



St Anthony's Girls' Catholic Academy

Thornhill Terrace, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR2 7JN

School Unique Reference Number: **138054**

Inspection dates:	13-14 June 2018
Lead inspector:	Pat Witte
Team inspector:	Paul Martin

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Catholic Life:		Outstanding	1
Collective Worship:		Outstanding	1
Religious Education:		Outstanding	1

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Anthony's Girls' Catholic Academy is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- The mission of this Mercy school permeates all aspects of school life. The focus on concern for the poor and the education of women and girls is paramount. The foundations laid by the Sisters of Mercy are lived out in this inspiring community.
- Collective Worship is outstanding. The response of pupils, staff and governors is profound and deeply rooted in faith. A wide range of worshipping opportunities are prepared and delivered including liturgies, assemblies and Masses.
- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. The strong sense of belonging, so passionately proclaimed by every member of this community, is overwhelming. It is in the quality of relationships that a deep sense of spirituality is evident. Tolerance and respect for all ensures that almost all pupils thrive and are confident in their spiritual, emotional and intellectual growth.
- Religious Education is outstanding. The newly in post subject leader has led substantial improvements throughout the department with a significant impact on outcomes. Pupils enjoy Religious Education and make very good progress in a subject they enjoy.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Anthony's Girls' Catholic Academy is a larger than average-sized secondary school, within the Mercy tradition.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium is lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils with special needs is lower than average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils from ethnic groups has risen to 21%.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The academy was awarded teaching school status in September 2014 and is part of the Beacon Teaching Alliance in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.
- The academy is embarking on a new sixth form partnership with St Aidan's Catholic Academy from September 2018.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- To continue to identify and meet the needs of each individual within the school community by:
 - building upon the outstanding practice already in place.
- To close the gap for all cohorts of pupils by:
 - planning for effective teaching and learning strategies through differentiation.
 - restructuring the timetable blocking at key stage three to ensure pupil movement.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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| • The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school. | 1 |
| • The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school. | 1 |
| • How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school. | 1 |

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- Almost all pupils at St Anthony's are at the heart of shaping the school's mission and ethos. They have a deep sense of discipleship and strive to ensure that the community thrives with Christ at the centre of their lives.
- Pupils contribute fully in a planned and systematic way to the evaluation of the school's Catholic Life. They readily take a lead in planning and delivering improvements to ensure an inclusive approach for all.
- The deep experience of belonging to this community evokes an inspiring response from the vast majority of pupils. They speak with great enthusiasm of a 'family' where everyone is included regardless of social background, religious beliefs or ethnicity.
- Staff and pupils speak warmly of the quality of relationships as a major strength of the school. The care and concern shown for its members is palpable.
- The behaviour of almost all pupils is exemplary at all times. They are alert to the needs of others and seek justice for all within and beyond the school community. Pupils listen readily to the views of others recognising that to forgive and to be forgiven is an implicit value accepted by all.
- Almost all pupils take full advantage of the opportunities the school provides for their personal support and development. They are happy and secure in their own stage of spiritual and emotional growth. They have a profound understanding of what it means to have a vocation and joyfully, without reservation offer their gifts in the service of others.
- Almost all pupils are enthusiastically and readily involved with school, parish and diocesan celebrations, irrespective of their own faith commitments. This is evident in the work of the pupil chaplaincy team, participation in The Event, The Source, Youth Ministry Trust camp and the Flame Congress. Large numbers of pupils sign up for fund raising activities; this is evident in their work with CAFOD, St Cuthbert's Care, Medaille Trust and many more.

- Opportunities to engage with the wider faith community are well developed. There is a ten year partnership and exchange with a Salesian Mission in Manzini, Swaziland which has involved staff and pupils in many projects. Staff from Manzini were visiting the school during the inspection. Many pupils readily partake in the annual diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes. Pupils have been deeply moved by the experiences and the insight into the Catholic tradition of the school.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- The governing body, headteacher and senior staff are fully committed to providing Catholic experience of the highest level to all members of the community. The Mercy ethos and mission statement are at the centre of all that takes place and are the guiding beliefs that characterise the whole community, being understood by all.
- The school provides extensive opportunities for the moral and spiritual development of the community. Prayer life is at the heart of the school and staff and pupils are fully involved in the celebration of the liturgical life of the Church. The meticulous planning of daily prayer and liturgical events by the chaplain underpin this supportive and joyful community.
- Year seven pupils are warmly welcomed into the school with an induction programme that is linked to the Mercy Mission. Pupils visit the Sisters of Mercy convent in order to gain a full understanding of the ethos.
- Induction of new staff and on going support into the Catholic Life of the school is of the utmost importance. New staff enthusiastically spoke of the process as providing a smooth transition into their new role giving them a strong sense of belonging.
- A major strength of the school is the provision of a high level of pastoral care for almost all within the community with a concrete commitment to the most vulnerable. The recent mental health questionnaire, staff training with Mind and the school's counselor are excellent examples of the school striving to meet the needs of all in an ever-changing world.
- Personal, health, and social education and relationships and sex education programmes are thoughtfully designed, carefully planned, consistently well taught and celebrate Catholic teachings and principles.
- The school's expectations are clearly and consistently communicated in order to ensure the highest possible standards of moral and ethical behaviour. The focus on personal responsibility, reconciliation and healing are paramount.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- The governing body, headteacher and senior team are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. Leaders are a source of inspiration for the whole community and lead by example. The Mercy ethos and school mission statement are the driving force for the continuing development of the Catholic Life of the school.

- The provision for the Catholic Life of the school is given the highest possible priority by the governors, headteacher and senior team. This is intrinsic to the schools self-evaluation and analysis that is clearly and explicitly focused on the Catholic Life of the school. This leads to well targeted and planned improvements that allow the Catholic Life to flourish.
- Governors are highly ambitious for the Catholic Life of the school. They are actively involved in its evaluation and are ready to challenge as well as support. Regular feedback is given to the governing body from middle leaders including the head of Religious Education and members of the senior team responsible for aspects of chaplaincy development.
- The recently appointed head of Catholic Life has undertaken scrutiny of the impact of projects to increase pupils' participation in this area with substantial feedback to the governing body. This is part of an ongoing dialogue to evaluate and enhance future developments.
- The school is held in the highest esteem by the local community and recognised by its unstinting drive for excellence. The school ensures that parents/carers have a thorough understanding of its mission and purpose. Parents interviewed during the inspection spoke very warmly about the school recognising it as a vibrant, caring community. Their pride in being part of such a strong Catholic community, where their children had the opportunity to grow in faith, was evident.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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| • How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship. | 1 |
| • The quality of provision for Collective Worship. | 1 |
| • How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship. | 1 |

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship is outstanding.

- The genuine enthusiasm of pupils for Collective Worship at St Anthony's is impressive. Almost all pupils enjoy the opportunities to participate in the many different forms of Collective Worship provided by the school.
- Pupils take the initiative in the preparation of morning prayer and assemblies. They delight in the opportunity to lead their peers and use many creative and resourceful ideas to express their faith. The celebration of St Anthony's feast day in the chapel, during the inspection, allowed many pupils to display their leadership, respect and reverence for prayer.
- The vast majority of pupils show confidence in their ability to use a variety of prayer approaches. They display great insight in their use of scripture and religious artefacts. Many contribute to the selection and playing of music and hymns to accompany prayer. All form groups prepare and deliver assemblies with pride. Other groups in school such as the student chaplaincy team and the CAFOD young leaders take responsibility for preparing and delivering assemblies this includes drama, music and singing.
- The impact of peer led liturgy and prayer is profound. Pupils are uplifted by the experiences and delight in the skillful way the faith message is disseminated to them. The student chaplaincy team speak of their mission to 'spread the faith' with deep reverence and feeling.
- Almost all pupils have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons and feasts. They prepare Collective Worship which displays this understanding particularly in Advent, Lent and Christmas.
- Pupils of different faith backgrounds bring a richness to the prayer life of the school. They participate fully in the preparation and delivery of Collective Worship and also share their faith traditions with other pupils. The annual faith festival ensures that the different religions of all members of the school are celebrated. Pupils feel included in all aspects of Collective Worship.
- The experience of living in this faith community has had a deep and visible effect on the development of all pupils irrespective of their age, ability or faith background.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- At St Anthony's the whole community recognise that Collective Worship lies at the heart of the faith life that they experience. The chaplain ensures that the day begins with staff prayer and then the same theme is reflected in form group prayer. This is a central feature and provides daily inspiration in the most creative way.
- The highest priority is given to Collective Worship in regard to planning and resourcing. The chaplain along with the senior team and student chaplaincy team ensure that the experiences of Collective Worship are of the most excellent quality and are treasured by the whole community.
- It is evident that the careful planning of Collective Worship ensures clear purpose and direction. The chaplain and a further volunteer are both Sisters of Mercy. This enhances the deep level of understanding of the liturgical seasons and the Church's mission in education. The themes chosen for reflection and prayer enthuse pupils and staff and provide a platform for their own further preparation.
- Staff and pupils are passionate about the high quality planning and delivery of Collective Worship. The chaplain is always on hand to support and give individual help and guidance. Retreat events are provided for senior staff and chaplains. This ensures that skills are regularly updated and disseminated to all staff. New staff are given training on working in a Catholic school and on planning and delivering worship.
- Planning of Masses where pupils take the lead is of high importance. Local clergy are available to support the provision of a weekly Mass in school. Pupils are fully involved and take advantage of the opportunity to celebrate together.
- The school community is welcoming to other adults who are linked to the pupils and the school facilitating a range of celebrations. Members of the governing body frequently attend Mass and parents/carers and other adults attend a range of events including year eleven presentation evening, year thirteen leavers' ceremony, the annual bereavement service and faith 'chat' sessions.
- The chaplain also works closely with all the partnership schools each week sharing and providing liturgies to aid Collective Worship. This facility is highly valued by the primary and secondary headteachers.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- The excellent quality of the Collective Worship at St Anthony's demonstrates clearly the outstanding expertise of the staff involved. The headteacher, senior team and chaplain have expert knowledge of how to plan and deliver high quality spiritual experiences to pupils and staff.

- The in-depth understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons, rites and symbols has enabled a deep appreciation of these traditions for the whole community. Pupils are able to embrace the spiritual messages in a way that is relevant to life in a modern world. It is clear that as a result pupil response to Collective Worship is outstanding.
- To maintain and improve upon the spiritual development of school leaders importance is given to further development and training. Staff are nurtured each day through prayer and are also welcomed for small group training sessions to the convent. Individual training is also tailored to needs of staff on specific areas of Collective Worship.
- A staff training priority is in the development of spiritual and liturgical understanding. Retreat and training opportunities are offered and wholeheartedly responded to by staff. The headteacher attends the annual diocesan headteachers' conference which includes an opportunity for reflection. The chaplain attends retreats as both a religious and a chaplain.
- The headteacher, senior team and chaplain are highly visible as leaders of Collective Worship. They attend voluntary Mass each Friday and where possible attend other events with pupils. This includes The Youth Village, The Event, John Paul II Award Presentation Evening, year six Mass, year seven Mass and the year eleven presentation Masses. They are models of outstanding practice for staff and pupils.
- In the monitoring of school performance the highest priority is placed upon the development of high quality experiences of Collective Worship. The headteacher, senior team and chaplain therefore carefully monitor Collective Worship in order to improve that quality experience. A culture of considered change and reflection within the community supports this.
- The views of pupils, staff and parents/carers are regularly sought regarding the quality and significance of Collective Worship. The headteacher, senior team and chaplain respond to these findings in a way that enhances further the development of Collective Worship.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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| • How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education. | 1 |
| • The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education. | 1 |
| • How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education. | 1 |

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is outstanding.

- Pupils enjoy their work in Religious Education and demonstrate passion and commitment. They are very rarely off task. Almost all pupils concentrate very well and engage in active learning. They learn exceptionally well.
- Behaviour for learning is outstanding and evidence on the inspection days, and from school internal data, indicates that almost all lessons proceed without interruption. They want to learn and are very committed to improving their knowledge and skills in a subject that they enjoy.
- Most pupils make good or outstanding progress during individual lessons and similarly over the two years course. The number of pupils who progress to studying A level Religious Education is low considering the success that many pupils have at GCSE along with their obvious enjoyment of the subject
- Internal key stage three assessment and tracking data analysis demonstrates that most pupil make good or outstanding progress over time.
- All headline figures for attainment and progress at key stage four are above national averages. Average point scores show an upward trend of improvement. A small number of pupils do not make as much progress as their peers, especially those identified as having special educational needs and disability (SEND) and those who qualify for pupil premium. The department and school leaders are working effectively to address this.
- Pupils use self and peer evaluation effectively and almost all pupils could explain how they were doing and what they need to do to improve their work in Religious Education further.
- They show a mature ability to be able to work individually, in pairs and in small groups when this is required. Peer assessment is used very effectively. Pupils are keen to learn from one another in an atmosphere of mutual support. This was particularly evident within a year twelve Religious Education group discussing medical ethics, where pupils shared their plans on how to answer the claim that 'life begins at conception'. Pupils express and justify their views confidently even with sensitive subject matter.

- Progress data, pupil books and lesson observations demonstrate that pupils learn exceptionally well, develop and apply a wide range of skills to great effect within the Religious Education curriculum. Pupils are religiously literate.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is outstanding.

- Teaching in Religious Education is mostly outstanding and over time this makes an excellent contribution to student outcomes.
- Teachers are highly effective because they plan challenging and varied teaching strategies and activities, across all key stages to ensure that all pupils are engaged from the moment they arrive in the classroom. These activities, along with an imaginative range of resources, act as stimulants to promote outstanding progress and behaviour. Teachers are passionate and infectious about their subject and this is consistently portrayed along with very high expectations.
- Strategies, including timed, individual, paired and group activities, are used to challenge pupils and extend their learning. Teachers use time very effectively to ensure that lessons proceed with pace, continuing to keep pupils on task and interested.
- Differentiation is now becoming more widely used across the department to ensure that all pupils are challenged and engaged at the appropriate level. Additionally, plans are underway to restructure the internal timetable blocking to enable Religious Education lessons to be blocked so that movement between groups in KS3 will be possible. These initiatives will support the learning and progress of those identified with SEND.
- Assessment, recording and reporting systems are outstanding with all stakeholders effectively and frequently informed.
- Post-16 general Religious Education provision is well structured on one hour per week over the two years covering a wide range of challenging and informative topics. The inspectors observed one of the lessons where speakers from Swaziland were outlining the work of the Manzini Youth Care Project which the school is involved with.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is outstanding.

- The leadership and management of Religious Education were judged to be outstanding. Leaders collectively demonstrate a clear vision and passion for their work with an infectious enthusiasm in working towards achieving and maintaining outstanding provision and pupil outcomes.
- Staff, in particular the department leader for learning in Religious Education and the leader of Catholic Life along with other key staff are involved in diocesan training and meetings.
- Leaders at all levels monitor the progress of all pupils using an effective tracking system and intervention strategies are employed to address underperformance. Governors know how well the department is performing and utilise the critical friend approach very effectively to support and challenge where action has been identified.

- A rigorous and thorough process of self-evaluation is undertaken at key points throughout the year with resultant strategies designed to bring about improvement where needed. They are clear in their own assessment concerning the need to improve the progress of pupils with SEND and using differentiation more consistently across the department. They know what outstanding teaching and learning involves and work tirelessly across the department to work towards this very high standard.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION:

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CATHOLIC LIFE:

1

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.

1

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

1

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:

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How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.

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The quality of provision for Collective Worship.

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

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The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.

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How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St Anthony's Girls' Academy
Unique reference number	138054
Local authority	Sunderland
This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt. Reverend Séamus Cunningham the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle Diocese under canon 806 of Canon Law. For voluntary aided schools it also fulfils the responsibility the Governing Body has to inspect the school under s48 of the Education Act 2005.	
Chair of governors	Andrea Shanks
Headteacher	Monica Shepherd
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