

# Archdiocese of Cardiff



## Inspection Report Corpus Christi High School

Inspection dates	9-11 <sup>th</sup> February 2015
Reporting Inspector	Mrs Patricia Landers
Accompanying Inspector	Mr Garry Maher
Type of school	Secondary
Age range of pupils	11-16
Number on roll	1042
Local Authority	Cardiff
Chair of Governors	Mrs K Brown
School Address	Tŷ Draw Road, Lisvane, Cardiff. CF23 6XL
Tel. no.	029 2076 1970
E-mail address	<a href="mailto:bmullins@cardiff.gov.uk">bmullins@cardiff.gov.uk</a>
Parishes served	Christ the King Holy Family St Brigid and St Paul St Joseph St Peter St Philip Evans St Teilo and Our Lady of Lourdes
Date of previous inspection	9-11 February 2009
Acting headteacher	Mrs A Thomas

**Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Archdiocese of Cardiff and Inspection of denominational education under Section 50 of the Education Act 2005**

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

**Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?**

**Key Question 2: How good is provision?**

**Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?**

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on prospects for improvement.

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector leading practice or practise that is both consistent and highly effective.
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

The table below shows the terms that Archdiocesan inspectors use and a broad idea of their meaning. It is for guidance only.

<b>Proportion</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>With very few exceptions</b>	<b>Nearly all</b>
<b>90% or more</b>	<b>Most</b>
<b>70% or more</b>	<b>Many</b>
<b>60% or more</b>	<b>A majority</b>
<b>Close to 50%</b>	<b>Half/around half</b>
<b>Below 40%</b>	<b>A minority</b>
<b>Below 20%</b>	<b>Few</b>
<b>Less than 10%</b>	<b>Very few</b>

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Archdiocesan website: [www.rcadc.org](http://www.rcadc.org)

## Context

Corpus Christi Catholic High School is a voluntary aided mixed 11-16 school within the Catholic Archdiocese of Cardiff. It serves the northern part of the city of Cardiff from Pentrebanne in the west to Pentwyn in the east as well as the central areas of Cathays, Roath and Adamsdown. It is comprehensive in its intake. Pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds and approximately 11% are entitled to free school meals. This is below local and national averages. English is spoken as the first language in the majority of homes, 22% of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds who speak English as a second language. Very few pupils speak Welsh fluently. 89% of the pupils are Catholic and most of the intake comes from the six feeder primaries. Pupils are representative of the full range of ability. 19% of pupils are identified as having Special Educational Needs, of whom 2% have statements. Significant changes have occurred within the staff since the last inspection, including a new Acting Headteacher and Acting Deputy Headteacher. The Chair of Governors was in place at the last inspection but a number of new governors have joined the team.

<b>How effective is the school in providing Catholic education?</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<p>Catholic Education at Corpus Christi High School is excellent. The school is an inclusive community which has an excellent Catholic ethos into which all are welcomed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The governing body is industrious and knowledgeable, and supports the school well</li> <li>• The acting headteacher has a clear vision of the school's mission and shares it with the rest of the school. She is very well supported by the acting deputy head and the senior leadership team</li> <li>• The whole staff displays an impressive commitment to the school's Catholicity.</li> <li>• Provision for prayer and worship is excellent. Pupils experience a wide range of liturgical celebrations and opportunities for prayer, all of which contribute strongly to their spiritual and moral development.</li> <li>• Pupils understand and appreciate the distinctiveness of the school and have excellent attitudes towards the school, its ethos and what they believe they gain from it.</li> <li>• Effective pastoral care promotes students' well-being</li> <li>• The quality of teaching is generally good, and in many cases excellent.</li> <li>• Standards in Religious Education are excellent.</li> <li>• Management of the Religious Education department is excellent. The head of Religious Education provides effective and expert leadership. The department is at the forefront of pedagogical initiatives throughout the school and is often used as an example of good practice.</li> <li>• The chaplain provides excellent support for the RE department and makes a significant contribution to the ethos of the whole school.</li> <li>• The school is very well supported in developing its religious life by the work and frequent visits of local clergy.</li> </ul>	
<b>What are the school's prospects for improvement?</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<p>Capacity to improve is excellent because</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• areas previously identified as needing improvement have been addressed.</li> <li>• self-evaluation processes are accurate within Religious Education, and the headteacher, governors and head of the Religious Education department clearly understand what is needed to move the school forward.</li> <li>• planning for improvement is detailed and carefully monitored.</li> <li>• the Head of Religious Education leads a team of committed teachers who are willing and able to work with her to drive the department forward.</li> <li>• the distinctive ethos of the school recognizes, values and nurtures each individual as being made in the image of God.</li> </ul>	

## **Recommendations and Required Actions**

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

- R1: Develop strategies to ensure that the quality of all teaching in Religious Education is consistent and brought in line with the best practice in the department.**
- R2: Further develop Assessment for Learning strategies and ensure that they are fully embedded across the department.**
- R3: Continue to develop strategies to reduce the underachievement of some boys.**
- R4: Dedicate one INSET day each year to further developing staff spirituality and understanding of the Catholic ethos of the school, in line with archdiocesan recommendations.**

### **What happens next?**

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

Progress in addressing the recommendations will be monitored by the Archdiocese.

## **Main Findings**

**KQ1. How good are outcomes?**

**Excellent**

The quality of attainment overall is excellent, which is in line with the school's own assessment. The school has a very distinctive Catholic ethos which permeates all aspects of school life. Pupils are positive about what the school has to offer and feel valued. They treat each other with respect and show concern for everything around them. Their conduct in lessons and about the school is exemplary, not because it is enforced but because they see it as the right thing to do. They develop an excellent sense of what is right or wrong. This is reflected in their classroom discussions, their written work and their interviews with inspectors. 'Listening to Learners' plays an important part in the school and students feel that their opinions are taken seriously. The school has a School Council with pupils representing all year groups. In an interview with an inspector, students spoke of the prayer life of the school, the pastoral support, provided their commitment to social awareness and support for those less fortunate through works of charity, and outreach.

As a result of the work of the Religious Education department and the chaplain, pupils contribute readily to a range of opportunities for prayer and spiritual celebrations. They talk enthusiastically about the opportunities offered. In the assemblies observed during inspection week, a tutor group of each of year 8 and year 9 led the acts of worship. They clearly gave witness to their faith and the whole experience was one which obviously had an impact on the rest of the year group. The assemblies were based on the feast day of Our Lady of Lourdes and the World Day of Prayer for the Sick. Pupils provided the music, and participated as readers. Assemblies and whole school Masses are well supported by the music and drama departments. A parish priest, who was interviewed, also spoke highly of the student response to prayer, Masses, the Sacrament of Reconciliation and their contribution to the liturgy.

Pupils were observed achieving well and obviously enjoying their lessons. They generally, approach their studies conscientiously, are attentive and apply themselves well to their tasks. They are keen to contribute to question and answer sessions in lessons and this enables them to make good progress. Pupils were able to articulate the range of topics covered by the Religious Education curriculum, including prayer and pilgrimage in year 9. However, achievement is inconsistent for a small group of less able boys, and occasionally lessons lack challenge. The excellent relationship between students, and between students and their teachers, makes a positive contribution to their lessons.

The standard of work in exercise books is generally very good. Books are well presented and contain a range of work, including some evidence of independent work, as well as tasks closely directed by the teacher. There is also evidence of extended writing. It was evident from both the lessons and work in exercise books that learners were becoming religiously literate.

At Key Stage 3, standards achieved are very good and continue to improve. Almost all students achieved their predicted grade and standards match the average for English. Standards at Key Stages 4 are excellent. At GCSE, 32% of pupils achieved A\* and 81% of entries were awarded grades A\*-C. This is well above the national average and the highest in the archdiocese.

Different groups of pupils are enabled to do well through effective differentiation, which was in evidence in all lessons observed and challenging extension tasks for the More Able and Talented (MAT). Pupils also spoke of the willingness of all Religious Education teachers to give extra lessons to any learner experiencing difficulties.

<b>KQ1. How good is provision?</b>
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<b>Excellent</b>
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Provision for collective worship is excellent. Pupils and staff also have the opportunity for private prayer in the chapel, which is located at the heart of the school. Staff meet for prayer every Friday morning. The prayer session observed was meaningful and reflective. It was led by the chaplain and well attended by staff.

Pupils can articulate the school's Mission Statement and have a sound understanding of the key celebrations in the liturgical year. In whole school Masses, students act as cantors, readers and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. Assemblies are vibrant, liturgically relevant and contain student participation. They are largely planned by pupils. The Daily Acts of Worship are well led by staff and help to cement the strong community spirit which is evident. Well planned resources are provided to all staff by the chaplain.

The accommodation for Religious Education is excellent. During the course of the inspection, much excellent teaching was observed. There were no inadequate lessons. Teachers are knowledgeable and plan their lessons conscientiously. They make good use of the interactive whiteboards, which contribute to student learning. Generally, teachers have high expectations of their pupils, who make very good progress. There was considerable evidence of differentiation in lessons to support groups of learners. New strategies are being developed to eliminate the underachievement of less able boys. There were also challenging extension questions for the More Able and Talented. The excellent relationships in the classrooms encourage learning and give the students confidence to contribute orally and to participate in group work. In the best lessons, teachers adopt imaginative approaches and fully engage and challenge learners.

In Key Stage 3, students complete assessments every term. This provides information which is used to monitor progress and to ensure that support is provided where it is needed. Pupil tracking is well developed. The information is shared with parents and learners, the latter being well informed about the attainment level at which they are working and how to reach the next level. Teachers mark student work regularly and most work is commented upon, though there is some inconsistency within the department in relation to Assessment for Learning strategies. Where used well, the use of WWW (What went well?) and

EBI (Even better if ...) provides useful guidance to the learner. Peer- and self-assessment are popular with the pupils and used very successfully.

In Key Stage 3, the department has a detailed scheme of work based on ICONS which plots student learning in line with the Curriculum Directory and is assessed using NBRIA levels. In years 10 and 11, the school uses the Welsh Joint Examination Board GCSE specification and the evidence from the most recent examinations is that it is suitable for the students, who have achieved very well.

Links between the school and the wider Catholic community are excellent. Local clergy visit the school to say Mass and administer the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Students are encouraged to be involved in their own parishes. An Easter themed liturgy is taken out to two parishes each year. There are also very good links with the feeder primary schools and St David's Catholic Sixth Form College.

Pupils are aware of the diverse society in which they live. The school is involved in a wide range of charities, local, national and international. Donations are made to CAFOD, the British Heart Foundation, Marie Curie, Mary's Meals and Operation Christmas Child. The school has links with schools in other parts of the world. In the past, pupils have visited an orphanage in Belarus, but in the present political climate, support has to be financial only.

All pupils in year 7 attend the retreat centre at Kintbury. Other year groups have visited a variety of retreat centres in the past but a new venue is being sought at present. Retreat days in KS3 have been held in a local parish. The whole school participated in a mission led by the Sion Community last year. The mission and the retreats were very popular with pupils. There is a plan to run a pilgrimage to Lourdes for year 9 pupils in the summer term.

Pupils are given the opportunity to explore their faith further through the provision of the well-attended Alpha course which is led by the chaplain, ably supported by two other members of staff who are not members of the Religious Education department.

The school communicates well with parents, who are kept informed about their child's progress through parents' evenings and the provision of assessment data. If parents have concerns, they have ready access to the appropriate member of staff. Parental response to the inspection questionnaire revealed very strong support for the school.

A new Relationship and Sex Education course has been developed and parents have been consulted. This is a clearly written, well-resourced course. The Religious Education, Personal and Social Education, and Science departments work closely to deliver this course.



<b>KQ3. How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
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Leadership and management are excellent. Staff are fully committed to the ethos of the school. The chair of governors is in regular contact with the headteacher and is extremely knowledgeable about the school. The Religious Education link governor seeks to keep abreast of developments in the department, supports them well and acts as a critical friend. Other governors are also supportive, and the Catholic nature of the school is a high priority. Religious Education is treated as a core subject and governors are very involved in discussing standards. The school provides all the requirements of the Bishops' Conference except that Key Stage 3 pupils currently have only 8% taught Religious Education curriculum time.

The Acting Headteacher has a clear vision of the school's mission and expresses it passionately. It is shared throughout the school, and it is impressive to hear students talking about the Mission Statement as linking everyone in the school community. The whole staff displays a commitment to the Catholicity of the school. Those who are not Catholic, whether pupil or staff, say they feel very welcome. The senior leadership team is closely involved in monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the effectiveness of the Catholic life of the school and curriculum Religious Education to ensure that the department is fulfilling its mission. The Head of Religious Education provides effective and expert leadership and meets with the staff regularly to discuss the department's work and to lead strategies for improvement. Book trawls and lesson observations are used to monitor standards and detailed records are kept. She has a team of talented, committed Religious Education teachers, including two newly qualified teachers, who are well advised and supported by department members. The department is supported by the chaplain who is responsible for planning assemblies and liturgies and organising retreats. Staff are also supported with resources for assemblies and daily acts of worship by the chaplain.

The school has made excellent partnerships with the feeder primary schools and transition arrangements were judged by parents to be excellent. Very good links also exist with other local secondary schools and St David's College. Diocesan, deanery and parish links are also well developed and the school has excellent relationships with the outside agencies that support it.

Community cohesion is at the forefront of the school's mission. There is a strong sense of belonging in the school and all are welcomed in a spirit of equality, inclusiveness and respect. The school offers a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of their role in society. 'Listening to Learners' is well embedded in the culture of the school and members of the School Council feel that their views are respected and acted upon. Pupils are very generous with their time, talents and money and support a range of local, national and international charities.

## Appendix 1

### Responses to parent questionnaires

88 parents/carers completed the parent questionnaire.

- 57 were completely satisfied with all aspects of the school.
- All parents/carers were happy with the values and attitudes that the school fosters and felt that were made to feel welcome in the school.
- The majority also believed that the school sought their views and concerns and took them into account.
- The majority of parents believed that the school gave them a clear understanding of what is taught in Religious Education and nearly all agreed that the school enabled their children to achieve a good standard of work in Religious Education. They were also happy with the help and guidance available to their children and believed that the school enabled their children to develop spiritually through prayer and worship.
- Most parents believed that the school kept them well-informed about their children's progress in Religious Education.
- Parents stated that they chose Corpus Christi High School because of its Catholic teaching, strong discipline and good reputation in the local community. Some parents had themselves been educated at the school.
- What they found distinctive was the inclusive atmosphere within the school, the way the school helped students with special needs make progress, the moral and spiritual values expressed within school life and the development of gospel values.

## Appendix 2

### Evidence Base

- The school's self-evaluation reports and other documentation
- Meetings with the acting headteacher, acting deputy headteacher, head of religious education department, chaplain, three heads of department and three other teachers.
- Meetings with the chair of governors, another governor and the Religious Education link governor, who is also parish priest of one of the parishes served by the school.
- Lesson observations.
- Scrutiny of planning and assessment.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work.
- Attendance at staff prayer, school assemblies and classroom-based acts of worship.
- Discussions with pupils.
- Parent questionnaire returns.
- A meeting with parents.