

DIOCESE OF LEEDS



DIOCESAN BOARD FOR INSPECTIONS

# SECTION 48 FINAL REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL  
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

**MOUNT ST MARY'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL**  
Ellerby Road, Leeds, LS9 8LA

School URN	108097
School DfE Number	383/4753
E-mail address	thehub@mountstmarys.org
Chair of Governors	Cinta Culkin
Headteacher	Mark Cooper
RE Subject Leader	Cath Dickinson
Date of Inspection	23 <sup>rd</sup> – 24 <sup>th</sup> October 2013
Section 48 Inspector/s	Paul Martin and Marie Evans

## INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection Grades: 1 is Outstanding, 2 is Good, 3 requires improvement in order to be good, 4 is Inadequate

**OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:** how effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.

2

*The above judgement on overall effectiveness is based on all the available evidence following the evaluation of:*

- *Outcomes for pupils,*
- *The provision for Catholic Education*
- *Leaders and Managers*

**OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS**

2

**THE PROVISION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION**

2

**LEADERS AND MANAGERS**

2

**Summary of key findings:**

### **This is Good school**

- The overall effectiveness and provision for Catholic Education is good with some outstanding features. Leaders, managers and governors are all firmly committed to the Church's mission in education. Their enthusiasm, coupled with hard work, shines through in everything they do to ensure that pupils benefit from the Catholic life of the school. The headteacher is skilfully driving the school towards further improvement whilst maintaining a loving and caring community. Staff are supportive of one another and work effectively together as a strong team for the benefit of all pupils.
- The monitoring and evaluation systems of the Catholic life of the school need to be strengthened.
- Pupils come from a wide variety of different cultures but they show a mutual respect through their caring attitude towards one another and they benefit enormously from the Catholic life of the school. They are proud of their backgrounds and are equally proud of belonging to the Mount St Mary's community. They are ready to be given more leadership roles in shaping and evaluating the Catholic life of the school.
- The Religious Education (RE) Department is led with focus and clarity. Good practice is firmly embedded and the majority of teaching in RE is good with some outstanding. The school does not achieve the full 10% lesson requirement in RE across all year groups. Results at Key Stage 4 (KS4) are on a positive trend and robust tracking systems for ongoing analysis of progress demonstrate that this will continue although some gaps in attainment between sub-groups need to be closed.

## **What the school needs to do to improve further.**

- Create clear leadership and management roles focusing on the Catholic life of the school and incorporating systems of monitoring and evaluation involving all stakeholders including pupils.
- Continue to raise attainment of all sub-groups by further developing the quality of teaching through sharing outstanding practice.
- Further develop pupil outcomes by giving more opportunities for pupils to become leaders, within, for example, their own chaplaincy group and supported by the lay Chaplain.

## **Information about this inspection**

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 Diocesan Administrator of Leeds. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation and the inspection schedule follows the criteria set by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA 2012).

The inspectors reviewed in detail the following aspects:

- Observation of nine lessons covering both key stages and all teachers of RE;
- Examination of pupils' written work, teacher assessment and written feedback;
- Meetings with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, RE leader, Lay Chaplain/chaplaincy team, governors, pupils and parents;
- Examination of school and department documentation including school improvement plans, policies, monitoring and evaluation records, planning and assessment files;
- Acts of worship in two year groups and in four form groups covering both stages as well as Year 8 Form Mass.

## **Information about this school**

- The size of the school is average compared to others of the same type.
- Mount St Mary's serves the Catholic communities of the Inner East, South and West of the city and the parishes of St Patrick's; St Joseph's, Hunslet; Christ the King, Bramley; Holy Family, Armley; St Francis of Assisi, Holbeck; St Anthony's, Beeston and St Philip's, Middleton.
- 54% of the pupil population are Catholic, 26% Christian, 6% other faiths and 14% of no faith.
- Approximately 50% of the teaching staff are Catholic with 20% having the CCRS or equivalent.
- The school has recently been through a period of extensive rebuilding and refurbishment.

- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for both the Pupil Premium and school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- There is an above average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages and who speak English as an Additional Language. Pupils come from a wide variety of different heritages and speak many different languages.

## Full report - inspection judgements

### Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils are Good

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school.	<b>1</b>
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	<b>2</b>
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.	<b>2</b>

- Pupils participate in a wide range of activities including those which involve specific year groups and more recently with respect to House groups. Pupils give up their time freely and contribute with effort and enthusiasm. Following a Year 9 Retreat, for example, a few pupils took on leadership of the CAFOD group and since then twenty pupils in year 10 have continued with this work.  
Pupils are very generous with their support for others both within and beyond the school. The school has a long tradition of supporting St Gemma's Hospice, Macmillan Nurses, CAFOD and Catholic Care. Although pupils come from a wide variety of different cultures and speak many different languages, they show a mutual respect through their caring attitude towards one another. They are proud of their backgrounds and are equally proud of belonging to the Mount St Mary's community. As one pupil commented, "The school teaches you to become a better person, we are allowed to be who we are and we get on with each other."  
The "Young Leaders" initiative involves pupils in various leadership and peer support opportunities across the school. For example, some of them take on responsibilities to help those in the early years with Numeracy and Literacy. Others support Year 6 pupils as they make the transition from primary to secondary school. Such an initiative could be widened to include Catholic life / chaplaincy young leaders on a more formal basis than exists at present. Pupils willingly act as prefects and form representatives are involved in the school council. They are ready to be given more leadership roles in shaping and evaluating the Catholic life of the school.
- The outcomes for pupils in RE are good and show every indication of further improving in the next academic year. The results at KS4 are on a positive trend and robust tracking systems for ongoing analysis of progress demonstrate that this will continue. Pupils speak positively about their enjoyable yet challenging experiences in RE and appreciate its value and relevance within school. They are aware of other world religions and the diversity that exists within the school. They are allowed to be who they are and also to give their opinion. Pupils have a clear sense of the progress they are making and in how they can improve. They speak with real enthusiasm about the

various teaching styles employed within RE, particularly at Key Stage 3 (KS3), where they perform well and this shows every indication of improving further. Achievement at KS4 is certainly comparable with English and Mathematics and this comparison will be more valid once entry for the full RE GCSE is achieved. However, some underachievement exists with, for example, school action SEN pupils and gaps need to be closed. The school now has a plethora of data and relevant staff are skillfully analysing where attainment gaps exist with appropriate identification of what action needs to be taken.

- During a Year 8 Form Mass, pupils acted as liturgical ministers which they did skilfully and with confidence. Four girls sang beautifully and overall the pupils had a very positive experience and were very well led by their Form Tutor in addition to the lay chaplain. All pupils were keen to be involved and were observed to be participating. Pupils were respectful during a year 10 assembly and although impeccably behaved, the overall impression was one of rather passive involvement to what was otherwise a good and meaningful act of worship. On this occasion some pupils were alert and confident in reading and being part of the provision but it was not widespread. Pupils talk with confidence about their involvement in Collective Worship and how they sometimes take the lead in prayer in both whole year liturgies and in form groups. Pupils have the opportunity to compose their own prayers but generally there is some reliance on the adults of the school.
- A small number of pupils attend voluntary activities including, for example, Rosary during October, Stations of the Cross in Lent and the Diocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage. A large number of pupils in Year 11 attended the Retreat to Myddelton Grange in June.

## The provision for Catholic Education is Good

The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education.	<b>2</b>
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning.	<b>1</b>
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.	<b>2</b>

- The majority of teaching in RE is good and sometimes outstanding. Planning makes evident strong strands of consistency across the Department in both key stages and covers a broad range of issues and themes. A variety of teaching and learning styles are employed including group work, treasure hunts and carousel research activities. In one Year 8 class, pupils were able to explore Jewish celebrations and festivals using a range of resources and group work tasks. At KS4, pupils were encouraged to debate and discuss a range of issues, focusing extensively on issues surrounding environment and medical issues. Behaviour for learning was seen to be good, though at times could be passive. Regular assessment tasks coupled with on-going marking and feedback of written work, ensure that most pupils are aware of the level they are working at and generally know what they need to do to improve. Teachers should, however, ensure that the written feedback is followed up.
- There is clear progression throughout both key stages. In Year 7, pupils are able to build on their knowledge and understanding of key areas of Catholic life, encouraging a deeper understanding of the faith. There is ample evidence of exploration of other faiths. In Year 9, pupils are able to study Islam, enabling them to understand key

themes that will later emerge at GCSE. Similarly, in Year 8 pupils explore the Jewish faith in a comprehensive and detailed way.

- The curriculum is carefully planned and reviewed. Pupils are able to see RE within its wider context within the school and its links with other subjects, for example, Personal Social Health Education (PSHE) and History. These cross-curricular links should be further developed and extended, perhaps strengthening links with Science in the delivery of Sex and Relationship Education (SRE). The curriculum caters for the range of needs within the school and takes into account the wealth of backgrounds. There is a clear focus on sharing the Catholic faith with pupils and this serves to evangelize those individuals who are of a non-faith background. Similarly, the nature of the curriculum in both key stages promotes community cohesion and tolerance. Pupils are encouraged to develop their attitudes and ideas towards others in a way that is at one with the Gospel values, this is evident in the Schemes of Work across all key stages and in the overall programme of study. RE makes a strong contribution to the Spiritual and Moral development of all pupils.
- The curriculum is coherent with the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and the requirements of the National Curriculum. However, the school does not achieve its full 10% lesson requirement. Strategies are in place to address this to some extent, for example, during PSHE, pupils are encouraged to reflect on the Gospel values as they consider wider social and personal issues. One such lesson saw pupils in Year 11 who had been identified as requiring sustained intervention, preparing their own assembly working with the Parable of the Prodigal Son and connecting this to their own desire to change and seek self-improvement.
- During a visit to Year 7 morning registration, prayer was led by the Form Teacher who voluntarily prepares Collective Worship resources for two days per week for other tutors. This was a good provision with some outstanding features and pupils were obviously used to the well-structured use of time. Generally though, most resources for form prayer are prepared by either the lay chaplain or other committed staff. Increasingly other staff as well as pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for planning and delivering worship. Tutors are also becoming involved in the planning. The Lay Chaplain who attends Form tutor Meetings when requested supports year leaders and tutors in this planning. Inspectors joined a Year 8 group for a Form Mass in the well-resourced chapel and pupils along with staff enjoyed the experience. Year 7 have a pastoral day at the beginning of their first term culminating in a Welcome Mass attended by a good number of parents. Year 9 have opportunity to go on retreat to Savio House, Year 10 to Lourdes on the Diocesan Pilgrimage and Year 11 to Myddelton Grange but this is not repeated for other year groups. Further development of retreat opportunities for all would be beneficial.

## **The Leadership and Management are Good**

<b>How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Catholic Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.</b>	<b>2</b>
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- Leaders, managers and governors are all firmly committed to the Church's mission in education. Their enthusiasm, coupled with hard work, shines through in everything they do to ensure that pupils benefit from the Catholic life of the school. The headteacher is skilfully driving the school towards further improvement whilst maintaining a loving and caring community. Staff are very supportive of one another and work effectively together as a strong team for the benefit of all pupils. The school has recently consolidated the range of leadership roles including the clear mapping of responsibility and line management structures across all subjects. Leaders have identified the need to "consolidate and enhance the Catholic ethos at all levels". Effective monitoring and evaluation of the *present* systems and structures, coupled with a review of responsibilities concerning the Catholic life of the school will clearly support such an opportunity. Not all pupils are aware of the school's distinctive mission and *their involvement* in the evaluation and shaping of the school's mission will prove invaluable.
- Dedicated staff along with the lay chaplain and other leaders make up the staff chaplaincy group which meets every half term to review and plan upcoming events. Staff are passionate about ensuring pupils have a quality experience for key liturgical events including, for example, the Welcome Mass for Year 7 and a Year 11 Leavers' Mass. School leaders expect morning prayers to be said each day along with the symbolic lighting of a candle in each form room. This is monitored along with other procedures pertaining to the form registration time through occasional "corridor walks" by year leaders who complete a tick box monitoring sheet. However, this does not measure the *quality* of Collective Worship and as such the provision is variable with leaders being unable to effectively evaluate the provision and plan purposefully for improvements. The Lay Chaplain seeks the views of pupils through informal methods following school liturgies.
- The RE Department is led with focus and clarity. Good practice is firmly embedded across the department. This can be evidenced both within the classroom and with the consistent planning and assessment that takes place across both key stages. The school is planning to enter all pupils for the full GCSE course. Leaders ensure that RE target grades are set centrally, challenging and above expectations. Systems are in place for tackling underachievement throughout the year with robust systems for monitoring and evaluating performance across all areas of the RE department.
- The school works hard to ensure that pupils belonging to specific sub-groups are identified and provided with good opportunities. Pupils in Year 11 are offered alternative routes to achievement via the Catholic Offsite Student Provision (COSP), which strives to ensure that all pupils are included, even those with the most challenging behavioural needs.
- The Lay Chaplain sees herself as the spiritual leader in school, a witness to her faith and a role model, offering support where needed and coordinating a wide range of liturgical events. Not all pupils, however, are aware of either her role or how she could be a support to them in their journey in faith.
- The RE curriculum is coherent with the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and the requirements of the National Curriculum. However, the school does not provide the full 10% lesson requirement across all year groups: governors and leaders are advised to review this situation.
- Governors are fully committed, loyal and passionate about their work. They are consulted through reports from leaders and managers but they have not been involved in the production of the S48 SEF. Link governors are now attached to various subject

areas including RE and as such they are becoming more knowledgeable and ultimately more challenging in their role. However, such links need to be extended to take into account the Catholic life of the school and Collective Worship so that governors have a keen understanding of the part they can play in shaping and supporting these areas. The school is well supported by the school chaplain and support is available when requested from other priests within the diocese.

- The school is a welcoming place for parents and they in turn are grateful for the range of opportunities the school provides in helping their children grow spiritually. One parent commented that “school is very inclusive and no one is left out. Children feel they can pray and practise their faith without fear or disrespect. Parents, teachers and pupils all work together here.”