
The Diocese of Hallam Section 48 Report

The Catholic Life of the School and Religious Education

Diocese of Hallam



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

St Marie's School, A Catholic Voluntary Academy

School URN	107113
Name of Chair of Governors	Dr Kevin Smith
Name of Head teacher	Mr Alan Dewhurst
Date of inspection	Thursday 19th November 2015
Section 48 Inspector	Mr Peter Davison

“ An enthusiasm for the things of God”

Introduction

Description of the School

St Marie's School is a Catholic Voluntary Academy, part of Our Lady Seat of Wisdom Umbrella Trust, situated in the Fulwood/Broomhill area of Sheffield. The school serves 5 parishes spread across a wide area of Sheffield: St Marie's Cathedral, St Francis of Assisi (Crosspool), St Vincent's (Crookes), St William of York (Ecclesall) and Holy Family (Arbourthorne). The pupils come from a wide variety of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. The school has 2 school buses, one to Crookes/Walkley and one to Arbourthorne/Heeley. The school has been on this site since 1972 and expanded to incorporate pupils from St Vincent's school when it closed in 1989. The school roll has increased again in recent years because of a rise in the Catholic population locally.

Type of School	Primary
Age profile of students	4-11
Number on roll	237
Number of students on Special Needs and Disabilities Register	38
Number of students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs	3
Number of Catholics on roll	261 (94%)
Number of Other Christian Denominations	12 (4%)
Number of other Faiths No religious affiliation	5 (2%)
School Address	Fulwood Road Sheffield S10 3DQ
Telephone Number	0114 2301904
Email	<u>enquiries@stmarieslearning.co.uk</u>
School Website	<u>www.st-maries.sheffield.sch.uk/</u>

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.	1
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	1
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	1

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

- Pupils at St Marie's demonstrate an exceptional sense of pride in their school. They talk freely and enthusiastically about their faith and sense of belonging. As one pupil reported: "We all accept that everyone's different but we are a community and we get on really well together." It is clear that pupils are at the centre of shaping the school's Catholic Life; they willingly take on a number of responsibilities such as the Liturgy Leaders group, the Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, the Charity Committee, the Safety Committee and numerous voluntary roles helping in the classrooms, dining hall and playground.
- They value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the parish communities. Pupils treasure the school's Catholic identity and are able to recognise what makes their school special. The Catholic Life of the school is evidently at the heart of the school's ethos and mission; as a result, pupils' spiritual and moral development is outstanding.
- Standards of behaviour are exemplary; pupils are polite and alert to the needs of others.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and appreciate how well-informed they are about school life through letters, the school website and social media. They say their children are happy at school and they, themselves, feel welcome in a very warm, inclusive environment. Parents who have gone through difficult family circumstances appreciate the support given by the school.

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

- All pupils make excellent progress. Progress is at least good in each key stage for different groups and exemplary for some. Very good moderation work has been undertaken with other schools in the Umbrella Trust to ensure teacher assessments are accurate.
- Pupils show a passion and enthusiasm for their learning in Religious Education. The work in their books is exceptionally well presented and all groups are fully engaged in their studies.

- Pupils are able to respond effectively to marking and can evaluate and improve their own work. Their knowledge, understanding and skills are developing well helping them to become more independent in their learning.
- The ‘Come and See’ programme is used very effectively along with other resources and support materials. Pupils acquire a good knowledge and understanding from first entry to the school and use this as a firm foundation to further their progress.
- Behaviour for learning is exceptionally good with pupils rarely off task and lessons proceed without any interruptions.

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

- Pupils show interest, respond well and actively participate in Collective Worship. In an observed assembly, the Liturgy Team led a lively signed interpretation of a well-loved hymn evoking an enthusiastic response from all pupils and staff. Children sing with great joy and fervour ensuring celebrations are vibrant, lively and inspirational.
- They are reflective and focused during Collective Worship and from the earliest age pupils participate fully in prayer. It is very evident that prayer and age-appropriate worship are fundamental aspects of life at St Marie’s. One pupil reported: “Religious Education makes me come closer to God”. Others said they liked their personal prayer journals which they could share with others.
- The pupils have a good understanding of religious seasons and festivals and the colours of the liturgical season are used well to enhance displayed work. In the observed assembly each class was reverentially presented with purple display cloth for the season of Advent as they returned the green cloth of Ordinary Time.

PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

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

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

- The majority of teaching is outstanding and never less than consistently good. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge; their lesson planning takes careful account of pupils’ previous learning and effectively tailors tasks to challenge and enthuse learners.

- Records of attainment are well established and assessment data provides quality information to inform the next steps in pupils' learning.
- Staff meet before the start of each topic to plan together using the 'Come and See for Yourself' resource. The subject leader ensures that teachers have an outstanding grasp of the aims and objectives of the theme being explored.
- Pupils are positively affirmed throughout their lessons and marking now informs them of their progress and increasingly identifies how they can improve. Effort and achievement are celebrated.
- In lessons observed, pupils were thoughtfully encouraged to understand ideas related to the theme of 'Advent' from the *Come and See* programme. Careful planning, challenging questions, guided discussion and quality resources encouraged pupils' enthusiastic responses. Excellent use is made of classroom interactive whiteboards to motivate, engage and inspire.
- Teaching assistants are highly skilled and provide excellent care and support to pupils. They are deployed effectively and show sensitivity to pupils' needs.

The extent to which the Religious Education Curriculum promotes pupils' learning is outstanding

- The Religious Education curriculum provides outstanding opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development.
- Pupils clearly enjoy Religious Education lessons and they understand their value. They are able to apply what they have learned in the context of their daily lives. They can discuss what they have learned and show they are reflective, not only in lessons, but generally.
- Progress is evident within lessons and throughout the school year as reflected in pupil workbooks and assessment data. Behaviour is exemplary.
- The range of cross-curricular links is extensive and includes role-play, drama, art, and ICT. This, together with visitors to the school, such as representatives from Cafod, serves to enhance provision and learning across the school. The school supports many charities throughout the year.
- The study of other world faiths such as Judaism and Islam help children respect other faith 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 annual pilgrimage walk to Padley, the website Prayer Portal, a wide variety of celebrations marking the liturgical year, stimulating displays, the children's Liturgy Team and visits to places of religious significance make a profound contribution to this excellent provision.

- The school has very strong links with the five parishes it serves. The clergy are regular visitors to the school. Parish-based sacramental preparations are fully supported and celebrated by the school.
- The use of multi-media projections on an enormous screen together with imaginative artefacts makes whole school assemblies and liturgies very dynamic and engaging.

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.	1
How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement for improvement to outcomes for pupils.	1

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 inspirational headteacher is passionately committed to providing an outstanding education for every pupil in an inclusive, nurturing and happy environment shaped by Gospel values. He leads by example and his clear vision has gained the admiration and gratitude of the whole school community.
- The highly effective governing body plays an outstanding 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 are excellent role models providing leadership and guidance at all levels.
- The governing body fulfils its role by being rigorous in its strategic involvement in developing the Catholic Life of the school. They have helped shape the direction of the school through their high profile and the many contributions they make. They are ambitious, well informed and make an excellent contribution to school development.
- The parish priest of St Marie's is on the governing body, supports teaching and learning, celebrates liturgies and provides pastoral support on a weekly basis. He plays a significant role in contributing to the governors being very astute in the rigour of their monitoring, analysis and self-challenge.
- St Marie's is a welcoming, caring and happy community. This is evident in the children's consideration for each other and the pastoral care given by adults in the school. Children feel happy, safe and secure.

- The school environment is stimulating, vibrant and welcoming and illustrates how staff endeavour to provide the very best for their community.
- Leaders ensure that parents know what is going on at school through regular communications as well as information on the school's website. The views of parents are important to the school and through feedback from questionnaires these are analysed and acted upon.

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. Building on the firm foundations put in place by the previous subject leader, through excellent subject knowledge and targeted support she has been outstanding in raising achievement and standards ensuring all learners are taught well.
- Governors and the leadership team have clearly defined monitoring structures and policies in place which enable them to self-evaluate accurately. The Self Evaluation Document provides evidence of the school's monitoring, analysis and self-challenge. It gives an accurate picture of the Catholic Life of the school, the provision for Religious Education and its analysis provides a basis to celebrate the school's strengths and also outlines areas identified for development.
- Through effective monitoring, the excellent subject action plan identifies areas to develop together with strategic steps to achieve set targets.
- There is a very successful induction, support and mentoring system in place for new members of staff. This leads to staff having greater confidence in delivering high quality lessons and a sound understanding of how to ensure pupils of all abilities make outstanding progress.

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

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	1
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The overall effectiveness of St Marie's School in providing Catholic Education is outstanding

- Through determined leadership, standards of attainment and pupil progress in Religious Education have improved considerably since the last inspection.
- The mission and ethos of Catholic Education permeates every aspect of school life.
- The Headteacher, subject leader, governors and leadership team have a clear vision in developing the Catholic Life of the school. Inspirational leadership combined with the commitment of all members of the school community in constantly striving to improve provision is having a very positive effect on school improvement.
- The provision offered by the school is outstanding in developing Religious Education through a well-planned and relevant curriculum. This plays an important part in the moral, social, spiritual and social development of the pupils.
- The school has successfully met the recommendations from the previous inspection and Diocesan monitoring report with a notable impact on outcomes for individual and groups of pupils
- Teaching is at least good and mostly outstanding. Recent developments in marking strategies, assessment and tracking of pupils' progress have led to improved teaching and learning.
- The excellent provision for Collective Worship and prayer has been enhanced by the work of the Liturgy Team. Pupils regularly prepare and lead worship with confidence and enthusiasm.

Recommendations:

- Further raise the quality of teaching through the sharing of identified outstanding practice.
- Ensure that current high standards are maintained and developed in light of changes to the leadership team and governing body structure.
- Create an outdoor space as a further opportunity for personal reflection and to develop children's spirituality.