community. Students feel very well supported and are proud of the schools promotion of equality and diversity. School leaders are acutely aware of the strengths of the school and through careful evaluation have accurately identified key areas for improvement.

Outcomes for students are good overall. Students in all key stages speak positively about their learning and Religious Education is ranked as one of the most popular subjects in the school. Attainment is broadly average but learning and progress in classrooms is good. GCSE underperformance in recent years has been addressed and up to date robust tracking data indicates that both attainment and progress will improve significantly for the current key stage four (KS4) cohort of students. Students benefit greatly from the wealth of opportunities offered to them in relation to the Catholic life of the school. School liturgical celebrations are greatly valued and pupil involvement in, and response to collective worship is outstanding.

Provision for Catholic education is good. Good teaching and learning is a strong feature of the school and this helps to ensure the engagement and progress of students. Improvement in assessment is helping to drive up standards and the school is aware of the ongoing need to continue to work hard in this area in order to ensure consistency. Students speak positively about the support and guidance they get from teachers. Appropriate changes have been made to curriculum design in all key stages and this is having a positive impact on outcomes. There is outstanding provision for collective worship which is well supported by an enthusiastic chaplaincy team.

Leaders and managers provide strong purposeful leadership at all levels, and are keenly focussed on driving up standards. The headteacher articulates clearly his vision for this very Catholic school and the impact of this is evident in fast improving standards. Accurate self-evaluation and rigorous monitoring of standards and progress by the headteacher, other school leaders, and by governors is helping to ensure on going improvement. The school has strong partnerships with other providers and community cohesion is outstanding. Strategic changes in terms of school leadership and the provision of support and challenge demonstrates that there is outstanding capacity for continued improvement.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- To raise attainment at KS4 through the continued use of rigorous assessment and monitoring.
- To develop and personalise departmental schemes of work for both KS 4 and 5.

PUPILS

How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups

2

- how well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education
 - ❖ the quality of pupils' learning and their progress
 - ❖ the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress
 - ❖ pupils' attainment in Religious Education
- the extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school
- how well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship

2

2

2

3

1

1

Evidence from lesson observations and interviews clearly show that students enjoy their learning and they appreciate the wide variety of teaching strategies employed. As a result, they are now achieving improving results at the end of each key stage. A positive, productive and professional atmosphere pervades all aspects of the students' approach to Religious Education. Outcomes for students in Religious Education (RE) are good as are learning and progress for most students. In addition, robust data indicates an upward trend, most notably for the year ten and year eleven cohorts who are expected to exceed challenging targets. The school recognises that achievement in recent years has been disappointing, most notably at GCSE, however, policy changes and new assessment and monitoring procedures are indicative of improvement. Attainment is broadly average, but at advanced level is above average for 2011 when using diocesan comparisons. Strategic changes in line management from 2010 for the RE department, is helping to rapidly improve standards. The quality of learning of students with particular needs is impressive, in particular for those students where English is an additional language. In one lesson observed resources had been modified and translated to assist a student in successfully accessing the learning. Differentiation is evident in lessons but has yet to make a serious impact upon outcomes at GCSE; however, progress data indicates an improvement this year. The use of learning support assistants is very good as is the priority the school has clearly given to vulnerable groups in order for them to make progress.

The extent to which students contribute and benefit from the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. They recognise that the school takes seriously its role in their on-going formation and they value the rich experiences and opportunities offered to them. Students are aware of the mission of the school and are able to articulate how the gospel values are explained and lived out in this Catholic community. High expectations and equally high levels of support are available from staff and this ensures that students feel happy and safe as they go about their work. Students participate willingly in a rich array of opportunities to deepen their faith including retreats, summer camps, pilgrimages, mission events and a host of successful fund raising opportunities.

Students' response and participation in collective worship is outstanding and this is a strength of the school. Varied opportunities exist for prayer before and during the school day and this allows students to reflect and to pray for themselves and for those who they feel are most in need. House masses are a highpoint of the year and student involvement in the planning and participation of such events is strong, including the provision of high quality live music. House assemblies articulate gospel values and a strong sense of respect and prayerfulness is evident from students. Students speak positively of Lenten preparation which includes actively participating in the Stations of the Cross. Effective links across departments in relation to collective worship helps students to see it as integral to school life.

PROVISION

How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education

2

- the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education
- the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education
- the extent to which Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs
- the quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

2

2

1

The teaching of RE is good due to the fact that it is well planned, well resourced and well delivered. Students benefit from a range of well structured activities and good use is made of ICT. Students demonstrate a willingness to learn. They enjoy active engagement techniques and they benefit from the high quality subject knowledge of their teachers. Efficient use is made of learning support and the provision for English as an additional language students is impressive. Teachers benefit from peer observations and the increasing use of this, and recent work on improving questioning has clearly had an impact. The use of Assessment for Learning is clearly evident in some classrooms but is not yet departmental wide. The pace of lessons is generally good but opportunities to allow students to process their learning and make sense of the new content in order to improve progress and outcomes is needed.

The effectiveness of assessment and guidance is good. New procedures are in place and the head of department and his team are working hard to improve the quality and regularity of assessment and there are good examples of this in KS3. Teacher assessment and guidance given on year ten work is of a high quality, however, this is not yet consistent across all key stages, with particular regard to formatively assessed tasks. The school has detailed and accurate information on students' progress. Regular assessment ensures that students are aware of their progress especially in KS4 and KS5. Students confirmed that the department is focused on improving standards, and in their words, they are 'encouraged to improve'. Sixth Form students speak very highly of the quality and support of the academic guidance provided.

The RE curriculum is enriched in all key stages by the strategies and opportunities provided for the students and they speak very positively about their learning. The commonality of lesson structure provides a routine and positive learning environment provided in a relaxed, yet alert, atmosphere in which the students can learn. The display of specialist vocabulary in each classroom aids learning and promotes religious literacy. The timely course changes and the removal of the 'Entry Level Certificate' at KS4 are positive steps to increase challenge and to ensure courses are appropriate to the students' high levels of prior attainment. Sixth form students generally speak highly of the opportunities afforded to them in the general RE course, however, the current offering of the National Open College Network (NOCN) level one and two qualifications lacks some challenge.

The quality of collective worship is outstanding. A detailed calendar of themes linked to the Church's liturgical calendar, but also owned by the school community affords direction for worship but also time for personal reflection. The rich variety of liturgical opportunities offered by the school helps to ensure student and staff involvement and increases understanding of the Church year. The work, commitment and availability of an enthusiastic chaplaincy team ensures the provision of high quality materials and the creative use of ICT helps to engage students and to maximise impact. A particular strength of the school is the regular involvement of parishes in worship and this is recognised and appreciated by students who enjoy relating to members of their parish communities in the school setting.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

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 improvement to outcomes for pupils
- how well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils
- the extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory and canonical responsibilities met
- how well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and well-being
- how effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion.

1

2

1

1

1

The promotion, monitoring and evaluation of the Catholic life of the school are outstanding. The mission of the school is clearly articulated by the headteacher and his team and the development of the Catholic life is seen as a priority. Provision of resources is generous. Regular opportunities exist for student and staff retreats, uniquely led by year 12 students, and for high quality continuous professional development. School leaders act as role models and regularly lead and attend acts of collective worship. Each new year begins with Mass, setting the tone for the year. A Catholic ethos committee meets termly to receive reports on the Catholic life of the school thus ensuring accountability and enabling the school to evaluate performance and to set new priorities. It is undeniable that the Catholic traditions of the school permeate all aspects of the community.

The monitoring and evaluation of the provision for RE is good. Significant improvements introduced in September 2010 have greatly improved the systematic monitoring of the progress and provision for RE with a particular focus upon Students' outcomes. Internal progress measures indicate that these systems are having a positive impact. School leaders are aware that further work is required and they are resolute in working to raise standards. Department improvement planning is evidence based, and a systematic approach is being taken by the head of department who has developed a very positive and productive relationship with the new senior leadership team (SLT) link. Schemes of Work at KS4 and in the sixth form require some development and personalisation in order to assist teachers in improving the typicality of their lessons. The camaraderie of colleagues and the sharing of resources are indicative of the standard and style of leadership offered at all levels.

The extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support is outstanding. Governors demonstrate a real commitment to the school and are able to talk in depth and with confidence about the school's monitoring systems, its strengths and priorities for improvement. They have benefited from clear guidance from the SLT in terms of data and can articulate the priorities for improvement, with particular reference to curriculum RE. Governors visit the school regularly, both formally and informally affording them opportunities to meet staff and students and to monitor daily practice. A priest governor chairs both the Raising Achievement and Catholic Ethos Committee and is link governor for the RE department thus ensuring challenge for these important aspects of school life.

The development of partnerships with other providers is outstanding. The school is an active member of the Hexham and Newcastle Catholic Partnership South and this provides rich opportunities for both students and staff to work with ten other Catholic schools in the diocese. In addition, the school has developed excellent links with parishes and primary feeder schools led by a Parish Pastoral Youth Worker in order to enrich the Catholic dimension for students and to provide them with support beyond the school. The school has a strong link with a school in The Gambia and this is supported and valued by the whole school community. The school also promotes links with other agencies in order to ensure that the talents and interests of students are fully developed.

The promotion of community cohesion is outstanding. Students speak strongly of the support and sense of belonging and inclusivity in this school which celebrates individuality and diversity. The school has a strong international dimension and has seventy students for whom English is an additional language. The school has International School Status and deliberately reaches out beyond the confines of the building. Students actively engage in opportunities to go to other countries and commitment and support for the Team Gambia Project is impressive. There is a strong commitment to fundraising with each House choosing a fundraising challenge as well as giving support to numerous annual national charity appeals. Students are aware of and tolerant towards different faith traditions which are deliberately promoted at various times in the school year.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Overall effectiveness	2
The school's capacity for sustained improvement	1
How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ the quality of pupils' learning and their progress ❖ the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress ❖ pupils' attainment in Religious Education • the extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school • how well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship 	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 5px;">2</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 5px;">2</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 5px;">2</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 5px;">2</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 5px;">3</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 5px;">1</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">1</div>
How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education • the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education • the extent to which Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs • the quality of collective worship provided by the school 	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 5px;">2</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 5px;">2</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 5px;">2</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">1</div>
How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the School	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan improvement to outcomes for pupils • how well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils • the extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory and canonical responsibilities met • how well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and well-being • how effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion. 	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 5px;">1</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 5px;">2</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 5px;">1</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 5px;">1</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">1</div>