

DIOCESE OF HALLAM SCHOOLS' DEPARTMENT



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The McAuley Catholic High School,

Cantley Lane, Doncaster,
South Yorkshire
DN3 3QF

School URN	106810
Name of Chairman of Governors	Rev John McNamee
Name of Head Teacher	Mrs Mary Lawrence
Date of Inspection	28-29 April 2009
Section 48 Inspector	Mrs. Rita Price

“... an enthusiasm for the things of God.”

INSPECTION REPORT

Introduction

The Inspection of The McAuley Catholic High School, Doncaster, has been carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Framework and Schedule for Section 48 Inspections, as approved by the Bishop of Hallam. The process of inspection in the Diocese of Hallam has been developed as an activity of the Church to support schools in further deepening the quality of Catholic education provided.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL

The McAuley Catholic High School is a large and popular 11-19 comprehensive school, serving families and parishes in the Diocese of Hallam and from a wide and varied catchment area. There are 1729 pupils in the school with 329 students in the sixth form. The school offers a distinctive Catholic education. It includes children from Catholic and other backgrounds and denominations. It welcomes children of all abilities and is very attentive to their pastoral and learning needs. Through the mission statement which is summed up in the phrase "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full" (John 10:10), the school expresses its commitment to live out faith in the community, to praise through prayer and worship, to experience the Christian values of love, respect and understanding, to celebrate and rejoice in the talents of all, to provide equal opportunities for all, to build links with the community and care for the environment; and to work to the very best of their ability. Governors and senior leaders speak of their ownership of the mission statement and the importance of the school's corporate approach to Catholic school development. There is a chapel on both sites and both are accessible and well cared for by the Chaplaincy Co-ordinator. The school is keenly involved in wider learning activities and shares its success and enthusiasm in many ways with the parents, the parishes and the wider community. The school is a specialist school in performing arts and applied learning, and is a 'Leading Edge' school for mathematics. Additionally, it is recognised as a Consultant School for the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust. Among the school's awards are the International Schools Award, Sportsmark, Artsmark Silver, the Inclusion Chartermark, Investors in People, the Healthy Schools Award, an Outstanding School Award, and the status of a National Support School.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

The McAuley School is an outstanding Catholic School. There is a strong community identity, and sense of purpose, evident on both school sites. The school believes in reaching the highest standards and this is notable in the 'can do' culture, hard work, and continuing success of the school. Outstanding Catholic leadership is evident at the head of the school and through the chair and members of the Governing Body. This partnership ensures that the school's mission is central to the work of the school. The Governing Body plays to the full its role in strategic development and in determining the school's curriculum, staffing and resources. The centrality of prayer and worship, appropriate school policies and the importance of religious education are clear priorities. Local priests play an invaluable part in school governance and chaplaincy. The school has very good links with parents and shows the same mutual regard for pupils and students. The school promotes a sense of community, celebration, strong pastoral support and leadership across the school. This is a reflective school always open to new possibilities, working hard to build links with others locally, in the UK and globally, and contributing well to the common good.

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The school has worked hard to ensure that religious education is a leading and high performance subject, at the heart of the curriculum, building on the school's strong ethos and chaplaincy. Its Catholic self-evaluation is detailed, providing an accurate picture of the school and helping to steer the school's priorities so that further improvements can be achieved.

Improvements since last inspection

The school's capacity for improvement is outstanding. The school is confident and since the last inspection has continued to raise its standards, to improve and to extend its work, and to engage more specialist staff for religious education. Its approach to improvement planning and monitoring is particularly good. The school has maintained and increased the strengths identified during the previous inspection. Student progress and attainment at Key Stage 4 and at post 16 have continued to rise. In religious education, staff have given special attention to the preferred learning styles of the pupils. This includes encouraging the use of kinaesthetic styles of learning identified for development in the last inspection.

Areas for development

The McAuley Catholic High School will continue to self-review and plan its way forward. To assist that process the inspection notes the following:

1. On Catholic Self-Evaluation: - That governors contribute to this process and to the findings.
-That there is a simple feedback to the daily acts of worship.
2. On School Policy Development:
- That a school statement be written on spiritual and moral development.
3. On Religious Education:
- That the school continues to review the curriculum, transition and progression issues and standards.
- That teaching makes more use of questions and explanations to deepen knowledge and understanding in religious literacy.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Catholic school leadership at the McAuley School is Outstanding. Governors, school leaders and staff know and support well the educational mission of the school. The school has loyal and committed governors who are active in Catholic school development. With the head and senior leaders they support the place of religious education at the heart of the curriculum. The school's mission statement is central to all aspects of school life. It is continually referred to in the decisions of the school. The work of the head of the school with the senior staff is outstanding and they

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present as very good role models. They give full support to school retreats and to pilgrimages. Morale and achievement in the school are high and staff work in many ways and in teams to promote the Catholic ethos and values. The school is proud that, at all levels of management, clear parameters are set and a discursive style of leadership encouraged. Leaders know the school well, lead prayer and maintain and encourage development in the school's ethos. The school works closely with the Diocese in evaluating its provision. The chaplaincy is well promoted and supported by the staff and by the sixth form. There are very good links with the local priests and parishes. The school is strongly committed to its prayer life and to religious celebrations. Its sense of community is deepened through the many activities which enrich the school.

SCHOOL'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROMOTION OF COMMUNITY COHESION

As a Catholic school, The McAuley is proud of its outstanding contribution to community cohesion, particularly though its integration of pupils from many different backgrounds and ethnic, religious and cultural groups. The school is confident that staff and pupils work hard together to include everyone and to support cohesion. The pupil voice is heard and responded to, notably through the school council, where students see themselves as working together for the good of the school. The school's own review cites many successful ways in which staff and students work together to lead and to build community and belonging. Links with parents, priests and parishes and with primary and secondary schools are notably good. The school points to its willing involvement in the local community, civic matters, theatre, fair-trade, charities, and support for other schools. It promotes active responsibility, personal leadership and concern for the common good. There is involvement in environmental projects, peace initiatives and justice in the UK. The school's international involvement has been recognised in an award. There are collaborative links with other European countries, for example Spain and Italy, to combat bullying. Links that promote social justice are keenly shown through the school's work with CAFOD, Amnesty and Fair Trade.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Provision for prayer and worship is outstanding. Senior staff, learning managers and classes lead the school's set rota for acts of worship and class prayer. There is good practice where students, including the sixth form, lead and take part in acts of worship with their own peer group and with younger pupils. The school also is very proud of its 'Worship Band' which makes a key contribution to liturgical celebrations. Staff are encouraged to lead prayers and are supported with ideas, resources and a school prayer book. Larger school assemblies are well planned and these are respectful occasions. Pupils know how to enter and leave quietly and they respond well and join in the prayers appropriately. Themes for the acts of worship are changed regularly in line with the season and need, and the school values this in broadening the spiritual and moral development of the students. The school evaluates a great deal and this steers the way forward. It would help to consider next a relevant focal point, an alternative to staff standing at the sides of the hall and ways to improve readings from the scriptures.

The school arranges several other prayer times, for example on special occasions or during the seasons of Advent and Lent. Staff know the value and importance of well prepared liturgies in the school, notably on the special occasions when Mass is celebrated, such as when students arrive or leave the school. There are opportunities too for the school to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. There is a good range of retreats which appeal to the pupils. The school benefits also from a newly appointed Chaplaincy Co-ordinator and the direct support of many of the Deanery's priests. The two school chapels are freshly maintained and these are giving very good opportunities for class and individual visits. While the Mass is celebrated as a 'voluntary Mass' at

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different times through the year the school should review and increase access to the Eucharist or so that the Eucharist can be recognised clearly at the heart of the life and community of the school.

HOW WELL LEARNERS ACHIEVE.

Standards in religious education continue to rise to a higher level, encouraged by the school's high expectations. The students are set individual targets with regular assessment and there is increasing use made of pupil data in tracking performance. At Key Stage 3, pupils learn and broaden their knowledge, understanding and skills from the lessons taught. The department is aware that more can be done to raise standards at Key Stage 3. More attention is needed to progression, to the coverage of learning and to deepening knowledge and understanding at Key Stage 3. The NBRIA levels of attainment underpin this work. .

At Key Stage 4, the school is to be praised for entering its full cohort for GCSE and for raising its standard at GCSE by 5%. At GCSE, results are rising steadily and are predicted to reach well above the national average for A* - C. In 2008, 65% of the pupils entered gained A*-C which is above the national average, and just less than 100% of pupils gained A*- G. At post 16, the take up of students has increased greatly at AS and A2 with very good achievement. Also, the students have done exceptionally well in completing the new general programme known as the NOCN course. Pupils show increasing awareness of spiritual and moral matters and show high regard for one another and for the staff. The standard of behaviour and general courtesy in class and around the school is excellent.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

The lessons observed during the inspection confirm the school's own judgment that teaching is mainly good or outstanding. At Key Stage 3, teachers follow the school's programme well, paying proper attention to different learning styles and to the focus of the lesson. Strong features common to all lessons are the mutual regard between teachers and pupils which helps their interest and enjoyment, clearly focused lessons with sequenced tasks and good attention given to different learning styles. Teachers show sufficient subject knowledge but do not always extend learning enough or give additional insight. More use can be made of the interactive whiteboard, for example, to access sites on 'pilgrimage'. Teachers use questions and thinking skills to good effect but not enough to challenge or to build sufficient class dialogue.

Lessons that prepare pupils for GCSE begin in Year 9 and are accurate and tightly focused. Pupils respond well. At Key Stage 4 and at post 16, teachers confidently prepare pupils for their external examinations. Where teaching is outstanding, the input is interesting, suitable for the pupils but also demanding of them. Teachers also expect the pupils to absorb and connect their new learning and they check that everyone understands and can use new concepts and new language. Written work is marked mainly with encouraging comment but in some books more can be done to help the pupils know how to improve. Occasionally, praise is over-used .

THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The religious education curriculum at key stages 3 and 4 and at post 16 has been given careful attention and it follows national guidance including the programme for General Religious Education in the sixth form. The department has made improvements to the Key Stage 3 programme but this must be kept under review with the removal of the Year 9 programme for GCSE studies. The department makes a very good contribution to learning about world faiths, to pupils' spiritual and

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moral development and to cross-curricular themes and aspects. The school meets the curriculum time requirement for religious education.

LEADERSHIP OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The department is led very well with experience, outstanding commitment and leadership. The department does not lose sight of its goals: to improve continually, to work with a common understanding and to reach the highest standards of achievement and religious literacy. The department is well supported by the governors and by the leadership team. There is now a confident team of specialist teachers taking the work of the department forward. The department's contribution to the wider school and to the community is generous and significant. The head of department ensures that it actively supports the Catholic life of the school and this makes a significant contribution to school retreats, pilgrimages, celebrations and to school liturgy. National initiatives, particularly in the area of the 13-14 curriculum development should be kept under review.

Summary of Inspection Findings

The overall effectiveness of the school as a Catholic School is Outstanding
Leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are outstanding.
The provision for Collective Worship is outstanding .
The school’s contribution towards Community Cohesion is outstanding.
Achievements and standards in religious education are outstanding.
Teaching and Learning in religious education is mainly good, with some outstanding teaching.
The religious education curriculum, in meeting learners’ needs and interests, is good with outstanding features.
Leadership and management of religious education are outstanding.

Key for inspection grades: - Grade 1: Outstanding; Grade 2: Good; Grade 3: Satisfactory; Grade 4: Inadequate. (Grade 0: means point not included in this Inspection)

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

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> 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>the capacity to make further improvements</i> 	1

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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 head teacher 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> 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the impact of the involvement of the chaplaincy team on the work of the school</i> 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>how effectively the Catholic life of the school is monitored and evaluated</i> 	1
<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?	1
<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> 	1
<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

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> 	1
<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
How effective are teaching and learning in religious education?	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>how well teaching is used to meet learners' needs and curriculum requirements</i> 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the suitability and rigour of assessment in planning, monitoring and informing learners' progress</i> 	1
<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> 	0
<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> 	1
<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
