



**DIOCESE OF LANCASTER EDUCATION SERVICE**

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION  
REPORT (Section 48)**

**St Mary's Catholic Academy  
Blackpool**

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION  
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

**School:** St Mary's Catholic Academy

**Address:**

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**School URN:**

141275

**Headteacher:**

Mr Simon Eccles

**Chair of Governors:**

Mr Barry Leyland

**Lead Inspector:**

Mrs Helen Seddon

**Team Inspectors:**

Mr Richard Charnock and Fr Michael Docherty

**Date of Inspection:**

27<sup>th</sup> February and 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Mary's is an 11-18 Catholic Academy serving the community of Blackpool. With a large and truly comprehensive intake the Academy serves a geographical area covering the whole of the Blackpool area.

Since its last inspection in January 2012 a number of key changes have occurred. The Academy underwent a significant "Building Schools for the Future" rebuild and refurbishment, which the community moved into in September 2013. In addition to this the then "St Mary's Catholic College" joined the Blessed Edward Bamber Multi Academy Trust (BEBCMAT) and became an Academy in September 2014 along with Christ the King and St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary Academies.

PUPILS	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Number on roll	219	219	209	210	207	79	53	1196
Catholics on roll	129	137	125	120	112	50	28	701
Other Christian denomination	65	57	47	61	66	17	20	333
Other faith background	3	5	8	2	4	4	1	27
No religious affiliation	22	20	29	27	25	8	4	135
No of learners from ethnic groups	50	55	45	37	26	14	3	230
Total on SEN Register	34	33	26	39	46	8	8	194
Total with Statements of SEN	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3

Exclusions in last academic year	Permanent	0	Fixed term	34
Index of multiple deprivation	0.34			

PARISHES SERVED BY THE SCHOOL	
Name of Parish	No of Pupils
Christ the King and St. Kentigern's	80 + 154
Holy Family	86
Our Lady of the Assumption	25
Sacred Heart	12
St. Bernadette's	50
St. Cuthbert's	115
St. John Vianney	203
St. Theresa's	3
St. John's, Poulton	6
St. Monica's	3

TEACHING TIME FOR RE	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Total teaching time (Hours)	5	5	5	5	5	1	1	27
% of teaching time	10	10	10	10	10	3.3	3.3	9.4

TEACHING TIME FOR ENGLISH	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Total
Total teaching time (Hours)	6.6	6.6	6.6	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.3	44.7
% of teaching time	13	13	13	16.6	16.6	22	28	17

<b>TEACHING TIME FOR MATHS</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Total</b>
Total teaching time (Hours)	6.6	6.6	6.6	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.3	53
% of teaching time	13	13	13	16.6	16.6	22	28	17

<b>STAFFING</b>	
Full-time teachers	74
Part-time teachers	12
Total full-time equivalent (FTE)	82.10
Classroom Support assistants	12 FTE 6.89
Percentage of Catholic teachers FTE	48
Number of teachers teaching RE	10
Number of teachers with CCRS or equivalent	14
Number of teachers currently undertaking CCRS	4
Chaplaincy staffing	4 FTE 3.53 + 2 Gap

<b>ORGANISATION</b>	
Published admission number	210
Number of classes	496
Average class size KS3	26.6
Average class size KS4	19.4

<b>EXPENDITURE (£)</b>	<b>Last financial year 2015-16</b>	<b>Current financial year 2016-17</b>	<b>Next financial year 2017-18</b>
Total expenditure on teaching and learning resources	311,547	410,477	400,000
RE Curriculum allowance from above	5,651	5,764	5,800
English Curriculum allowance from above	8,920	8,140	8,100
Total CPD budget	28,283	23,000	30,000
RE allocation for CPD	CPD funds not allocated to departments separately.	CPD funds not allocated to departments separately.	CPD funds not allocated to departments separately.

<b>How the school has developed since the last inspection</b>
<p>Improvements since the last inspection include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A sharper focus on tracking systems is now in place at KS4. (DAFITAL)</li> <li>• Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities have been given for staff in the Religious Studies department. The introduction of DAFITAL is linked to a coaching process for all staff to help them improve their teaching of certain topics.</li> <li>• General RE programme is now embedded in the sixth form</li> </ul>

RE DATA															
	RE					English					Maths				
	KS4				KS3	KS4				KS3	KS4				KS3
	% Entry	A*-C	3L	4L	Yr 7-9 2L Prog	% Entry	A*-C	3L	4L	Yr 7-9 2L Prog	% Entry	A*-C	3L	4L	Yr 7-9 2L Prog
<b>Most recent</b>	99.5	62				100	67				99.5	67.3			
<b>2015</b>	100	64	66	40.3		100	78.5	82.1	29.5		100	64.1	58.5	16.4	
<b>2014</b>	100	60	60.5	33.2		100	55	58.6	18.3		100	54.7	47.4	14.2	

## INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

**OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**

1

**CATHOLIC LIFE**

1

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

2

### KEY FINDINGS

This is an outstanding Catholic Academy. Christ is at the centre of all it does and Gospel values permeate throughout. The leadership of the academy is outstanding as Directors and leaders are totally committed to the Church's mission of high quality Catholic education for all. Staff are authentic witnesses to Gospel values and endeavour to live these out in their work with pupils, especially the most vulnerable.

Pupils told inspectors that 'Catholic values reach into each subject in the academy' For example, in a science lesson AMDG [standing for '*ad majorem Dei gloriam*' – To the greater glory of God] is displayed on the wall and pupils could explain that this was to remind them of God and that science supports faith.

The quality of the pastoral care is outstanding with all pupils and staff expressing the caring community that exists in all aspects of the life of the academy. Pupils care deeply about their school with one Year 11 pupil saying, "I feel lucky to come here."

The academy lives up to its mission statement which is displayed in every classroom in the academy which is "for all to grow in wisdom, understanding, self-esteem and closeness to God."

The prayer and liturgical life of the academy is outstanding. There is a very strong Chaplaincy team whose work permeates the whole of the academy and supports and encourages the work of all staff. Pupils are actively engaged in the prayer life of the academy and take part and lead prayer and liturgy on a regular basis.

The academy is committed to faith in action and is very active in supporting those in need locally and globally through prayer, action and fundraising.

The academy's capacity to improve is outstanding due to the vision and drive of directors

The quality of Religious Education is good because pupils are given the opportunity to learn and develop their religious understanding in a safe and supportive environment.

Pupils make good progress from their starting points to achieve good outcomes which have improved over the last three years. Teaching is good in that it engages and motivates pupils to achieve and make progress. The leadership of Religious Education is good. Staff meet regularly to share ideas and plan together to improve learning for pupils. There are rigorous and effective monitoring and evaluation systems in place to improve pupil progress.

## **WHAT THE SCHOOL NEEDS TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER**

To improve further the school needs to:

- engage pupils in prayer and liturgy more fully by:
  - widening opportunities for pupil involvement in the creation of resources for daily prayer
- accelerate improvement in Religious Education outcomes for pupils by:
  - Closing the progress and attainment gap between male and female pupils and between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils (Raising Achievement Plan)
  - Strengthening leadership of the subject to ensure the RE is stronger or at least as strong as other core subjects, in terms of progress and attainment
  - Further develop Teaching and Learning especially with regard to the new GCSE specification and the subject knowledge required for this
  - Continue with the implementation of the new Key Stage 3 curriculum to ensure the challenge and rigour prepares pupils for the GCSE and A Level
- Improve the provision of post-16 General RE and Religious Studies by:
  - Managing the curriculum model to ensure more pupils have access to study A Level Religious Studies
  - Increase the curriculum time for General RE to the expected 5%

## PART A: CATHOLIC LIFE

### 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
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school
- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school

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At St Mary's the pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the academy to an outstanding extent. Pupils and parents are proud of their school and are confident to express their beliefs in a supportive and caring environment. As one pupil says 'being part of St Marys means that we should follow in Jesus' footsteps and do what he would do'.

St Mary's students have many opportunities to express their faith through leading prayer and worship, both in the academy and in the wider community. Every class is given the opportunity to lead an assembly based on the Gospel of the week. Students are encouraged to think about the meaning of the text and share the message with the rest of their Learning House. During the inspection a Year 11 form were observed leading an assembly based around the Ash Wednesday Gospel. They had prepared this together, and it created a reflective atmosphere which engaged pupils in prayer and reflection. Opportunities to create resources for prayer are currently not wide enough to ensure all pupils are engaged as deeply as they could be. The pupils were eager to tell the inspectors about their termly Learning House Masses which are prepared by pupils. They clearly enjoyed these opportunities and were proud of their participation in these Masses.

All at St Mary's Academy benefit from the outstanding provision of a large Chaplaincy team. Pupils and staff named the team as a strength of the academy. Pupils stated that the team gave support to everyone who needed it. One pupil commented on the help and support he had received throughout school and the benefit of having a trained counsellor in the academy.

High levels of reverence and respect were observed in all prayer and liturgy. Pupils talked about how the time spent in prayer was about 'connecting to God' and gave them a chance to reflect about their day and to pray for other people in need.

The leadership of this Catholic academy is outstanding. At all levels of leadership the Catholic mission and vision of the school is described as central to everything the academy does. The Board of Directors, Headteacher, leaders and staff at St Mary's are fully committed to the mission of the Church in education. The business plan of the Trust sets out a vision for the ethos of the academy based around four key dimensions: Announcing, Liturgy, Ministry and Community. The directors are regularly involved in the academy activities, including joining the community for Mass and for Ethos INSET days.



The Senior Leadership Team feel challenged and supported by the directors. The Senior Leadership Team regularly monitor and evaluate the Catholic life of the school. Directors make efforts to reach outside of the academy and the Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) to engage with all their partner schools to work towards a more cohesive approach to Catholic education across the phases.

The school displays its Catholic faith explicitly with many high-quality examples of religious images, art and iconography which are both contemporary and traditional in form.

Every member of staff has an appraisal target set which seeks to enhance the way in which they contribute to the ethos of the Academy. The teaching staff felt this resulted in every teacher working positively to strengthen the Catholic life of the academy.

Staff are confident to lead prayer and do not just see themselves as teachers but as witnesses of the Catholic faith in this academy. Pupils respond well to this witness and also speak highly of the relationships they have with staff who, they say, 'always help you'.

Throughout the inspection, the academy was described as a caring family. This perception was tangible in interactions observed around the academy. The arrangement of the school into Learning Houses fosters a real sense of community and enables pupils across the age ranges to come together for times of prayer and liturgy.

The pupils felt that the academy's behaviour policy gave them many chances to improve their behaviour and that being in a Catholic school encouraged them to think about their actions more. Middle leaders expressed that reconciliation was a very important part of the policy and that pupils at St Mary's experienced forgiveness and were given a fresh start. The behaviour in lessons and around school was very good with high levels of respect being shown by pupils to one another and staff.

The school expresses its faith through actions. The academy is very active in raising money for those less fortunate than themselves. For example, pupils requested to have a collection following the Nepal earthquake. During the inspection, Fairtrade soft drinks were being made and sold to raise money, and in Lent pupils choose charities to which money raised can be given. There are also outstanding links with projects in Ghana and Nepal which enable pupils to show concern for people throughout the world and understand why as Christians they are called to act.

The strong support for the school from parents can be seen in the high level of response to the inspection survey. One parent commented, "I am impressed by the strong morals and awareness of supporting others which the school promotes." 97% of parents who responded agreed that their children were happy in school.

## PART B: RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education
- How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education
- The quality of provision in Religious Education

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Overall the quality of Religious Education at this academy is good. Pupils enjoy the subject and learn the key teachings of Catholic faith in a context which respects their questions and engages their imagination.

Most pupils make expected progress from their starting points. Gaps in attainment and progress for boys and disadvantaged pupils have been identified and are being addressed in the Departmental Raising Achievement Plan and although the gap is starting to close there is still work to do.

The extent to which pupils enjoy and achieve in Religious Education is good. Pupils enjoy their Religious Education and can explain its value. One pupil said "RE helps us to relate to the wider world and challenges us to be better people."

Pupils are attentive and want to achieve. They show confidence in their teachers and enjoy positive relationships with them. Pupils say that they get on well with the teachers and they know they can ask them if they are finding the work difficult or if they need to talk about other issues. Generally, pupils are engaged and attentive and many show independence as learners. An example of this independence was seen in the project based work that pupils in General RE complete an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) on their own, with guided support.

Directors, Headteacher and leaders are committed to the academy's Catholic mission and to the place of Religious Education in that mission. The delivery of curriculum RE takes account of the Curriculum Directory and its implementation. There is a new Key Stage 3 curriculum which is more rigorous and challenging than before which will help prepare pupils better for the demands of the new GCSE.

Directors, leaders and managers monitor the provision and outcomes for Religious Education. The Academy self-evaluation process of academic monitoring and evaluation is routine and robust. The RE department is compliant in preparing an annual Raising Achievement Plan which is regularly reviewed by the Head of Department, Senior Line Managers, Headteacher and the CEO. As a core subject, the RE department is involved in regular review meetings and provides an analysis and summary for the progress of pupils throughout the year. This analysis provides a firm basis for identification of the department's strengths and areas for development.

CPD is very effective and staff meet regularly to share ideas and plan together. Every Thursday staff are given two hours of CPD which focuses on Teaching and Learning,

DAFITAL (Data and Feedback Informing Teaching and Learning), ethos and curriculum planning. All staff commented that this time was very effective in helping them to develop and improve progress and outcomes for pupils. Assessment for learning informs teaching and the introduction of the DAFITAL meetings have meant that teachers are sharper in their understanding of where pupils are and what needs to be done to secure stronger progression.

The quality of provision in Religious Education is good. The school fully satisfies the requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference guidelines in Years 7-11, however the academy must make arrangements to dedicate the required time in the sixth form. Learning is often stimulating and memorable, and is focused appropriately on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and the Church. The curriculum meets the needs of groups and individuals and this is seen in the provision of General RE where pupils can either follow the EPQ strand or the Working with Others strand depending on which one best matches their interest and ability.

The quality of teaching observed is effective in ensuring pupils are interested in their learning and make progress. It encourages spiritual and moral development. An example of this was a Year 8 lesson where pupils were focusing on prayer and *Lectio Divina* by reflecting on the question: "How can I make sure that my prayer is focused on Christ rather than myself?" A Year 9 lesson was focused on the issue of abortion and pupils were given the opportunity to discuss different viewpoints and reflect on the teaching of the Church on this issue.

Teachers have good subject knowledge which inspires and challenges pupils and contributes to their good progress. The challenge of the new GCSE curriculum has meant that teachers have had to increase their subject knowledge to match new content and this is an area for ongoing development for the department.

Pupils are provided with detailed feedback, both orally and through marking so that all learning is strengthened and progress secured. Teachers listen to, observe and question groups of pupils during lessons to improve learning.

## SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Capacity for sustained improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Catholic Life</b>	<b>1</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.</li> </ul>	<b>1</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How well leaders and managers promote and ensure provision for the Catholic Life of the school through monitoring and evaluation.</li> </ul>	<b>1</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.</li> </ul>	<b>1</b>
<b>Religious Education</b>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The quality of provision in Religious Education.</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>

	<b>Pupil Outcomes</b>	<b>Leadership &amp; Management</b>	<b>Provision</b>	<b>Overall</b>
<b>Catholic Life</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Religious Education</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>