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DIOCESAN BOARD FOR INSPECTIONS

CANON LAW 806 FINAL INSPECTION REPORT INCORPORATING SECTION 48

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ST MALACHY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL,
A VOLUNTARY ACADEMY
Furnace Place, Illingworth, Halifax. HX2 8JY

School URN

141480

Date of S48 inspection and
OE grade

22/23 November 2018
Outstanding (1)

E-mail address

head@st-malachys.calderdale.sch.uk

Chair of Governors

Mr John Fisher

Headteacher

Mrs Annie McNally

RE Subject Leader

Mr Tom Kowalski

Date and grade of last S48
Inspection

13/14 November 2013 : Good (2)

Section 48 Inspector

Mr Alan Dewhurst

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.

1

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

CATHOLIC LIFE

1

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

1

Summary of key findings:

This is an outstanding Catholic school.

- St Malachy's Catholic Primary School is outstandingly effective in providing a high quality Catholic education for its pupils.
- The headteacher leads by example, with a clear vision to create a 'green oasis of learning' for the whole school community. She models the Catholic mission of the school in an outstanding manner, as recognised by pupils, parents and staff. She is supported by a united staff community in providing the very best for all pupils, regardless of background or religious affiliation.
- In Religious Education (RE), pupils' progress across all year groups is very good. From on-entry attainment that is typically below average for many pupils, skills and understanding begin to be developed well at an early age, and this foundation is built on successfully throughout each class.
- By the time they leave school at the end of Key Stage 2, almost all pupils are meeting age-related expectations and some demonstrate deeper understanding; they are able to reflect spiritually on religious matters, think ethically and theologically and have developed a very good level of religious literacy.
- Teaching in Religious Education is sometimes outstanding, and none of it is less than good. Where excellent, it is characterised by imaginative and well-targeted lessons from knowledgeable teachers that engage the pupils' attention, involve them actively and engender a keen interest.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding overall; this is mainly because of current factors such as the need to develop experience, expertise and subject knowledge amidst a changing teaching staff profile.
- Collective Worship plays a central part in developing pupils spiritually and morally. It is well organised, celebrating in the Catholic tradition but in ways that are accessible to

pupils of all ages. It is enriched by innovative approaches to celebrating special occasions, such as at Pentecost, and by utilising art to highlight changing seasons; and by the opportunities for prayer shared within school and with the parish community.

- The encouragement of pupils to play an active part in planning and leading acts of worship for their peers is developing well, with pupils taking on leading roles with keen enthusiasm. Pupils are confident in using traditional prayers, and are beginning to develop a wider range of styles of prayer.
- The Catholic Life of the school has been developed well, particularly in providing a sense of belonging to the community for pupils and parents or carers alike. Parents feel welcomed and cared for, and that their children are safe, well known and understood. There is a strong sense of a 'family' about the school, created by sympathetic, approachable and encouraging leadership and committed and caring staff. Pastoral care is excellent.
- The inclusive environment, where all pupils are nurtured and encouraged, has enabled each of them to commit fully themselves to the school's Catholic mission. Pupils behave in exemplary fashion, following the courtesy and politeness modelled by staff. They are kind and supportive towards each other. Such is the community's unity that it was impossible during inspection to tell what religious affiliation any pupil had as all upheld the Catholic ethos.
- Leaders and academy councillors work very effectively to ensure that the school's Catholic identity and mission is at the forefront of their priorities. Academy councillors are well informed and supportive, and are actively involved in the life of the school. The senior leadership team are working very successfully in partnership to develop all aspects of the school's provision. They ensure that high expectations are maintained, and that all pupils are supported well, particularly those most vulnerable.
- Leaders and academy councillors' monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education, Catholic Life and Collective Worship is excellent.
- The school fulfils all of its statutory and canonical requirements. Leaders and governors have successfully implemented all of the recommendations of the previous Section 48 inspection.

What the school needs to do to improve further.

- Raise the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in RE so that it is consistently outstanding by:
 - Sharing the current outstanding practice existing in the school and in other partner schools;
 - Ensuring that learning objectives are focused on developing pupils' understanding through progressive small steps, thereby embedding attainment.
- Develop further the Collective Worship provision focusing on:
 - Building the confidence and expertise of all staff in leading acts of worship;
 - The use of a wider range of styles of prayer in Collective Worship;
 - Continuing to build pupil skills in leadership of Collective Worship progressively across year groups.
- Continue to improve the Catholic Life of the school by:

- Ensuring the mission statement is regularly promoted so that all pupils have ownership;
- Developing the role of groups, such as the school council and 'Mal's Pals', in influencing the participation of all pupils in the school's Catholic Life.

Information about this inspection

The Inspection of St Malachy's Catholic Primary School 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 inspector reviewed in detail the following aspects:

- 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 pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education
- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship
- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education, Collective Worship and the Catholic Life of the school

The inspection was carried out by one inspector over one and a half days, involving these activities:

- Teaching and learning was observed in eight classes.
- A whole school Collective Worship was observed as well as a classroom worship planned and led by pupils in Year 6.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher and the RE coordinator.
- There was also a meeting held with four members of the academy council, including link governors, the vice chair and the parish priest.
- Discussions were also held with groups of pupils and a group of parents.
- A sample of pupils' RE workbooks from every class was scrutinised, along with the RE coordinator's file and files for both Collective Worship and Catholic Life of the school.
- A range of documents was made available and scrutinised including the Diocesan Self Evaluation Form (DSEF), the action plan for RE, Catholic Life and Collective Worship,

the School Improvement Plan (SIP), attainment and progress data, school policies and minutes of academy council meetings.

- Displays around the school and in classrooms were also noted.

Information about this school

- St Malachy’s is a smaller than average primary school, with 195 pupils on roll, including nine who attend part-time in the nursery. It has been a member of the Blessed Peter Snow Multi Academy Trust since conversion in October 2014. The school serves the parish of Our Lady of Lourdes and St Malachy, Ovenden.
- 40% of pupils are baptised Catholics. Approximately 12% are from other Christian denominations and a small proportion from other faith backgrounds. The largest group of pupils (46%) have no religious affiliation.
- Nearly half of all pupils are eligible for the Pupil Premium, significantly above the national average.
- 31% of pupils have English as an additional language.
- 21% of pupils (41) are on the register for Special Educational Needs/Disability (SEND).
- Staffing includes seven full time teachers, all of whom teach Religious Education. Three teachers are baptised Catholics. One teacher holds the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS). There are eleven classroom support staff.
- Since the last inspection, there has been a significant change in teaching personnel, including the appointment of two new teachers for the start of the current academic year, both are newly qualified.
- The headteacher is due to take up a new appointment in January 2019.

Full report - inspection judgements

CATHOLIC LIFE

The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

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| 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 |

- Pupils fully appreciate and value the Catholic Life of the school. They understand the special nature of its Catholic identity, and that it asks that they ‘follow the path of Jesus’, as one pupil stated, and that they give of their best.
- They are proud of their school and know that it is a loving community where all are mutually supportive. As one pupil stated, ‘You are never alone – teachers and classmates surround you to support you.’ Others acknowledged that everyone is ‘kind to each other’ and that they are not afraid to speak up because they know their concerns will be heard and addressed.

- The school's mission statement is displayed prominently throughout the school. It is an effective expression of the wider mission of the church in education, and was created following extensive consultation with staff, parents, governors and pupils. It is a unifying statement of purpose for adults working in and supporting the school. Although known about by pupils, it is not used as a focal influence to develop their participation in the Catholic Life of the school. This does not detract from pupils' sense of belonging to the school community, or their enthusiasm for contributing to the development of the Catholic character of the school.
- Many pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, enthusiastically take on responsibilities to help each other, to develop the school's facilities and to help the wider community. Examples of this participation are seen in the current drive to raise funds for an outdoor classroom through a variety of activities. Charitable works are also prominent, for instance through the harvest collection for a local food bank and support for CAFOD and the Good Shepherd Appeal.
- The school council's elected members help to give voice to pupil concerns and suggestions for improvement to the headteacher. Another group of elected pupils – Mal's Pals – focus on raising money, charitable work, eco-awareness, support for Collective Worship and community initiatives. These groups have the potential to improve further the Catholic Life of the school given more regular and prominent roles.
- The behaviour of pupils is excellent. They are very caring towards each other, courteous to all adults and welcoming to visitors.
- The school uses Jigsaw learning as a main resource in its personal and social education, and it is effective in helping pupils to develop healthy lifestyles and relationships. The current RSE programme is under revision, with diocesan training having recently been accessed. However, pupils currently have a good understanding of their own development at an age appropriate level.
- Pupils embrace a holistic approach to education, thanks to the emphasis given to Catholic social teaching and concern for the common good. This has most recently been influenced positively by the school's focus on virtues, with each class 'owning' one of the virtues – charity, fortitude, temperance, for example – and each virtue being highlighted during a particular week.
- Parents are clear that their children gain significantly from the school's provision. They feel that their children are happy and safe within a caring learning environment. They praise the community ethos – "just like joining a family" was a common feeling. Praise is extended to all staff in the school.
- The school's pastoral provision is excellent. Teachers, learning mentors and teaching assistants all play an effective part in supporting pupils, particularly the most vulnerable. This can be seen in the special provision in the building, such as 'The Hive' nurture room, sympathetically and attractively furnished, and the learning mentors' room with its plethora of cuddly toys; but also in the close support for individuals and groups in the classroom, on the playground, or in the library.
- The school also offers a breakfast club and a range of after-school activities to engage and support pupils. Financial support is given to ensure that everyone can benefit from enriching experiences, such as on school trips or from visitors to school, as well as with the provision of school clothing for those in need.
- The school makes its Catholic identity and ethos explicit through its learning environment, with attractive and inspirational displays throughout classrooms, corridors and in other open spaces. The seasons and feasts of the liturgical year are highlighted, as well as pupils' work on special themed activities.

- Parents are very appreciative of the approachability of school staff, and their understanding of pupils' welfare needs. They very much applaud the way the school celebrates their children's achievements, particularly through the Friday celebration assembly. Children are rewarded by a variety of means as a class or as individuals for attendance, good behaviour, outstanding work, effort or positive attitude. Their motivation to receive recognition is evident.
- Leaders and governors are very committed to ensuring the priority given to developing the Catholic identity of the school. This is evidenced in the school development plan, in the minutes of the academy council, and in the frequent focused visits by governors to the school.
- Leaders within school model behaviours and commitment very effectively, giving clear direction and encouragement to staff and pupils alike. Strategies for engagement with parents and carers are also very effective, ensuring a strong measure of support for the school's mission. Parental feedback, via regular questionnaires, is almost universally supportive on all measures.
- The school responds to diocesan policies and initiatives enthusiastically, most notably through the current focus on virtues, ensuring that the bishop's vision for the diocese is promoted fully. School leaders attend diocesan and academy leaders' events regularly, benefitting significantly from the partnership with other Catholic schools in the area.
- The school's self-evaluation of its Catholic Life is rigorous and coherent. It helps to identify and celebrate the many things that the school does well, in addition to creating well-targeted and planned improvements.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious Education is outstanding

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| How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education | 1 |
| The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education | 2 |
| How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education | 1 |

- The quality of pupils' achievement, learning and progress is outstanding.
- Pupils enter the school at nursery or reception, with many beginning their education with skills below those found typically for their age. As the majority of pupils have no faith affiliation, teachers and support staff have to strive hard to build a sound foundation of skills, knowledge and understanding. This work continues through the school so that, by the end of Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils are achieving expected standards and a significant proportion are exceeding expectations.
- This means that, from their starting points, almost all pupils make good progress with many progressing beyond expectations. In the last two years, levels of attainment have been at least in-line with diocesan averages, with 2017 results being stronger still. In

2018, 70% of pupils made better than expected progress from their level of attainment at Key Stage 1.

- Assessment data for the current cohort shows similar levels of progress. This trend is mirrored consistently across the school. All pupil groups make good progress, including those with special educational needs.
- Assessment and monitoring are firmly embedded within the school. Regular assessments take place and data is collected and analysed. Results are used to inform next steps.
- Moderation meetings are held to assure the standardisation of results. These take place each term within school but they are also assured by moderation meetings within the local Catholic cluster to which the school belongs.
- As a result of good and outstanding teaching, pupils become religiously literate, engaged in learning about and from religion, able to reflect spiritually and think ethically and theologically with depth of understanding.
- For instance, pupils in Year 6 were able to reflect with maturity on the roles of Martin Luther King, St Oscar Romero and the class patron saint, St Maximilian Kolbe, in fighting for justice for the poor and oppressed. Their ability to write in the guise of one of these people was impressive, as was their reflective poetry produced on the themes of remembrance and refugees.
- Most pupils show active engagement in lessons, responding enthusiastically to the variety of learning tasks offered to them. They collaborate willingly, and can sustain their attention when listening to their teachers or peers.
- Pupils are keen to improve, and are knowledgeable about their levels of understanding and what is needed to improve these, thanks to a consistent marking policy and the sharing of assessment targets through the 'I can' statements.
- The quality of pupils' work in books increases as they move through the school, as they make progress in their attainment. Most pupils take care to present their work well, and seize upon opportunities to demonstrate their learning in writing and through artistic and creative modes.
- Some of the teaching in RE is outstanding, and none is less than good. Teachers have very good knowledge of their pupils' current attainment, utilising this to plan effectively to meet their needs, to extend understanding and to build appropriate skills.
- The school bases its religious education teaching around the structure of the diocesan recommended scheme, 'The Way, the Truth and the Life'. This is being enhanced by the school's adoption of a patron saint for each class with a corresponding virtue, enriching learning and helping pupils to make the saint's example and the virtue relevant to their own lives.
- Teachers demonstrate high expectations of their pupils. Where creativity and innovation are added to a thorough understanding of the subject, pupils are led towards engaging and responding enthusiastically. The pedagogy developed through the 'Read, Write, Inc.' Literacy scheme is particularly effective when applied within Religious Education lessons, embedding understanding for younger pupils and helping the discussion in collaboration across all classes. Professional development in creative approaches to RE has also had a positive impact.
- Teaching is not outstanding overall because of a number of current factors. A significant proportion of teachers are in the process of building their subject knowledge and expertise, and the school has suffered some instability through changes in staff, both permanent and temporary.

- In some instances, the focus on delivering achievement against the ‘I can’ statements has led to the lack of a careful step-by-step progression towards a goal, necessary for truly embedding understanding.
- Teaching assistants support learning effectively and sympathetically, particularly with those pupils with specific needs.
- Celebration of achievement is widespread and frequent. The school uses its ‘smileys’ well to motivate pupils in their learning.
- The Religious Education curriculum complies completely with diocesan and bishops’ conference requirements in terms of its content and the curriculum time devoted to the subject.
- Academy councillors receive accurate and regular in-depth information about the quality of teaching and learning, and about pupils’ progress. They interrogate and challenge leaders appropriately, in order to ensure they have a full understanding of standards, and are actively involved in monitoring through visits to classrooms, giving detailed reports back to the main council.
- RE leadership has undergone several changes in recent years but without impeding the development of the subject and the school’s commitment to improvement. The present RE subject leader is highly knowledgeable and deeply committed to leadership of the subject, and is already supporting colleagues, disseminating information and monitoring standards effectively. He is well-supported by the headteacher and deputy head.
- The headteacher and RE subject leader share a clear vision for teaching and learning, which they are implementing with expertise and enthusiasm. The drive to ensure that Religious Education is given the highest priority is seen in the reviews carried out by the Calderdale Catholic Cluster Schools Partnership and by the local SACRE, the latter highly commending the school for its teaching of the subject.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Collective Worship is outstanding.

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

- Collective Worship is central to the life of the school, and has a profound effect on the spiritual and moral development of pupils. The school ensures that all pupils are able to celebrate the main feasts of the church’s year as well as have daily opportunities for prayer.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about planning and leading worship in their classes. Pupils at the earliest age help to select resources or set the focus for prayer. Through Key Stage 1, they develop their choice of artefacts and other supporting materials.

- As they move into Years 3 and 4, pupils are assisted by teachers to plan using the 'Pray Together' resource. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils are developing their own PowerPoints to deliver classroom worship according to a set structure.
- During the inspection, a Year 6 classroom worship was planned and led by two pupils with skill and forethought, utilising traditional prayers, a reading from the psalms and a thoughtful choice of images and music reflecting the feast of St Cecilia. Singing was enthusiastic and moments of silence were observed reverently by all. This ability to pause for reflection was further demonstrated in the celebration assembly for the whole school.
- Pupils show a marked preference for the use of traditional prayer, but are starting to develop the use of a wider range of styles of prayer. This is at an early stage of development.
- Collective Worship is planned in detail across the year. Each week has a chosen ethos statement and Collective Worship focus, with attention given to the liturgical calendar and the dressing of the prayer focus area in the hall, corridor and in each classroom. Whole school worship at the beginning of the week introduces the theme, highlights the weekend's gospel message and presents the virtue to aim for during the week ahead.
- Because of this detailed planning, pupils develop a very good understanding of the liturgical year, the main feasts and seasons and the colours and symbols associated with them.
- Gatherings in the hall and in classroom develop the chosen themes with a celebration of achievement on a Friday. During the inspection, Year 2 pupils demonstrated the definition of the virtue that had featured that week, and was attached to their class: 'Fortitude' was explained as being 'brave, curious, confident' and having 'grit', making a difficult concept accessible to all pupils.
- Particular feasts or times in the church's year are given prominence through special liturgies or Masses. For instance, the school had held a moving Remembrance Service at the beginning of November and the feast of Pentecost was celebrated with gusto by processing to the church with banners and other decorations before releasing balloons into the air, each with a prayer attached. In 2017, the school took part in a BBC Songs of Praise programme, taking on '40 challenges for Lent.'
- A further emphasis is given to religious celebration through the school's use of 'art days' to give pupils the chance to interpret an event or season through creativity, such as at harvest time or at the beginning of Advent.
- School and parish links are very strong and continually developing. The parish priest is a regular visitor to the school, informally meeting pupils. School leaders and the parish priest work closely together to draw families into regular practice of the faith, and they acknowledge their role of helping the process of evangelisation in those for whom religious affiliation is not yet developed. Family Masses, sacramental preparation and welcome meetings for new parents are further examples of this link.
- Family prayer is also encouraged, for instance through the Lent prayer bags and the leaflets supporting the praying of the rosary.
- One significant excellent aspect of the links between the school and parish is the 'Prayer Partners' programme. This has seen every child in school partnered with a parishioner, or ex-parishioner, with each given the responsibility to pray for each other. This is done in school communally every day.
- All staff play a part in leading Collective Worship. The school has, over time, arranged for developmental sessions to help teachers plan and lead appropriately, and it is the intention to continue to give opportunities for all staff to understand the key elements of

liturgy and how to make each act of worship appropriate and relevant to pupils, since many staff members have changed over time.

- Leaders and Governors have adopted a rigorous monitoring timetable to ensure that Collective Worship is evaluated. The RE coordinator has undertaken his own monitoring this term and designated academy councilors have also visited to experience worship and to feed back via evaluation forms.