



DIOCESE OF
SHREWSBURY

**REPORT ON THE
MONITORING INSPECTION
OF OUTSTANDING SCHOOLS**

**Upton Hall School FCJ
Upton, Wirral**

URN: 105115

14th March 2018

Inspector – Mr J McCann

The areas of focus in this monitoring inspection were :-

1. **OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS** - How well pupils achieve and enjoy learning in Religious Education.
2. **LEADERS AND MANAGERS** – How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvement of outcomes for pupils.
3. **PROVISION** – The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.

The school's most recent Self Evaluation judges that its **Overall Effectiveness** is **Outstanding** and supports these judgements with comprehensive evidence. This overall judgement is **confirmed** through Section 48 Monitoring Inspection and the following comments summarise findings in the aspects of the key areas identified above.

OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS

Standards of achievement in Religious Education have very high outcomes for most girls at the end of each Key Stage 3, with approximately 50%+ of the cohort achieving Level 7+. There has been effective analysis and monitoring of academic performance with positive intervention strategies carried out in each key stage. This tradition continues with the recently appointed Leader of Department and his newly appointed members of the department.

The standards pupils achieve at GCSE RE are consistently well above national average and girls' performance at the highest levels is broadly in line with the outstanding standards achieved in other core subjects. The evidence provided indicates a sustained level of pupil progress and achievement in each key stage. GCSE results in RE over the last 3 academic years show 87%-91% of the whole year cohort achieving an A*-C grade, with more than 42%-54% achieving an A*-A grade. The department enters all pupils for examination each year with a 100% pass rate. At A level all pupils achieve an A* -E grade with an average of 85% of entries over the last 3 years gaining an *A-C grade.

From learning walks, book scrutiny, responses to pupil questionnaires and interviews it is evident that the pupils in each key stage are keen and encouraged to do well, they display a very positive attitude to the subject and work with interest and engagement in lessons. Pupils speak very positively about the subject and the staff who teach them stating that they have particularly enjoyed; Our Faith Story throughout Y7 and Y8 and issues surrounding discrimination and matters of life and death in Y9: the nature and range of contemporary moral issues studied in key stage 4 and continued in Philosophy and General RE in VI Form.

Pupils appreciate the atmosphere created in class, the willingness of staff to support and want the best for them. The pupils gain a good understanding of the beliefs and traditions of Catholicism while also engaging with the broader spiritual, moral, cultural and social issues of contemporary society. This is all underpinned by the many opportunities that exist beyond the classroom for pupils to be engaged with many local national and international charities. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in day retreats throughout their school career. The school's FCJ charism articulated in the Vision and Values booklet, motto and Mission Statement are introduced to all staff and students at the beginning of their school career, revisited each year and are a recurrent theme in each classroom, public space and documents and throughout the school.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

The Headteacher, senior leadership team and governing body are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education focused on making the FCJ 'Vision and Values' a reality in the daily life of the school. The commitment to these values, in which spiritual, academic and personal growth are so important, is evidenced in the school's policy documents and practices and its effective leadership, management and governance. There is unequivocal and explicit evidence that the Catholic mission of the school is a priority, along with opportunities for spiritual and moral development and Collective Worship.

Due to significant financial constraints the appointment of a dedicated chaplain to serve the school has been delayed. There is however a clear and consistent appreciation at all levels of the impact this role could have on serving the pupils and staff of the school.

There is effective monitoring of academic performance and appropriate intervention strategies undertaken by the Head of the RE department. The RE department staff are engaged in supporting the retreat programme, providing support to the SLT chaplaincy coordinator. The department is line managed by the Headteacher and is also offered support and challenge by two experienced link governors.

The Catholic life of the school is monitored and reviewed by the SLT, each of which has oversight of a year group(s) as well as the Heads of Year. Parental, pupil and staff opinion is sought through questionnaires, and the Student Council; results are published and analysed and impact upon the processes of evaluation and planning. Parental support for the school's values and attitudes, as well as academic RE is very strong. 100% of the 289 parental replies stated that their child enjoyed school and that parents were made to feel welcome. All staff interviewed on the day of inspection spoke of their pride in being a member of the Upton Hall community and could relate their professional practice to the school's values and vision and describe how this was put into practice in their encounters with pupils and staff alike.

Classroom observations are regular, and well documented. Prayer and reflection are an integral part of school life. Form and whole year assembly provision are subject to regular informal monitoring by the appropriate senior managers and/or pastoral leader; this area could be further developed. There is general pride in what the school represents and the pupils are extremely positive in support of this.

PROVISION

Collective Worship is central to the daily life of the school and forms a key part of every school celebration. Praise, celebration and affirmation are a significant feature in the life of the school, as evidenced through interviews, pupils' books, many questionnaire responses and the school calendar of liturgical and pastoral events. The school has a member of the RE department who has dedicated time as a chaplaincy coordinator to deliver appropriate material and resources to facilitate the development of Collective Worship across each year group and provide support for staff and pupils. The chaplaincy coordinator provides prayer and reflection materials every day for all form tutors to use. This element of school provision is very effective, valued, well developed and firmly integrated into the life and practice of pupils and staff. Members of the senior leadership team also work closely with pastoral leaders in leading year group Acts of Collective Worship. Collective Worship and prayer are an integral part of the daily life of the school, as are planned opportunities to receive the sacrament of the Eucharist with a sympathetic appreciation of the opportunities given to those of different denominations and faiths.

The school is actively and positively engaged with two of the priests in the parishes it serves and welcomes their contribution to the Catholic life of the school. The commitment of the staff, governors and senior leaders is also evidenced in the many opportunities throughout their school career that pupils have to go on retreats. These activities are linked to practical experiences and challenges that enrich the students' spiritual, moral and cultural education, through charitable fund raising and direct action e.g. Caritas, Change a Child's Life,, The Friday Club, Mini Dash - working with other diocesan Catholic schools, raising funds and volunteering for the annual Diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Upton Hall School FCJ lives its Mission and Values statement. Outcomes for pupils are consistently very high, the provision for Catholic Education, leadership and management in the development of the Catholic life of the school are confirmed by this inspection as outstanding. The mission of the school is clearly evidenced throughout in terms of practice, aspiration and relationships, all in the context of striving for the highest academic achievement. Much of this comes from the key leaders in the school embracing the Catholic ethos and making it evident to all.

IMPROVEMENT SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

- A programme of Sixth Form general RE to fulfil the Bishops' Conference requirements is in place.
- Owing to significant financial restraints the governors were unable to appoint a full time dedicated school chaplain. However the school has a total commitment at all levels to support this appointment in the near future.

In order to maintain and enhance the progress of the school even further it is recommended that the school:

- appoint a school chaplain or dedicated chaplaincy coordinator as soon as possible. In the interim create a clear structure to support the senior leader to lead chaplaincy;
- develop a more formal approach to monitoring Collective Worship throughout the school;
- increase the opportunities to further develop staff spirituality;
- RE department continue to develop the new courses in KS4 and KS5 and build on the strengths in the newly formed team.