



## DIOCESAN CANONICAL INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL, COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

# St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Wellington Street, Grimsby, North East Lincolnshire, DN32 7JX

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| <b>School URN:</b>      | 139009                               |
| <b>Inspection Date:</b> | 28 March 2017                        |
| <b>Inspectors:</b>      | Dr Eilis Field and Mrs Patricia Hurd |

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|------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|----------|
| <b>Overall Effectiveness</b> | Previous Inspection:    | Good        | 2        |
|                              | <b>This Inspection:</b> | <b>Good</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Catholic Life:</b>        |                         | Outstanding | 1        |
| <b>Collective Worship:</b>   |                         | Good        | 2        |
| <b>Religious Education:</b>  |                         | Good        | 2        |

## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

**St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy is a good Catholic school.**

- The Catholic Life at St Mary's is outstanding. The parish priest is justified in describing the school as 'an oasis for the pupils and their families'. Driven by her own personal faith and well supported by the equally committed deputy headteacher and a team of highly skilled governors, the headteacher ensures that Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church underpin every aspect of school life. As a result, pupils feel valued and the vast majority develop a strong sense of right and wrong. Both indoors and out, bright attractive displays, artwork and notices loudly proclaim that this is a Catholic school.
- The Collective Worship of the school is good. Pupils benefit from a rich variety of prayer and worship. Pupils are respectful and show reverence at times of prayer and worship. They are keen to participate, to answer questions and to offer their thoughts on how to live good lives. Pupil chaplains are proud of and understand the importance of their role.
- Religious Education is just on the cusp of good. Good practice is evident in some classes. The headteacher and her deputy have a clear and accurate view of the standard of teaching in Religious Education throughout the school and are taking robust steps to address areas of weakness.
- Under the leadership of the headteacher, the school has developed increasingly strong links with the parish. Parishioners treasure the school and welcome the invitation to be a part of school life. The school in turn values the support they receive from the parish. The new parish priest is proactive in building on and further developing the links established by his predecessor. The school, and in particular the school's leadership team welcome and value his support. The proximity of the church to the school enhances the partnership between the school and the parish. Pupils and parents regularly attend Mass in the church. The subject leader for Religious Education has developed in her role and is proving instrumental in improving standards in Catholic Life, Collective Worship and Religious Education.

## FULL REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Mary's is a slightly smaller than average primary school. At the time of this inspection, there were 213 on roll.
- The school serves the parish of The Most Holy and Undivided Trinity (Grimsby, Cleethorpes and Immingham).
- The school is part of the Northern Lincolnshire Catholic Academy Trust (NoLCAT).
- 32% of pupils are baptised Catholic, 13% are from other Christian denominations, 4% from a faith background other than Christian and 51% have no religious affiliation.
- 15% of pupils have special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND) at school support stage, 9% of whom have an EHCP (education, health care plan).
- 47% of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium which is significantly above average.

### WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Further enhance the Catholic Life of the school by:
  - Facilitating a genuine role for pupils in shaping the school's mission and Catholic ethos. For example, they may be invited to contribute to the school improvement plan or assist governors on their monitoring visits.
  - Ensuring staff are trained in order that the RSE scheme, *A Journey in Love* is taught effectively and consistently across the school.
  - Ensuring that governors retain an objective and accurate overview by appointing a non-staff member as the link governor for Catholic Life and Religious Education.
- Improve the quality of Collective Worship by:
  - Allowing pupils time for genuine reflection, to enable a deepening of their understanding of the Gospel.
  - Developing pupils' ability to plan Acts of Worship independently.
- Ensure teaching and learning of Religious Education is consistently good or better across the school by:
  - Developing all teachers' understanding of assessment for learning and ensuring that they consistently and effectively apply its principles to their planning and delivery of lessons.
  - Ensuring that the marking and feedback policy reflects most recent guidance and is consistently applied across the school, so that teacher marking within the lesson improves pupils' understanding of their learning.
  - Adopting a presentation policy and ensuring that it is consistently applied across the school.
  - Providing pupils with the opportunity to challenge themselves to work at a higher level in their written work.
  - Developing manageable and sustainable strategies to secure a consistently high quality of teaching and learning regardless of staff mobility.

## CATHOLIC LIFE

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| THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL | 1 |
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- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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**The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school – outstanding**

- Pupils are proud to belong to the school. The vast majority of pupils are well behaved at all times. Behaviour management is firmly rooted in Gospel values and misbehaviour is addressed robustly. Pupils who struggle to behave have an opportunity to go to the 'Eden' room, where they can reflect and start again.
- Pupils are proactive in developing a sense of social justice and look to the patron saint of their house group to draw inspiration when selecting which charities they support. For example, St Francis support an animal charity, St Bernadette Soubirous help the poor through CAFOD, St John Bosco support the local community through 'Harbour Place' and St Teresa of Lisieux support Marie Curie, with a little flower as its emblem and the example of St Teresa to 'do the little things well'.
- The school has strong links with the parish. The new parish priest is highly supportive of the school and is using his considerable expertise in Catholic education to support staff and pupils in developing the liturgical life of the school.
- Pupils take advantage of the prayer areas allocated throughout the school. They welcome them as places of quiet reflection.
- All pupils know the mission statement, 'We value all in the name of Jesus the Christ', but not all pupils, however, understand its meaning and how it impacts on their lives. The school may wish to consider revising the mission statement to a more child friendly and meaningful one.
- Pupils have welcomed a greater involvement in developing aspects of Catholic Life, such as planning and developing the outdoor prayer garden.

### **The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school – outstanding**

- The displays, artwork and notices throughout the school, along with indoor and outdoor prayer areas give a strong sense of belonging to a Catholic community.
- The behaviour policy is clearly rooted in Gospel values. Whilst there is a clear message that bullying of any kind is not acceptable, opportunities for pupils to reflect and experience forgiveness are also strongly evident.
- The school takes its safeguarding responsibilities very seriously and goes the extra mile to meet the challenges posed by the social context of the school. A full-time learning mentor and a safeguarding lead have been appointed to ensure that care and support is given to its most vulnerable pupils and their families.
- Staff are well supported by the leadership team and particular care is given to ensure that teachers from faith backgrounds other than Catholic feel included and develop their understanding of Catholic education.
- The school has now reached a point where it could facilitate a genuine role for pupils in shaping the school's mission and Catholic ethos.
- The school's policy for RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) has been updated to ensure that it is in-keeping with the teaching of the Catholic Church. The school has recently adopted the RSE scheme, *A Journey in Love* and has identified the need to develop staff in its use and implementation.

### **How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school – outstanding**

- The headteacher and her deputy, driven by their own personal faith, ensure that the Catholic Life of the school underpins all policies and decisions. They have been courageous in ensuring that, despite the pressing need to accelerate progress in English and mathematics, the Catholic Life of the school has remained a priority. Their courage is now bearing fruit as school standards are rising.
- Governors have addressed fully the issues raised in the 2012 diocesan canonical inspection report to distinguish between the Catholic Life of the school and Religious Education. They now have a clear understanding of their role in ensuring that the Catholic Life of the school is sustained and developed and at the same time have an accurate view of the standard of teaching and learning in Religious Education.
- New staff are well supported by the leadership team and all staff, regardless of their faith backgrounds, are fully supportive of the Catholic ethos of the school.
- The school recognises and values the key role that the Northern Lincolnshire Catholic Academy Trust (NoLCAT) has played in its development. Governors and the school's leadership are now pleased to be able to contribute to as well as receive valuable support from this effective alliance.

***Continued***

- As a result of governor changes, the governing body took the interim step of appointing the deputy headteacher as the link governor for Religious Education but understand that having a staff member to monitor the school's work may not be fully effective in providing an independent appraisal. Governors now need to appoint a non-staff member as the link governor for Catholic Life and Religious Education.
  
- Governors have recently introduced a more focused approach to their monitoring by deciding on a specific focus to their visits linked to the Religious Education action plan; they are asking robust questions and this needs to be sustained and developed.

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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| THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP | 2 |
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- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.
- The quality of provision for the Collective Worship.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

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### How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship – good

- Pupils show reverence and respect at all forms of Collective Worship and prayerful activities.
- Pupils benefit from a wide variety of Collective Worship, some adult led and some delivered by pupils. They are keen to participate and enthusiastic in offering thoughts and answering questions when discussing Bible stories or thinking about their relationship with God.
- Singing is a strong feature in Acts of Worship; all pupils participate joyfully when singing hymns.
- The pupil chaplains are playing an increasingly prominent role in the liturgical life of the school. They are proud of and recognise the role of pupil chaplain as a privilege.
- Acts of Worship could be further improved by allowing time for genuine reflection on the meaning of the readings, for example following a scripture passage in order to enable a deepening of their understanding and therefore the actions of Christian believers.
- Now that pupils are fully engaged in Acts of Worship, they would benefit from developing the skills needed to prepare Acts of Worship independently.

### **The quality of provision for Collective Worship – good**

- The subject leader for Religious Education has worked hard to develop worship. She ensures that timetabled Acts of Worship always happen. She is proud of the pupil chaplaincy group which is growing in strength.
- The newly appointed parish priest welcomes the opportunity to share his expertise and develop staff and pupils in preparing and delivering high quality Acts of Worship.
- The subject leader for Religious Education regularly and diligently engages with diocesan training. She cascades the skills and knowledge she has gained from this training to other staff members.
- Acts of Worship are carefully planned around the Church's liturgical year. The school day is punctuated with prayer.
- Staff training starts with a prayer. Staff from across the academy trust come together for Collective Worship three times a year.
- Staff would benefit from further direct training on Collective Worship in addition to the cascading of training by the subject leader for Religious Education and this in turn would develop the staff's ability and confidence in developing these skills with their pupils.

### **How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship – good**

- The school's leadership team is experienced in leading Acts of Worship; leaders act as role models for other staff.
- The subject leader for Religious Education feels that she is growing in confidence in her ability to carry out her role as a result of the support she receives from the senior leadership team. The previous parish priest mentored her in the preparation of school Masses.
- Collective Worship is well resourced. In addition to religious artefacts and music, the school has its own chapel and an outdoor prayer garden.
- Under the guidance of the senior leadership team, the subject leader for Religious Education monitors the quality of Collective Worship. She has introduced a rota whereby the staff and to a lesser extent the pupils are systematically involved in evaluating Collective Worship.
- The monitoring of Collective Worship would be enhanced further by a greater involvement of pupils.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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| THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION | <b>2</b> |
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- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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### How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education – good

- Consideration was given to awarding pupil outcomes grade 3. However, as a result of the drive of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, there is strong evidence that accelerated progress is being made in some classes and that robust, appropriate action is being taken to address underachievement.
- At 71%, the percentage of pupils achieving a Level 4 at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2016 remains slightly below the diocesan average of 79%, but is indicative of an upward trend where the gap is closing. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 or above at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2016 was 88%, this exceeded the diocesan average of 87%.
- Where teaching and learning is securely good, oral feedback and pupils' written work demonstrate that pupils make good or better progress from their low starting points. This good practice now needs to be disseminated to classes where pupil progress is less secure.
- Pupils behave well in Religious Education lessons and have positive attitudes to learning.
- The standard of written work in Religious Education in some classes is good but this is not yet consistent throughout the school.
- In some classes, pupils understand the Religious Education driver words and how they can use them to improve their work. This now needs to be disseminated to all classes.
- There is little evidence of pupils editing and improving their own work in Religious Education.
- There need to be more opportunities for pupils to write at greater length in Religious Education. Presentation of pupils' work is inconsistent; a clear presentation policy which is consistently applied throughout the school should be implemented.



## **The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education – good**

- Teaching and learning in some classes was judged to be securely good and a small minority was outstanding. In these classes, activities were carefully planned to meet the learning needs of all the pupils. Astute questioning and extending pupils' responses led to a deepening of pupils' understanding within the lesson.
- In classes where the teaching and learning was judged to require improvement, or in the case of a very small minority - inadequate; pupils were kept sitting the carpet for an unduly long time, which meant that pupils were not fully engaged in the lesson and valuable learning time was lost. Questioning was closed and one word responses were accepted without any attempt to extend or clarify pupils' understanding.
- The school's marking policy is not consistently applied across the school and marking was not always judged to be effective in moving pupils' learning on. Even in classes where teaching and learning overall was judged to be good, marking was descriptive, for example, 'you have retold the story of the Lost Sheep', rather than being developmental.
- Behaviour management in all classes was judged to be good. The good behaviour observed in all classes belied the social context of the school. In all classes, teachers adopted positive behaviour strategies and had clearly developed good relationships with pupils.
- The school needs to ensure teaching and learning continues its drive towards consistently good or better across the school by:
  - Disseminating the good practice within the school and by providing in-class mentoring for new or recently qualified teachers.
  - Developing teachers' ability to clarify and extend pupils' oral responses so that they make progress within the lesson.
  - Ensuring written tasks are open and provide pupils with the opportunity to challenge themselves to work at a higher level. Use of glue/stick and colouring activities should be restricted to occasions where they would demonstrably enhance learning outcomes.
  - Accelerating the rate of progress made by pupils within each lesson by developing the teachers' ability to intercede with accurate oral and written feedback within the lesson.
  - Ensuring that the school's marking and feedback policy reflects the above strategies.

**The extent to which leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education – good**

- The headteacher ensures that all classes meet the episcopal requirement to devote at least 10% of curriculum time to Religious Education.
- Religious Education is given a high priority by the school and is treated as a core subject in the allocation of time and staff training.
- As a result of robust tracking and monitoring systems, the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the governing body have a clear and accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching and learning in Religious Education.
- The senior leadership need to fine tune their feedback to teachers by providing clear and incisive points for improvement to be achieved within a fixed time schedule of no more than two weeks.
- Given the context of the school, the headteacher and her deputy have provided a strong lead in setting out their high expectations regarding teaching and learning and this has had a positive impact on raising standards in Religious Education. They now need to shift the culture to one of being directed to one whereby teachers take greater ownership of their own development and understanding of pedagogy and hold themselves to account.
- The school has a high mobility of staff other than the leadership team and this tends to be an ongoing challenge for schools in areas of social deprivation. To meet this challenge, school leaders, supported by governors, need to explore strategies to secure ongoing mentoring of inexperienced staff so that the quality of teaching and learning does not fluctuate and at the same time does not present the headteacher and her deputy with an impossible workload.

## SCHOOL DETAILS

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| <b>School Name</b>             | St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy |
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 139009                               |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | North East Lincolnshire              |

The inspection of this school was carried out on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham under Canon 806 of Canon Law in accordance with the *evaluation schedule* for diocesan canonical inspections in the Diocese of Nottingham. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. The process begins with the school's own self-evaluation and the inspection schedule is in line with the criteria set by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA).

During the inspection, the inspectors observed 8 Religious Education lessons and 2 Acts of Collective Worship.

Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the subject leader for Religious Education, the chair and deputy chair of governors (the deputy chair is also a director of NoLCAT), the chair of NOLCAT, 2 foundation governors and the parish priest. Discussions were also held with pupils.

The inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including reports to the governing body, action plans, the school development plan, monitoring forms, assessment data and tracking and parental response forms. Inspectors also examined the work in pupils' Religious Education books.

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| <b>Chair of Governors:</b>                 | Mrs Jan Ducey           |
| <b>Headteacher:</b>                        | Mrs Catherine McHale    |
| <b>Date of Previous School Inspection:</b> | 26 April 2012           |
| <b>Telephone Number:</b>                   | 01472 357982            |
| <b>Email Address:</b>                      | head@smp.nelcmail.co.uk |

## WHAT INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS MEAN

Within the report, the following grades are used:

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|----------------|----------------------|
| <b>Grade 1</b> | Outstanding          |
| <b>Grade 2</b> | Good                 |
| <b>Grade 3</b> | Requires Improvement |
| <b>Grade 4</b> | Inadequate           |

In the context of the whole school, the overall effectiveness grades have the following meaning:

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| <b>Grade 1</b> | Outstanding          | The school is a highly effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are exceptionally well met.  |
| <b>Grade 2</b> | Good                 | The school is an effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are met well.  |
| <b>Grade 3</b> | Requires Improvement | The school is not yet a good Catholic school, it is not inadequate however, and there are aspects that require improvement. There will be a monitoring visit within the next 12 months and the school will be re-inspected within 3 years.           |
| <b>Grade 4</b> | Inadequate           | There are features in need of urgent and immediate attention. The school is not meeting the basic minimum requirement for adequacy as a Catholic school. The school will receive an annual monitoring visit and will be re-inspected within 3 years. |