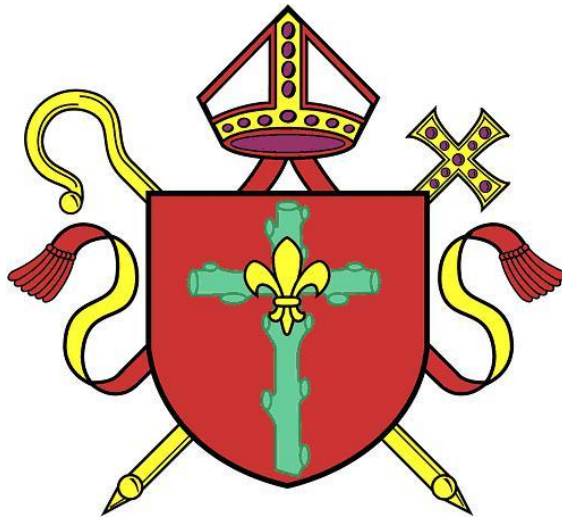


DIOCESE OF NOTTINGHAM INSPECTION SERVICE



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

(Section 48, Education Act 2005)

Saint Mary's Catholic Primary School, A Catholic Voluntary Academy
Hastings Street
Loughborough
Leicestershire
LE11 5AX

8 & 9 November 2012

URN: 138295

SECTION 48 DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT

School:	Saint Mary's Catholic Primary School
Headteacher:	Mrs Annette Jones
Chair of Governors:	Mrs Anne Ford
Date of Inspection:	8 & 9 November 2012
Inspection Team:	Mrs Anne Recchia
URN:	138295
Overall Grade Awarded:	2

Description of the school

Saint Mary's Catholic School is small primary school serving the parishes of Saint Mary's Loughborough and Our Lady and the Angels, East Leake. It converted to academy status in July 2012 and is part of The Blessed Cyprian Tansi Catholic Academy Trust which consists of 6 Catholic schools in the area. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is higher than the national average. Only a few pupils need help in learning to communicate in English. In most instances, these are pupils who are newly arrived from Poland. 59% of pupils are baptised Catholic, with a further 17% baptised in other Christian denominations. 9% of all pupils are from other World Faiths and the remaining 13% have no religious affiliation.

The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below the national average. Just under half of these pupils are supported through school action, while the remainder are supported at school action plus level. There are currently no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Pupils known to be eligible for additional funding under the Government's pupil premium is below the national average.

Common grading scale for all inspection judgements	
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness

Saint Mary's is a good school with some outstanding features. Pupils reach good standards in Religious Education by the end of Key Stage 2. The progress of most pupils over time is good. Some pupils make more rapid progress where teaching is outstanding. Pupils benefit from and contribute to the Catholic life of the school to an outstanding degree. They respond and participate very well to the school's Collective Worship.

The school is well led by its committed and enthusiastic headteacher and senior leadership team who develop the Catholic life of the school to a good standard. Governors play an active role in supporting the school and holding it to account. Partnership with parents, the parish, other providers and organisations are well developed and serve to promote Catholic learning and pupil well being.

The quality of teaching in Religious Education at Saint Mary's is good in ensuring that learning is purposeful and relevant. The development of more challenging targets for pupils is now a priority to extend and improve the learning and progress of all pupils. The Religious Education curriculum is both creative and stimulating. The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding.

Overall effectiveness	Grade: 2
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What does the school need to do to improve further?

The school should focus on the following areas for development:

- Develop the use of Assessment for Learning strategies in Religious Education so that particularly through marking, all pupils know both how well they have achieved and how they could improve their work further.
- Further develop the use of assessment data and information in order to inform planning so that challenging targets are set for all pupils.
- Ensure that tasks pupils are asked to complete in Religious Education are well differentiated to meet the needs of all learners.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

The school has a good capacity for sustained improvement. Since the last inspection, outcomes for pupils have improved and are continuing to do so. All issues highlighted in the last report have been addressed effectively by the headteacher and leadership team. Accurate self-evaluation has resulted in appropriate priorities being set to secure improvement and build on successes in the Catholic life of the school and Religious Education. Leaders and managers have a clear vision for the school which is communicated well to staff and pupils.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement	Grade: 2
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PUPILS

How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups

From a low starting point on entry, pupils in the Foundation Stage Reception Class make good progress as a result of well-focused teaching. They quickly acquire skills and use appropriate vocabulary to describe religious symbols and actions. By the end of Key Stage 1, this good progress is maintained. Most pupils by the end of Key Stage 1 reach age related expectations with a considerable proportion (half of the year group) exceeding these. By the end of Key Stage 2, almost all pupils reach expected levels for their age with some working at a level above expectations. Progress is good over time throughout the school and is an improving picture year on year. Some pupils reported that work in Religious Education was not as difficult as work in other core subjects; this was evidenced in a small proportion of their books and during some lesson observations. In classes where pupils are effectively challenged as a result of accurate assessment and demanding target setting, pupils attain levels above expectations and make levels of progress that are above average. This level of challenge is however, not consistently practised throughout the school especially with some high achieving pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language make good progress as a result of well-targeted adult support. They are beginning to understand how to improve and extend their learning through positive verbal feedback in lessons. This would be improved further with a more consistent approach to written feedback (marking), which included areas for improvement.

Pupils generally apply themselves well and seek to produce their best work in Religious Education. They show interest and enthusiasm in lessons and enjoy their learning. Pupils show good knowledge and understanding of the curriculum and apply this knowledge to their lives. Their behaviour and relationships with one another and the adults in the school are good. They show an awareness of the religious, moral and social demands both within and outside the school and rise to the challenge of living out the school's mission statement. They are able to work independently and cooperatively in groups showing good levels of concentration and commitment.

Pupils are proud to belong to Saint Mary's School and are aware of and take an active role in forming its distinctive nature. Pupils take on roles of responsibility within the school with pride especially the School Council and the ECO Committee. Year 5 pupils also enjoy their role as Prayer Partners for the pupils in Reception. Pupils generally develop strong friendship bonds across age, gender and cultural boundaries. They treat others both in and beyond the school community with high levels of respect; as a consequence, incidents of bullying and racial harassment are rare. They acknowledge the good work of their teachers and support staff and are aware that Religious Education lessons have an impact on their moral, spiritual and social development.

Pupils respond to and actively participate in the school's Collective Worship to an outstanding level. They act with reverence and are keen to participate in all forms of worship and prayer. They are becoming skilled in using a variety of ways to support their private and public prayer including meditation, reflection, chants, litanies and gesture. From a very early age, pupils are encouraged to make choices and participate in the planning and leading of worship so they develop an ease and a confidence in the use of

scripture, religious artefacts, hymns and prayers as they progress through the school. Pupils are keen to develop this area of school life and are excited about plans to form a dedicated chaplaincy group. Collective Worship contributes very effectively to the spiritual and moral development of pupils.

How good outcomes are for pupils, taking account of variations between different groups	Grade: 2
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LEADERS AND MANAGERS

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan improvement to outcomes for pupils

Leaders and managers at all levels are highly committed to the mission of the Church and demonstrate this through the provision of a well-balanced curriculum which has spiritual and moral development at its heart. They are particularly conscious of the changing community that the school serves, welcoming and engaging with different groups to seek their opinions and respond to the needs of all the children. Leaders and managers perform a range of monitoring and evaluation activities that inform planning; as a result, they have a clear picture of strengths and areas for development and set realistic targets and time frames to develop the school further.

Since the last inspection, there has been a considerable change in staff, which has resulted in a more skilful and well qualified leadership team that has the capacity and enthusiasm to support the headteacher in bringing about change. Leaders and managers see the professional development of staff as a priority. Staff training has been well focused on raising the attainment of pupils in Religious Education and providing a rich and creative curriculum. Areas for development highlighted in the last inspection have been effectively tackled and pupils' enjoyment and achievement in Religious Education has improved. There is a good induction programme for newly qualified teachers making use of the school's own expertise and that of outside agencies including the diocese. Leaders and managers are aware of the need to plan for succession and see the training and guidance of teachers as future leaders a priority.

Leaders and managers promote community cohesion to an outstanding level. Inclusion is a central goal and a shared vision throughout the school. The school has responded well to the increasing number of migrant families in the school, through training, awareness raising, staff appointments and good communications. Parents feel valued and welcomed, their opinions are regularly sought through questionnaires and meetings and they are kept well informed of their child's progress through written and verbal communications. Parish links are strong; the newly appointed Parish Priest is already making an impact on the quality of Collective Worship and prayer in the school. He has contributed effectively to the curriculum, enriching pupils' experience, knowledge and understanding of their faith.

The school has good links with schools in the immediate area especially the family of Catholic schools in the academy trust. Shared training for staff and governors, utilising the wider pool of expertise and good practice has resulted in a deeper sense of a community working together for the common good. Pupils value their own religious identity and that of others in their community. Leaders and managers ensure pupils are knowledgeable and respect the faith of others. They provide opportunities for pupils to

engage with people of other faiths and cultures through first hand experiences. Pupils of other faiths are given opportunities to express their beliefs and values in an open and respectful way. Staff and pupils take part enthusiastically in charitable fundraising for local, national and international causes.

The Religious Education coordinator, appointed after the last inspection has focused on the development of a robust system of assessment and tracking of attainment in Religious Education. Through well targeted training and support, she has ensured the teaching staff are confident in levelling pupils' work accurately and is now beginning to address the need for more challenging target setting using the assessment data collected.

Governors fulfil their statutory and canonical duties to a good standard. They are well organised and have a range of skills that complement and support the leadership of the school. They are kept well informed through detailed reports from the headteacher, regular monitoring visits to the school and meetings with staff and pupils. Governors are actively involved in setting priorities for the school, contributing to the self-evaluation process and school improvement plan. They have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for development. More focused and rigorous monitoring visits would serve to develop their role as critical friends, holding the school to account and improving outcomes for pupils even further.

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the school	Grade: 2
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PROVISION How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic Education

The quality of teaching at Saint Mary's School is mostly good with some outstanding practice. The well qualified and enthusiastic teaching staff use their good subject knowledge to inspire and challenge pupils thus contributing to their good progress. Nearly all the teaching is effective in ensuring that pupils are interested and engaged with their learning. Teachers are generally aware of the ability and prior knowledge of pupils through accurate assessment and are able to plan imaginative and stimulating lessons that meet the interests and needs of most pupils. Good use is made of teaching assistants and other adults in the classroom to effectively support learning, especially pupils with learning difficulties and those whose first language is not English.

In lessons where teaching is outstanding, a challenging and open-ended questioning style to extend pupils' understanding is a common feature. This level of challenge and high expectations is also evident in the tasks set for pupils; pupils are highly motivated to do their best, sustain their concentration throughout the lesson and are developing independence in their learning. In classes where teaching is outstanding, marking and oral feedback to pupils is of a consistently high standard to ensure that pupils know how well they are doing and what steps need to be taken to improve. For the teaching to improve further across the school, this outstanding practice should now be shared throughout the school.

Since the last inspection, the school has developed a more accurate and robust system of assessment. Data is used effectively to track the progress of pupils to tackle any

underachievement so that pupils make appropriate rates of progress. In the lessons observed during this inspection, teachers used information from assessments to plan well-differentiated tasks which built upon prior learning. However, this level of differentiation is not always evident in the pupils' books. To maximise and accelerate learning, all pupils should be sufficiently challenged, especially high achieving pupils, to attain the highest standard possible in order to reach their full potential in Religious Education. The consistent use of 'driver words' and reference to the learning objective in the marking of pupils' work would help them to understand how well they have achieved and how to improve their work further. The development of more challenging targets for pupils is now a priority to extend and improve the learning and progress of all pupils.

The Religious Education curriculum is rich and varied. Teachers make good use of innovative and stimulating resources to interest and engage the pupils. Very good use is made of information technology in particular to motivate and inspire pupils. The school has planned the introduction of the new 'Come and See' programme well making full use of the support provided by the diocese and the collaboration with other schools. Teachers are using the material effectively and confidently to provide good opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of pupils. The curriculum meets external requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding. It is central to the life of the school and contributes very effectively to the spiritual and moral development of pupils. Opportunities for prayer for staff and pupils are well planned, stimulating and thought provoking. The liturgical development of the pupils begins at an early age and is developed throughout the school. Pupils become skilled in the use of different prayer styles, artefacts and biblical texts as they become increasingly involved in the planning and leading of their own liturgies.

Staff and pupils regularly review the provision for prayer and worship and plan improvements. Opportunities to celebrate key festivals and holy days in the Catholic calendar and festivals in other faiths are well planned. Pupils understand their own faith and have an insight into the faith of others.

How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education	Grade: 2
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Inspection Judgements Summary

Overall effectiveness – How effective the school is in providing Catholic education.	2
How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups.	2
How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the school.	2
How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education.	2
How good OUTCOMES are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups.	2
How well pupils progress and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	2
Taking into account:	
<i>pupils' standards of attainment in Religious Education;</i>	2
<i>the quality of pupils' learning and their progress;</i>	2
<i>the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress.</i>	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school.	1
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.	1
How effective LEADERS AND MANAGERS are in developing the Catholic life of the school.	2
How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan improvement to outcomes for pupils.	2
How effectively leaders and managers promote Community Cohesion.	1
How well leaders and managers at all levels monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils.	2
The extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school so areas needing development are tackled decisively and statutory and canonical responsibilities met.	2
How effective the PROVISION is in promoting Catholic education.	2
The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education.	2
The effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education.	2
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs.	2
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.	1