



DIOCESAN CANONICAL INSPECTION REPORT

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

St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Longlands Road, New Mills, High Peak, SK22 3BL

School URN:	146260
Inspection Date:	21 March 2019
Inspectors:	Mrs Helen White and Mrs Siobhan Minford

Overall Effectiveness	Previous Inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This Inspection:	Good	2
Catholic Life:		Good	2
Religious Education:		Good	2
Collective Worship:		Outstanding	1

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

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

- St Mary's staff and pupils take great pride in being part of the school which has a warm, family feel. The mission of the school is evident throughout the building and has been developed by both pupils and staff. The school has more recently focussed on Bishop Patrick's spiritual themes of encounter, discipleship and missionary discipleship by engaging in charity work for those less fortunate than themselves. The school environment is full of vibrant displays which support pupils in their understanding of Catholic Life.
- Pupils enjoy their Religious Education lessons and talk enthusiastically about their work. They are proud of their books and this is reflected in how beautifully the work is presented. Teaching and learning in Religious Education are good overall. Behaviour for learning is outstanding. Assessment in Religious Education is good and is an area which continues to be developed by senior leaders. Teachers incorporate a range of curriculum areas in order to support the delivery of Religious Education. Outcomes at the end of both key stages are above diocesan averages.
- Prayer and worship are given the highest priority and, as a result, this area is outstanding. Pupils are very confident in planning and leading Collective Worship. They learn from an early stage about how to lead Collective Worship for their class and by the time they are in Year 6, they are capable and take complete ownership of their worship in school. The head of school, teachers, priest and local governors are fully committed to ensuring high quality worship which is meaningful and child-centred. As this area of the school's provision is so effective, it would be of great benefit to the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Academy Trust for the school to act as a beacon of outstanding practice for other schools within the trust.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Mary's is a smaller than average primary school. Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes.
- The school serves the parish of St Mary's Marple Bridge and New Mills.
- The school became part of the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust on 1 September 2018.
- There are currently 109 pupils on roll of which 40% are baptised Catholics, 39% are other Christians, 3% are from another world faith and 18% have no religious affiliation.
- 9% of the pupils receive school support for their special educational needs and/or a disability and an additional 2% of pupils with special educational needs and/or a disability are supported by an educational, health and care plan (EHCP). These are both below the national average.
- 8% of pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding which is below the national average.
- Since the last diocesan canonical inspection, the previous headteacher has retired and the school has internally appointed a head of school, along with an executive headteacher who supports the school for two days each week.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

■ Catholic Life:

- Pupils' participation and leadership within the newly established chaplaincy team is very much at the embryonic stage. Further planning and involvement from the lead lay chaplain is needed to ensure that the group has prominence and purpose within the school.
- The school's behaviour policy requires review to reflect behaviour in school; it should also be more overtly Catholic by including reference to concepts such as forgiveness and reconciliation.
- Evaluation of the Catholic Life of the school needs to be developed further; this could be supported through requests for information at trust level in the newly established St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust.

■ Religious Education:

- Leaders need to focus on how well pupils make progress in Religious Education, not only throughout each year, but also from the end of the previous key stage.
- The school's marking policy requires review to ensure continuity across the school in the feedback given to pupils regarding their progress in Religious Education.

■ Collective Worship:

- Leaders will be able to further develop the provision for Collective Worship by collaborating with the new lead lay chaplain appointed by the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust to develop the role and purpose of the chaplaincy team further.
- As all aspects of Collective Worship are outstanding, it would be of great benefit to the Trust for the school to act as a beacon of outstanding practice in this area for other schools.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL	2
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school. 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school. 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school. 	2

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

- The mission statement of the school has been developed by the whole school community and is central to the Catholic Life of St Mary's. It is present in all areas of the school as well as on pupils' books, policies and communications from the school.
- Pupils demonstrate the respect they hold for themselves and each other by their excellent behaviour around the school. Pupils say that they value and enjoy the 'special friends' system that operates where Year 6 pupils are paired with pupils new to the Early Years class. They value the responsibility and deep friendship bonds which are created through this.
- Pupils recognise the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation in the everyday life of St Mary's. This is demonstrated through their drama work and the desire of pupils, not of the Catholic faith, to receive forgiveness in the recent service of reconciliation led by the assistant priest. It also demonstrates the inclusivity of the school.
- Pupils value and respect the Catholic traditions of the school and its links to the parish and diocese. They respond enthusiastically to the opportunities to support the charitable projects and regularly contribute to CAFOD campaigns as well as a number of local charities. Year 6 pupils greatly enjoy their 'enterprise week' where the money raised from the most successful business venture is donated to the charity of their choice.
- Pupils' participation and leadership within the newly established chaplaincy team is very much at the embryonic stage. Further planning and involvement from the lead lay chaplain is needed to ensure the group has prominence and purpose within the school.

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

- It is evident in every area of the school that a focus for development has been the teaching and promotion of the liturgical year. Prayer tables, displays, teaching powerpoints and artwork all demonstrate a good understanding of the Church's seasons and their representative colours.
- The school has provided pupils with a 'rainbow room' which is used regularly for prayer and reflection. The chaplaincy team uses it each week to work with younger pupils, reading them bible stories and providing them with activities to support their understanding. A newly established 'prayer hut' has been created in the space and is already being used regularly by pupils.
- School leaders feel that Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is becoming embedded in the school as they adopt a variety of approaches to its teaching. This currently involves the use of the *Journey in Love* resource as well as resources provided by Sister Dorothy. Parent information sessions are planned for the Pentecost term to be delivered to parents and pupils by an external provider.
- The Monday Act of Worship provides pupils with a personal, social, health and emotional education (PSHE) focus by using and promoting the *Statements to Live by*. These are referred to by pupils throughout the week and they are encouraged to record their resultant actions on them.
- The school's mission statement is clear and all staff are fully committed to its implementation across the curriculum and throughout the whole life of the school.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school – good

- The school has a good understanding of its current strengths and weaknesses. These were accurate in the school's self-evaluation document which was shared with inspectors.
- The value given to the promotion of the Catholic Life of the school is evident in the prominence it receives when the head of school communicates her Friday letter to the school and parish family.
- Leaders and local governors demonstrate a commitment to the mission of the Church. They are role models through their attendance of Mass in St Mary's as well as being catechists, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist and supporting children's liturgy within the church. The development of the Catholic Life of the school is seen as a shared responsibility.
- The school's behaviour policy requires review in order to reflect behaviour in school; it also needs to reflect the school's Catholic identity and make reference to aspects such as forgiveness and reconciliation.
- The head of school is an experienced and effective leader of Religious Education and Catholic Life; she models good practice to staff and pupils.
- Evaluation of the Catholic Life of the school requires further development; this could be supported through requests for information at trust level in the newly established St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust. This will result in planned improvements to further enhance Catholic Life.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	2
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- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and governors 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

- Achievement in Religious Education is high and has been consistently so over recent years in both key stages. The school has achieved standards which exceed diocesan averages over the past 3 years and is projected to do so again at the end of 2019.
- Pupils' books are valued, with the school mission statement displayed on the front of each exercise book. Pupils take great pride in their presentation and the quality of work produced. End of year expectations are shared with pupils. However, care needs to be taken with some of the younger pupils in order to not over-scaffold their work as this can limit the quality of work produced.
- Most pupils engage well in their lessons and are keen to please their teachers. The pupils shared with inspectors how much they enjoyed their Religious Education lessons when learning through other subject areas, for example one child told the inspectors that she 'really enjoyed making the Stations of the Cross in textiles'. Most pupils' behaviour in lessons is outstanding due to the high expectations set within the school.
- Visitors are welcomed into the school who can share their expertise with the pupils for example during the school's multi faith week a full day was led by a former curator of the Manchester Jewish Museum (Judaism with Jeremy).

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education – good

- Teaching is good or better at St Mary's. Teachers cater well for mixed aged classes by adapting the *Come and See* scheme into a two year programme. Differentiation of pupils' work is evident in all classes.
- Inspectors observed a variety of cross curricular subjects used to enhance the learning experience for the pupils, for example in Class 1 the pupils were acting out Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem and were painting a 'hosanna' banner decorated with hand printed palm leaves. One older pupil told inspectors 'there is a lot of writing to do' but that she enjoyed other subjects being included in Religious Education lessons too.
- Learning support assistants are effective in lessons. Inspectors observed them scribing for the teachers during the introduction to lessons, supporting pupils with special education needs and/or a disability and working alongside other pupils to support their learning.
- Although attainment is high, leaders now need to focus on how well pupils progress, not only throughout each year but also from the end of the previous key stage in order to gain a more accurate understanding of progress over time.
- Marking is an area which can be streamlined throughout the school without increasing the amount of marking carried out. The school now needs to update its marking policy to ensure that teachers are responding to pupils about how well they have met the learning focus of the lesson. Marking should be consistent across the school, so for example, teachers in both key stages need to agree on the code for the same coloured pens being used when providing feedback to pupils.

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

- The Religious Education subject leader has a clear vision of teaching and learning and has experience and expertise within this area of the curriculum.
- As a result of local governors challenging senior leaders about differentiation in Religious Education, they became involved in carrying out book scrutinies alongside the head of school and executive headteacher. Local governors are also keen to oversee Religious Education assessment information from baseline upwards and have requested that this information is presented to them in a more user-friendly layout.
- Staff regularly attend diocesan training and moderate pupils' work. In-service training has been effective in keeping the school abreast of new initiatives in Religious Education which have been developed recently.
- The school has an annual timetable which identifies the main foci for the monitoring and evaluation of the core subjects with a good balance between Religious Education, English and mathematics. This ensures that the school fulfills the episcopal requirement to devote 10% of the weekly timetable to Religious Education.
- The school now tracks the pupils' progress and attainment based on 'end of year expectations'. The executive headteacher is keen to track progress from the end of the previous key stage and not just year on year.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP	1
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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 governors 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 – outstanding

- During the inspection, pupils from Years 5 and 6 took the initiative to plan and deliver a Key Stage 2 Act of Worship. This was carried out with enthusiasm and confidence and it is evident that it is a regular occurrence at St Mary's. The Act of Worship seen by inspectors in Class 2 was of an equally high standard.
- Acts of Worship are engaging and pupils use a variety of media to present their message; both contemporary and traditional, including songs they have written themselves as well as drama. All pupils value, enjoy and participate in worship, giving positive and constructive feedback at the end when their verbal evaluations are gathered by the head of school.
- Pupils demonstrate that they have an excellent knowledge of the Church's liturgical year and this is evident through the choice of theme for the Lenten season which is appropriate for the age and ability of the other pupils.
- Pupils at St Mary's are confident and heartfelt in their responses to prayers during their Acts of Worship. There is genuine enthusiasm in their singing and their desire to be part of worship experiences.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship – outstanding

- Inspectors were very impressed with the quality and regularity of Collective Worship at St Mary's which is well embedded throughout the school day. It has a clear message, purpose and direction and was appropriate for the season of Lent.
- The school chaplaincy team are not tasked with leading Collective Worship throughout the school as this responsibility falls to all pupils – this is a very positive and inclusive approach. In Class 2, there are liturgy leaders and in Years 5 and 6 there is a rota for pupils to prepare and deliver Collective Worship.
- Praying together is central to the daily life of staff and pupils at St Mary's. They begin their day together in prayer as well as when they begin their Religious Education lessons. Pupils have their own prayer which they recite joyously along with actions.
- Collective Worship is valued highly as can be seen in the school's planning, evaluation and resourcing and this results in the high quality of Worship seen throughout. Opportunities for Collective Worship are thoroughly planned and, where possible, parents and the school community are invited. Parents say they value this. The nearby church of St Mary's is also used and pupils are given the opportunity to worship along with parishioners regularly.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship – outstanding

- Collective Worship is evaluated well and this is evident not only in school's documentation but in the verbal feedback asked for by the head of school at the end of the Key Stage 2 Act of Worship.
- The Collective Worship evidence file contains a number of evaluations over an extended period of time. There is clear evidence that these evaluations are regularly acted upon so as to make regular improvements.
- Leaders place a high priority on the professional development of all staff, supporting the development of liturgical formation and improving the practice of planning Collective Worship. New staff to the school are well supported by senior staff who model and share excellent practice and expertise.
- Leaders can further develop the provision for Collective Worship by collaborating with the new lead lay chaplain appointed by the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust to develop the role and purpose of the school's chaplaincy team further.

SCHOOL DETAILS

School Name	St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy
Unique Reference Number	146260
CMAT	St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust

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 (September 2018)* 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 4 Religious Education lessons and 2 Acts of Collective Worship.

Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, the head of school, the subject leader for Religious Education, the director of performance and standards from the trust, a foundation governor and the assistant priest. Discussions were also held with pupils and parents.

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

Chair of Governors:	Mr Keith Mastin
Executive Headteacher:	Mr Graham Lobb
Head of School:	Mrs Kim Payce-Drury
Date of Previous School Inspection:	30 January 2014
Telephone Number:	01663 742412
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WHAT INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS MEAN

Within the report, the following grades are used:

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires Improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

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

Grade 1	Outstanding	The school is a highly effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are exceptionally well met.
Grade 2	Good	The school is an effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are met well.
Grade 3	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 18 months and the school will be re-inspected within 3 years.
Grade 4	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.