



**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION  
REPORT**  
(Under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005)

on

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

**School:** St. Mary's Catholic Primary School

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**School URN:** 112904

**Headteacher:** Mrs Ann King

**Chair of Governors:** Mr Keith Mastin

**Inspector:** Mrs Anne Recchia

**Dates of Inspection:** 29 and 30 January 2014

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The inspection of this school was carried out on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham under Canon 806 of Canon Law and Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in accordance with the Diocese of Nottingham Schedule for Section 48 Inspections. 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 inspector observed 4 Religious Education lessons and 2 Acts of Collective Worship.

Meetings were held with the headteacher who is also the subject leader for Religious Education, governors and the parish priest. Discussions were also held with pupils and parents.

The inspector scrutinised a range of documents including the school improvement plan, governors' minutes, pupil attainment tracking in Religious Education, records of Acts of Collective Worship and other school events, monitoring of Religious Education and Acts of Collective Worship. The inspector also examined the work in pupils' Religious Education books.

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St. Mary's is much smaller than the average sized primary school and pupils are taught in four mixed age classes. The school serves the parish of St. Mary's Marple Bridge and New Mills. There are currently 111 pupils on roll of which 46% are baptised Catholics, 37% are baptised Christians and 17% are of no religious affiliation.

The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional funding, known as the pupil premium, is average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational need is above average. Almost all pupils are of white British heritage. Due to the small numbers in each year group, all of the above varies from year to year.

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## INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<b>OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CATHOLIC LIFE</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>COLLECTIVE WORSHIP</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>RELIGIOUS EDUCATION</b>	<b>2</b>

### KEY FINDINGS

St Mary's is an outstanding Catholic school overall.

- Pupils' contribution to the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding; they have a deep sense of belonging to this inclusive community and work hard to promote the ethos of the school both within and beyond its walls. The school offers an environment where pupils can grow as confident, caring and spiritual individuals - at ease with their own faith and the faith of others. Leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school very effectively and plan for improvements well.
- Collective Worship is at the heart of the school and is outstanding. It is well planned, resourced, monitored and evaluated. Pupils gain the skills, knowledge and understanding of liturgy according to their age and ability and are becoming increasingly skilled in the planning and delivery of their own liturgies. The headteacher, staff and governors are highly committed to providing good quality worship throughout the school. The parish priest works well with the school to ensure that pupils feel part of the whole parish community.
- Religious Education is good. Pupils make good progress and achieve high standards by the end of Key Stage 1 and 2. Teaching is good with some examples of outstanding practice. Assessment has improved since the last inspection; teachers have gained knowledge and confidence to assess work against national standards and as a result, know how well their pupils are doing and how they can improve further.

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

- Teachers should plan more carefully differentiated tasks for pupils that are based on the careful analysis of assessment and tracking information, in order to ensure that all groups of pupils and individuals are sufficiently challenged and thereby make rapid progress in Religious Education.
  - The marking of pupils' work in Religious Education should include not only how well pupils have achieved but how they can continue to improve. Time should be given to pupils to enable them to act on teachers' comments and respond to suggested improvements in their work.
  - Introduce a robust system of 'baseline' assessment of Religious Education on entry to school in order to more accurately assess and track the progress of pupils over time in the Foundation Stage and beyond.
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# CATHOLIC LIFE

## THE QUALITY OF 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.
- 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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Pupils at St. Mary's have a deep sense of belonging to a Catholic community within the school and the wider parish and diocesan family. They have a strong sense of their own worth and religious identity and are at the centre of shaping the ethos and mission of the school especially through the student council and class meetings that often focus on issues relating to its Catholic Life. In addition to this, the chaplaincy team take a lead in developing the spiritual life of pupils. Pupils take full advantage of the safe and secure environment and the opportunities offered by the school for personal support and development. They are developing as happy, confident individuals who behave with respect and consideration to others. One Year 6 pupil said, 'Through our good behaviour, we are showing others the image of God'. Pupils offer their gifts in service to others through charitable giving and roles they undertake within the school.

Throughout the school there are visible signs of its Catholic identity through the vibrant displays and religious icons and symbols. The mission statement is at the heart of the school, is prominently displayed and is evident in the excellent relationships seen throughout the school. All are ably led and supported by the headteacher who shares her vision for high quality education and faith development very effectively. Pupils understand the school's mission; how it is to be lived out in the school community and further afield. Personal, Health and Social Education and Sex and Relationships Education programmes are well established and are consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

The headteacher and leadership team prioritise effectively the development of the Catholic Life of the school through well-targeted training and expenditure. During the Year of Faith, for example, they committed funds to both the development of pupil led liturgies and the spreading of the Gospel at home and school through the distribution of 'The Wednesday Word'. The recently refurbished 'Rainbow Room' is also being effectively used by the chaplaincy team to plan and lead worship. The formal and informal monitoring and evaluation of the Catholic Life of the school is carried out regularly. Views of parents are sought in a variety of ways including questionnaires, open days and informal discussions. They are highly supportive of its mission and appreciate the quality of education and care the school offers to their children. The headteacher undertakes regular learning walks and discusses findings in staff meetings, governors' meetings and informal discussions. Pupils' views are sought in questionnaires and through class meetings and discussions. Governors are well informed and make a significant impact on the Catholic Life of the school through their support and commitment and their willingness to challenge when appropriate.

# COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

## THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.
- The quality of provision for Collective Worship.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

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Pupils show respect and reverence during Acts of Collective Worship. They use a variety of ways to respond to the call to prayer with enthusiasm, these include quiet reflection, spontaneous prayer, response to the bible, dance, drama, song and music. The recent introduction of signing during singing has enabled the very youngest pupils to participate more fully. These pupils quickly learn the simple prayers of the Church and gain confidence in sharing their own prayers in public and in silence. As a consequence, pupils develop an ease in the prayer life of the school where it is seen as a natural occurrence in the day. Pupils participate in Mass and services of reconciliation confidently both in school and the parish, where they are encouraged to take a full and active rôle. Pupils regularly plan and lead acts of collective worship. Skills to do this are developed from an early age with the effective use of the 'Let us Pray' resource and support from class teachers and the headteacher. Through the Religious Education curriculum, pupils develop a good understanding of liturgical seasons and use this knowledge and understanding in their own liturgies. All of this leads to pupils, in line with their age and ability, delivering effective Acts of Collective Worship that are thought provoking, inclusive, reflective and engaging. Pupils are able to evaluate these effectively in order to affect improvements.

Collective Worship is central to the life of the school; it is well planned, resourced and inclusive, taking account of the different starting points and faith backgrounds of the pupils. Through the Religious Education curriculum, pupils are able to gain knowledge and understanding of the faith practices of other religions. The leadership team is aware that first hand experiences through visits to other places of worship and visitors from other faiths would further enhance pupils understanding. Liturgies are well planned using the 'Come and See' programme, 'Statements to Live By' and the seasons of the liturgical year.

The headteacher monitors class and key stage liturgies regularly , evaluating the strengths and areas for development, which feed into the whole school development plan. In order to gain the views of a range of stake holders, governors and parents now need to be more involved in this monitoring cycle. The headteacher is passionate about delivering high quality Collective Worship and has invested in appropriate resources and staff development opportunities to ensure that pupils and staff have the skills and the means to plan and deliver meaningful and creative liturgies. The parish priest and headteacher work well together to ensure pupils are involved in the parish community and that they feel part of the liturgical life of the Church.

# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

## THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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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 (including governors) monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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Most pupils enjoy learning in Religious Education. Where there is outstanding teaching, this is most evident. Pupils show passion and commitment to succeed in the tasks set. Almost all pupils are keen to do well and apply themselves diligently in lessons. Behaviour for learning is generally good and in some classes, it is outstanding. Given their average starting point, most pupils in the Foundation Stage make good progress in Religious Education, quickly acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding. They can recognise key people in the bible, retell some biblical stories orally and through play and use some religious language. In Key Stage 1, as a result of good and outstanding teaching, pupils are making rapid progress in Religious Education. They show a good understanding of scripture and the application of this in their lives. For example, most pupils are able to recognise that we use a variety of books in church, they understand their purpose and how the priest and congregation use them. As a result, they are beginning to make links with the bible and the liturgy. Attainment of almost all pupils is at least in line with diocesan and national expectations and a very large majority of pupils are exceeding these expectations by the end of Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, pupils are making good progress over time resulting in a very large majority attaining levels in Religious Education which are at least in line with diocesan and National expectations with a large majority exceeding these year on year. Pupils in the current Year 6 are expected to continue this high standard with a larger proportion of pupils achieving above expectations. Due to well-targeted support offered by class teachers and support staff, there are no significant differences between the progress of different groups of pupils.

Teaching is at least good throughout the school with some evidence of outstanding practice and all pupils make good progress. Teachers often show good and in some cases, excellent subject knowledge which is used effectively and creatively to aid learning. Teachers understand the importance of the subject and show passion and confidence in their teaching. Planning is thorough and is linked closely to the learning objectives in the 'Come and See' Programme which is being used well to engage all learners. However, differentiation is often achieved by outcome and support offered by the class teacher and support staff. With differentiated tasks, there could be a more consistent focus on the 'driver' words, which would help pupils to understand what is expected and how to improve their work. This would enable pupils to evaluate of their own work as this is at an early stage and needs to be developed. Resources are used well especially Information Technology to enhance teaching and learning. Good cross-curricular links are made with other subjects to make learning fun and creative. Teachers are skilled in the use of questioning techniques to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding. In outstanding lessons, questioning is used to really challenge all pupils. Marking is generally very supportive, where achievement and effort is always rewarded. Some teachers provide direction to pupils on how to improve their work and the next steps in their learning. Pupils are beginning to respond to marking

where this practice is used. This good practice now needs to be shared and used consistently across the school.

There is an annual timetable of both formal and informal monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education. The results of this are used to improve teaching and learning across the school. The headteacher systematically tracks the progress of pupils in Religious Education and is beginning to evaluate and refine this process so that it can more effectively inform planning and the differentiation of pupils' tasks. She regularly attends diocesan training and moderates pupils' work against others in the diocese. She is well regarded by teaching and support staff who look to her for vision and direction. She has high expectations for both staff and pupils, is passionate about the subject and can accurately identify the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning in Religious Education. In-service training has been used effectively to improve assessment throughout the school and as a result, teachers feel confident in the accurate levelling of pupils' work against national standards. The use of a baseline assessment on entry and as pupils progress through the Foundation Stage would enable teachers to target pupils not making sufficient progress and tailor tasks and support accordingly so that they are able to make accelerated progress as they move through the school.

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## WHAT INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS MEAN

Within the report, the following grades are used:

<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:

<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.
<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. The school will receive a monitoring visit within twelve months.

