

DIOCESE OF LEEDS DBI



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

MOUNT ST MARY'S CATHOLIC HIGH
Ellerby Rd,
Leeds
LS9 8LA

School URN	108089
School DfCSF Number	383 / 4753
Chair of Governors	MRS C CULKIN
Headteacher	MRS B KING
RE Subject Leader	MRS C DICKINSON
Date of Inspection	June 2010
Section 48 Inspectors	Tony Slade & Mary Mollicone

INTRODUCTION

The Inspection of Mount St Mary's Catholic High School was carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Leeds Diocesan Framework and Schedule for Section 48 Inspections approved by the Bishop of Leeds.

Description of the school

Mount St Mary's High School is a comprehensive Catholic school for pupils aged 11 to 16 within the centre of Leeds. It is a specialist school for Maths and ICT. There are 925 pupils on roll of whom 619 are Catholics, 194 are from other Christian backgrounds and 30 from other faiths. The majority of its catchment area is characterised by major social and economic deprivation and the number of pupils entitled to free meals is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including those with a statement, is also above average. Attainment on entry is well below national and local average. The majority of pupils at the school are White British, although there is a rapidly increasing proportion from black or minority ethnic groups. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. Of the 56 teaching staff, 26 are Catholics. There are 4 specialist teachers in the Religious Education (RE) department. The headteacher is about to retire and one of the deputy heads has been appointed as the new headteacher.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

The overall effectiveness of the provision for the Catholic life of the school, of curriculum RE, and the school's main strengths and areas for development.

Mount St Mary's is an outstanding Catholic school. The hard work in developing the school in all aspects, spiritual, academic and social is evident in the daily life of the school, evidence of this is seen in the financial and moral commitment to a chaplaincy team and in finances required to up-date the facilities for enhancing the teaching of RE. The RE department has made significant advances in the development and delivery of a quality RE curriculum as well as a programme for monitoring pupil progress. Collective Worship is of consistently high quality, not only for the major religious festivals and school events, but for year and form assemblies. Attitudes in the school's leadership team show that there will be no resting on laurels. It is for these reasons that such high grades have been awarded.

The effectiveness of any steps taken to promote improvement since the last inspection

Since the last inspection in November 2006, the school has successfully addressed the issues raised by:

- Reviewing its Mission Statement with full consultation;
- Building up a chaplaincy team;
- Developing Collective Worship;
- Introducing and promoting the effective use of ICT in RE.

The capacity to make further improvements

A major strength of the school is its capacity to analyse itself rigorously. Based on an exceptionally accurate self-awareness, its capacity to improve is outstanding. There is a clarity and determination to progress and this determination is shared by the senior leadership team, the governors and those responsible for the school's religious life and education. In the light of the robust plans already drawn up and being acted upon, no additional steps need to be recommended in order to further improve the provision of Catholic education.

What steps need to be taken in order to further improve the provision of Catholic education?

None.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

How effective are Leadership and Management in developing the Catholic life of the school?

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are outstanding. The headteacher has a clear determination and philosophy to run a school founded on Christian principles. The Mission Statement speaks of developing the full potential of each person, spiritually, academically, socially and physically. This is supported by objectives which include the development of spiritual growth with an understanding of Christian values and the provision of an education rooted in Catholic values and principles. Greater use could be made of the Mission Statement to clarify the philosophy behind the school's actions and plans. However, the school does implement its aims successfully, thanks to a consistent approach adopted by all with managerial responsibility including the governors. This is seen, for example, in devoting an entire in-service training day to 'Catholic Ethos'. The Chair of Governors is justified in her observation that, "*We are proud to belong to this school.*"

This commitment is given professionally and personally. All matters pertaining to the school as a Catholic institution are well in place: a chapel and chaplaincy, extra time for religious activities and services, the provision of high quality pastoral care, excellent staffing for teaching RE and high quality resources. The amount spent on RE in the last financial year was £10526 which was a big increase on the previous year and is now only marginally below the amount spent on other core subjects. There are good standards of behaviour and relationships. A particularly strong characteristic of the school is its success in building commitment to inclusion and cohesion. Many examples of this abound: multi-cultural days, the study of other world religions – including the study of 'RE and Community Cohesion', provision for disadvantaged children are all naturally in the scheme of things. The amount of money raised for charity is quite staggering. The huge amount raised for St Gemma's hospice is thanks in part to those who sang Christmas carols in the middle of Leeds. Money is also raised for Catholic Care, CAFOD and the Sylvia Wright Trust in India. There is substantial financial support for pupils going to Lourdes. Qualities of empathy, care and concern for others are fostered by encouraging

pupils to work with groups in the wider community. Pupils organise a Senior Citizens' Christmas Party and donate food items which are made into hampers for them, and sing at Saxton Garden Flats. A special project has been the successful support for a school in Kichwamba in Uganda. Funding raised by the pupils paid for a school library and ICT room. It is hoped to adopt a new project very soon. It is obvious from conversations with pupils that they enjoy raising money for charity having done so from their own limited means.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

The provision and delivery of Collective Worship is outstanding. There is a priest-chaplain, a lay chaplain and a part-time assistant lay chaplain. They are assisted by many staff and pupils. The Liturgical year e.g. Advent Christmas, Holy Week and Easter is fully celebrated as is the school's own year with celebrations such as the Welcome Mass for Year 7 and the Leavers' Mass for Year 11. The chaplaincy team are the key instrument in organising and assisting in the provision of very high quality services, not only for these special events, but for year and form assemblies. There is a weekly voluntary Mass and in the course of the year there are Class Masses. Recognition is given to the beliefs of other religions, such as the celebration of Hannukah, Diwali and Eid. Four high quality assemblies, with music, pupil participation and excellent use of ICT were observed during the inspection. They were prayerful, meaningful and pupils responded in a thoughtful and attentive manner. The assemblies are monitored by the Senior Leadership Team. Major celebrations are often enhanced by a performance from Expressive Arts pupils, a moving example of which was observed during the inspection. The priest chaplain's work, which includes a pastoral element, is much appreciated. The beautiful chapel, with the Blessed Sacrament reserved, is used for the weekly voluntary Masses and frequent non-liturgical services. It also acts as a sanctuary where pupils are welcome to visit for personal reflection, warmth and support. The chapel 'Prayer Tree' is one particularly imaginative scheme which is very popular. Many staff, not only the RE staff, make a contribution to the quality of religious services. This includes leading prayers at staff briefings. There is an excellent programme of retreats. There are many and varied opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually and deepen their faith. There are whole-year day retreats during Key Stage 3, some of which are held at Leeds Trinity University College in Leeds. Many Year 10 pupils go on the Leeds Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes where they help sick pilgrims. Many pupils take the opportunity to attend a residential retreat at Myddleton Grange. It was clear from the pupils' comments, that these experiences are highly valued. The whole programme makes a huge contribution to social inclusion and cohesion as well as to the spiritual and moral development of pupils. Areas for development include ensuring that the monitoring of Collective Worship is robust, extending the retreat programme and providing further opportunities to celebrate Mass in school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RE

How well do pupils achieve in RE?

Achievements and standards in Religious Education are good. Pupils' work and progress is well monitored. At Key Stage 3, standards are on a par with other subjects. At GCSE the results are well above expectations and have significantly added value. For the last three years, a majority of pupils have taken the Full Course and the percentage obtaining grades A* to C has risen to 58%, with 31 pupils achieving A/A* last year. Overall, 99% of pupils obtained grades A* to G. A minority of pupils have taken the Short Course. A very small number of pupils were not entered for GCSE. In recent years, the proportion of boys with good grades was much lower than that of girls, but current forecasts indicate that the gender gap is about to disappear. These results are amongst the best of other major subjects in the school. Thanks to the efforts of staff, pupils of varying ability, including those with learning difficulties, make good progress.

The quality of provision in RE

How effective are Teaching and learning in RE?

The RE department consists of a team of specialist dedicated teachers who have the drive, skills and commitment to be strong leaders of learning; morale is high and staff share good practice and resources. In the five lessons observed, the majority of teaching was at least good. It is evident that planning is differentiated, highlighting additional needs of pupils to ensure all pupils (including those who have special educational needs as well as the gifted and talented) are challenged to progress in acquiring knowledge and understanding. Hence, all can succeed and make good progress. The positive attitude and behaviour of pupils is commendable and derives, in part, from the stimulating atmosphere created in lessons and the teachers' positive management of pupils. The reward system where 'Gems' are given for good work and attitude is valued by students as they aspire to go on the end of year trip to Flamingo Land. Effective use of ICT by staff in their preparation of learning resources and by pupils in their learning enhances the quality of provision in the classroom. Progress is monitored through regular assessment and pupils record their results in their exercise books allowing them to track their progress. Assessment of pupils' work is regular, consistent and is in line with the department's marking policy. Pupils enjoy their lessons and make good progress as a result of a reasonable level of challenge and the secure atmosphere that promotes self-esteem. One pupil made the comment, "RE is fun but you learn a lot, it is one of my favourite subjects." Parents are involved where appropriate. Areas for development have been clearly identified and include incorporating a spiritual element into every lesson to improve achievement in Attainment Target 2 and to continue to develop quality resources to further enhance lessons and pupils engagement and enjoyment of RE.

How well does the RE curriculum meet the needs and interests of pupils?

The RE curriculum meets external requirements in terms of content (due to the re-writing of Key Stage 3 Schemes of Work to condense KS3 into two years), however, the bishops stipulation of 10% curriculum time is not observed in Key Stage 3. All Schemes of Work

are in place and allow pupils to study and understand the teachings, beliefs, values and way of life of other World Faiths. For GCSE, pupils study the Edexcel Catholic options. Pupils are respectful of all faiths, particularly in relation to diversity in the community, through initiatives such as the Stephen Lawrence Award level 2. The school organises Multi- Cultural days celebrating a range of cultures through music, art, dance, food craft and story telling. A comment from one of the pupils summarises how the RE curriculum contributes to the spiritual and moral development, "There is freedom to give your opinion, you are not judged on your opinion. You learn how people think, but we know what the Catholic Church teaches."

The biological aspect of sex education is taught by science staff and the issues surrounding relationships and other ethical issues are explored in RE lessons. Pupils are given opportunities to pray, reflect and meditate in small groups in the chapel in their RE lessons guided by the Chaplain. Areas for development include developing closer links with PHSCE. to ensure all ethical issues are taught in line with the Catholic Curriculum Directory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF RE

How effective are Leadership and Management in raising achievement and supporting all pupils in RE?

There is a strong sense of the school's mission: leaders and managers at all levels operate as a team totally engaged in this work with a sense of purpose. The department is line-managed by the headteacher. The ethos of the school is evident in the good relationships and the network of support and care that permeates the community. The Head of RE has worked with her staff to improve standards and results in RE. Teachers have been involved in the production of quality ICT teaching resources which have engaged pupils and led to improved performance in G.C.S.E. in particular. Tracking and monitoring is effective, particularly in KS 4. The inclusion of all learners is central to the goal of the school, which promotes diversity and allows pupils to develop academically and spiritually. Resources are well utilised and there is a culture of sharing resources and good practice which enhances curriculum RE. Governors fully support and facilitate the work of all involved in RE, including the Chaplaincy team. Areas for development include continued work by staff at all levels to continue to improve results, narrow the gender gap at G.C.S.E and aim to enter all pupils for public examinations.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS SUMMARY

ASPECT	GRADE	DESCRIPTOR
OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS	1	Outstanding
THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL		
How effective are Leadership and Management in developing the Catholic life of the school?	1	Outstanding
How good is the quality of Collective Worship?	1	Outstanding
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION		
How well do pupils achieve in RE?	2	Good
How effective are Teaching and learning in RE?	2	Good
How well does the RE curriculum meet the needs and interests of pupils?	1	Outstanding
How effective are Leadership and Management in raising achievement and supporting all pupils in RE?	1	Outstanding

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS ANNEX

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective and efficient is the provision of Catholic education in meeting the needs of pupils and why?	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the effectiveness of steps taken to promote improvement since the last inspection 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the capacity to make further improvements 	1

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

How effective are leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school?	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how well the governing body fulfils its role in relation to the school's Catholic foundation 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality care and education 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the quality of the leadership of the headteacher and senior staff in leading and developing the Catholic life of the school 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively the Catholic life of the school is monitored and evaluated 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively leadership at all levels in the school promotes pupils' spiritual and moral development 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively leadership at all levels in the school promotes and provides opportunities for the spiritual development and prayer life of the staff 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the impact of the involvement of the clergy and/or chaplaincy team on the work of the school 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively leadership at all levels promotes the school's contribution to social cohesion 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively leadership at all levels encourages the positive behaviour of pupils 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the extent to which pupils' contribute to the school and broader community 	1

How good is the quality of Collective Worship?	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the frequency and quality of the provision for prayer, Collective Worship and liturgical life of the school 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pupils' response to the school's provision for prayer and worship 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how well Collective Worship contributes to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the inclusive nature of the provision for prayer, Collective Worship and liturgical life of the school 	1

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How well do pupils achieve in RE?	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the standards reached by pupils in RE 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how well pupils make progress in RE, taking account of any significant variations between groups of pupils 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how well pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress in RE 	2

How effective are teaching and learning in RE?	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that pupils are well taught in RE 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how well teaching is used to meet the full range of pupils' needs in RE 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the effectiveness of planning, monitoring and assessment in RE 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the extent to which pupils enjoy their work in RE 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the involvement of parents and carers in their children's learning in RE 	2

How well does the Religious Education curriculum meet the needs and interests of pupils?	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how far the RE curriculum meets external requirements 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the extent to which pupils are gaining a knowledge and developing an understanding of the teachings, beliefs, values and way of life of other world faiths 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the suitability of family life and sex education, education in personal relationships and citizenship education 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the extent to which the curriculum in RE contributes to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how far the RE curriculum promotes social cohesion 	1

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all pupils in Religious Education?	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively subject leaders in RE set clear direction and provide support leading to improvement 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively performance in RE is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all pupils achieve as well as they can in RE 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively and efficiently RE resources are deployed 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the extent to which governors discharge their responsibilities in RE 	1