

# DIOCESE OF LEEDS



## DIOCESAN BOARD FOR INSPECTIONS

### CANON LAW 806 FINAL INSPECTION REPORT INCORPORATING SECTION 48

#### THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL  
Upton St, Batley WF17 8PH

School URN

107732

Date of S48 inspection and  
OE grade

28<sup>th</sup> February/1<sup>st</sup> March 2019  
Good

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Chair of Governors

Mrs A. Crowther

Headteacher

Mrs N. Grant

RE Subject Leader

Mrs J. Blanchfield

Date and grade of last S48  
Inspection

16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> October 2013

Section 48 Inspector/s

Mrs E. Taylor/Mrs W. Walsh

## 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 is the school in providing Catholic Education.

2

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

**CATHOLIC LIFE**

1

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

2

**COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

1

**Summary of key findings:**

**This is a good Catholic school.**

- St Mary's is a warm, welcoming, caring and inclusive school with a profound Catholic ethos. All leaders have a strong sense of their responsibility to the Church, the school and the community. The shared sense of mission and vision result in a school where all stakeholders feel valued.
- The school's mission statement, '*We live, love and learn together with Jesus as our guide,*' is lived out throughout the school and is tangible as soon as the school is entered, leading to a strong feeling of family and belonging.
- The headteacher's personal faith and commitment to the school and the families within it is a strength of the school. This is acknowledged by parents, governors, staff and children. As a result of this, pastoral care within the school is given a very high priority and is highly effective. Staff and pupils are supported formally and informally and opportunities for personal growth are offered to all. A Catholic Care worker is employed by the school and his role is effective and appreciated.
- Pupils are extremely well behaved and have clear care and respect for themselves and for each other. Pride in their school is articulated by the pupils and is shown through the acts of kindness and consideration which were witnessed throughout the inspection.
- Collective Worship (CW) is outstanding and is central to the life of the school. Pupils are taught the correct liturgical responses from a very early age and participate in Collective Worship with reverence and enjoyment.

A wide and varied range of Collective Worship is offered to all pupils and staff and worship planned and led by pupils is of a very high standard. Pupils' attitudes to Collective Worship are excellent, showing respect, reverence and engagement.

- The school's mission statement is embraced by the children and staff. This has been set to music by members of staff and is regularly and enthusiastically sung by the children. The statement is also recited by the pupils either at the beginning or the conclusion of each act of Collective Worship and has resulted in a living statement which the pupils know and take to heart.
- Foundation governors continue to ensure that the Catholic Church's education mission is adhered to as well as continuing to offer support to the headteacher and senior leaders. They are deeply committed to the school's future and its further development.
- The parish priest is very involved with the school and offers his support and expertise in a range of ways including teaching the pupils about each part of the mass. He encourages worship both within the parish church and in school. His commitment to and pride in the school is clear.
- Religious Education (RE) teaching is good and where practice is strongest, is outstanding. Generally, pupils are engaged and enthusiastic about their work.
- RE leadership is effective, the RE coordinator provides valuable support and expertise to all staff and is now mentoring others beyond the school.
- Curriculum provision is enhanced by the use of creative strategies and also by different initiatives such as the study of other faiths and work with charitable organisations, for example Minnie Vinnies, Rotakids and Mission Together.

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

- Ensure teaching and learning continues to improve in consistency through:
  - Developing a more rigorous and regular cycle of evaluations of RE lessons and pupils' work.
  - Identifying the strengths and areas for development of individual teachers so that appropriate support and challenge can be given.
- Ensure the 'I can' statements are used effectively to plan challenges that will deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding, especially for boys and the more able, and provide feedback which challenges as well as celebrates pupils' learning.
- Increase the proportion of existing outstanding teaching by sharing the outstanding teaching that is apparent in some classes across the school.

## Information about this inspection

The inspection of St Mary's Batley 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. 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 2017).

The inspectors reviewed in detail the following aspects:

- How successfully the school has addressed the points for improvement arising from the last inspection.
- The provision made by the school for Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship.
- How pupils contribute and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their RE.
- The quality of teaching in RE and how well pupils respond to this.
- The RE curriculum and how well it promotes pupils' learning.
- How well pupils contribute to and benefit from Collective Worship in the school.
- Leadership and management and how well they promote and monitor the provision for Catholic Education at St Mary's.

The inspection was carried out over two days by two inspectors.

- The inspectors carried out a focused tour of the school with the headteacher.
- Teaching and learning were observed in eight classes, covering all key stages.
- Five acts of Collective Worship were observed led by teachers, small groups of children, a whole class and a senior leader.
- Detailed discussions took place with the headteacher, RE subject lead, members of the school council and Mini Vinnies, the parish priest along with the chair of governors and one other foundation governor. Further discussions were also undertaken with members of staff (including support staff), pupils, parents and grandparents.
- The Catholic nature of the learning environment was scrutinised in classrooms and shared areas.
- The school self evaluation document (DSEF), timetabling of RE, headteacher's reports to governors and minutes were also studied as was the school's evidence of monitoring, evaluation and assessment data.
- The school website was also sampled where examples of newsletters for parents could also be seen and evaluated.

- Responses to both last year's and this current year's parental surveys were provided and evidence taken from these.
- A very detailed work scrutiny of pupils' RE books was undertaken using their current English work as a comparison.

### Information about this school

- St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Batley, is a popular, highly regarded one and a half form entry voluntary aided Catholic primary school serving the parish of St Mary of the Angels.
- The planned admission number for the school is 45 and pupil on roll numbers over recent years has generally remained static.
- The school educates pupils from ages 3 – 11. The nursery numbers have declined this year due to more parents requiring provision of a more flexible service.
- Currently there are 329 pupils on roll of whom 70% are baptised Catholics, 7% from other Christian backgrounds, 2% are of another faith and 21% without a declared religious affiliation.
- The school serves a mixed catchment area where pupils are drawn for a range of home backgrounds and circumstances. The index of multiple deprivation (IMD) shows that 32.35% of pupils come from 20% of the most deprived areas in the country with 65% of pupils in the lowest 30% (as at the January 2018 census).
- The number of pupils in receipt of free school meals (FSM) is 22% which is above the national average of 14%.
- The number of pupils speaking English as an additional language is low at 4% although there has been a very slight increase in recent years.
- Pupils registered for special educational needs support stands at 16%. Nine pupils (2%) have an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP).
- The school is staffed by 12 full time and 4 part time teachers.
- The school is an active member of the North Kirklees Catholic Cluster as well as the local pyramid of schools who feed St. John Fisher Catholic High School. The school also works with colleagues across Calderdale and Bradford.

## Full report - inspection judgements

### CATHOLIC LIFE

#### The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.	1
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school	1

- The Catholic Life of the school is given the highest priority by all members of the school community. All stakeholders are inspired by the school mission, *'We live, love and learn together with Jesus as our guide,'* which is lived out daily in school both within and beyond lessons.
- Pupils are rightly proud of their school and very appreciative of it. They extol the characteristics of St Mary's in terms of the provision offered and the team who teach and care for them throughout the year.
- They behave extremely well and care for one another following the model given to them by their teachers and senior leaders, where children's individual needs are known and met.
- This can be evidenced from comments made by parents including one whose child has special educational needs who could not praise school highly enough saying, 'My child learns differently from other children, but these teachers can't do enough for him. He is so happy here.'
- Likewise, along with the very high standard of behaviour always on display throughout the school, the inspector witnessed one pupil, very quietly and without any fuss, giving up his seat for a younger pupil. Indeed, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are courteous and polite and are great ambassadors for the school.
- Relationships between staff and between staff and pupils are also exemplary. As more than one member of the team said, 'We are like a family. We look out for each other.'
- Pupils are encouraged to show compassion for those less fortunate than themselves, thereby living out the demands of Catholic Social Teaching, in the words of one pupil, 'to turn our concern into action.' They do this in a wide variety of ways including by supporting Mission Together, the Good Shepherd, local homeless charities and the local foodbank.
- Practically, the pupils visit local care homes to sing for elderly and disabled members of the community. This is not just at Christmas but also happens at other times of the year.
- The pupils also prepare and make greeting cards for the sick, elderly and housebound members of the parish family which the parish priest is delighted to distribute on their behalf and which the people he visits are equally delighted to receive. This idea came from one of the children.
- They also give of their time freely with many of them being members of the school council, the Mini-Vinnies and the Rotakids (junior members of the local Rotary group).
- During the inspection, in whole school morning prayers, one pupil was recognised for having raised a very substantial amount of money for Martin House Hospice by having his head shaved. He had done this in full consultation with (and permission from) the headteacher.
- The diocesan relationship and sex education policy has been adopted by the school who are in the process of implementing this fully.
- Attention to detail of displays around school are further evidence of the outstanding nature of Catholic Life at St Mary's. These relate to children 'linking' together (by using a paper chain link created by each pupil) and through the heading of one display, 'We are all different but together we make a great team,' followed by dozens of paper jigsaw pieces all carefully and accurately joined together.

- Opportunities offered by this extensive and very well-maintained site are well utilised and further develop the Catholic Life of the school by involving the community in developing an outside prayer garden, dedicated to Our Blessed Lady.
- The Catholic Life of the school is monitored and evaluated not only by the headteacher but by the parish priest and foundation governors who visit the school to carry out learning walks.
- Catholic character education has been established in school since the beginning of this academic year, where pupils are becoming increasingly aware of the virtues of faith, hope, love, justice, charity and patience. These are further explored in lessons and in informal situations so that pupils become adept at recognising and developing them in their personal lives.
- Each week, classes make a 'pledge.' These pledges are read out to the whole school and include those such as, 'In class 10 (Year 5/6) we are trying to demonstrate patience towards those around us and the obstacles we encounter in our lives.'
- Parents and carers are very happy indeed with St Mary's Catholic school. This can be seen in the high proportion who returned school surveys over at least the last two years, where percentages and comments were overwhelmingly positive in all questions asked. Indeed, most were either 100% or 99% either agreeing or strongly agreeing to comments such as, 'My son/daughter enjoys school;' 'My son/daughter feels safe at school,' and 'School are helping to develop my child's faith.'

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### Religious Education is good.

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	<b>2</b>
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	<b>2</b>

- Overall, teaching of RE is good. Some teaching is outstanding and a small minority requires improvement. None is inadequate.
- In lessons where teaching was good or better, pupils remained focused, on task and absorbed throughout. Even in other lessons, the majority of pupils behaved extremely well and remained focused.
- The school follows the diocesan scheme, 'The Way, the Truth and the Life,' and in those lessons where practice is best, teachers have interpreted and extended the scheme creatively to add more relevant and purposeful challenges.
- Because of the commitment of resources to this subject, teachers have benefitted from continuing professional development (CPD) training organised by the diocese. These courses have supported the teachers in developing a range of creative tasks including those which involve drama and art appreciation.

- Teachers now need to consider whether challenges are being set because they are 'creative' or because they will develop pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Where outstanding teaching was observed, carefully selected, resourced and organised tasks had been given, enabling pupils to become entirely engaged in their learning.
- In almost all lessons, prior learning 'hooked' the pupils into the task in hand and enabled them to build on knowledge and understanding already embedded.
- Teachers should more regularly identify opportunities within each topic which will give pupils the opportunity to write at length so that their deeper knowledge and understanding can be revealed. Ultimately, this will impact on attainment.
- Pupils not as skilled in writing as their peers should be given the opportunity to display their knowledge and understanding orally, or in more accessible tasks. Again, this would show an improvement in attainment.
- Where practice is strongest, careful planning promotes well-structured lessons where the learning objective is clear and the pupils are given success criteria in order to ultimately achieve this objective. Teaching points and timings are noted in these plans, which support the moving on of lessons thereby making them purposeful and relevant.
- In the Early Years Unit, children were able to differentiate between actions that would lead to them being, 'bucket dippers,' or 'bucket fillers' ; in other words, those ways that would be considered Gospel values as opposed to those that would not.
- In key stage one, the Last Supper was explored through the setting of the scene of the Passover meal as Jesus would have shared it with his disciples. As the teacher demonstrated the breaking of the bread, one child interjected, 'That's just what Father Eamonn says when we go to Mass!' Another child recognised that those were the words, 'Of that song we sing!' Explanations were focused and age appropriate, enabling the children to develop their understanding and to move onto their learning task furnished with the knowledge to complete it with confidence and pleasure.
- In lower key stage two, virtues were explained well, and in the lessons where practice had the most impact, these were linked to prior learning and to familiar scripture passages (as well as to the Catholic Life of the school which was showcased in this lesson). Pupils then used this knowledge to develop their thinking in the task which was to recognise the qualities needed for each of the virtues they had learned about.
- In upper key stage two, the complex concept of the Transfiguration was effectively explained by the teacher whose subject knowledge was deep and clearly reflective. She used a variety of artwork to illustrate the symbolism of the event which had a profound impact on pupils' understanding.
- Depth of subject knowledge and the teacher's ability to interpret this to a level that the children could access was a feature of all the outstanding lessons observed.
- Also, in upper key stage two, expectations of what the children could achieve was very high. They were expected to engage in 'big questions' such as, 'Why was Jesus sent to us?' and 'Why didn't Jesus perform a miracle to save himself from death?' This lesson was well resourced with pertinent scripture extracts and examples of works of art to aid discussion and increase attainment.
- Scrutiny of pupils' workbooks showed a wide range of creative activities which are generally completed well. In some classes, some of these need to be re-considered so that they are planned for progress in attainment and/or development of knowledge and understanding as well as creativity and enjoyment.



- Marking and feedback of the children’s RE work is not always as rigorous as that in other subjects. Rather than simply acknowledging that the learning objective has been met by re-iterating it, questions should be added which deepen their thinking and/or give a further opportunity to display the knowledge and understanding learnt in the lesson. This is beginning to happen in some classes but needs to be more consistent throughout school. In that way, pupils could well be awarded higher levels of attainment providing that opportunities are given for them to fully respond to the questions.
- A consistent approach to the use of the ‘I can’ statements has not been established so opportunities for using these for planning, assessment and target setting have been missed.
- Some pupils are being encouraged to complete the ‘I can’ statements which can lead to some inaccuracies in terms of levels reached.
- In some classes, the whole range of ‘I can’ statement levels are included, from level 1 to level 5 which has resulted in the repetition of tasks to cover levels already achieved.

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

### Collective Worship is outstanding.

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school’s Collective Worship	<b>1</b>
The quality of provision for Collective Worship	<b>1</b>
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	<b>1</b>

- The provision for Collective Worship at St Mary’s is outstanding.
- A key stage act of Collective Worship led by the headteacher was of the highest quality.
- The pupils entered the hall calmly and reflectively; this atmosphere was maintained throughout.
- The care shown by the headteacher to one pupil in particular during this session was genuine and moving and only served to display the ethos that pervades the school.
- The pupils were given the opportunity to add their own personal intercessions to the rest of those present, which many of them did. Each individual’s prayer was held quietly and reverently by their peers before giving the appropriate response.
- Consideration should be given to having other members of the school team present during sessions led by the headteacher in order that this outstanding example of leading Collective Worship can be used as continuing professional development opportunities.
- Music was used in all examples of Collective Worship to aid the children’s attention and devotion. They sing tunefully and with enthusiasm although the quality of the singing is never lost.

- In all acts of Collective Worship, pupils were confident to express the appropriate liturgical response which is clearly embedded throughout school.
- An act of worship led by the Year 1 teacher was well resourced with an appropriate centre piece on which the children could focus and was entirely relevant to the Gospel reading of Jesus calling his first disciples.
- Proper reverence for the word of God is displayed through the pupils' handling of their bibles and the calm, controlled and practised way this is shared with their peers.
- One class shared their daily act of worship in the outside classroom. The focal point had been carefully arranged by them and was led by the children using a planning format which they could describe without it being in front of them. The rest of the class participated with respect showing the usual exemplary behaviour.
- The outside prayer garden which is neatly kept and well established is undergoing further development to enable the children to use that area also as a site specifically for Collective Worship and personal reflection and prayer.
- Morning prayer led by Year 2 followed the correct liturgical pattern and each child was given their own particular reading, prayer or reflection. This included one pupil who, at the beginning of the academic year, was unable due to her special needs to enter the hall for whole school sessions. However, she is now able to participate fully with the unobtrusive support of a member of the team.
- Whole school sessions also include birthday celebrations where pupils who have recently reached their next age milestone are invited to process from the back of the hall carrying a (battery operated) tealight whilst the rest of the school sing, 'The Light of Christ.' The symbolism is clear and very meaningful.
- The Collective Worship session led by a group of Year 6 pupils was carefully planned, well resourced, beautifully prepared and shared with their classmates, teacher and inspectors. Each participant was given the opportunity to write down their own prayer and these were carefully collected and placed on the prayer table in a special box.
- Voluntary prayer opportunities are also provided for the pupils, for example the prayer tree in the hall, where they can write and add their own prayers using a post-it note.
- The high profile given to Collective Worship throughout the school is shown through the planning and records kept in a similar hard backed book in each class. These provided very useful records for of evidence.
- The parish priest is a regular visitor into school and leads acts of Collective Worship, (for example on Ash Wednesday), in school as well as presiding at class and school Masses. He, along with foundation governors, have witnessed some Collective Worship gatherings in school. His support is greatly appreciated by the headteacher and RE subject lead.