



# EAST ANGLIA DIOCESAN SCHOOLS' SERVICE

Director of Schools' Service: Mrs. Julie O'Connor

The White House, 21 Uppgate,

Poringland, NR14 7SH

Tel: 01508 495509 Fax 01508 495358

Email: [joschools@rcdea.org.uk](mailto:joschools@rcdea.org.uk) or [ssc@rcdea.org.uk](mailto:ssc@rcdea.org.uk)

## Interim Monitoring Visit

26<sup>th</sup> June 2018

### St Benedict's Catholic High School – Bury St Edmunds

St Benedict's Catholic High School is an 11-18 mixed comprehensive secondary school. It has 851 pupils on roll, of which 67% are Catholics. It primarily serves the Catholic families of West Suffolk. Pupils mainly come from the primary feeder schools of St Edmunds; Bury St Edmunds, St Felix, Haverhill, St Joseph, Sudbury and St Louis, Newmarket. It is currently operating across two sites, therefore due to time restraints the monitoring visit was based at the Upper School site.

The Head of Religious Education recently went on maternity leave and so Damian Wallace has been appointed Acting Head of Religious Education. The school also has a part-time Lay Chaplain/Chaplaincy Co-ordinator who is a positive influence in school and is line managed by the Deputy Headteacher.

The Interim Visit of five hours included:

- SLT Briefing
- Staff Briefing
- Year 9 Assembly
- Meeting with Headteacher
- Meeting with Head of Humanities, Acting Head of RE and Lay Chaplain/Chaplaincy Co-ordinator
- Pupil Voice meeting with Students in Year 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12
- Work Scrutiny
- Learning Walk of Year 10
- Feedback meeting with Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Acting Head of RE and Lay Chaplain

The school has a very strong Catholic ethos and this is clearly evident in the excellent relationships between all members of the school community. The school's self-evaluation on Catholic life, Religious Education and collective worship is very good. The pupils are very proud of their school and are keen to make it the best school possible. A Year 12 student said that "The school is clearly a Catholic school in the way we treat one another with respect and care". The pupils are actively involved in the Catholic life of the school by participating in a wide range of Liturgies and other celebrations. Pupils in the school articulate a strong sense of community and demonstrate a genuine appreciation of the care provided by their teachers and the School Chaplain.

The Religious Education Department has a suitably high profile within the school. Pupil attainment and progress is excellent particularly at GCSE Level, the gap between pupil premium and non-pupil premium pupils is also being closed. Pupils enjoy their learning and spoke about the varied teaching strategies that teachers use in the classroom including drama, group work, debating, making models as well as book work. Pupils enjoy exploring different ideas and beliefs and have time to reflect on a variety of moral and social issues.

The school has made progress in all the areas of improvement required from the Section 48 Inspection in 2013.

*Seek more opportunities for pupils to have a direct say in shaping the Catholic Life of the school*

Pupils participate in assemblies and leading acts of worship. Pupils have an active role in the music life of the school and there are Sixth Form Chaplaincy ambassadors who support the Chaplain in promoting and organising liturgies throughout the school. The school council are also actively involved in giving feedback to the school on the areas of collective worship and Catholic life.

**The Diocese Inspector suggests to further embed pupils having opportunities to shape the Catholic life of the school that pupils are invited to be members of the Chaplaincy Group/Team.**

*Develop teaching and learning strategies that enable pupil progress in RE lessons to be accelerated.*

Progress has been made in this target as demonstrated by the excellent Religious Education GCSE results and feedback from students on the variety of learning activities that take place in lessons.

**The Diocesan Inspector suggests to further embed the developments made in this area that the department needs to focus on being consistent in its forecasting of pupils targets and ensuring that pupils receive clear feedback to their work and pupils are given time to respond to their teachers comments at the start of lessons.**

*Develop a more rigorous monitoring of the Catholic life of the school by Governors and Leadership Team.*

The school has worked hard on this area and have fully embedded clear systems to monitor the Catholic life of the school and ensure Governors are aware of any issues in this area. The Headteacher reports termly to Governors on Religious Education and Chaplaincy. The Chaplain also produces an annual report to Governors on Catholic life. Catholic life is clearly a priority in the school's Development Plan and the Deputy Headteacher line manages the Chaplain. The school also has a calendar of liturgical themes which form the basis of assemblies and thoughts for tutor time. Assemblies, tutor time and other liturgical celebrations are monitored by the Chaplain and SLT using a standardised pro-forma.

*Review the School's Mission Statement*

The Mission Statement was reviewed in 2014 following the Section 48 Inspection in 2013. However, there have been many changes in the school since 2014, particularly the appointment of the new Headteacher. It is her intention to review the Mission Statement as a priority for 2018/2019.

**The Diocesan Inspector suggests that the school's Mission Statement is reviewed and that all stakeholders in the school are part of the review.**

*Reconsider the decision to exempt A Level RS pupils from the general RE programme*

The school has fully implemented this change and all students now receive the expected 5% of time at KS5 which is delivered through the Extended Project qualification.

The Headteacher and senior leaders and pupils are rightly proud of the school. The whole school community clearly supports the Catholic Christian ethos. Staff and pupils are inducted successfully about the values that underpin the life of the school.

I would like to thank everyone at St Benedict's Catholic High School for such a warm and friendly welcome.

The feedback from the Headteacher regarding the monitoring visit was that it had been a very useful experience for the school.

**Tom Reilly, Section 48 Inspector  
On behalf of the Diocese of East Anglia**