



Nottingham Roman Catholic Diocesan Education Service

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Mr C Wright
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Stoke Golding
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17 December 2018

Dear Clive,

Diocesan Canonical Monitoring Visit to St Martin's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Following my visit to your school on 6 December 2018, I write on behalf of the Nottingham Roman Catholic Diocesan Education Service to report on my findings from the visit. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent diocesan canonical inspection.

The visit was the first since Collective Worship was judged to require improvement following the diocesan canonical inspection of 28 November 2017. It was carried out under Canon 806 of the Code of Canon Law.

Senior leaders and local governors are taking effective action to tackle the area judged to require improvement at the recent diocesan canonical inspection. The school does not require a further monitoring visit.

Evidence Base:

- Meeting with the headteacher and a senior leader
- Review of evidence folder for Collective Worship
- Observation of two morning form time Acts of Worship
- Meeting with local governors, one responsible for Catholic Life and the Chair of Governors
- Meeting with the pupil Divinity Group
- Meeting with other pupils not involved in a group
- Meeting with a new member of staff
- Meeting with the Lay Chaplain
- Observation of Advent Liturgy for Year 7
- Observation of an Act of Worship for Key Stage 4

The Diocesan Centre, Mornington Crescent, Mackworth, Derby, DE22 4BD

Context:

The school became part of the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust on 1 September 2018.

Main findings:

The following areas were highlighted at the school's previous inspection:

The governing body and school leaders need to ensure that the Catholic Life of the school and Collective Worship are seen as priorities by the whole school community by:

- *Ensuring that reports and evaluations on improvements and developments required take place and are embedded into the life of the school and subsequently monitored.*

The local governing body is actively involved in monitoring and evaluating improvements and developments in Collective Worship in the school. The local governing body has supported and driven improvements in provision with the creation of the new chapel, the provision for Lay Chaplaincy, a change in the leadership of Catholic Life by providing more capacity in the leadership team with the subject leader for Religious Education joining the leadership team in January 2018 and taking the lead on Catholic Life and Collective Worship under the direction of the headteacher.

The local governing body has had three new foundation governors join it, one of whom is extremely experienced in Catholic Life. A robust action plan has been developed since the diocesan canonical inspection last year which is regularly evaluated by school leaders and monitored by the local governing body. The senior leader responsible for Catholic Life and Collective Worship has met regularly with the local governor responsible for this area. School leaders have visited a number of Catholic schools to bring good practice back into school.

Suggested next steps:

- Ensure that the local governor minutes reflect the level of challenge and support from local governors on Catholic Life and Collective Worship.
- *Ensuring that staff induction for support staff new to the school takes place in a more formal way, particularly colleagues who may join mid-way through the year.*

Staff induction has been developed to ensure that all new staff are inducted effectively into the school. School leaders have developed a robust and high quality CPD programme for all staff on Collective Worship. Inset days and staff meetings have been focused on how to deliver prayer and reflections during form time. The training has also focused on improving the quality of key stage Acts of Worship to ensure that they are pupil led. The experienced new Lay Chaplain and school leaders have been leading this training. During the visit, a new member of staff was spoken to about this training and how it has supported him in his understanding of Collective Worship.

Suggested next steps:

- In future training sessions, to embed further some of the good practice by sharing this with colleagues, for example, by taking pictures of faith boards that demonstrate good examples of pupil ownership of prayer.

- Continue with plans to attend diocesan training on Collective Worship and feed this into a whole staff training session.
- *Introducing weekly opportunities for form Mass/liturgy so that all pupils no matter of age or faith experience the intimacy of small group prayer.*

School leaders have been working hard on improving pupil experience of Mass/liturgy before introducing a weekly opportunity for Mass/liturgy. The new school chapel is a space that is open to all pupils to allow them to pray at lunchtimes and break times, this is beginning to be used by them. Pupils are participating in liturgies during Religious Education lessons.

Suggested next steps:

- This needs to be developed further by providing all pupils with the opportunity to attend a Mass/liturgy once a week.
- Realise plans of the Lay Chaplain to provide a prayer or Rosary group for pupils and staff.
- *Ensuring that the quality assurance carried out by senior leaders is regular and robust and that policy and practice are aligned.*

There is evidence of much improvement in this area. School leaders have developed a monitoring system using a set form for monitoring form time morning prayer. This is now being monitored by all senior leaders and heads of year. The Lay Chaplain has developed a form for both staff and pupil feedback on Mass.

Suggested next steps:

- Develop a calendar for the monitoring of Collective Worship by senior leaders, heads of year and pupils so that it is cyclical and systematic. This could easily be linked to the whole school monitoring calendar.
- *Taking every opportunity during the school day to develop the prayer life of pupils; for example, having visible signs of the school's Catholic identity situated in spaces where pupils can be encouraged to reflect and pray.*

School leaders have taken a number of steps to improve the visible signs of the school's Catholic identity by developing the school entrance area. Statues, displays and quotations around the school have visibly changed the school environment. The considerable investment by the school in a new chapel which is in a central location of the school, is a clear example of how the school is improving the Catholic identity situated in spaces for where the pupils can be encouraged to reflect and pray.

- *Ensuring that the school website properly reflects the true Catholic nature of the school.*

A new website has been developed which makes clear the school's distinctive Catholic ethos with clear links to spirituality and Collective Worship to demonstrate what is taking place in the school. The school uses social media to reflect what is happening in the school and in the area of Collective Worship.

Collective Worship - to provide more opportunities for the pupils to plan, participate and lead in a range of different liturgical activities by:

- *Ensuring that meetings of the chaplaincy group take priority over any other pupil session, which may be taking place at this time.*

The pupil chaplaincy group has been significantly enhanced and developed since the diocesan canonical inspection. There are now 90 members of this group which was called 'the group with no name' and is now known as the 'Divinity Group'. The role of this group is both pupil chaplaincy and community charity work. Pupils applied to become part of this group. Each form group has two or more prayer representatives who support Collective Worship in the form and are responsible for the faith boards. The representatives from the Divinity Group explained during the visit that their meetings take priority over any other pupil sessions and other things have been cancelled to allow them to meet. School leaders are rotating the roles of the Divinity Group so pupils get the opportunity to do both chaplaincy and community work.

Suggested next steps:

- School leaders will need to consider further how pupil chaplaincy continues to enhance Collective Worship and provide pupils with more opportunity to evaluate the provision and quality of worship.
- *Arranging for retreats to take place regularly for year groups other than Year 7.*

In-school retreats last year took place for Year 7 and 8. They are now calendared for every year group for this academic year. External retreats are planned for each year group with visits to the Briars, Rome, Alton Castle and Santiago. The recent Year 10 retreat focused on RSE (Relationships and Sex Education), within the retreat, school leaders planned reflection time and asked pupils to evaluate the day. Year 7, 8 and 9 are currently experiencing Advent Liturgies with workstations in the chapel focused on giving pupils meaningful and prayerful opportunities around the season of Advent. The transition programme of pupils from Year 6 to Year 7 now includes a full day on Catholic Life and Collective Worship in the school.

- *Not only providing resources for staff i.e. slides, but modelling what and how to use these resources.*

A number of staff training sessions have been held. This has resulted in an increased understanding by staff about prayer and Collective Worship. The 'Christ at the Centre' document is central to this CPD programme. Staff in the school have received five training sessions since the diocesan canonical inspection, these have been focused on improving the quality of Collective Worship. The daily prayer resources have a themed approach following the 'Ordo' and the school links with NDCYS (Nottingham Diocesan Catholic Youth Service). The prayer slides are now consistently used throughout the school; however, during discussions with pupils, it was noted that they would like a more varied approach to prayer.

Suggested next steps:

- Pupils would like a more varied approach to prayer in form groups. The Divinity Group would like to play a role in designing the prayer slides so that there are a variety of prayer reflections such as the use of videos, pupil filming, bible readings and more reflection opportunities.

- *Involving pupils more in the shaping of the school's mission and ethos.*

The school provides a number of opportunities for pupil voice, the Divinity Group is a clear example of this. The school provides a strong support structure for vulnerable pupils. Pupils from both the Divinity Group and those not in the Divinity Group feel they have an input into the school's mission and ethos. The pupils who led the Act of Worship observed were not part of the 'Divinity Group'.

Support:

- Training session booked for Tuesday 29 January 2019 for the local governing body on the new diocesan canonical inspection framework.

This letter will be copied to the Director of Education, the chair of governors and the CEO of the Catholic Multi-Academy Trust.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Maher
Diocesan Canonical Inspector

