



Nottingham Roman Catholic  
**Diocesan Education Service**

## DIOCESAN CANONICAL INSPECTION

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

**School:** St Mary's Catholic Primary School, A Voluntary Academy

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**School URN:** 138339

**Headteacher:** Mrs Geraldine Kelly

**Chair of Governors:** Mrs Margaret Shanahan

**Date of Inspection:** 25 November 2014

**Inspectors:** Mrs Fionuala Boucher  
Mrs Geraldine Willders

**Overall Effectiveness:** 1

**Date of Previous Inspection:** 26 April 2007

**Overall Effectiveness:** 1

## **INTRODUCTION**

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 8 Religious Education lessons, one 'retreat day' session and an Act of Collective Worship.

Meetings were held with the headteacher, the subject leader for Religious Education, a governor and the parish priest. Discussions were also held with pupils.

The inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including governing body reports, albums and evidence files, the work in pupils' Religious Education books and other documentation supplied by the school.

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Mary's is an average sized primary school serving the parishes of St Mary's, Hyson Green and St Paul's, Lenton in Nottingham. The school is part of the St Barnabas Catholic Academy Trust. 85% of pupils are baptised Catholics, 8% belong to other Christian denominations, 6% follow other World Faiths and 1% of pupils have no religious affiliation.

The school sits in the top 20<sup>th</sup> percentile school deprivation indicator (RaiseOnline 2014). The percentage of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is 28% (above the national average).

The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is 48.6% (more than double the national average - 18.8%); this has increased in recent years. The diverse nature of the school's population is reflected in RaiseOnline data, which shows that 74.6% of the pupils are from a minority ethnic background.

The percentage of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is 7% and is in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils supported at school action is 10.7% and is slightly above the national average.

## 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>1</b>

### KEY FINDINGS

St Mary's is an outstanding Catholic school.

- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. The school's mission statement underpins the tangible sense of community at all levels. Pupils relish being part of this supportive and joyful school with Christ at the centre of everyday life.
- Collective Worship is outstanding. This is a strength of the school. Prayer permeates the life of the school and enriches the experiences of all members of the school family. Pupil-led liturgy is becoming a firm and successful feature of the school's provision for Collective Worship.
- Religious Education is outstanding. Pupils' spiritual moral and ethical understanding is exemplary; their academic progress is consistently good and improving. Leaders and managers have a burning desire to ensure that every pupil reaches his or her full potential. Governors share this passion; they are now in a position to strengthen their role in monitoring and evaluating Religious Education at a more formal level.

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

- Governors must develop a more formalised and systematic approach to the monitoring and evaluation of the Catholic Life of the school, Collective Worship and Religious Education.
- Baseline assessment systems (for Religious Education) must be revised and improved in order to ensure that the religious knowledge and understanding of pupils with English as an additional language is assessed accurately on entry to the school. This will assist the school in tracking pupils' progress in Religious Education even more thoroughly.

## 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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The quality of the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

Pupils are extremely proud to be members of St Mary's School. Almost all pupils are at the centre of shaping the school's mission and ethos. The pupil responses in their class 'mission books' exemplify their understanding and commitment to the shared vision for the school. Pupils from all backgrounds have a deep sense of belonging and acceptance of others. This is borne out in the inclusive atmosphere and positive relationships which abound. Pupils say: 'We believe in Jesus. Not all schools are Catholic ones and we are lucky to be here'. Behaviour is exemplary at all times as a result of effective care, guidance and support from staff and peers. Pupils are articulate in explaining why their school is important and how the school nurtures and extends their spiritual, moral and social development. The positive impact of initiatives, such as the UNICEF 'Rights Respecting School Award' provide pupils with the secure foundations to discover and enjoy active vocation and service.

There is a tangible sense of community at all levels within St Mary's; it is a supportive and joyful community in which all are valued and relationships are of the highest quality. There are high standards of moral and ethical behaviour with clear and consistent expectations for all members of the school, reflecting Gospel values and the school's own ethos. The learning environment is vibrant and engaging, with attention to detail; visitors are in no doubt that this is a place where Christ is central to all aspects of school life. This is further enriched by the use of high quality religious artefacts and inspirational displays. The pupil chaplaincy team, led by the recently appointed school chaplain, is high profile within the school and, as a result of its good work, the school's Catholic Life is further enhanced. The school has worked hard to ensure that programmes for Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and personal, health and social education (PSHE) meet the needs of all pupils and that they reflect the teachings of the Catholic Church. The additional investment in a school counsellor is highly valued.

School leadership is deeply committed to the Church's mission which is at the centre of defining the whole school ethos and underpins school policies. The headteacher, supported by the deputy headteacher and subject leader for Religious Education, has successfully driven improvements for monitoring and evaluating the Catholic Life of the school since the last inspection. Committed governors make a significant contribution to this through their support; they are prominent and active in their work. Governors now need to be more rigorous in their challenge of senior leaders and involve themselves more formally in the regular monitoring and evaluation of the Catholic Life of the school.

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

### THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship. 

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- The quality of provision for Collective Worship. 

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- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship. 

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The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding.

Acts of Worship inspire pupils and the wider community. There is a high level of engagement during worship, reflected in the depth of thoughtful contributions, respectful silence and willingness to offer spontaneous prayer. Enthusiastic singing enhances these important times in the school day. Pupils are becoming adept at planning non-Eucharistic liturgies and this is having a significant impact on the pupils' response and participation levels. Pupil-led liturgy has become embedded since the last inspection and is of the highest quality. Pupils are developing a knowledge of the range of approaches that can be used including traditional and non-traditional prayer, music, gesture and the use of artefacts upon which to focus. Pupils understand the importance of prayer on their spiritual and moral development; they place high importance on these and relish times in their school prayer room; 'We can solve problems in the prayer room - reflect and be friends again'. Pupils recognise the importance of respecting the faiths of others. They are articulate in their explanation of why we should 'not judge people's religions'; pupils of other faiths in the school thrive and feel valued.

Worship in all its forms is central to the life of the school. There are a wide range of opportunities already established and there are further plans to engage with the community on a wider scale. Praying together is a daily experience and shapes the school day - staff are no exception to this. Staff have a firm grasp of the liturgical year and work hard to ensure that pupils have high quality experiences throughout. They are skilled in supporting pupils in planning age-appropriate worship during class liturgies, retreat days and whole school Acts of Worship. They also facilitate individual opportunities for pupils to spend time in prayer, e.g. open use of the school prayer room - a space that is highly valued by all. Employment of the innovative school chaplain has had a significant impact on pupils' leadership of worship, including its quality, frequency and style.

Leaders and managers view Collective Worship as an essential element of outstanding practice. They effectively promote, monitor and evaluate provision ensuring that staff receive high quality formation at their own level as well as relevant staff training, as outlined in the comprehensive school development plan. Leaders and managers are visible role models within the school and a source of inspiration for staff, governors and parents alike. Systems for monitoring and evaluating Collective Worship are well developed by the school's senior leadership team but would now benefit from a more formalised approach at governing body level. Leaders actively seek the views of all and respond to these swiftly in their planning for improvements. The school has been pro-active in working closely with the Nottingham

Roman Catholic Diocesan Education Service in order to quality assure and verify their judgements. Collective Worship is therefore a strength of the school.

## 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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The quality of Religious Education is outstanding.

Pupils' behaviour for learning is exemplary. Lessons proceed without interruptions and almost all pupils are fully immersed in their learning. They are rarely off task, even when working independently or outside the classroom. Learners view Religious Education as one of their most important subjects; one pupil eloquently described, 'RE is much more complex - it's not just about what you write, it's about what you think as well'. Pupils in Year 6 are highly literate in terms of their religious understanding. Many are developing an ability to think spiritually, ethically and theologically beyond their years. Pupils apply their knowledge to their own lives and codes of behaviour and are able to make links between scripture and their learning. Progress is at least good overall; older pupils learn exceptionally well and acquire knowledge quickly. The school judges attainment on entry in Religious Education as low. In order to establish a more accurate picture of pupils' knowledge and understanding of Religious Education at this stage, the school needs to ensure that, wherever possible, pupils with English as an additional language have support to access the school baseline assessment when they join the school. For example, deploying the Polish teaching assistant who is already used effectively to support staff and pupils when undertaking the baseline assessment in the Reception Class. Standards of attainment in Religious Education are above diocesan averages at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and outcomes have remained consistently strong for almost all groups of pupils over time.

Teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Most pupils and groups of pupils make at least good progress over time. Teachers have a clear understanding of how to engage their pupils and use an imaginative range of strategies to promote purposeful learning. Equally, the majority of teachers manage time effectively to maximise learning opportunities. This is particularly evident in Year 2 and Year 6 where pupils are consistently challenged with a swift and rapid pace of work in lessons. Differentiated tasks are finely tuned to meet the needs of all learners; teachers use skilful questioning to guide and direct learning and where this is most effective, teachers select and target different types of questions to ensure that pupils are challenged to be independent and deep thinkers. It is evident that high quality marking has been a priority for the school; as a result, marking is consistent, appropriate and has a positive impact on the progress of pupils. Children respond in writing to teacher comments and are acutely aware of their 'next steps'.

Accurate self-evaluation by the school leadership team leads to well-targeted planning and outstanding outcomes in Religious Education. The engagement of the Primary Adviser for Religious Education has been instrumental in raising the confidence of staff in making sound judgements; securing this support is testament to the passion and drive of school leaders to ensure that this school provides nothing less than the best. The subject leader for Religious Education inspires the whole-hearted commitment of colleagues; she is high profile in the life of the school and has been very well supported by the deputy headteacher to continue to strive for improvement since the last inspection. A system of continuing professional development, including bespoke induction and coaching for new staff has secured consistency in the quality of provision for Religious Education. The cycle of monitoring is well embedded and moderation is effective within the school and beyond. Governors now need to take a leading role in the formal monitoring and evaluation of provision for Religious Education. The curriculum is well designed to reflect the community the school serves and meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales fully.

## 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, 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.
<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 as a Catholic school. The school will receive an annual monitoring visit and will be re-inspected within 3 years.