

The Diocese of Hallam
Section 48 Inspection Report

**The Catholic Life of the School, Religious Education and
Collective Worship**

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Bungalow Road, Edlington, Doncaster DN12 1DL

School URN	106773
Overall Effectiveness grade	Outstanding (1)
Date of inspection	6 July 2022
Name of Chair of Governors	Mr John Cape
Name of Executive Head Teacher	Mrs Bernadette Nesbit
Name of Head of School	Mrs Sarah McCall
Name of RE Subject Leader	Miss Kerry Padian
Date of previous inspection	28 June 2018
Previous inspection grade	Requires Improvement (3)
Section 48 Inspectors	Mr Alan Dewhurst Mr Richard Hilton

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection Grades: 1 is Outstanding, 2 is Good,
3 requires improvement in order to be good, 4 is Inadequate

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS: how effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.

1

The above judgement on overall effectiveness is based on all the available evidence following the evaluation of the following three sections:

CATHOLIC LIFE

1

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

1

OUTSTANDING (1)	To be judged OUTSTANDING for overall effectiveness: The three Section judgements must all be OUTSTANDING
GOOD (2)	To be judged GOOD for overall effectiveness: The three Section judgements must all be at least GOOD
REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT (3)	To be judged REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT for overall effectiveness: One or more sections will be judged to REQUIRE IMPROVEMENT with no sections judged inadequate.
INADEQUATE (4)	To be judged INADEQUATE for overall effectiveness: At least one Section will be judged inadequate.

Summary of key findings:

This is an Outstanding Catholic Primary School

- St Mary's Catholic Primary School is an outstanding Catholic school, imbued with a strong Catholic ethos, providing an excellent Catholic Religious Education and outstanding Collective Worship.
- Thanks to visionary and committed leadership, the school has developed the highest quality swiftly, since its last inspection when it was judged to be requiring improvement.
- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding because a strong sense of Catholic identity has been established, enabling all staff and pupils to be united in living its mission to 'walk together with Christ...helping one another...in loving and caring, letting the light of Jesus shine'.
- Religious Education is outstanding because it has been led expertly, with all staff and pupils understanding the highest expectations demanded by leaders and motivated to provide excellent learning opportunities for pupils. Because of this, pupils are enthused and excited in their learning and make rapid progress.
- Collective Worship is outstanding because the school has committed itself to the centrality of prayer in its daily life, offering a very wide range of experiences to pupils, and becoming in the process a vibrant and joyful worshipping community. Strong Links with the parish of St Mary's have contributed significantly to the development of the quality and range of opportunities for prayer and liturgy.

What the school needs to do to improve further.

- Continue to develop the wide range of Collective Worship across the school, fine tuning opportunities to ensure the quality of practice and provision.
- Carry out a review of the mission statement in order to refresh its impact on the community, so that it matches the grade descriptors for 'outstanding' in the new inspection framework.
- Take opportunities to share the school's outstanding practice in Religious Education across the diocese.

Information about this inspection

The inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School was carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Diocesan Framework and Schedule for Section 48 Inspections approved by the Bishop of Hallam. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation and the inspection schedule follows the criteria set by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA 2017). While following the inspection schedule as published, inspectors acknowledged the significant impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on schools over a sustained period, and took this into consideration when reaching their judgements

The inspector reviewed in detail the following aspects:

- The school's response to the recommendations of the previous inspection
- 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 pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education
- The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education
- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship
- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship

The inspection was carried out by two inspectors over one day:

- Inspectors examined the content of the school website
- Religious Education lessons were observed in five classes.
- Inspectors attended three acts of worship, namely Mass involving younger pupils, a classroom gathering in Year 5 and a Key Stage 2 assembly.
- A Year 4 retreat afternoon, including adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, was also observed.
- Discussions were held with the Executive Head Teacher, the Head of School, the Chair of Governors, parish priests and RE subject leader; and groups of pupils, parents and parishioners.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of school documents, policies, records, minutes of governors' meetings, as well as a sample of pupils' workbooks.
- Inspectors also noted displays around the school.

Information about this school

- St Mary's Catholic Primary School is a one-form entry, voluntary aided school in Doncaster local authority, serving the parish of St Mary's, Edlington.
- There are 169 pupils on roll. Just over half the pupils are baptised Catholic, 19% are from other Christian denominations, a very small number from other faiths and 28% have no religious affiliation.
- Around a third of pupils have English as an additional language. Approximately a third are eligible for the pupil premium.
- Since the last inspection, the school has experienced much change in leadership and staffing. The leadership structure changed in January 2020 with the appointment of an Executive Head Teacher and a Head of School, followed by several departures and new appointments of teachers. A new RE subject leader joined the school in September 2021.
- St Mary's now works in close partnership with Holy Family Catholic Primary School, Stainforth and St Francis Catholic Primary School, Balby.

Full Report – Inspection Judgements

CATHOLIC LIFE

The quality of the Catholic Life of the school is **OUTSTANDING**

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	1
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school	1

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

- Pupils are very proud of their school. They understand its distinctive nature as a Catholic community and value the opportunities it gives them to participate in sharing and living out its mission.
- Their active involvement in the Catholic Life of the school is evident in the range of activities that they willingly undertake, and they play a full part in evaluating the school's provision through pupil voice exercises that contribute to improvements.
- Behaviour is immaculate. Pupils show consistent respect for each other, collaborate willingly together and are polite and caring. They understand fully how they should treat each other by 'following in the footsteps of Jesus'. They exude a consistent positive attitude, and present as happy, confident and secure.
- Pupils are well aware of the demands of membership of a Catholic community. They enthusiastically engage in discussions that highlight Catholic social teaching, raised within the context of the wider school curriculum, with examples relating to justice, fairness and global harmony observed during the inspection.
- They enthusiastically embrace the school's chaplaincy provision, actively participating in leadership roles, such as planning and leading class worship, or as members of the GIFT (Growing in Faith Together) team ministering across the school.
- Pupils are developing an excellent understanding of loving relationships and sexual development at an age-appropriate level through the school's provision.
- They engage enthusiastically in the opportunities to serve others, such as in charitable ventures that have supported the British Red Cross, the Good Shepherd appeal, Mission Together, local food banks and people of Ukraine. They have also had the chance to meet and serve the elderly in local care homes.
- Links with the parish are enjoyed by pupils, with regular opportunities given to visit the parish church and to meet parishioners and priests.

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

- The school mission statement and school motto are well understood by pupils. Staff commitment to promoting and implementing the Catholic mission is very evident in the quality of relationships within school.
- The mission statement has been in place for some time without revision, and, while still a feature of the school, its prominence and potential to inspire is somewhat underplayed.
- There is a very strong sense of community at all levels, modelled outstandingly by leaders and all staff and recognised by parents and parishioners. This results in a very high quality of relationships between all adults and children.
- The school environment has changed markedly since the last inspection, and is now presented very well, with appropriate and imaginative display of the school's Catholic identity and pupils' work. It has a sense of order and respect that is mirrored by the way pupils care for their surroundings.
- The entire curriculum reflects a desire to ensure that Catholic social teaching permeates topics studied by pupils, yielding many opportunities for spiritual and moral development. It helps pupils to make links between what they learn and how to put their values into action.
- Pupils are encouraged to consider their values, and the virtues they need to aspire to, through the chaplaincy provision, through the 'Virtues to Live By' scheme and through recognition of their efforts, such as via the Good Samaritan Award.
- The pastoral care for staff and pupils is embedded in the school's policies and structure. Pupils recognise that they have 'trusted adults' that they can turn to, with further assistance available through the pastoral leader and mental health and welfare ambassador.
- Relationships, Sex and Health education is embedded effectively through the 'Life to the Full' programme supplemented by visits from the Big Talk team.

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

- Leaders at St Mary's Catholic Primary are deeply committed to ensuring that pupils receive the highest quality Catholic education that can be provided.
- They have ensured that the Catholic Life of the school is given the highest possible priority, evident in school documentation and in the day-to-day functioning of the school's activities.
- Their commitment to enhancing and revitalising the school's Catholic identity since the last inspection has been noticed by stakeholders in the community. Parishioners and parents recognise that outstanding behaviours have developed over recent times, linked to the school's Catholic mission. Pupils too recognise the changes that have developed. The parish priest and his assistant clearly recognise the ways in which pupils have embraced the Catholicity of the school.

- The school’s self-evaluation of its Catholic Life has led to rapid improvements that have been well planned and effective. These have included successful partnerships with other schools and the reconnection with the parish.
- Continuing professional development for staff is prioritised and well organised, ensuring that those new to the school and to Catholic education understand the expectations involved.
- Parental engagement is well catered for, particularly through the welcome given to all who visit the school, and through frequent communication via newsletters, facebook and the school website, for example.
- Governors have been active in ensuring the Catholic Life of the school is monitored rigorously, and that it features regularly in discussions in governors’ meetings, and through the headteacher’s report.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of Religious Education is OUTSTANDING

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	1
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	1

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

- Pupils make consistent progress in Religious Education from their various starting points, with each year group showing improvement in standards as they move through the school year, evidence in the school’s assessment data and in pupils’ work.
- Pupils take great care in presenting their work. They understand the high expectations of their teachers and they respond accordingly. They are developing a high degree of religious literacy as they mature, so that pupils in the older classes are able to utilise a growing religious vocabulary to articulate their learning, both in writing and in discussion.
- There is much enthusiasm among pupils about their learning in Religious Education. They are fully engaged in their lessons, concentrating exceptionally well in their listening, their group tasks and when called on to respond in writing. They are able to reflect on what they learn and connect it to current events in the world and how they live their own lives, developing their values and their ethical understanding.
- Pupils enjoy tackling challenging activities and the wide range of learning contexts that they are offered. They respond well to opportunities to present work in their

own independent style when allowed. They enjoy working with each other and do so without hesitation. Their learning behaviours and positive attitudes are outstanding.

- Pupils' attainment is very good, particularly in view of their starting points on entry to school, and the disruptions caused by the Covid pandemic. Pupils understand how teachers recognise how well they are learning through the topic assessment structure set up by the school. They do not yet have regular opportunity to self-evaluate their achievements.

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

- Teachers consistently plan lessons that are highly effective in engaging pupils, developing understanding of key concepts very effectively and challenging pupils to think deeply. The wide range of activities offered by teachers excites the pupils' interest and motivates them to give of their best.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is very good. They prepare very well so as to ensure that the learning focus of each lesson is specific and can be addressed through the tasks given to pupils.
- Units of work are carefully structured to maximise learning. Each topic has a knowledge organiser and front cover that lays out the learning focus areas, the specific vocabulary to be developed and references to scripture. These are used as an on-going assessment tool. The 'Big Question' for each unit is broken down into a number of key questions to help pupils develop their understanding step by step. A 'Respond' sheet at the end of the unit highlights the learning that pupils have retained, contributing successfully to the overall assessment for the unit. This is excellent practice.
- Lessons start with a point of reflection, often enhanced by quiet music and visual stimulus, pointing to the special status of RE as a core subject. Teachers communicate the purpose of each lesson very clearly through the statement "Today we are getting better at..." giving pupils the 'big picture' of what they are trying to accomplish.
- The breadth of teaching methods employed ensures active engagement by all pupils, sustaining interest over the course of the lesson by ensuring that each stage is addressed at appropriate pace and time is used efficiently. Effective questioning contributes to the development of understanding and the consolidation of learning.
- The sequence of lessons in each topic is well identified in the knowledge organiser and assessment page in the pupils' books. Marking is efficient, well understood by pupils, and they are given extensive feedback actively during their lessons. Teaching assistants support learning very well, interacting with groups and individuals, maintaining focus and checking understanding.
- Teachers' high expectations result in excellent response from pupils. The volume and quality of work seen in pupils' books bears testament to the priority given to Religious Education.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is outstanding

- The school's Religious Education curriculum fully meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in devoting at least 10% of the taught timetable to the subject. The priority and high status given by leaders to Religious Education ensures that all staff acknowledge its importance and convey high expectations to their pupils.
- Leaders and governors regard Religious Education as the 'Core' of the core subjects, ensuring that it has full parity with other subjects in terms of resourcing and professional development.
- The RE subject leader has skilfully developed and introduced quality resources to assist teachers. She has provided continuing professional development opportunities regularly, and has been highly supportive of her colleagues, while ensuring that high standards are maintained through monitoring activities. She has carried out her role in an exemplary fashion.
- Structures for developing teachers' expertise are highly effective. Each teacher has a profile document devoted to Religious Education, enabling leaders to assess standards and set goals, motivating teachers to raise their own standards. Regular opportunities for teachers to share the work of pupils across other schools with each other is another example of excellent practice.
- The school's evaluation of its development and attainment is highly accurate. This has been enabled by ensuring a wide understanding among staff and governors of the contents of the Diocesan Self-Evaluation form (DSEF), by which the school recognises how well it is developing Religious Education and identifies areas for improvement.
- The RE link governor has assisted leaders regularly in carrying out monitoring visits to affirm their judgements of how well the school is achieving. Governors are enabled to receive a full picture of the school's performance through reports presented and discussed at meetings.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The quality of Collective Worship is OUTSTANDING

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	1
The quality of provision for Collective Worship	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	1

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

- Pupils participate in and respond to the opportunities for Collective Worship in entirely appropriate manner, given the context of the particular setting.
- Their enthusiasm for gathering together in prayer is clearly evident from the examples observed during the inspection and those shown in school records.
- From a very early age, pupils learn about the special nature of worship, showing respect for the times when attentive listening is called for, but responding enthusiastically to questioning when called on. Their responses can show deep thought and knowledge of liturgy and scripture.
- Singing is joyful and exuberant, often accompanied by assisting actions, such as clapping or signing. Periods of silent reflection are respectfully observed.
- Pupils are keen to take part in planning and leading Collective Worship. Younger pupils are responding well to the modelling of liturgical prayer by teachers, developing understanding of the four stages of each gathering, aided by resources that are made available to them in each class, the 'Let Us Pray' cards being one example.
- They form a very good understanding of the liturgical year from this modelling, with each prayer focus area reflecting the appropriate liturgical colour for the seasons of the Church's year, and from the key stage or whole school acts of worship that mark important feasts and stages of the calendar.
- Older pupils are becoming adept at planning and leading acts of worship independently, with all given the opportunity to do this in turn in small groups. They are able to select an appropriate theme, with guidance, decide on a scripture reading from a limited choice and choose how their peers will respond and take forward a 'mission' afterwards into their day. They bring creativity and imagination into their responsibilities.
- The GIFT team, all volunteers who have applied to be members, carry out their ministry in whole school or key stage settings with confidence.
- The sense of community engendered by acts of Collective Worship is very strong, seen, for example, in the response of the youngest pupils in Mass in the parish church, in a Key Stage 2 gospel assembly, in a pupil-led classroom liturgical prayer and in a 'retreat' featuring sacramental adoration.
- In all these settings, pupils take part willingly together, irrespective of religious background, in unified fashion.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is outstanding

- Praying together is a natural and central part of the school day. Leaders and staff members ensure that classes and groups of classes turn to prayer in informal and formal ways regularly, with opportunities interwoven with other learning activities at given points in the day.

- Themes chosen for prayer gatherings are well selected, reflecting a thorough understanding of the Church's liturgical year, Catholic social teaching and the norms of Catholic tradition.
- Collective Worship resources support the provision very well. The Ten Ten Collective Worship programme enhances whole school and class gatherings, with a gospel assembly starting the week and setting the theme for the week. 'Virtues to Live By' is also used to good effect. A 'Liturgy Box' in each classroom enables staff and pupils to create an appropriate prayer focus for each act of liturgical prayer. Older pupils have been able to have their own prayer journal in which to record their personal prayer. A 'prayer hut' outside is another resource for pupils to use.
- Staff members have a very good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts, and bring this understanding to their planning and presentation.
- The school ensures that a very wide range of experiences is given to the pupils, with celebrations taking place in a variety of settings, inside and outside school, including in the parish church. A class attends a parish Mass on a rota basis each week throughout the year. Whole school Masses take place on important feast days or occasions, and other celebrations have included a penitential service in Lent, a blessing of Advent wreaths, Remembrance commemorations and class 'retreats'. Parents commented on their appreciation of being invited to liturgical celebrations.
- The school is very well supported by the priests of the parish, whose frequent involvement with the school is a mark of the very strong parish links that have been established. Parents and parishioners are encouraged to participate whenever possible, and their feedback in surveys shows how much they value these opportunities.

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

- Leaders, including chaplains to the school, have expert knowledge in planning and delivering high quality Collective Worship. All staff are drawn into the planning and celebration of acts of worship to ensure that they are immersed in the norms of Catholic tradition, and can model best practice to pupils in turn.
- Leaders are very visible as leaders of Collective Worship. Their example of commitment towards prioritising acts of worship is followed completely by staff members. The same priority has been given to developing the planning and leadership of pupil-led prayer, with teachers modelling liturgical prayer and encouraging younger pupils, and greater independence given to pupils as they move into older classes.
- The school leaders have worked hard to develop a very wide range of experiences for pupils, with the 'retreats' the most recent innovation. Given that the introduction of a number of elements has taken place over a short time, the school's evaluation of all aspects of the quality and appropriateness of the provision to the various ages of pupils, although frequent, has yet to be developed at depth.
- The professional development of staff, incorporating liturgical formation, has been given appropriately high priority, with particular attention given to the formation of those new to Catholic education.