



DIOCESE OF
SHREWSBURY

**REPORT ON THE
MONITORING INSPECTION
OF OUTSTANDING SCHOOLS**

**St John Plessington Catholic College
Bebington**

URN: 139031

25 November 2013

Inspector – Mr J Wilbraham

The areas of focus in this monitoring Inspection were :-

1. **OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS** - How well students achieve and enjoy learning in RE and RS.
2. **LEADERS AND MANAGERS** – How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the College and plan and implement improvement of outcomes for pupils.
3. **PROVISION** – The quality of Collective Worship

This inspection confirms the College's self- evaluation which judges it as **outstanding** in all areas of its provision for Catholic Education

1. OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS

In April 2013 the College was judged by Ofsted as outstanding in respect of outcomes for pupils. While being recognised as one of the top 20% of schools nationally for pupil progress and rapidly improving GCSE results, it was also commended by the Government for its performance relating to *Pupil Premium* and *Free School Meals* measures, with high value added at all levels. This indicates that the College achieves academic success for pupils of all needs and abilities, providing academic challenge at the highest level while supporting the whole range of students with its fully integrated pastoral support system. The College is genuinely and successfully inclusive. In this context RE results have been very strong with steady improvement since the last inspection. Clear progress is made by students in Key Stage 3; for example in 2013 93% of pupils achieved level 5 or above by the end of the Key Stage, this in the light of RAISEonline data which indicates a high proportion of students entering in year 7 'significantly below average'. While the A level 'value added' is among the strongest in the College with a score of + .35. GCSE results have steadily improved since the last inspection with a dip in 2013. This is recognised as an anomaly and rigorous monitoring and intervention strategies are operative and show clear evidence that the upward trend will resume in 2014. The General RE in the Sixth Form is given appropriate time and status and is well delivered.

The standard of teaching in the Department is outstanding as is its leadership and management. Students engage with the subject and enjoy it, while benefitting from clear, consistent and informative assessment and marking. Classrooms are excellent learning environments with stimulating display, resources and activities and clear expectations which mean that pupils are immediately 'on task'. Excellent examples of classroom activities, question and answer techniques and literacy strategies are all evident. Monitoring and evaluation are rigorous with teaching and learning and curricular provision under constant review.

2. LEADERS AND MANAGERS

The leadership and management of the College are outstanding and are characterised by a collective espousal of Gospel values and a unity of purpose in translating them into practice. The Mission Statement, distilled from the motto '*Always Faithful to Christ*', drives the whole College which is outstandingly led by the Headteacher who is in turn supported by a very effective Leadership Team and Governing Body. Leaders and managers at all levels are expected to subscribe to the College's Christian values and it is clear that they do. The Headteacher's vision for the College sees no bounds, taking its values beyond the College's own community to a much wider field; this is where the Academy status and leadership take the College beyond its own community to support other institutions, (in the words of the Academy's Aims) '*witnessing to the Catholic faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ*' while expressing '*a preferential option for the poor and disadvantaged*', with a clear understanding of communal obligations.

The leadership and management of the RE Department is also outstanding with a real sense of purpose and unity and a commitment to high standards. Planning, monitoring and pupil focus are all very effective and supported by a strong link with the Senior Leadership Team.

3. PROVISION

Collective Worship and prayer are a visible and integral component of the daily life of the College. It is facilitated by the work of the chaplain and RE team with excellent support from the staff as a whole. Weekly programmes (derived from the Sunday's Gospel) are provided for daily prayer and reflection. These are led by both teachers and pupils. Pupil ownership and participation in Collective Worship and Liturgy is supported and encouraged. There is evident commitment to high quality, with resources and time committed to ensure this. Examples of this include the annual Christmas Carol Service and the Drama, Dance and Music based Para liturgies such as the 'St John Plessington Passion'. Worship and Prayer-based activities are linked to practical activities which enrich the students' spiritual, moral and cultural education. Examples of this are the charitable activities and experiences such as retreats, residentials, SVP visits to care homes, Christmas shoe box collections, Cafod and Fair Trade activities and the Lourdes pilgrimage. The chaplain plays a vital role in all this and has a very positive influence on the spiritual and pastoral life of the College.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

- Outcomes for pupils, the provision for Catholic Education, leadership and management of the Catholic life of the College and the RE Department are all confirmed by this inspection as Outstanding. The values of the College are strongly evident in terms of practice, aspiration and relationships. Staff as a whole embrace the College's values: according to one comment during the inspection 'staff are the Gospel for young people in the school'. The Catholic nature of the College is seen as something to celebrate.
- Student interviews and evaluations, parental surveys and applications for places at the College all confirm the outstanding achievements and ethos.

IMPROVEMENT SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

- Improvement in academic performance has continued at all levels
- The Key Stage 3 curriculum has been reviewed and improved
- The College's outreach to support other institutions has been enhanced by the Academy status and its underpinning values

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue to aspire to the implementation of the College's mission as presented within its Academy goals and values
- Ensure the continued implementation of the rigorous programme to regain the momentum of the upward trajectory of performance at GCSE