

DIOCESE OF LEEDS



DIOCESAN BOARD FOR INSPECTIONS

SECTION 48
FINAL REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

St Mary's Menston, A Catholic Voluntary Academy
Bradford Road, Menston, Leeds LS29 6AE

School URN	108094
School DfE Number	4601
E-mail address	admin@stmarysmenston.org
Chair of Governors	Mr Bob Lavery
Acting Headteachers	Mr Thomas Rothwell Miss Catherine Garrett
RE Subject Leader	Catherine Collard
Date of Inspection	31 st March / 1 st April 2014
Section 48 Inspectors	Paul Martin / Liz McGuire

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.

1

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

1

THE PROVISION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

1

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

1

Summary of key findings:

This is an outstanding school

- The acting headteachers, along with other key leaders, have been instrumental in driving up standards and making St Mary's Catholic Academy a beacon of excellence whilst ensuring the Catholic mission of the school is firmly embedded within all aspects of the community. A strong and skillful team of committed governors has provided effective challenge and support.
- Standards in RE have improved since the last S48 inspection and are now very high across all key stages with outstanding progress being made by the majority of pupils. Teaching across KS3, KS4 and in the sixth form (general RE and A/ AS level) is now mainly good and some is outstanding. Leadership and management of RE have improved and are now strong.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Students in the sixth form make an outstanding contribution, supporting and leading both within and beyond the school across a wide range of initiatives.
- Pupils, including those in the sixth form, are highly responsible and greatly enthusiastic about contributing to and benefiting from the Catholic Life of the school. This is as a result of an extensive range of opportunities and roles provided by a dedicated staff seeking to further the spiritual, social and academic needs of all pupils.
- Prayer life is central to the school community and staff provide excellent resources to engage all pupils and members of the school.
- The school offers many opportunities for pupils of all ages and abilities to put 'faith into action.' The whole community demonstrates a moral conscience in a wide variety of

charitable activities and social enterprise: this is evident, for example, in the school's excellent support for education in South Africa, through the Bambisanani Partnership.

- Pupils openly talk about the distinctive nature of the school and to their commitment to improving the lives of others. Their excellent relationships with one another and adults in the school community are testament to the very positive effect the school has on their lives.

What the school needs to do to improve further.

- To further develop monitoring and evaluation systems of the Catholic Life of the school and Collective Worship, as part of strategic planning, ensuring that pupils are fully involved in this process.
- To review curriculum provision and weighting in a) RE at KS4 and b) General RE at KS5.

Information about this inspection

The Inspection of St Mary's Menston, a Catholic Voluntary Academy 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 9 lessons and 1 tutorial / PSHE lesson covering all key stages and all teachers of Religious Education (RE).
- Examination of pupils' written work, teacher assessment and written feedback.
- Meetings with the acting headteachers, members of the senior leadership team, RE leaders, PHSE leaders, lay chaplain/chaplaincy group, governors, pastoral teams, pupils and parents.
- Examination of school and department documentation including school improvement plans, policies, monitoring and evaluation records, planning and assessment files, partnership and project files.
- Collective Worship in a Year 7/8 assembly and in three form groups in addition to a range of voluntary worship.
- Inspectors also visited a staff briefing and RE department meeting.

Information about this school

- Mixed 11-18 voluntary academy with 1236 pupils on roll including 291 in the Sixth Form. Retention rates from Year 11 to 12 are high (70%).

- The school became an Academy in March 2013 being part of The Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust with the five Catholic primary schools of the Wharfedale deanery - St. Joseph's Otley, St. Joseph's Pudsey, St. Mary's Horsforth, Sacred Heart Ilkley and Ss Peter and Paul Yeadon.
- The school serves the parishes of Addingham, Burley in Wharfedale, Horsforth, Ilkley, Otley, Pudsey and Yeadon.
- The school is non-selective, although pupils' attainment on entry is above the national average as shown by Key Stage 2 SATs results. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (3.5%) is below the national average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is all well below the national average.
- RE curriculum expenditure is on par with other core curriculum areas. Approximately 98% of pupils aged 11 – 16 are baptised Catholic. The figure for Post 16 is around 85% in both year groups. There are 78 fte teaching staff, 38 fte are Catholic and 3 teachers have the CCRS or equivalent.

Full report - inspection judgements

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils are outstanding

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

- The pupils at St. Mary's are happy, confident and secure in developing their spiritual and emotional growth. They take full advantage of the rich and varied academic, spiritual and social development opportunities available to them. These include: - retreats, diocesan pilgrimages and events, work with CAFOD, the John Paul II Foundation for Sport and Stephen Lawrence Award initiatives. Pupils take responsibility for shaping and leading many of these opportunities. The international school work through the Bambisanani Partnership and the associated student enterprise initiative for fund-raising are exemplary. Sixth form students have the opportunity to visit rural South Africa to teach and experience the culture of the village. One pupil stated, "There is a real connection and power there. A sense of wanting to do more."
- There is a strong sense of pupils' willingness to express their beliefs and celebrate their faith in the Catholic tradition in a spirit of respect and social justice. Pupils are happy and proud of their school: they are supportive of the school values in being caring, forgiving and respectful of one another. One pupil commented that, "There is a community spirit of support for staff and families. Children are transformed here."
- Many sixth form students volunteer to act as mentors and tutors to pupils in the main school offering educational, spiritual and emotional support.

- Pupils are regularly praised for being excellent ambassadors of the school. A Youth Ministry worker has enabled good links to be developed with some parishes leading to an increase in pupil involvement.
- Fund raising for charities such as Martin House, Catholic Care, and St. Gemma's Hospice is outstanding and many events are organised by the pupils themselves.
- Chaplaincy groups play an important role in the life of the school. Pupils have a 'voice' through the school and year councils and they participate with enthusiasm in decisions on school and community activities. The Student Council has a chaplaincy student representative to ensure that spiritual life matters are effectively communicated in both directions.
- Standards in RE are very high across the key stages with outstanding progress now being made by the majority of pupils. The difference in attainment between boys and girls is narrowing. Performance at Key Stage 4 (KS4) has been over 80% for the last four years and in 2012/2013 was significantly above national figures at A*-A and A*-C. Performance at Key Stage 5 (KS5) is high. Over the last three years students have attained over 45% A*-B grades (A2) and attained over 50% A-B in the last two years at AS. However, despite good attainment at AS fewer pupils take up RE at A2. The provision for students attending General RE lessons (CRS) in Year 12 is relatively new and needs to be extensively reviewed.
- Pupil representatives from across all year groups stated that lessons were creative, interesting and that they felt challenged. Pupils enjoy RE and this was evident from lesson observations, pupil work scrutiny, reviews and conversations during the inspection.
- Most pupils concentrate very well and are able to independently manage tasks without direction from the teacher. They have developed an enthusiasm for tackling independent and challenging work. They clearly want to succeed and are keen to extend and improve their learning: this is highly commendable.
- Pupils regularly participate, prepare and lead worship with enthusiasm and confidence from Year 7 upwards as a result, for example, of witnessing good leadership by sixth-form students. Liturgical celebrations and events are enthusiastically supported by a range of choir, orchestra and drama groups. Pupils were able to articulate the opportunities for prayer and worship during their school day and they place great value on the impact this has on them individually and as a community.
- During the inspection pupils, staff and the Lay Chaplain contributed to reflections and acts of worship in daily prayer, form time, year group assemblies, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, silent prayer in the chapel, and at a staff briefing. Pupils and staff have many occasions to worship as a community and equally there are many opportunities to pray and reflect silently and peacefully as individuals. Various voluntary acts of worship were seen to be well attended by members of St Mary's community during the inspection. Pupils are at ease when praying in a range of situations, both within the school and when participating in extra-curricular activities. The chapel is well used by pupils and they recognise and appreciate this resource.
- The staff and pupils make extensive use of the chaplaincy and this work is well led by a highly spiritual and caring Lay Chaplain. Pupils respond naturally and participate with enthusiasm in the liturgical celebrations with a good understanding of the Gospel values. Pupil involvement in effectively monitoring and evaluating Collective Worship needs to be further developed as part of the school's strategic planning.

The provision for Catholic Education is outstanding

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

- Pupils are taught in mixed ability groups that enable all students to strive for the best and which encourage a positive working environment. They are set challenging targets and these are tracked, with appropriate intervention, throughout the year. Pupils who excel in leadership, effort and attainment are sent postcards each half term and pupils value this initiative.
- Teaching across KS3 and KS4 and in the sixth form (general RE and A/ AS level) is mainly good, some is outstanding and here pupils make excellent progress where challenge and pace are appropriate. Teachers generally have strong subject knowledge and use a range of high quality resources. The learning observed during inspection was often stimulating and memorable with most pupils actively engaged and enjoying their learning.
- As a result of good assessment procedures, teachers plan well to meet the needs of all pupils. An experienced teaching assistant, working closely with class teachers, makes an excellent contribution to the progress of pupils in need of support. The department seeks the views of pupils and aims to evaluate and plan for future learning as a result of the feedback.
- Pupils are provided with detailed feedback, both orally and through marking using a range of stamps covering success, challenge and tips on how to improve. In discussion pupils knew how well they had done and what they needed to do to sustain progress. One pupil stated, "They care for us and are determined for you to succeed and there is an open door policy to support us at all times."
- There is a policy and programme for Education in Personal Relationships which is also supported by Respect and Health Fairs in a programme of PSHE and SEAL and this meets with the teachings of the Church and which ensures pupil dignity is respected. An observed PSHE lesson had good pace and challenge and was both highly interactive and engaging for pupils.
- The RE curriculum is imaginative and well-resourced. This needs to be reviewed however, to ensure that it provides increased opportunities for spiritual, moral development and vocational understanding. The team draws on expertise within and beyond the school and regularly involves using other agencies in the delivery of the modules for example Sylvia Wright, and these are designed to be relevant and informative.
- Extra-curricular opportunities are varied, have a high take up and are much enjoyed. Pupils from each key stage were keen to express their appreciation of the range of enrichment activities which they recognised as developing their social, moral, spiritual and cultural responsibilities. They particularly enjoy the opportunities for retreats and pilgrimages and the school should endeavour to investigate alternative retreat programmes/venues due to the current ones being always oversubscribed.

- Students attend a weekly General RE lesson (CRS) in year 12 and participate in two `drop down` days in Year 13, run by `Ten Ten` theatre company and the RE team, based around moral and ethical issues. Regular monitoring and evaluation of these relatively new courses by leaders and students, will lead to more effective planning and further development.
- The governors need to review the new plans for RE and check that the recommendation to deliver 10% RE across KS3 and KS4 along with 5% time across Years 12 and 13 is met.
- Prayer life is integral to the school community and staff provide excellent resources to engage all pupils and members of the school in deep inspirational and spiritual thought. The school day begins with an opportunity to join Morning Prayer in the dedicated chapel. The celebration of the Eucharist, such as the Inaugural Mass of the Academy, is seen as at the heart of Catholic school belief and celebration. Prayer opportunities for staff and pupils are held at times to encourage participation by all members of the community and are planned to focus on daily needs and the liturgical calendar.
- A dedicated chaplaincy group, drawn from across the school, has a wealth of experience and expertise in planning, organizing, and leading pupil involvement in a programme of internal and external events which supports good spiritual formation. The group are highly skilled in helping pupils to plan and deliver quality worship at year and whole school gatherings. They ensure pupils' liturgical formation is well planned, appropriate to their ability, and shows progression from year to year.
- The observed Year 7 and 8 Assembly focused on the events of Holy Week. Pupils, led by sixth form students, participated in a creative and engaging dramatisation of the liturgy as well as an opportunity for reflection. This reflected a deep understanding of the Church's mission and the spiritual formation of all pupils. Several form groups were visited and in each instance, pupils were involved in prayer and reflection in an atmosphere of respect and reverence. Detailed monitoring of Collective Worship during form time will provide leaders with accurate information as to how to continue supporting all staff in this role.

The Leadership and Management are outstanding

How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Catholic Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.	1
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- The acting headteachers, along with other key leaders, have been instrumental in driving up standards and making St Mary's Catholic Academy a beacon of excellence. They have ensured that leaders and staff at every level are equally as passionate, enthusiastic and committed as they are in their efforts to communicate the mission, ethos and vision of Catholic Education. This is a remarkable achievement considering that the school has had a period of instability at headship level since the last S48 inspection.
- A training day dedicated to developing the new Mission Statement provided the catalyst for empowering everyone connected with the school to be re-energised in its quest for excellence. There is firm evidence of the Mission Statement permeating policy and practice across all areas of the school.

- The monitoring and evaluation of the Catholic Life and Collective Worship are effective and strong, thereby continuing to ensure that the school's Catholic mission is a priority. Further involvement of pupils in this could be developed as part of strategic planning, covering all areas of provision.
- The leadership within the RE department is outstanding. This has ensured that standards have risen since the last S48 inspection and are now very high across all key stages with outstanding progress being made by pupils at all levels.
- The pastoral team is highly experienced in meeting pupils' needs and ensuring that, in partnership with support agencies and Catholic Care, suitable provision is made to support both pupils and families. The team placed an emphasis on consistent pastoral care which enables pupils to flourish and participate in life and in being fulfilled.
- The leadership team and the governors have engaged effectively with primary school partners, parents, pupils and the staff in taking the school forward to Academy status.
- Scrutiny of documentation, development plans and newsletters indicated that there was a consistently high level of provision for the pupils in all aspects of school life.
- The governors' standards committee scrutinises outcomes and the pastoral committee focuses on the religious and wider Catholic aspects of the school. There are link governors for Religious Education, attendance, health and safety, child protection and Special Educational Needs. Governors are enthusiastic and active participants in the life of the school, offering challenge and support across all areas including the Catholic Life of the school.
- Pupils benefit significantly and exceptionally well in achievement and well-being as a result of highly developed partnerships and collaborative work with providers and professional services across the local community, the Leeds Diocese and with the University of Leeds. These partnerships provide pastoral, spiritual, academic and welfare support to ensure good Catholic well-being. The school also engage in partnership work for teacher training in Catholic schools with Leeds Trinity University.