



DIOCESE OF PLYMOUTH

INSPECTION REPORT

St Boniface's Roman Catholic College

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DfE number: 4002

Headteacher: Mrs K White

Chair of Governors: Mr M Parle

This report to the Bishop of the Diocese under Canon 806 of the Code of Canon Law is also the report to the governors of the College on religious education. For Catholic maintained Colleges, the report also fulfils the requirements of Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

Date of inspection: 9th/10th March 2023

Date of previous 9th/10th May 2017

Reporting Inspector: Mrs A Fowler

Additional Inspector: Mrs C Collett

Description of the College

St Boniface is a smaller than average Catholic secondary academy for boys aged 11-16. It welcomes pupils of all denominations and faith backgrounds. Since the last inspection there have been a number of staff changes and since September 2020 the College has been led by an Executive Headteacher. The College is part of the Plymouth CAST Academy Trust. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is average overall though this differs slightly between year groups. The proportion of SEND pupils is above average. Approximately 22% of the intake identify as Roman Catholic with another 24% identifying as Christian.

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic College (summary statement)

Grade 3

This College requires improvement because:

- The progress of students in Religious Education requires improvement
- The ability of students to lead prayer and worship needs to be developed.

The capacity of the College community to improve and develop is good

- The leadership and the governors are committed to improving the Catholic Life of the College. They are aware of the further improvements that need to be made
- Students value the school and feel it is an inclusive community
- The College is supported by the parish priest and is committed to working closely with the diocese
- The head of Religious Education is committed to working in partnership with other schools to improve progress in religious education. Staff within the department are enthusiastic and seek to support students.
- The Chaplain provides support for those students who are members of the Chaplaincy team and has created a welcoming reflective space within the chapel. They also provide support materials for staff to use to enhance prayer.
- The mission statement and virtues education are well embedded and understood by students.
- Catholic Life has been the focus of continued improvement by leaders and governors. The ethos of the school is now visible throughout the building and students feel the school supports them through its pastoral programmes.

What the College should do to improve further

- Continue to raise overall student progress in Religious Education through:
 - Ensuring teachers develop the skill set of students to enable them to be self-evaluating and able to understand the progress they are making
 - Continue to develop strategies which engage students in their learning
 - Ensure that the delivery of Key Stage 3 Religious Education is fully in line with the Curriculum Directory
 - Continue to develop and support the subject knowledge of religious education teachers.
- Governors need a more rigorous approach to the monitoring and evaluation of the Catholic Life of the College
- Further develop the leadership of all students in leading prayer and worship

a) The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the College

- Students value the opportunities to take responsibility within the College community. The members of the Junior Leadership Team represent the College on public occasions and help organise various events which help students evaluate the Catholic Life of the College. They meet to discuss issues that are raised via the student support station (this is a box outside the Chapel where students can raise concerns or suggest ideas) and plan strategies to respond to these ideas. Other areas where pupils take responsibility include Anti-bullying Ambassadors in Years 9-11 and Charity Ambassadors in Years 7 and 8 who help promote and organise charity events
- Students believe the College to be an inclusive community and value the opportunity to learn about other cultures and faiths through the Religious Education Programme.
- They speak knowledgeably about the College's provision for pastoral care and value this support. Although students acknowledge there is still some poor behaviour, they speak positively of the steps the College has taken to address this and feel safe within the College. The emphasis on living virtuously has helped pupils reflect on their behaviour. Through the Kairos and Ubuntu programmes in Years 7 and 8 students are given further opportunities to be reflective and to make connections between faith and life.
- The Chaplaincy (or G.I.F.T) team is valued by those who are part of it but the impact of this team is not obvious within the College community
- Students are aware of the challenges faced by others and through their charity work are able to both actively support those in need and develop their understanding. The focus in Lent is on CAFOD and other organisations supported include Mary's Meals and The Church in Need.
- Students believe the sex and relationship programme helps them develop an understanding of, and an ability to form good relationships.

b) The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the College

- The College has recently introduced Catholic Virtues into its rewards and behaviour system. These virtues are prominently displayed around the College and well understood by students. Their link to the rewards system has encouraged students to think about how they can display these virtues in their daily lives. All staff have received training on how to implement these virtues and this forms part of the induction programme for staff. Catholic Social Teaching (CST) is linked to the virtues though students cannot as yet fully articulate the connection.
- Displays throughout the College reinforce and make explicit the Catholic identity of the College. The Chapel is a welcoming space, with displays made by students which reflect

either the liturgical year or the current focus of the College's charity work. This reinforces the link between faith and life.

- The College is an inclusive community and celebrates its diversity, through for example, its pastoral programmes and its Dimension days. The Religious Education curriculum, and the College's charity work enables students to become more aware of their own needs and those of others, promoting the importance of respect and dialogue.
- The Relationship and Sex Education programme is based on the principles of the Catholic Church and integrated into the Personal Social and Health Curriculum. The college consulted with parents, provides training for staff and reviews the programme to ensure topical subjects are covered to enable the students to reflect critically on current issues
- The Chaplaincy team meet regularly and those who are part of this team are able to reflect on and contribute to, the Catholic character of the college, however this provision is not as yet widely disseminated.

c) How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the College

- Leaders and governors see the development of the Catholic Life of the College as a priority and a core leadership responsibility.
- Governors and senior leaders monitor the Catholic Life of the College, but this is not yet rigorous enough and not linked to the development plan for Catholic Life. The impact of monitoring needs to be demonstrated more clearly.
- The College's self-evaluation includes student, parent and staff surveys which include questions on Catholic Life, Prayer and Worship and Religious Education.
- Continued Professional Development takes place regularly for staff on aspects of Catholic Life and is also part of the induction programme for new staff. Whilst this provides opportunities for staff to review reflect on and develop their contribution to the Catholic Life of the College the impact of such provision is not always clear.
- The College informs and involves parents through the termly bulletins, the school website and face book page, and the form tutor system; however, a minority of parents feel communication could be more effective.
- The College has a strong connection with the local parish. The parish Priest is a frequent visitor to the College and well known and respected by students.

a) How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

- Students are developing an understanding of the value Religious Education especially the opportunities it provides to learn about other faiths.
- The number of students making good progress is limited at present but the College is implementing intervention strategies to address this. The impact of these strategies will require time to take effect.
- Strategies to increase religious literacy are in place but are not yet effective for all students. Although students understand that there can be a variety of views on specific topics and differing views are to be treated with respect, they are not all able to articulate with any degree of confidence what the Catholic view of these topics or issues is.
- Students are heavily reliant on teachers to improve their work and are not skilled at self-assessment or understanding the progress they are making . Work doesn't challenge sufficiently high ability students and there needs to be greater scaffolding to support those needing extra help

b) The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education

- Although data on student progress is collected on a regular basis this does not always inform planning consequently students are not able to make sufficient progress. Teachers attend CPD to improve and develop their own understanding but at times this knowledge is insufficient. As a consequence, some lessons are heavily reliant on prepared materials which means the strategies for learning used are limited so lessons are less creative and engaging.
- Teachers involve students in a limited way in evaluating how well they are achieving. This inhibits good progress and makes them unsure about how to make future improvements. Feedback is limited in its effectiveness
- Where lessons are at their best pace is good, activities keep students focused and interested but this is not consistent across lessons.
- Target sheets are present in students' books in order to help them with the 'next steps'. However, these are not always completed and targets are often generic rather than skill focused, for example 'work harder'. As a consequence, they do not consistently lead to improvement in student's work.

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

- Leaders and governors see Religious Education as a priority for the College and ensure that it receives 10% of curriculum time. There are two link governors for Religious Education who are knowledgeable and actively involved and report back to the full governing body.
- Although the syllabus in Key Stage 3 is based on the Curriculum Directory for Religious Education, this is not sufficiently tracked to ensure that content is fully covered. The skills required by the Directory to ensure outcomes are fully met are not being explicitly used. The use of a GCSE format for assessment in Key Stage 3 means that some skills are being overlooked. The work becomes more formulaic and strategies and activities more limited. As a consequence there is less engagement from students, who make insufficient progress.
- Leaders and governors receive data on progress in Religious Education, but this has a limited impact and their structured evaluation of any data requires improvement.
- The subject leader is committed to bringing about improvement and monitors books, conducts lesson observations and carries out student surveys. As yet however these are not having sufficient impact on improving progress in the subject.
- The monitoring and evaluation of leaders and governors needs to be more strategic and closely linked to the development plan, so the impact of any intervention strategies can be clearly evidenced.

Collective Worship

Grade 3

a) How well pupils respond to and participate in the College's Collective Worship

- Students regularly take part in the prayer life of the College. However, approaches to formal prayer can be limited and lack creativity. As a consequence, students are not always engaged by it.
- The Chaplaincy team have lead prayer on occasions, for example the rosary last October. However, whilst some students are involved in reading or writing prayers, the majority rarely have the opportunity to lead or plan prayer and worship.
- Students take part in voluntary prayer activities, for example on Ascension Thursday over 60 students attended Mass in their break time in St Peter's church.
- Some of the Dimension days organised by the College are specifically themed around prayer. This offers students the opportunity to reflect more deeply and be involved in the creation of displays for example by creating a St Boniface's College Romero Cross which now resides in the College Chapel.

- The liturgical year is celebrated within the College, however this has only a limited impact on developing students' understanding.

b) The quality of Collective Worship provided by the College

- Staff and students pray together. Staff meetings begin with prayer. Each year group has an assembly once a week and tutor prayer takes place during the rest of the week. The assembly programme and events for the liturgical year are planned out in advance.
- A welcome assembly at the start of each year helps remind pupils of the Catholic character of the College and the importance of prayer.
- Parents and other adults are invited to attend specific liturgies and the newsletter informs parents of liturgical events within the College. However, a minority of parents feel that they are not invited to participate.
- Training has been provided for staff on how to deliver prayer although the impact of this has not been fully assessed. More thought needs to be given to the involvement of all students, especially those who may find it difficult to access conventional methods of prayer.
- Resources are provided by the Chaplain to support tutor prayer. The use of these resources is not yet consistent and tutor prayer is not always organised well or with a view to the needs of students. Whilst students may participate in tutor prayer, they rarely lead or plan this. At present the majority of staff are not skilled enough to help students become leaders in prayer.

c) How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the prayer life of the College.

- The senior leadership team have carried student surveys which focus on aspects of worship. Based on the findings of the survey, leaders arranged a whole staff training event in the January INSET day which focused on modelling quality collective worship in tutorials and assembly. The impact of this training however is not consistently seen.
- Senior leaders also ensure access to support materials for prayer and worship, and see supporting the development of the prayer life of the College as a priority.
- Governors need to ensure that the monitoring and evaluation of prayer and collective worship informs the College's spirituality development plan, and that the impact of any actions is clearly recorded.

Summary of Parental Questionnaires

There were 44 responses to the parental questionnaire. Whilst the majority of comments were very supportive of the College, a minority of parents felt that they were not invited to be involved in the College's prayer life. Comments expressed by parents included:

"They (students) are encouraged to be thoughtful and kind. "

"St Boniface has a strong Catholic ethos which is felt when you walk in the College."