

**The Diocese of Hallam**



**SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT**

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

**SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT**

**SAINT PIUS X CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL  
WATH upon DEARNE**

<b>School URN</b>	<b>106962</b>
<b>Name of Chair of Governors</b>	<b>Mrs Audrey Hart</b>
<b>Name of Headteacher</b>	<b>Mrs Eileen Gilmartin</b>
<b>Date of inspection</b>	<b>11 February 2011</b>
<b>Section 48 Inspectors</b>	<b>Mr Tom Moore Mrs Deirdre Cleary</b>

“ ..an enthusiasm for the things of God”

## Introduction

The Inspection of St Pius X School has been carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Diocese of Hallam 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

St Pius X is a smaller than average 11-16 Catholic comprehensive school with specialist status in Humanities (Religious Education, English and History). Standards on entry to year seven are broadly average. It is oversubscribed and highly regarded in the Dearne Valley, an area of significant social and economic deprivation. It serves seven parishes and six Catholic primary schools. Three of the parishes and their primary schools form part of a Federation. The school is deeply committed to the mission of the Catholic Church in education and promotes an ethos based on Gospel values.

A very large majority of the pupils are of White British heritage. Very few of them have English as an additional language. The proportion of students who are known to be eligible for free meals is below average. However the percentage of students with special educational needs is above average. The NEET (Not in Education Employment or Training) figure for the school is low at 1.6%.

## Information about the school

<b>Type of School</b>	<b>Catholic Aided    Comprehensive    Voluntary</b>
<b>Age profile of students</b>	<b>11 - 16</b>
<b>Number on roll</b>	<b>653</b>
<b>Number of students on Special Needs and Disabilities Register</b>	<b>154</b>
<b>Number of students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Number of Catholics on roll</b>	<b>329</b>
<b>Number of Other Christian Denominations</b>	<b>258</b>
<b>Number of other Faiths</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>School Address</b>	<b>Wath Wood Road , Wath upon Dearne S63 7PQ</b>
<b>Telephone Number</b>	<b>01709 767900</b>
<b>Fax Number</b>	<b>01709 875106</b>
<b>Email</b>	<b>ppchegilmartin@rgfl.org</b>

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>How effective the school is in providing Catholic education</b>
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<b>2</b>
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St Pius X School provides good, effective Catholic education. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Religious Education lessons are effective in ensuring that the pupils are consistently engaged and interested in their work and make steady progress. The leaders and managers of St Pius are assiduous in their role of promoting the Catholic life of the school and in planning for improvements to the quality of education for their students. Both the staff and the pupils have a very high regard for the school's distinctive Catholic ethos.

Although the pupil outcomes in Religious Education at Key Stage 4 were only satisfactory last year, the inspectors feel that the capacity for sustained improvement within the school in general and in the Religious Education Department in particular, are now very good indeed. The school is very aware of its strengths and areas for development and has clear plans and support mechanisms in place to allow it to continue to move forward. The quality of the buildings is undoubtedly a major obstacle to development but the tenacity and determination of the leaders of the school will find ways of mitigating its effect. Religious Education, prayer and worship are well resourced and there are many opportunities provided for pupils to develop spiritually, morally and culturally.

There is a strong sense of community in the school which is valued by all. Pupils commented that teachers are like "second parents" to them. As a community the school is outward facing and shows care and concern for the communities to which they are linked.

<b>The school's capacity for sustained improvement</b>
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<b>2</b>
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The school's capacity for sustained improvement is good. The senior leadership team is highly motivated and consistently models high standards and expectations to both the staff and the pupils. Structures for monitoring and managing the performance of the staff are in place and are gradually being used to improve pupil performance in Religious Education and to develop the provision for the Catholic life of the school. The general school community: governors, staff, students and parents are committed and motivated to a shared ambition for Catholic education and to bringing about improvements to pupil outcomes.

The areas highlighted for attention in the last S48 report have in the main been addressed. There is a comprehensive and detailed strategic plan in place to develop prayer and worship in school and the role of the Chaplaincy Co-ordinator. This has already moved the school forward in this area and is likely to continue to do so. An important part of this has been strengthened relationships with local priests. Since the last inspection a new Assistant Headteacher position with responsibility for "Ethos" has been created. This is an indication that the school is ambitious for this

vital element of school life and has identified it as a high priority. There has been an increased focus on teaching and learning in Religious Education and appropriate support is in place for staff to continue to develop.

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

- Incorporate the strategic plans already in place for the development of the Catholic life of the school into one of the aims of the school development plan and continue to review and monitor progress in this area
- Review the curriculum to consider the extent it delivers the expected outcomes of the Curriculum Directory and to ensure that all students access distinctive Religious Education
- Ensure that information on the progress of students in Religious Education is used to maximum effect by all teachers and that appropriate interventions for individuals and groups of students are in place so that students reach their potential.
- Continue to use strategies already in place to ensure that all Religious Education teaching is good/outstanding and that there is appropriate challenge for all pupils in all lessons
- Continue to support and develop leadership in Religious Education and Chaplaincy

**PUPILS**

<b>How good outcomes are for pupils taking particular account of variations between different groups</b>	<b>3</b>
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The outcomes for pupils taking into particular account the variations between different groups, are satisfactory. The standards of attainment of the pupils in Religious Education at the end of Key Stage 4 are below the national average for the subject. This is reflected in both the A\*- C and A\*-A indicators, but follows a steady upward trend in the previous three years.

In 2010 there was under achievement by some groups of students. A more aspirational approach to pupil attainment needs to be fostered within the Department. However the quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education, as observed by the inspectors on the day was in the main good and some outstanding teaching was seen. The children enjoy Religious Education and are keen to do well. They participate actively in lessons and their behaviour is of a high standard. They are enthusiastic about their learning.

The pupils contribute well to the Catholic life of the school and they benefit hugely from attending St Pius. They are quick to point out their appreciation of the school and are well able to enunciate the differences between St Pius and other community schools in the area. Children at this Catholic school take on positions of responsibility and leadership in support of its distinctive ethos. They are secure in their beliefs and are ready to express their own views. The pupils speak confidently about CAFOD and SVP and are able to respond positively to the needs of others

both within and beyond the school. They participate well in chaplaincy provision and engage thoroughly in retreats, liturgies and with moral and ethical issues. There is a lively interest and active participation in Acts of Collective Worship; they are at ease when praying as a school community. Pupils are familiar with traditional Catholic prayers and are well able to compose prayers of their own.

**PROVISION:**

<b>How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education</b>	<b>2</b>
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The effectiveness of the provision in promoting Catholic education is good. The quality of the teaching as observed on the day was at least satisfactory; most lessons were good and some were outstanding. In the lessons observed it was evident that there are very good relationships between staff and pupils, this in turn engages most pupils in their learning. Lessons are purposeful with clear objectives and outcomes based on the schemes of work. Lessons are clearly linked to assessment at both Key Stages and this is proving to be effective in engaging students and making them aware of what level they are working at and the standards they are aiming for. The attitude to learning in the lessons seen was good; students were positive and co-operative and generally were on task.

The inspectors observed lessons where good subject knowledge was used to inspire pupils and to build understanding. This was frequently done very creatively through mediums such as art, audio and video clips which pupils enjoyed; it allowed them to explore the concepts more deeply. A good range of teaching styles and activities were seen including discussion, paired and group work. The Department should now build on these and explore teaching strategies that allow them to check learning in a variety of ways and include shorter tasks at KS4 so that students, particularly boys, know more explicitly that they are making progress throughout the lesson. Questioning was used to good effect particularly to make students think spiritually, ethically and theologically. A more consistent use of extended questioning to draw out answers would stretch students and challenge their thinking further.

The school gathers information about pupil progress at three points over the year, in part to identify areas of underperformance. The Religious Education Department makes satisfactory use of this information. Support is targeted generally at the whole cohort rather than at individuals. Two examples of this support are the development of revision materials and arranging teaching in a carousel in a bid to address underachievement. This is an area where significant improvement could be made by communicating the data to all staff in the department and targeting individual students with more specific interventions. However, the Religious Education staff are very committed to trying a range of strategies in order to target underachievement. With this as a continued high priority the department will make good progress. The current KS4 programme involves students being entered for modular exams very early in Y10. The results were disappointing. The department would benefit from reviewing this strategy and considering the development of internal assessment methods to gauge progress, rather than relying on early external examination entry.

There is some excellent new and innovative practice in KS3 on assessment which is structured, regular and integrated into lesson planning. This will have a positive impact as it continues to be embedded in practice and should in future be extend into KS4. Assessment for learning is used to structure lesson planning. This includes objective led lessons, the regular checking of learning and, in particular, a move towards peer and self assessment. The use of peer and self assessment are features which the department should continue to develop. This will allow students to see more clearly what they need to do to achieve the next level and be able to articulate it more explicitly to their peers. Students are aware of their targets in RE and feel motivated by them. Another area of strength of the Religious Education Department is the quality of the written feedback given to students; it is precise, constructive and informative.

The spiritual and moral development of the pupils is very well catered for by the Religious Education curriculum. Students have the opportunity to engage in a variety of extra curricular activities. The curriculum has been well planned to take into account the needs and interests of students and has been mapped to the Curriculum Directory. However the Department needs to consider to what extent it is delivering the expected outcomes of the Curriculum Directory at KS3 and KS4, particularly in the light of the choice of syllabus made for GCSE Religious Education. There are some students who are not accessing distinct Religious Education because they are involved in the Pathfinder curriculum. The school is aware that due consideration must be given to this as it does not fulfil the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. Plans are in place to address this. The NBRIA levels of attainment have been adapted by the department and are regularly used in assessment. The Department should continue to evaluate the accuracy of their levelling and work with the Diocese on this.

## **LEADERS AND MANAGERS**

<b>How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
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The leaders and managers of St Pius Catholic School are good at developing the Catholic life of the school and they are deeply committed to promoting the mission of the church. There is a wide range of monitoring activities in place relating both to the provision and to pupil outcomes. Senior leaders are well aware of the school's strengths and its areas for development. The self evaluation of the Catholic life of the school has developed in recent times and is now more rigorous and challenging. The students are able to articulate the distinctive nature of the school. Both staff and pupils have a high regard for the Catholic life of the school and appreciate the developing chaplaincy provision. Sex and relationship education is delivered across Religious Education, Science and PHSE. The school development plan sets out the priorities for the next three years. It is a concise yet detailed document which covers the three whole school strands of "Standards and Achievement, Teaching and learning and Effectiveness of Care Guidance and Support." It would however have been useful and strategically significant if an initial page on developing the Catholic life of the school had been included. This omission is in part remedied by the detailed plans for development in Chaplaincy and in Religious Education, but the

burden of strategic planning for the Catholic life of the school must be seen as much wider than the remit of Chaplaincy and Religious Education.

The senior leadership team carefully monitor the performance of the Religious Education Department. Indeed they have recently introduced a monitoring exercise after the outcomes of the mock examination are known. In this way, appropriate intervention can be made prior to the final examinations.

The governing body, in the main, both understands and discharges well its canonical responsibilities of admissions and appointments. It may benefit from a more detailed look at curriculum issues, particularly at Key Stage 4. There is a range of expertise on the Board and governors are well placed to meet the needs of the school and to influence the direction of its Catholic life. They are involved in monitoring and evaluating both the distinctive ethos of the school and the work of the Religious Education Department. This is done via the Headteacher's report and by a regular presence around the school. The strengths of the school and the barriers to learning are well known to the governors. A governor strategy committee has recently been set up to specifically promote the Catholic life of the school.

Whole school INSET about the distinctive Catholic ethos has had a very positive impact on the staff. They meet every morning prior to the start of the school day in order to pray together. On Friday mornings this celebration also concludes with the staff singing a hymn together.

## SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Key for inspection grades:

Grade 1 Outstanding    Grade 2 Good    Grade 3 Satisfactory    Grade 4 Inadequate

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The school's capacity for sustained improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups</b>	<b>3</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> how well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	<b>3</b>
the quality of pupils' learning and their progress	<b>3</b>
the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress	<b>3</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> pupils' attainment in Religious Education	<b>3</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> the extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school	<b>2</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> how well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship	<b>2</b>
<b>How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic Education</b>	<b>2</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education	<b>2</b>

<input type="checkbox"/> the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education	<b>3</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> the extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs	<b>2</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> the quality of collective worship provided by the school	<b>2</b>
<b>How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> 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	<b>2</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> how well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils	<b>2</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> the extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimensions of the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory and canonical responsibilities are met	<b>2</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> how well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and well-being	<b>2</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> how effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion.	<b>2</b>

Further copies of this report are obtainable from St Pius X Catholic High School or from the Diocese of Hallam Schools' Department, The Hallam Pastoral Centre, St Charles Street, Sheffield S9 3WU Tel: 0114 2566440.