



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Canonical Inspection Report

RYE ST ANTONY SCHOOL

Pullen's Lane, Oxford, OX3 0BY

Inspection dates:

26th & 27th February 2020

Lead Inspector:

Julie-Anne Tallon

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:

Requires Improvement

Catholic Life:

Requires Improvement

Religious Education:

Requires Improvement

Collective Worship:

Requires Improvement

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

This Catholic school requires improvement to be Good because:

- Whilst leaders, including governors, acknowledge the need to review the school's mission, values and Catholic identity, work towards these developments has not yet been completed.
- Strong leaders within the school have identified the need to develop the staff's understanding of Catholic Life and the need to present activities that promote the vision of the school through a Catholic lens.
- Leaders recognise the need for standards, quality of work and pace of lessons in Religious Education to be comparable with other subjects.
- All leaders of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship need to engage in diocesan training to ensure they fully understand their roles and responsibilities, and the standards required in each of these areas.

It is not yet Good because:

- Staff's understanding of Catholic Life is not yet fully developed. Consequently, the provision of Catholic Life is not sufficiently focussed.
- Formal monitoring and evaluation of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship is not in place across the whole school. This must be implemented to ensure the leadership of Religious Education is consistently strong across all phases.
- Opportunities for pupils to plan and deliver high quality prayer are not in place.
- The bishops' expectation that all pupils complete a full course of GCSE Religious Education at the end of Year 11 is not being met.
- Religious Education is not being taught for 10% of the curriculum across the whole school.

FULL REPORT**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Through a review of the school's mission and values, develop staff understanding of Catholic Life to ensure that all activities are delivered through a Catholic lens.
- Establish a system of formal monitoring and evaluation for Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship that informs improvement plans.
- Ensure that staff are sufficiently skilled to enable pupils to plan and deliver high quality acts of worship.
- Ensure that all senior pupils complete a full course in GCSE Religious Education at the end of Year 11.
- Ensure that 10% of the taught curriculum is available for Religious Studies.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The quality of the Catholic Life of the school	Requires Improvement
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	Good
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school	Requires Improvement
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school	Requires Improvement

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school

- Pupils do not yet securely understand the Catholic mission of the school.
- Pupils show a deep respect for themselves and others. They feel their lives have been enriched through attending a Catholic school and from having friends from a variety of faiths and religions, including those of no faith. One pupil shared: "At Rye, we respect and welcome all."
- Pupils are not currently involved in evaluation of Catholic Life.
- Pupils appreciate the opportunities for thought provoking debates on topical issues and were keen to share that it is ok to have your own opinion and that others will respect it. Consequently, pupils feel safe at school.
- Younger pupils enthusiastically embrace being part of the school community but cannot articulate that they are part of a Catholic school community, or what challenges this brings. That said, they understand the importance of supporting others beyond the school community and enjoy working in their houses to raise money for charities that they have democratically selected themselves.
- Pupils feel passionately that their voice is listened to by school leaders, although could only give the example of voting for house captains when asked by inspectors of their role in school leadership.
- Senior pupils also appreciate the feeling of community and pastoral care as real strengths of the school. The school's culture of instilling a sense to serve others, be kind and put the needs of others before your own is deeply embedded.

- A system of 'house mothers', with older pupils supporting younger pupils in the senior school, is valued and held in high regard. Pupils are proud that they are taking part in a strong tradition of school by continuing this type of peer-to-peer pastoral support.
- Pupils' response to the chaplaincy that is provided is good and they have a strong desire to actively take part in the school's Catholic Life. For example, younger pupils value the Lenten 'day by day' diaries that were given to them and are excited to share their personal Lenten spiritual journeys. Staff reinforce how kind actions throughout Lent can positively impact our lives.
- The level of pastoral care provided by the school is high. Whilst pupils feel their relationship with teachers is quite informal, like 'being in family', they have a clear understanding that they have a responsibility to meet the school's high standards and relish the challenge in doing so.
- Pupils value the school chapel as a place of reflection and reverence.
- Pupils benefit from frequent opportunities to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. They understand the importance of receiving God's forgiveness and demonstrate some understanding of His grace.
- Relationships and sex education (RSE) is relevant to pupils' lives and, whilst firmly rooted in Catholic teaching, the inclusion of other perspectives for debate is appreciated by pupils of all ages.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school

- Work has begun on reviewing the school's mission statement, values and Catholic identity. Leaders should ensure that all staff are included in this aspect of the school's work.
- Opportunities for prayer are timetabled into the school day for all key stages, and in the evening for boarders.
- Observations and discussions show there is very clear respect between adults and pupils. All stakeholders are very proud to be a part of Rye St Antony School.
- The school is focusing on enhancing pupils' spiritual development. Consequently, from this year, the school is re-introducing residential retreat opportunities. The response to these invitations from pupils has been exceptionally encouraging, demonstrating the school's ability to identify pupils' needs.
- The school offers a very limited provision of chaplaincy. There is a need for the school's provision in this area to continue to improve.
- The school's physical environment contains signs of the school's Catholic character; however, they are not prominent and have little impact on the daily life of the school.
- Most classrooms have prayer focus areas, however, there is inconsistency across these. Pupils do not reference these spaces as important features of the school. Monitoring of these areas is poor with no clear actions for improvement in place. As a result, not all pupils benefit from them.
- The curriculum reflects a commitment to social, moral teaching and care for our common home. However, because this is not delivered through a Catholic lens, many staff and pupils do not understand the importance of these commitments to Christians.
- Links with the Blackfriars are a great asset to the school. Priests from this Order appreciate the quality of communications from the school and its efforts to reflect on some aspects of its practice.
- High standards of behaviour are evident throughout the school, including during lessons. Pupils can explain how their behaviours are influenced by Gospel values,

although pupils are only able to articulate this within the context of a Religious Education lesson.

- RSE is taught within the context of the Catholic Church and uses appropriate resources. The school is compliant with the demands of the bishops in this area.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school

- The acting headteacher and trustees are very aware of the particular purpose of Rye St Antony as a Catholic School. They fully embrace the original vision of the school's founders, including the importance of celebrating each pupil being the person God has called them to be.
- Leaders and governors support the mission of the Church but would benefit greatly from further diocesan training and guidance to ensure their work is more focussed.
- Whilst there are plans for Catholic Life activities in place, there is little accuracy, rigour or consistency in the monitoring & evaluation of this area. Consequently, the school's ability for self-evaluation and future planning is limited.
- Some work has begun with staff on understanding the importance of working in a Catholic school and developing staff understanding of the school's mission. There are examples of some staff who have an excellent understanding of Catholic Life; however, further work is required to ensure that this is secure, focussed and embedded with all staff.
- Leaders successfully engage with parents to the benefit of pupils; they support the school's efforts in Catholic Life.
- Governors are aware that improvement planning has tended to be reactive and therefore resulted in a very limited impact on the Catholic Life of the school. Their understanding of the importance of prioritising Catholic Life within the development planning process is developing.
- Governors are taking steps to improve the rigour of their evaluation. For example, they have recently completed the self-evaluation document provided by the Catholic Education Service. The findings from this review are mostly accurate but must now formally feed into targeted improvement planning.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of Religious Education	Requires Improvement
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	Good
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	Requires Improvement
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	Requires Improvement

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

- Pupils enjoy their Religious Education lessons and speak positively about the variety of approaches to learning in the subject. Pupils particularly value the opportunities provided to them to use ICT and drama.

- Pupils enjoy discussions around how the topics being studied are relevant to their lives today. They are competent in making connections between their own lives and what they are learning in class.
- Drama and use of traditional religious artwork are embedded as tools for developing pupils' knowledge and challenging understanding in Religious Education. As a result, pupils' knowledge of New Testament stories is consistently strong.
- Pupils are religiously literate. They demonstrate a good command of technical vocabulary, which they consistently use with accuracy.
- The quality of pupils' written work in Religious Education is mostly good, but it is not always consistent with the standard of work produced in other core subjects.
- The inspectors observed some examples of well-paced lessons that stretched pupils' thinking and challenged them. However, this is not consistent across school. Where challenge is appropriate, pupils are further motivated to succeed in their work. As one pupil explained, "some of the concepts we study are mind blowing and we can't understand it, but this just encourages our curiosity."
- Pupils understand that they are part of God's family and the responsible behaviours necessitated this. Consequently, pupils can establish secure links between life in modern Britain and the parables of Jesus Christ.
- Pupils are encouraged to challenge themselves in Religious Education through the 'must, could, should' approach. A culture of "pushing yourself outside your comfort zone" in order to achieve your very best is embedded across the school.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education

- Teachers are enthusiastic in their delivery of Religious Education. As a result, pupils respond with enthusiasm and are keen to complete the tasks they are set.
- Whilst assessment of Religious Education is in place, this does not yet use the national age-related standards. As a result, analysis of pupils' assessment is not currently in place and teachers' planning is not always matched well to pupils' needs.
- There is some limited, and inconsistent, use of pupil self-assessment in Religious Education. Because this practice is not embedded securely across the school, many pupils are uninvolved in assessing their own progress.
- Teachers often demonstrate good subject knowledge. Some teachers would benefit from support in dealing with challenging questions from pupils.
- A range of teaching strategies is used, including individual and collaborative learning. This approach to learning is clearly embedded, as pupils are confident to share and challenge each other's ideas.
- Teachers' proficiency of time management during lessons is inconsistent. Some classes enter the room to an immediate challenge task on the board with resources ready, whilst other classes do not begin lessons punctually. As a result, some pupils demonstrate poor motivation and a lack of concentration in Religious Education lessons.
- Tasks set by teachers are not always challenging or matched to pupils' needs. Consequently, not all pupils are enabled to make appropriate progress.
- In some classes, the importance of Religious Education is emphasised through inclusion of a relevant prayer within the lesson. However, the importance of Religious Education for spiritual development is not recognised by all teachers.
- The feedback provided by many teachers requires improvement. Because teachers do not consistently inform pupils how to master the skills needed for success in the subject, the progress made by some pupils is constrained.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

- Religious Education does not meet the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England & Wales. This is because not all senior pupils complete a full course GCSE at the end of Year 11. School leaders are aware of this and have undertaken work to address this from September 2020.
- 10% of curriculum time is not being allocated to Religious Education across the whole school.
- Analysis of data is not in place to identify the progress of key groups of pupils across all key stages. As work in the preparatory and pre-preparatory school is not assessed in line with diocesan guidelines, the inspectors are unable to comment on pupil attainment against national age-related standards.
- Formal monitoring and evaluation is not in place. As a result, Religious Education is not comparable to other core subjects, in terms of priority or improvement planning. Leaders' efforts in this area require improvement.
- Because the absence of consistent, appropriate challenge afforded to pupils in Religious Education has not been actioned by all leaders, standards are inconsistent across different phases of the school.
- Lack of full engagement with diocesan training in the local area has resulted in the school not being up to date with guidance and support provided.
- Governors value the importance of Religious Education and have invested in leadership payment and release time in this area. Failure to monitor the impact of this has resulted in school assuming a higher level of success than is in fact currently attained.
- Governors have secured an exceptionally strong leader for Religious Education, who has a secure vision for the development of the subject across the entire school. The school must now ensure that the leadership of Religious Education is consistently strong across all phases of the school.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The quality of Collective Worship	Requires Improvement
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	Good
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the School	Requires Improvement
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	Requires Improvement

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship

- Pupils are reverent and respectful, whenever opportunities for prayer are provided.
- Pupils have very limited experience of independently planning and preparing Collective Worship, therefore their ability to lead prayer is underdeveloped.
- Pupils are confident in delivering teacher-led worship and have some experience of supporting the preparation of this. During the inspection, a Year 5 pupil was very proud of his work in developing the PowerPoint for assembly.

- All pupils can recite the Rye St Antony 'birthday prayer' and speak fondly of how this is shared in assemblies. Beyond this, knowledge of traditional prayer is very limited.
- Pupils utilise a variety of approaches to prayer, including writing intercessions, silent meditation and more creative opportunities provided during form time. During the inspection, a senior form group wrote their own Lenten pledges before taking part in a guided reflection that had been written by one of the pupils.
- The recently formed rosary club runs weekly and is attended by pupils of all faiths, numbers are growing week on week, but it is too early to tell of the impact this initiative is having.
- Pupils of all ages have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year and the colours attached to it.
- Many pupils refer to acts of worship when discussing its impact on their behaviours and lives. These pupils cherish the opportunities provided to them for spiritual and moral development.
- Pupils have a deeply instilled sense of respect for people of other faiths, religions and backgrounds, which they give the highest priority towards.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

- Opportunities for prayer are provided as part of daily school life. Additional opportunities for night prayer for boarders are being developed but would benefit from greater variety and a more clearly defined structure.
- Boarders prepare the resources for Sunday Mass and lead the readings in this celebration. All boarders willingly and enthusiastically attend weekly Sunday Mass in the school's chapel.
- Because prayer is not given the highest priority in terms of planning, acts of Collective Worship are often routine and lack in variety. Although pupils speak well of Collective Worship, many struggle to articulate how prayer inspires them or to recall a prayer time that was especially spiritual.
- Planning of Collective Worship is in place but doesn't routinely link to the Gospel message for the week. Consequently, pupils are not always confident in articulating the link between the liturgical year and the Church's lectionary.
- Opportunities for pupils to plan & lead Collective worship are not in place. Staff would benefit from support in understanding the difference between planning and leading acts of prayer.
- The variety of prayer is limited, particularly during school assemblies. Pupils would benefit from being exposed to a greater range of creative prayer styles, as opposed to always reading out a traditional or teacher-written prayer.
- When organising prayer, the school facilitates attendance by adults wherever possible.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship

- There are currently no systems in place to monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts. A timetable of Collective Worship for the whole school is in place to reflect this.
- Some senior leaders show a good understanding of how to plan and deliver Collective Worship, although this is inconsistent. During the inspection, senior pupils

attended an assembly which provided a solid, but secular, approach to forgiveness. The pupils' hearts and minds were only enabled to meet God through a hymn and a prayer that was read to them. Subsequently, the spiritual development of pupils is not always a priority when worshipping together as a community.

- Displays in school demonstrate that leaders are beginning to meet the additional requirements of the diocesan bishop, through the 'God who speaks' initiative.
- Because prayer is limited in variety, acts of Collective Worship are not always accessible to pupils in a contemporary context.
- Opportunities for staff development are very limited. Leaders must identify the needs of teachers, in relation to the development of Collective Worship, and ensure that appropriate training is provided for staff, to enable progression in this area. This includes the liturgical formation of staff.
- Although governors attend Masses, they rarely review Collective Worship as part of their formal self-evaluation process.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Unique reference number	123295
Local authority	Oxfordshire
<i>This inspection was carried out under Canon 806 of Canon Law</i>	
Type of school	Through
School category	Independent
Age range	3-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	302
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Shuna McGregor
Headteacher (Acting)	Miss Joanne Croft
Telephone number	01865 762 802
Website address	ryestantony.co.uk
Email address	head@ryestantony.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	March 2011

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL

- Rye St Antony School is a Catholic independent boarding and day school in Oxford for 300; girls aged 3-18 and boys aged 3-11. The school is a lay foundation, established in 1930, the school reflects the character of its international university location, pupils coming from the City of Oxford, Oxfordshire and its surrounding counties, elsewhere in the United Kingdom (UK) and, more widely, from all over the world.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 23%.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is above the national average.
- The school does not store data on the percentage of pupils from ethnic minorities.
- The percentage of pupils with EAL is below the national average.
- Attainment on entry is average.

- There have been significant changes since the last inspection: there has been a new headteacher and, at time of inspection, a very recently appointed acting headteacher. There is a recently appointed head of Catholic Life across the whole school. There is a new Religious Education subject leader and head of preparatory school and a new Religious Education subject leader in senior school. The senior school has acted on Diocesan advice and now has a 'standalone' Religious Studies department.

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors: Julie-Anne Tallon and Ben McArdle.
- The focus of the inspection was on the impact, quality and leadership of the school's provision of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship.
- The inspectors observed teaching across 12 Religious Education lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All these lesson observations were conducted jointly with senior or middle leaders.
- The inspectors completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils across all key stages to evaluate their understanding of Catholic Life, the impact of Religious Education teaching on their learning over time and their experience of Collective Worship.
- Meetings were held with the chair of governors, the Catholic Life and Religious Education link governor, the acting headteacher, all Religious Education subject leaders, the person in charge of the Catholic Life of the school, the visiting priest, the head of pre-preparatory school, the head of preparatory school, the head of boarding school, and with several class teachers.
- The inspectors attended a whole school Mass, class and year group led acts of Collective Worship, a senior assembly and undertook a learning walk to look at aspects of learning and teaching in Religious Education, the presentation of the Catholic Life of the school and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, the Religious Education action plan, teachers' planning and a photographic evidence journal, the Religious Education evidence file, and videos of drama being used in Religious Education lessons.