



DIOCESAN CANONICAL INSPECTION REPORT

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

St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Hastings Street, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 5AX

School URN:	138295
Inspection Date:	25 June 2018
Inspectors:	Mr Gregory Hughes and Mrs Pamela Tonge

Overall Effectiveness	Previous Inspection:	Good	2
	This Inspection:	Good	2
Catholic Life:		Good	2
Collective Worship:		Good	2
Religious Education:		Requires Improvement	3

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

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

- St Mary's is a warm, welcoming, inclusive Catholic school. The community is cherished and the parish church plays a central role in the life of the school. Under the caring leadership of the newly appointed headteacher, the school is well-placed to build upon the strong foundations.
- The Catholic Life of the school is good. High quality displays and an inviting learning environment illustrate the mission statement and the Gospel values which permeate the school. Staff and pupils have good relationships and are well-supported by parents and governors.
- Collective Worship in the school is good. The school has made great strides to adapt to the high expectations of the diocese. Pupils are involved in the process and now need to take greater responsibility for the delivery. All pupils participate in acts of worship with reverence and respect.
- The teaching and learning of Religious Education requires improvement. Under the new leadership, gaps in teaching and learning have been clearly identified and are being addressed with the support of the senior leadership team, the diocese and governors. The determination and drive to achieve diocesan levels and the highest possible teaching and learning outcomes is clearly articulated by the senior leadership team and governors.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Mary's is an average one form entry primary school. It is currently part of the Blessed Cyprian Tansi Catholic Academy Trust but in September 2018, it will become part of the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust. The school serves the parish of St Mary's, Loughborough.
- There are currently 209 pupils on roll. 57% are baptised Catholic; 18% belong to other Christian faiths; 13% identify with other world faiths and 12% have no religious affiliation.
- 12% of the school population has SEND (special educational needs and/or a disability).
- 13% of the pupils on roll are in receipt of additional pupil premium funding (the pupil premium funding is additional government funding that schools receive to support those known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority).
- The current headteacher has been in post for approximately one year; the current subject leader for Religious Education has been in post for two years.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

■ Catholic Life:

- To implement fully the Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) programme, 'A Journey in Love', throughout both Key Stages.
- To ensure that the Behaviour Policy reflects the core Catholic values of forgiveness and reconciliation.

■ Collective Worship:

- To further raise the pupil ownership in both class and whole-school liturgies.
- To develop pupils' confidence to prepare and lead worship independently using the 'Let Us Pray' materials and similar materials.
- To create pupil-led acts of worship which are imaginative, varied and inspirational which incorporate traditional and contemporary prayer, music and new resources.

■ Religious Education:

- To develop more formalised systems of monitoring to clearly identify all distinct groups of pupils: boys and girls; pupil premium; EAL (English as an additional language) and SEND (special educational needs and/or disabilities) and any other significant groups of pupils in the school.
- To ensure that Religious Education outcomes match pupils' abilities and their assessed work using the *Levels of Attainment in Religious Education* document.
- To ensure that learning objectives are clear and focused, appropriate to the needs of all groups of pupils.
- To embed a robust marking and feedback system that assists learning and progress.

As Religious Education has been judged to 'require improvement', the school will receive a monitoring visit within one year of the publication of this report.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL	2
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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 – good

- St Mary's is a welcoming, inclusive, caring Catholic primary school. Pupils are central to the shaping of the school's mission and ethos. The essence of their mission statement, 'We love, we pray, we work, we play', greets visitors on entry to the school.
- Pupils from St Mary's speak highly of their community and play an active part in promoting its Catholic Life. Pupils support the local community in a number of ways including singing at the residential home or in the town centre at Christmas and fundraising for a number of causes including: Mary's Meals, a charity which provides a meal for children; Rainbows Children's Hospice and two homeless charities in Loughborough. They also support the wider community including CAFOD, Samaritan's Purse and UNICEF.
- Pupils from St Mary's take a leading role in promoting the school's ethos. Recently, pupils have taken part in the Pope's campaign to, 'Share the Journey,' for refugees. They use their initiative to raise money independently through cake or toy sales for those less fortunate.
- Most pupils are kind and considerate and behave well throughout the day. They listen and communicate in a sensitive way with each other. One pupil stated, 'Our school teaches us to behave more like Jesus. We help others, comfort people, let them join in our games and conversations so that no one feels left out'.
- Pupils are interested in the religious life of others. They are respectful towards religious artefacts in school. Pupils' work is used to produce high-quality displays demonstrating the Catholic ethos of the school and related themes, for example, British Values, the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child and Social Justice.
- The well-used prayer corner contains a prayer tree where pupils attach a ribbon as they pray. It also features letters to God and examples of the pupils' favourite Bible stories.

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

- The school mission statement is clearly linked to the educational mission of the Church. The headteacher leads by example and has established good relationships with all stakeholders.
- The warm and inclusive learning environment clearly promotes the school's Catholic character.
- There is a high level of commitment towards pastoral care. Vulnerable and needy pupils are carefully supported by early identification and outside agencies such as 'Relate'.
- The Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) programme, is in the process of being further developed. It is now taught throughout both Key Stages and its planning and delivery is becoming increasingly embedded. The headteacher is attentive to the pastoral needs of her staff.
- The Behaviour Policy is lived out according to Gospel values. The written policy documents now need to better reflect the core Catholic values of forgiveness and reconciliation.

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

- Leaders and managers are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. They are excellent role models within the community of St Mary's.
- The headteacher has prioritised the promotion of Catholic Life. Learning walks, scrutiny of displays and self-evaluation of Catholic Life have enabled leaders to create a living and breathing Catholic environment. Governors, together with the parish priest ensure that the liturgical year is celebrated appropriately.
- Newly appointed staff have accessed appropriate diocesan training, including the Bishop's Certificate. Leadership development is well-planned and strong links with other schools within the Academy Trust have provided continued professional development opportunities in monitoring and evaluation.
- St Mary's has worked hard to involve parents and carers to share in the community. Catholic Life is communicated and strengthened by an active Parent Teacher Association, strong links with the parish community and local area. Parents see the school as an inclusive and welcoming place.
- Governors are actively involved in the school. Newly appointed governors have set up regular discussions with the headteacher and subject leader about Religious Education. The governing body has the capacity to accurately monitor and challenge the necessary changes identified in the school development plan. Governors have attended all of the appropriate training for the establishment of the new Catholic Multi-Academy Trust.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP	2
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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 – good

- Pupils are eager to participate in acts of worship. The liturgy presented on the day of inspection, 'How to care for God's creation', involved all classes. Pupils prepared this act of worship confidently and joined in with reverence and a collective sense of community.
- Pupils understand how to plan, prepare and deliver acts of worship and liturgies. However, they now need to be given more opportunities to take ownership of this.
- Collective Worship is age-appropriate. Pupils are able to articulate spontaneous prayer and to show a wider sense of awareness towards those less fortunate than themselves.
- 'Let Us Pray' resources are available in every classroom. These should now be used more effectively in pupil-led liturgies by gradually increasing their level of independent use.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship – good

- Prayer is central to the life of St Mary's school and punctuates the day. Staff and pupils regularly pray together.
- Time is taken to create effective prayer focal points. Classroom prayer areas are engaging and attractive. Pupils are able to add their own prayers. In some classes, the liturgy boxes were suitably resourced but occasionally under-used.
- Parents are invited and welcomed to weekly liturgies in the school. They enjoy participating and are very complimentary about these increasingly joyful occasions.
- The school is fortunate in its proximity to the church. This enables regular Masses to take place and helps to support sacramental formation. Priests (from the Rosminian Order) are actively involved in promoting joint ventures between the school and the parish.
- The subject leader for Religious Education ensures that she stays abreast of current expectations. She is keen to continue to supplement the resources in school to enhance Collective Worship.

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

- Leaders and managers have a clear understanding of what constitutes high quality Collective Worship. They ensure that the seasons, rites and symbols of the Catholic Church are followed accurately.
- Through their monitoring and evaluation, leaders and managers have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.
- Collective Worship is clearly timetabled and well-resourced. Leaders have modelled good practice which is now becoming increasingly embedded. Monitoring now needs to focus on allowing pupils to take more ownership and lead both class and whole-school Collective Worship.
- Views have been sought by pupils, staff and parents; these have highlighted areas for development and continue to be followed up and acted upon.
- Governors visit the school and are able to carry out the role of a critical friend. Governors support the drive to continue the journey towards their aspirational vision of becoming an outstanding school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	3
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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 – requires improvement

- Pupils show some interest in Religious Education are ready to work and show good listening skills.
- Pupils come from diverse backgrounds and in this inclusive school, enjoy learning about other faiths.
- Behaviour for learning is variable. The level of pupil engagement is clearly linked to the quality of teaching; in better lessons, pupils demonstrate a greater willingness to participate.
- Even allowing for their low starting points, pupils are making inadequate progress. They are unsure of their current level of attainment in Religious Education and how to achieve their next step targets.
- Pupils are developing skills but the pace of this acquisition is not maximising their potential.
- Standards of attainment in Religious Education are not in line with diocesan averages at Key Stage 2. Pupils require a greater level of challenge in order to accelerate progress.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education – requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning over time is inconsistent and ranges from good to requires improvement.
- The '*Come and See*' programme is being used but learning tasks need to be more focused, facilitating the needs of all groups of pupils.
- Teachers' specialist knowledge and expertise varies throughout the school. As a result, resources and teaching strategies require development to ensure targeted support is age-appropriate.
- Systematic and more regular checking of pupils' understanding in Religious Education needs to become embedded.
- Marking and constructive feedback need to be developed to ensure that pupils know how to improve their work. With this in place, pupils will be able to respond to feedback and make accelerated progress.
- Teachers need to improve their questioning technique so that pupils are challenged in their responses and there is a deeper dialogue in class discussions that will lead to a deeper understanding.
- Where teaching is most effective, a variety of stimuli are used. Further use of ICT, drama, art and music would enhance current practice and pupils' enthusiasm. Pupils should be encouraged to become more independent in their learning.

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

- The newly appointed headteacher, together with her senior leadership team have accurately identified the areas for development. Monitoring activities and evaluation are becoming more consistent. A clear action plan has been implemented in liaison with the primary diocesan Religious Education adviser who has provided much support; this now needs to be used rigorously to hold teachers to account.
- The senior leadership team has provided support for staff. Their expectations are high and they use coaching to improve teaching. Systems and higher expectations have been clearly set out; the challenge is to ensure that these are adopted as a matter of urgency.
- Leaders should ensure that there is less reliance on worksheets in pupils' books and a greater emphasis on extended writing opportunities to provide sufficient evidence for assessment. Independent learning should be promoted together with a variety of teaching stimuli.
- The subject leader for Religious Education has engaged fully in diocesan training. She is committed to school improvement and has implemented a range of diocesan initiatives.
- A real strength of the school is its close link to the Parish of St Mary's and Religious Education is greatly enhanced by the support of the local priests. The close proximity of the church has also enabled the pupils to fully understand the Church's liturgical year. Feast days are explained and celebrated, including the Feast of St Blaise. Sacramental knowledge has been developed by studying Baptism and the Anointing of the Sick. The diocesan 'Day of the Eucharist' has been observed by pupils to further understand Benediction and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.
- The Religious Education curriculum meets episcopal requirements regarding curriculum time for Religious Education. Leaders have supported staff to embed the '*Come and See*' scheme and this has been developed in an adequate way focusing on the needs and interests of the pupils. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development.

SCHOOL DETAILS

School Name	St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy
Unique Reference Number	138295
Local Authority	Leicestershire

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 7 Religious Education lessons, 1 Act of Collective Worship.

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

The inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including reports of the 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 Luke Rollason
Headteacher:	Miss Priscilla Jordan
Date of Previous School Inspection:	08 November 2012
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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.