



DIOCESAN CANONICAL INSPECTION REPORT

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

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Sandon Road, Grantham, NG31 9AX

School URN:	120608
Inspection Date:	28 November 2017
Inspectors:	Mrs Patricia Hurd and Mrs Catherine Murphy

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

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Mary's Catholic School is an outstanding Catholic school.

- St Mary's Catholic Primary School is a joyful, caring and supportive community, where every child is valued and nurtured. The headteacher's determination that every pupil will receive the best possible Catholic education, underpinned by her personal faith, enriches all who work and learn in the family of St Mary's.
- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. The mission statement 'Every child is a gift from God: a gift to be nurtured...', is lived out in every aspect of school life. All pupils, regardless of their faith background, value and feel part of the strong Catholic ethos which permeates the school.
- The Collective Worship of the school is outstanding. Pupils enjoy and engage in the rich variety of worship and prayer life offered by the school. Pupils are beginning to take leadership of Collective Worship with the support of adults and are now ready to be further developed so that they can confidently plan and lead Acts of Worship with increasing independence.
- Teaching and learning in Religious Education is good with elements of outstanding in some classes. Pupils enjoy their learning in Religious Education. They feel challenged in most lessons and can talk about their learning with increased depth of thought and understanding. Where it is securely good or outstanding, pupils show enthusiasm, are eager in their research of the concepts being taught and remain fully engaged in the lesson.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Mary's Catholic Primary School is slightly smaller than the averaged-sized primary school and serves the parish of St Mary the Immaculate, Grantham.
- There are 216 pupils on roll of which 51% are baptised Catholics, 29% are from other Christian faiths, 6% are from other faith backgrounds and 15% are of no religious affiliation.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as a second language is increasing. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEND) is below average.
- 15% of pupils are known to be eligible for pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils entitled to free school meals, for children in public care and for pupils with a parent in the armed forces).

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Develop pupil skills in leading Collective Worship and provide a more structured approach so that pupils can regularly engage in the planning and leadership of Collective Worship:
 - Ensure training for pupils to enable their effective monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship.
 - Develop opportunities for pupils to become more involved in monitoring and evaluation of the Catholic Life of the school so that they can have greater ownership of plans for improvements to the school.
- To improve the quality of some teaching further to match that of the best by sharing good practice in school, particularly by:
 - Ensuring that feedback to pupils consistently informs them on how to improve their work, so that all pupils seek to improve their skills in evaluating their Religious Education learning.
 - Ensuring the school's policy for assessment of pupils' work is consistently applied in all year groups.
 - Sharing standards of work in books so that standards of presentation in Religious Education are consistent across the school and reflect the high expectations seen in most classes.
- Improve the quality of class worship by:
 - Securing teachers' confidence in planning and leading Collective Worship with appropriate training.
 - Sharing the good practice in school so that all staff are able to plan and lead Collective Worship.

CATHOLIC LIFE

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

- St Mary's is a vibrant community. The mission of the school is threaded through all aspects of school life, displayed throughout the school and fully understood by all staff and pupils alike.
- Pupils have an embedded respect and sense of belonging which underpins their enthusiasm for learning in Religious Education. They are passionate about supporting everyone within and beyond the community of St Mary's.
- The chaplaincy team are good ambassadors of the school; they are keen to articulate the distinctive Catholic nature of the school and also its inclusivity.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are very aware of the need to consider others both within lessons and around the school generally. Year 6 pupils, in particular, enjoy the opportunities offered to help with younger pupils; they see themselves as role models for others and were eager to point out the importance of their duties.
- Pupils enjoy participating in charitable fundraising and social events within the school and parish. They have extended this commitment for working with others to the wider community. They have created good links with a local residential home, where they often visit to perform plays and songs and also invite the residents back into school.
- This strong sense of community spirit is evident in the quality of relationships between all staff and pupils and has helped to strengthen links between school and parish. Pupils are regularly involved in both parish and diocesan celebrations. Mass in school has equally been welcomed and embraced by the parish and is well attended by parishioners.

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

- The school's mission statement, 'Every child is a gift from God; gifts we nurture to fulfilment ...', is very evident throughout the school and often referred to, not only in Religious Education lessons, but also during other subject lessons as part of their 'REAL' projects.
- The entire curriculum reflects a commitment to Catholic Social Teaching. Pupils develop a strong sense of social justice and are able to articulate their understanding of the links between the Catholic Life of the school and their actions. For example, a pupil remarked that 'the school helps them to help others'.
- Clear policies and structures are in place with explicit commitment to the most vulnerable and needy groups of our society. Careful thought is given to addressing the needs of all pupils and in particular to the most vulnerable. The 'BIO' room and the 'Retreat' room are two effective strategies used by the school to cater for the needs of vulnerable pupils.
- The school is in the process of introducing the Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) programme, a 'Journey in Love' and plans to share information about this programme with parents shortly. The programme is also being supplemented with additional diocesan materials which are currently being used informally in some classes.
- Staff and governors regularly review the mission of the school and take great care to see that it is regularly updated, as evidenced by whole school INSET (In service training for staff) in September 2017 'Mission in Action' led by Fr O'Connor. This training for all staff raised awareness of the school's strengths and areas for development of the Catholic Life of the school and enabled spiritual reflection on the school for all staff together.

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

- Driven by the passionate commitment of the headteacher, all staff and governors consider the Catholic Life of the school vital to their work in educating the pupils of St Mary's. There is a determination and commitment to ensure that the Catholic principles on which the school is founded remain central to all decision making.
- Developing the Catholic Life of the school is always treated as a priority and this is reflected in the school's development plan. Over the last year the school has made a significant financial investment to improve all aspects of Religious Education.
- The subject leader for Religious Education works hard to ensure that the monitoring of the Catholic Life of the school is a priority. Although relatively new to the role, she has been ably supported by the headteacher in developing systems to monitor and evaluate the provision.
- Governors hold the school to account for the Catholic Life of the school. Recent and more established governors, work alongside the parish priest to provide a healthy balance of challenge and support, as evidenced in governor minutes and a recent report provided by a new governor which will be presented to the whole governing body.
- The school works hard to engage all its parents. The headteacher provides strong leadership in modelling good relationships with parents.

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 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 – outstanding

- The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding. In the Act of Worship observed, most pupils responded with reverence, sang joyfully and were fully engaged.
- Acts of Worship are fully inclusive and it is clear that Collective Worship and prayer play a large part in the life of the school. Prayer areas in classrooms were evidently valued by pupils who spoke with enthusiasm about them.
- Pupils fully embrace opportunities for prayer in school, for example a Rosary club was well attended by pupils and because of the demand, the club has now been extended to include a club for other aspects of Collective Worship.
- Widespread enthusiasm and participation by children in leading Collective Worship is beginning to have impact but is not yet embedded across the school.
- High quality resources are used and the development of a prayer garden to enable Collective Worship outside, at the front of the school will further enrich Collective Worship.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship – good

- Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and is prepared in a range of ways to ensure that it is relevant and vibrant through the year. Two recent examples of creative, Collective Worship were the Eucharistic Adoration arranged in school, led by the parish priest and a Remembrance Liturgy held outside in the school grounds which produced an innovative display of poppies.
- Pupils, staff, governors and parents speak positively about their experiences at Mass in school and other forms of Collective Worship. A parent felt that worship in school had 'really encouraged her in her faith'.
- Some key stage and whole school Acts of Worship have clear themes and are enhanced with creative resources, but this is not consistently evident in all year groups.
- The quality of class worship is not as strong and this is because not all staff are confident in their role of developing pupil skills to plan and lead Acts of Worship.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic to participate in leading Collective Worship and this is beginning to have a positive impact, but is not yet fully embedded across the school.

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

- The headteacher has a strong understanding of what constitutes excellent Collective Worship and provides a good role model for other staff.
- Training in Collective Worship has been a feature of CPD (continual professional development) for teachers. This now needs to be consolidated so that all staff can develop their confidence in leading Collective Worship.
- High standards are maintained and insisted upon, for example: recently when a new Religious Education subject leader for the school was required, the role was effectively supported by the headteacher and guidance was provided to induct the new leader for the role.
- Governors are key in the monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship. They hold the school to account for the quality of Collective Worship. They regularly attend school Mass and other Acts of Worship and report their findings back to the full governing body.

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 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

- In most classes children show enjoyment for their Religious Education and extended pieces of work are completed demonstrating a depth of understanding in Catholic belief and an ability to relate Catholic belief to everyday life.
- Behaviour for learning in most classes observed was excellent; pupils worked with concentration, showing a strong degree of independence and self- regulation. However, in a small minority of classes learning opportunities for developing understanding in Religious Education were limited and pupils demonstrated a lack of involvement in their activities.
- Data tracking demonstrates that, from low starting points, attainment overall in Religious Education is in line with diocesan levels by the end of Key Stage 2. However, current progress in a small minority of classes is below the standards in the majority of classes.
- Where securely good teaching was observed, teachers had very clear learning challenges, used questioning well to probe pupils' knowledge and encouraged pupils in their use of specific religious vocabulary.
- Feedback to pupils is generally good and in line with the school's marking policy. However, work scrutiny from book sampling identified some inconsistencies and this is an area that needs to be addressed.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education – good

- Creative teaching approaches including 'REAL' projects (school led initiative) inspire pupils to participate fully in their Religious Education. In most classes expectations are high and all adults in the classroom are involved in ensuring that pupils make good progress.
- Most teachers plan challenging learning activities for Religious Education. Carefully thought out questioning in a large majority of the classes engages pupils to think deeply about Catholic beliefs, challenging them to add further detail to their work, thus enhancing their learning.
- Most pupils enthusiastically use the 'RUBRIC' (school assessment tool) well to assess and understand their learning and how to improve it, but where this is not consistently used pupils are not involved in assessing how they are achieving in their learning and teacher feedback does not always inform pupils how to improve their work.
- Most pupils make good progress from their starting points, they are confident in talking about their attainment in Religious Education and in most classes their work indicates an appropriate range of resources and teaching strategies that enable good progress to be made. However, in classes, where this is not evident progress is not as good.
- The headteacher and subject leader for Religious Education leader have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. They hold regular pupil progress meetings with class teachers to discuss pupil progress in Religious Education ensuring that when pupils fall behind action can be taken.

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

- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in every respect and in each Key Stage, so that 10% of the curriculum time is devoted to Religious Education.
- The subject leader for Religious Education and the headteacher are fully committed to providing high quality Religious Education. They are highly skilled practitioners who have high aspirations for all pupils.
- The 'Come and See' programme is creatively integrated into the whole school curriculum and is enriched by a positive experience of faith in the wider Church and local community. Pupils and their families attend school led masses in the parish and participate in worship such as the Remembrance service.
- The headteacher's skilful action planning and review, undertaken with senior staff, ensure that they have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for development. They quickly identify where action needs to be taken so that improvements can be made.
- Governors are well informed. They visit the school often and keenly challenge and hold leaders to account. They are very supportive of the school but are also confident and questioning in their approach.

SCHOOL DETAILS

School Name	St Mary's Catholic Primary School
Unique Reference Number	120608
Local Authority	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 6 Religious Education lessons and 1 Act of Collective Worship.

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

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

Chair of Governors:	Mrs Esther Hastings
Headteacher:	Mrs Geraldine Willders
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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 12 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.

In addition to the information above, if any one aspect of the evaluation schedule is found to ‘require improvement’, the school will receive a monitoring visit within one year of the publication of the report.