



DIOCESAN CANONICAL INSPECTION REPORT

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

St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Beaconsfield Street, Hyson Green, Nottingham, NG7 6FL

School URN:	138339
Inspection Date:	21 November 2019
Inspectors:	Mrs Fionuala Boucher and Mrs Helen White

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

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy is an outstanding Catholic school.

- St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy is a joyful place where all members of the school family are cherished and supported. This school is proud of its Catholic tradition and roots: past pupils return as parents and governors, reflecting a long history with local families and the community. The quality of the relationships across the school is a clear strength, underpinning the successes of and ongoing developments within the school. Pupils have exceptionally good manners: they say, 'It is not likely for people to behave badly here!'
- The Catholic Life at St Mary's is outstanding. Pupils participate fully in the school's mission, knowingly walking 'hand in hand with God', showing their love for him, each other and themselves. They are committed to using their gifts 'to make the world a richer place'. As a consequence, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupil leadership is a reality in this community: the chaplaincy team relishes opportunities to influence prayer life and charitable activities; older pupils opt to become reading buddies and playground buddies, in order to support younger members of the community.
- Religious Education is outstanding. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning: they concentrate hard in lessons and want to do well; they have pride in their work and produce impressive pieces in their workbooks. Teachers are knowledgeable and ambitious for their pupils. In the very best lessons, pace and challenge are impressive. Teaching assistants are a true asset, enhancing lessons and working in harmony with their colleagues for the benefit of the learners. Leaders and local governors ensure that training opportunities and support are high profile: they are passionately committed to Religious Education.
- Collective Worship is outstanding. Pupils show reverence and depth of thought during times of prayer and worship; they participate with open hearts and minds, responding appropriately in song, reflection, prayer and verbal contribution. Pupils enjoy opportunities to plan and lead worship themselves: there is scope for further development in this area. The impact of the lay chaplain and parish priest is significant: pupils and staff highly value the support they receive.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy has been part of the Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Academy Trust since 1 September 2018. The school previously operated within the St Barnabas Catholic Academy Trust.
- This is an average-sized, one-form entry primary school with nursery provision. There are 234 pupils on roll. The school serves the parishes of St Mary's, Hyson Green and St Paul's, Lenton in Nottingham.
- 89% of pupils are baptised Catholics; 5% belong to other Christian denominations, 4% of pupils follow other World Faiths and 1% of pupils have no religious affiliation.
- 11% of the school population has a special educational need and/or disability (SEND) and receive support within the school setting. No pupils currently have an educational health and care plan (EHCP).
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (which provides the school with additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for pupils from service families) is above average at 21%.
- The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is 48%, which is more than double the national average of 21%. 15 out of 17 possible ethnic groups are represented at St Mary's.
- Since the last diocesan canonical inspection, the leadership of the school has changed significantly. The school has appointed both an executive headteacher and a head of school, following the retirement of the previous headteacher.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Catholic Life:
 - Evaluate the impact of the extensive charity work undertaken by the school so that the pupils' experience of Catholic Social Teaching can be further enriched.
- Religious Education:
 - Further refine moderation procedures by working alongside other schools comparing work produced by the more and most able pupils.
 - Cascade the expertise found in the highest quality teaching in the school so that all teachers follow the best, agreed practice in Religious Education lessons in order for pupils to consistently succeed in their learning - both within and beyond the school.
- Collective Worship:
 - Ensure that pupils have further opportunities to develop their skills in planning and leading worship so that they have even greater autonomy in this important aspect of school life.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL	1
--	---

- 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 governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

1
1
1

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

- The school's mission statement is integral to the life of the school. The wording is widely displayed, throughout the building, verbally shared in prayer during worship, referenced in lessons and lived out in pupil responsibilities.
- Pupils in the chaplaincy team are committed to their role within the Catholic Life of the school and treasure opportunities to take part in initiatives. They are proud of their charity and fundraising efforts, choosing causes alongside their peers on a termly basis. They recognise the importance and impact of this work on themselves and others: through supporting 'Framework' they say, 'We raised money for the homeless - it is hard for them...'; through supporting 'Wish upon a Star', they talk about 'helping children with disabilities realise their wishes – and making their dreams come true'.
- Pupils at this school are highly respectful of all. Behaviour, manners and deportment are all exemplary.
- Pupils are proud to be members of the St Mary's school family. They respect the wider links they enjoy with the parish, diocese and further afield. For example, they talk with enthusiasm about their participation in 'We Day', explaining that this event allowed them to meet children from across the country and focus on projects and learning linked to world issues and responsibility, such as climate change. As a consequence, they plan to introduce a focus on recycling.
- Personal support and development is appreciated by pupils and well-embedded into the Catholic Life of the school. Folders containing extensive work in this area are in place, reflecting the extent of coverage to ensure that pupils are prepared to form positive relationships, keep themselves safe and recognise their own worth and skills.
- Pupils recognise and use their God-given gifts. By following the school's mission statement and aim that all should do 'our best with the gifts he gave us to make the world a richer place', pupils in Years 5 and 6 take the opportunity to choose three areas of responsibility to enhance pupils' experience of school, such as supporting younger pupils with reading and wider groups of pupils over playtimes - including leading a prayer group.

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

- The educational mission of the Church is clear to staff at St Mary's and is visibly alive within the school. Values of responsibility, honesty and kindness (amongst others) are celebrated and promoted through word and deed as well as through visual reminders around the school.
- Positive relationships are deeply valued and fostered: this is a place of nurture, contributing to the family feel within the community. The school's Catholic character shines through in the way in which colleagues interact with each other, their pupils and families.
- Prayer is central to school life. Within classrooms, focus tables reflect a strong emphasis on spiritual and moral development, enabling pupils to contribute prayers, ideas and written pieces to support Catholic Life within each year group. Class retreat days enhance provision and make excellent use of the newly appointed lay chaplain's skills and experience. Time is set aside weekly for staff prayer, which is well attended and prepared by different members of the team.
- The physical environment of the school is stunning. Vibrant displays are in evidence throughout, with a huge emphasis on Catholic Life and worship. Key figures in the life of the Church appear in artistic displays; the liturgical year's wheel is enhanced by the school's personal journey through the seasons; community projects and initiatives are shared and celebrated on boards along the corridors so that all can enjoy the school's involvement and successes.
- School policies and procedures reiterate the high standards of pastoral care for pupils, including the neediest. This consideration extends to adult members of the school community.

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

- The Catholic Life of the school is prized by all. Leaders and local governors are energised by and passionate about their work, acting as a source of inspiration for others.
- Professional development for staff and local governors is well planned and delivered. Leaders are keen to take every opportunity to support the staff in their understanding of the school's mission and responsibilities, resulting in high quality provision.
- The highest priority is given to Catholic Life in the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans: leaders and local governors rightly judge this aspect of the school to be exemplary. They have worked hard to ensure that this has remained the case since the last diocesan canonical inspection, improving monitoring and evaluation systems and procedures significantly across all areas.
- The local governing body is ambitious for itself and the school. Members lead by example, making an improved and significant contribution through frequent visits and reports as well as by challenging and holding school leaders to account.
- Leaders and local governors are resolute in their intention to support diocesan policies and initiatives. For example, The Year of The Word has already been introduced into the school in anticipation of its launch during Advent 2019. The Bishop's plan, emphasising the importance of encounter with God, discipleship and missionary discipleship, is highly visible in the school as a consequence of its promotion by leaders and local governors.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	1
------------------------------------	---

- 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.

1
1
1

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education – outstanding

- Pupils are keen to do well in Religious Education and they enjoy this subject area. The progress pupils make from the start of their journey in Reception to the end of it, in Year 6, is a strength within the school. The majority of pupils make rapid and sustained progress. Outcomes at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 for the past three years demonstrate that the pupils at St Mary's achieve better than the diocesan average.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about Religious Education lessons: their recorded work in books is clearly presented and valued by both staff and pupils. The vast majority of pupils with English as an additional language make strong progress, especially when their command of the English language increases as they progress through the school.
- Almost all pupils actively engaged in lessons and are committed to their learning. They have high levels of concentration and focus well. They know what they need to do in lessons and are keen to follow instructions in order to complete tasks effectively.
- Pupils are able to draw and reflect upon previous knowledge in this subject area and make links to current topics. Pupils respond to marking and know what their targets are for this subject. Their religious literacy, both written and verbal, is impressive. Pupils speak confidently about Religious Education.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. Pupils are respectful of each other's contributions.

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

- Most lessons are well planned. The *Come and See* Religious Education scheme is used effectively and expectations are high which enhances pupils' learning experience. Prior learning is referenced within the strongest teaching.
- Pace and challenge are generally strong. In the most effective lessons, teachers ensure that pupils' talk is facilitated by short and snappy input by adults. The confidence in adult subject knowledge, together with a good understanding of teaching methods from these teachers, ensures that pupils benefit from this expertise in school and beyond. The school now needs to cascade this expertise found in the highest quality teaching in the school to all teachers. This will ensure that the best, agreed practice in Religious Education lessons will support pupils to consistently succeed in their learning - both within and beyond the school.
- Marking is effective and is kept simple. Targets and next steps are evident throughout the books and across all classes. Pupils take the opportunity to peer-assess and self-assess when appropriate.
- The deployment and skill of learning support assistants is a strength within the school. During the inspection, support staff worked effectively alongside individuals and groups and were skilled at knowing the next steps for the pupils' development and learning. It was noted that staff who worked in this capacity were confident in stepping in to complement the learning experience for pupils alongside the teachers.

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

- Leaders and local governors ensure that Religious Education meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales in all aspects. At least 10% of curriculum time is dedicated to teaching Religious Education in all phases.
- Religious Education is held in the highest esteem and given parity financially with other core areas of the curriculum. Leaders ensure that Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is well embedded within the curriculum.
- Local governors have high expectations for Religious Education and are passionate about pupils succeeding in this area. They have high expectations and expect to see rapid progress and achievement in line with other core subjects. Local governors are actively involved in the evaluation of Religious Education through pupil interviews and conferencing. Local governors alongside the subject leader, head of school and the executive headteacher participate in learning walks and book scrutinies.
- The Religious Education subject leader, alongside other members of the senior leadership team, leads training sessions for teachers, including assessment, use of the driver words, differentiation, moderation and planning. The school now needs to further refine moderation procedures so that work produced by the more and most able pupils can be compared to work produced by other schools within the hub which is considered to be of a similar standard.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP	1
-----------------------------------	---

- 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.

1
1
1

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship – outstanding

- There is a genuine enthusiasm for Collective Worship. All pupils act with reverence and are very eager to participate in all areas of Collective Worship. Throughout the school week, there are opportunities to see a variety of prayer being used, including traditional, spontaneous and silent reflective prayer. Pupils' singing is both enthusiastic and reverent.
- Pupils enjoy the opportunities to be quiet, still and silent in prayer and reflect on the message within the liturgy. Their depth of concentration to reflect inwardly is a strength within the school.
- Pupils are becoming increasingly more confident in offering spontaneous prayers during their Acts of Worship. Some of the older pupils act as role models for the younger pupils in this respect.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year. There are vibrant displays around the school to remind pupils about liturgical colours and various traditions within the Church's calendar. Pupils speak with confidence about some of the saints and their lives and how this has impacted on their own lives.
- From an early age, pupils are involved in the preparation of Collective Worship with the support of both teachers and the lay chaplain. As part of their responsibilities, pupils from the chaplaincy team, in Year 6, support pupils from Year 1 with this process too. There now needs to be some opportunity for the pupils to take complete ownership of their planning and delivery of Collective Worship.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship – outstanding

- Collective Worship at St Mary's contains clear and purposeful messages. Praying together is part of the daily experience for staff and pupils. The focus for one of the Acts of Worship during the inspection was to introduce 'The Year of the Word': this was expertly led by the executive headteacher and there were opportunities for pupils to take on various roles and responsibilities throughout.
- The newly appointed lay chaplain leads retreats for all the pupils on a rolling programme. The themes for these can be either linked to the Religious Education curriculum or to the Church's year. Scripture is central to these retreats. There may also be the opportunity to talk, watch videos and take part in games and singing.
- Parents and other adults are welcomed to the school to take part in Collective Worship; this helps them to feel part of the school community. For example, during an Act of Worship in Year 1, parents were invited to receive a blessing on their forehead, with oil, from a child.
- Recently, there has been considerably more funding to resource Collective Worship. Over the past year, the school has purchased additional Bibles, artefacts and liturgical drapes. This has helped to focus and support worship in the classrooms, in the prayer room and at whole-school level.

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

- Leaders including the lay chaplains have expert knowledge and can model outstanding practice of Collective Worship, making it accessible to pupils. They have an excellent knowledge of the Church's feasts and seasons and of diocesan initiatives. They offer other staff and pupils outstanding models of good practice. Diocesan personnel and resources are used effectively to enhance the provision and to develop the liturgical skills of staff.
- The school is well supported by their parish priest; leaders value his work in the school and recognise that this enriches the prayer and liturgical life of the school family. His support of the parish enriches pupils' experience of what it means to be a member of a worshipping community.
- Senior leaders set high expectations for Collective Worship. Senior leaders share exemplary planning: they review and monitor Collective Worship in order to support the training of other teachers who may be new to teaching or new to Catholic schools. Training is valued and the impact of it is reviewed regularly.
- The evaluation of Collective Worship is valued by the school. Evaluations are sought from all stakeholders on a regular basis, informally, through interviews and questionnaires. The feedback directly impacts on teachers' practice thus enabling richer experiences for the pupils.

SCHOOL DETAILS

School Name	St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy
Unique Reference Number	138339
CMAT	Our Lady of Lourdes 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 8 Religious Education lessons and 2 Acts of Collective Worship.

Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, the head of school, the subject leaders for Religious Education, the chair of governors and the lay chaplain. A telephone meeting was held with the parish 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:	Mrs Maura Mannion
Executive Headteacher:	Mrs Celine Toner
Head of School:	Mrs Linda Valencia
Date of Previous School Inspection:	25 November 2014
Telephone Number:	0115 915 1799
Email Address:	headteacher@smca.nottingham.sch.uk

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.