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**The Diocese of  
Hallam  
Section 48 Report**

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**The Catholic Life of  
the School and  
Religious Education**

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**Diocese of Hallam**



**SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT**

**THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

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

<b>School URN</b>	<b>107118</b>
<b>Name of Chair of Governors</b>	<b>Mr Peter Mason</b>
<b>Name of Head teacher</b>	<b>Mrs Alexandra Healy</b>
<b>Date of inspection</b>	<b>Monday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2016</b>
<b>Section 48 Inspector</b>	<b>Mr Peter Davison</b>

“ ..... An enthusiasm for the things of God”

## Introduction

### Description of the School

St Mary's Primary School, a Catholic Voluntary Academy is an average sized primary school in the High Green area of Sheffield. The school serves the Parish of St Mary's, High Green and the mixed residential areas of High Green, Chapeltown, Ecclesfield as well as the surrounding villages. There are 210 pupils on roll taught in seven single-aged classes from Foundation Stage to Year 6. 54% of the children are Catholic, 33% are from other Christian denominations, 4% from other faith traditions and 9% with no faith.

There are few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and none at an early stage in learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. There is a significantly high proportion of Catholic teachers on the staff.

<b>Type of School</b>	<b>Primary</b>
<b>Age profile of students</b>	<b>4-11</b>
<b>Number on roll</b>	<b>210</b>
<b>Number of students on Special Needs and Disabilities Register</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Number of students with an Educational Health Care Plan</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Number of Catholics on roll</b>	<b>114</b>
<b>Number of Other Christian Denominations</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Number of other Faiths</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>No religious affiliation</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>School Address</b>	<b>Pack Horse Lane High Green, Sheffield South Yorkshire S35 3HY</b>
<b>Telephone Number</b>	<b>0114 2848488</b>
<b>Email</b>	<b><a href="mailto:enquiries@st-marysgreen.sheffield.sch.uk">enquiries@st-marysgreen.sheffield.sch.uk</a></b>
<b>School Website</b>	<b><a href="http://www.st-marysgreen.sheffield.sch.uk">www.st-marysgreen.sheffield.sch.uk</a></b>

## SUMMARY JUDGEMENTS

**OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS**

**1**

**THE PROVISION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION**

**1**

**LEADERS AND MANAGERS**

**1**

**OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**

**1**

The overall effectiveness judgement is based on all the evidence available.

- Outcomes for pupils,
- The provision for Catholic Education
- Leaders and Managers

## OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS

### How good outcomes are for pupils, taking into account variations between groups.

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school.	<b>1</b>
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	<b>2</b>
How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' Collective Worship	<b>1</b>

### **The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school is Outstanding**

- Pupils at St Mary's demonstrate pride in their school. They have a strong sense of belonging, are well supported by all the staff and feel confident and secure. Pupils express their approval of the system in place whereby they can choose a 'key worker' from the school staff along with the learning mentor's role in solving any problems they encounter. Children have been involved in shaping the behaviour policy and are ready to praise their peers when they see them improve or achieve well.
- Through strong teaching, liturgies and assemblies pupils can express their own beliefs and opinions with confidence, understand the importance of key celebrations throughout the liturgical year and refer to the teachings of Jesus and other key religious figures.
- Pupils can articulate what makes their school special: "You never feel alone – there's always someone looking out for you." "Everyone's friendly and nice to you" "It's an attractive school – you feel included in everything and you have time to shine" are some of the comments made by them. One pupil went further: "You couldn't really make this school much better because it's that good!"
- Exemplary behaviour and an openness to reach out to others less fortunate than themselves through many charitable good works is in great evidence.
- Parents, governors and staff recognise the need to forge closer links with the parish to develop and enhance the Catholic Life of the school still further.

### **How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is good**

- Through lesson observations and scrutiny of pupil workbooks, standards of learners' work in Religious Education are good and better and, pupils are achieving in line with or above national expectations.
- Pupils enjoy and value Religious Education. They work very enthusiastically, diligently and apply themselves well.

- Pupils work cooperatively in pairs and groups and develop the ability to work independently from an early age. Support staff play an excellent role in contributing to every child’s achievement.
- As a result of high quality feedback from teachers, pupils are aware of the levels they are working on and the next steps needed to achieve at a higher level. This is evident throughout the school and through this consistent approach children’s improvement in attainment is good.
- Work in their books is at least good. By giving children an opportunity to write at greater length to develop deeper thinking and to further an enthusiasm for tackling more challenging activities this work could develop even further.

**How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools’ Collective Worship is outstanding**

- Pupils show enthusiasm, reverence, respond well and actively participate in Collective Worship. They enjoy praying together in class, in school liturgies and in Mass.
- They are reflective and focused during Collective Worship and from the earliest age pupils participate fully in prayer. In an observed assembly children clearly demonstrated their understanding of the Gospel message answering deep theological questions very thoughtfully.
- There is evidence that pupil participation is being increasingly enhanced through the introduction of class faith leaders in Key Stage 2. They plan and lead prayer and worship with increasing skill, confidence and enthusiasm.
- High quality liturgical dance, drama and participation in many Diocesan and Sheffield primary school celebrations all contribute to engage pupils’ interest and inspire in them to think deeply and with heartfelt response.

**PROVISION**

**How effective the provision is for Catholic Education**

The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education.	<b>2</b>
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils’ learning.	<b>1</b>
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.	<b>1</b>

**The Quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education is Good**

- Teaching is good with some outstanding features. Teachers have good subject knowledge; their lesson planning takes good account of pupils’ previous learning and effectively tailors tasks to challenge and enthuse learners.

- Teachers have a clear understanding of the value of Religious Education as a core subject and this impacts positively on pupils. Teaching enables pupils to make at least good progress and as a result of secure assessment procedures teachers plan well to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Regular marking and constructive feedback impacts on pupils knowing what they have done well and where they need to improve.
- Use of learning partners and peer assessment is very effective in aiding learning. Pupils' effort and achievement are celebrated regularly.
- Written work is well presented. Orally, pupils can articulate their knowledge, thoughts and opinions very well.

### **The extent to which the Religious Education Curriculum promotes pupils' learning is Outstanding**

- The Religious Education curriculum provides an excellent opportunity for pupils' spiritual and moral development. Gospel values are clearly in evidence throughout the school through the mutual respect shown between all members of the school community.
- A cross curricular approach is used well to complement the Religious Education curriculum. Using lively and stimulating teaching resources helps to engage children's interest. Pupils reported: "Teachers make our lessons fun by using drama, art, role play, circle time, group activities, quizzes and story boards."
- Lessons are well-paced and techniques to ensure all pupils are actively engaged are used very effectively throughout the school. Innovative ways of using music and the interactive facilities of the whiteboard were observed having a very positive effect on pupil motivation and understanding.
- The study of other world faiths such as Judaism and Islam and visits to places of worship such as the Sheffield Synagogue helps children respect other religious traditions.

### **The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is Outstanding**

- Collective Worship has a high profile and is central to the life of the school. It plays a key part in meeting the spiritual needs of the pupils. Opportunities are provided to enable full, active and conscious participation of the whole school community.
- The school provides a wide range of opportunities for prayer daily and throughout the school year. Prayer journals give the children an opportunity to write their own prayers or to share with others. The Diocesan youth 'In Reality' team is used to deliver a high quality retreat experience. The Advent bags and the Lent bags are a great and appreciated link between school and home.
- There is a clear policy and planning document for Collective Worship and the school ensures that it is both regular and inclusive. The planning of worship is thorough throughout the school year and ensures that feasts, key points in the liturgical year and gospel values are given prominence and celebrated.

- Parents attend and speak highly of such celebrations as Harvest Festival, Remembrance Day, Christingle, Ash Wednesday, Lenten Stations of the Cross and Easter.
- The school has the capacity and desire to develop a deeper and closer bond with the parish. The parish priest is well placed to support and enhance the liturgical experience of all learners.

## LEADERS AND MANAGERS

### How effective the provision is for Catholic education

How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.	<b>1</b>
How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement for improvement to outcomes for pupils.	<b>1</b>

### How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils is Outstanding

- The Headteacher is fully committed to providing an excellent education for every pupil in an inclusive, nurturing and happy environment shaped by Gospel values.
- The very effective governing body plays an important role in ensuring the provision of the Catholic Life of the school permeates every aspect of school life on a daily basis. The Headteacher, governors and leadership team provide strong leadership and guidance at all levels. They are fully and enthusiastically committed to the mission of the Church.
- Governors are increasingly involved in monitoring and evaluating activities relating to the Catholic Life of the school. They have a good grasp of the school’s areas for development and celebrate its strengths. They have developed systems to add rigour to their searching analysis and self-challenge.
- School self-evaluation is thorough and actions taken to improve provision are clear, challenging and achievable through well designed strategies.
- Very good leadership of the Catholic Life of the school ensures that all pupils are well cared for and nurtured in this happy, caring, safe and supportive environment.
- Leaders seek the views of parents systematically. Parents report “Children really enjoy school- they don’t count the days to breaking up for the holidays.” “St Mary’s feels like a family where everyone is welcomed and involved.” “Children are confident in talking about their faith.” “The school fosters mutual respect for other faiths and cultures.”

## **How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement for improvement to outcomes for pupils is Outstanding**

- The Religious Education subject leader is highly focused on the school's mission and works very effectively to promote it. Through excellent subject knowledge and targeted support she has been effective in raising achievement and standards ensuring all learners are taught well.
- Whole school leadership, including governance is focused on supporting Religious Education as a core subject. Standards of teaching and learning are closely monitored and findings are acted upon. Staff training and spending on resources is given high priority.
- Staff are very well prepared for teaching the 'Come and See' curriculum and are kept up to date with new initiatives from the Diocese. Through meeting together in 'Come and see for yourself' sessions they have the opportunity to reflect on each theme and ensure consistency of approach throughout the school.
- Assessment strategies have been refined and are now fully embedded so now provide an accurate picture of the progress and attainment of all pupils. Information gained from assessment informs teachers' planning very effectively ensuring improved levels of progress in Religious Education.
- Through the liturgical life of the school and curriculum Religious Education pupils are well challenged to lead lives based on the teachings of Jesus. Behaviour in the school is outstanding. Care for one another is nurtured and pupils thrive in this outstanding school.

**This final section draws together all the evidence and judgements made in the preceding sections**

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**

<b>How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education</b>	<b>1</b>
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**The overall effectiveness of St Mary's School in providing Catholic Education is Outstanding**

- Through determined leadership, standards of attainment and pupil progress in Religious Education has improved considerably since the last inspection.
- Teaching is good with many outstanding features. Recent developments in marking strategies, assessment and tracking of pupils' progress have led to much improved teaching and learning in Religious Education.
- Governors and staff have high expectations with regard to the Catholic mission and ethos of the school.
- The spiritual and moral development of the pupils is outstanding. Pupil behaviour is exemplary.
- There are excellent links with parents and carers and they overwhelmingly support the school and appreciate the high quality care and education their children receive.
- Provision for Collective Worship and prayer has been enhanced by the introduction of 'Faith Leaders' in Key Stage 2. Pupils increasingly prepare and lead worship with confidence and enthusiasm. They talk enthusiastically about their work, showing increasing spiritual depth of thought.

### **Recommendations:**

- Ensure that the content of written work captures the discussion and rich dialogue that occurs between teachers and pupils during Religious Education lessons and is evidenced through examples of extended pieces of writing over time.
- Build closer links with the parish to develop and enhance the Catholic Life of the school still further.
- Use the school grounds to create a space for spiritual reflection.