

The Diocese of Hallam
Section 48 Inspection Report

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

St Marie's School, A Catholic Voluntary Academy

375 Fulwood Rd,
Sheffield
S10 3DQ

School URN	107113
Overall Effectiveness grade	2
Date of inspection	25th February 2022
Name of Chair of Governors	Mrs Candida Calvert
Name of Head teacher	Mr John Fernandes
Name of RE Subject Leader	Mrs Bernadette Twomey
Date of previous inspection	19th November 2015
Previous inspection grade	1
Section 48 Inspector(s)	Mr John Cape Mrs Lindsay Gamble

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.

2

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

2

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 a GOOD Catholic Primary School

- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. The mission statement is central to everything that the school does. All members of the school community support one another to grow in faith and fulfil the mission of the Church. There is a strong sense of belonging which is evident within relationships at every level.
- The quality of Religious Education is good. It is not yet outstanding because the level of challenge does not always deepen or extend learning for all pupils, and there are inconsistencies in quantity and quality between classes. Pupils enjoy Religious Education; they can explain its value and are keen to do well, leading to good progress.
- The quality of Collective Worship at St Marie's is outstanding. Opportunities for prayer are woven into the fabric of the school. Pupils, staff and parents are uplifted by their engagement with worship.

What the school needs to do to improve further.

- Improve the quality of Religious Education by:
 - Ensuring a consistency in approach to teaching Religious Education so that all lessons are well paced, challenging and all pupils are actively engaged in order to experience success and make good or better progress in their learning.
 - Further embedding feedback for learning so that pupils are guided to make improvements to their work in greater depth in order to move learning forward.

Information about this inspection

The inspection of St Marie's 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:

- Child led liturgy.
- Monitoring role of the Governing Body.
- The quality of teaching and learning.

The inspection was carried out by 2 inspectors over one day:

- Reviewed information posted on the school website which provided specific information about the importance of the Catholic faith and tradition at St Marie's and how this is lived out daily in the school.
- Discussed the work of the school with several key stakeholders including teaching and support staff, parish priest, parents and pupils.
- Met with the Chair of Governors to discuss provision and monitoring.
- Detailed discussion of the Catholic life and Religious Education with the Headteacher, Religious Education Coordinator and Religious Education Co-leader.
- Discussions with pupils about St Marie's school and how they enjoy their learning and being part of the school community.
- Progress reports, portfolios of work, photographic evidence, focal points and displays in and around school, the 'Retreat Room' scrutiny all provided valuable evidence and essential information during the inspection.
- Scrutinised a range of children's Religious Education work.
- Observed several acts of Collective Worship including Ten Ten Resources, Virtues to Live by, Year 6, and whole school.

Information about this school

St Marie's School, A Catholic Voluntary Academy, is an average-sized primary school in the south-west of Sheffield with 215 pupils. Since the last Section 48 inspection, the school has a new Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team. It is a wonderfully inclusive Catholic Academy, where children from a wide variety of backgrounds come together to learn, grow and flourish in a supportive, nurturing community. St Marie's converted to become a Catholic Voluntary Academy and a member of the Our Lady Seat of Wisdom Umbrella Trust of three Sheffield Catholic Voluntary Academies in October 2012. The school is currently moving towards being part of the St Clare Multi Academy Trust. The school's catchment area is very wide, admitting pupils from five Catholic parishes across the city 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 socioeconomic backgrounds.

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

- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. The mission statement is central to everything that the school does. All members of the school community support one another to grow in faith and fulfil the mission of the Church. There is a strong sense of belonging which is evident within relationships at every level.
- St Marie’s is a wonderful Catholic school. From the moment of entering the premises it is very clear that its prime purpose is Catholic education, helping children to develop their faith and to understand that God loves them. It is a most welcoming place where everyone is valued and respected and enjoys life to the full.
- Pupils at St Marie’s are proud of their religious identity and make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic Life and mission of the school which has a very high priority.
- Pupils take every opportunity to live out their mission with action. They are proud to be Mini Vinnies and liturgy leaders, using these positions to shape and plan for improvements in the Catholic Life of the school.
- Pupils say that they feel like St Marie’s is a special family and that they enjoy being part of that family. One child said that St Marie’s is a special place because, ‘We know how to look after each other in our school and we always try to make sure that everyone is happy’.
- Pupils described how the school supports them to be the best they can be and how it teaches them about virtues for life. Pupils across school reference their involvement in ‘Virtues to Live By’ and were able to talk about how these virtues deepened their understanding and appreciation of their essential role in education.
- The Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the parishes are deeply valued and respected by clergy, staff and pupils. With the support and encouragement of the parish priests and key members of the parish community, pupils are regularly involved with parish celebrations and activities.
- The school continues to work tirelessly in close partnership with the five parishes it serves to further strengthen links.
- All pupils enjoy the many benefits of high-quality care, support, encouragement and affirmation. This has resulted in all pupils, from a very early age, being confident, articulate and happy with a deep curiosity and interest in their faith and personal growth.

- Pupils enthusiastically and confidently embrace all of the many opportunities provided to contribute to the Catholic Life of the school and benefit greatly from them.
- Pupils are conscious of the needs of those beyond the school and actively organise a varied assortment of fund-raising opportunities to benefit others, such as Cafod, Caritas and Sheffield Children's Hospital.

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

- The provision for the Catholic Life of the school is given the highest priority. This is reflected in the school mission statement which every child knows, understands and lives out.
- Parents applauded the school for the magnificent support systems and measures put in place for the whole community since the beginning of the pandemic. 'The school have cared for our children with absolute dedication, calmness and commitment, surrounding them with an environment of consistency, routine and love'.
- Great care is taken to ensure that the school is a prayerful and joyful community that reflects the school's mission and its Catholic character. All pupils and staff participate enthusiastically in the Catholic Life of the school including staff prayer, communal singing, retreats and continuing professional development.
- The headteacher is passionately committed to his faith and leads by example, demonstrating a strong sense of purpose and commitment to the Catholic ethos and mission of the school. He ensures that all staff at St Marie's are able to share in this.
- Staff are encouraged and given opportunities to develop their own faith by participating in morning prayers, liturgies, reflections and the celebration of Mass. A high quality of care permeates throughout the school and as a result, there is a real sense of team spirit and positive working relationships.
- Pastoral support provided to pupils and staff is outstanding. Staff regularly check on the welfare of pupils; as a result, parents appreciate the continuity of care for all pupils at St Marie's. Staff value the support they receive from senior leaders.
- A bespoke space, 'The Retreat Room' is a well-resourced, organised and prayerful room which provides a dedicated space to gather, worship, reflect and pray. Pupils guide worship and use media rich resources to steer Collective Worship, Year 4 using Ten Ten resources for example.
- Parents especially praised online learning during the pandemic, always beginning and ending in prayer, which 'comforted the children, united classes and focused on positivity and hope at quite a dark time'.
- The relationships and sex education programme has been through consultation with governors and parents and is being taught, age appropriately, to pupils. The Ten Ten resources, and Big Talk support the effective implementation of this programme.
- St. Marie's is a family centred school and support for families during the pandemic has been paramount. Excellent communication and daily routine adjustments were appreciated and welcomed by parents who are proud to be part of this family.

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

- Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties extremely well. They work effectively with the headteacher and Religious Education co-ordinator and are committed to upholding the strong caring ethos that exists.

- The headteacher is a source of inspiration for the whole community. His dedicated and determined approach has resulted in a coherent, clear vision being communicated to all. He is highly respected by staff, governors, parents, parishioners and pupils.
- The Religious Education Coordinator and Religious Education Co-leader guide and support the Catholic Life of the school, by continually seeking out new and exciting ways to challenge, and guide pupils along their faith journey. The coordinator is a Diocesan Religious Education leader and supports the professional development of teachers through a range of staff training events.
- The outstanding leadership of the Catholic Life at St Marie’s ensures that all pupils are extremely well nurtured in a caring, safe and supportive community.
- Senior Leaders and governors are proud to be associated with St Marie’s; they cherish the development and sustenance of an authentic Catholic ethos.
- Governors know the school well and are fundamental in shaping both policies and practice. They are highly visible and regular visitors to the school, especially the Chair who gives tirelessly of her time and effort in monitoring provision.
- The school uses online learning and social media well to inform and engage parents. Provision during lockdown provided invaluable support for families both in terms of pupil learning and engagement as well as support for those who needed it most of all. As a result of this, parents feel that they are part of the mission to improve and transform the school to make it the best it can be.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of Religious Education is GOOD

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	2
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 GOOD

- The quality of Religious Education is good. Pupils enjoy Religious Education; they can explain its value and are keen to do well, leading to good progress.
- Religious Education is at the heart of the school curriculum and children’s learning.
- The Come and See Programme is embedded across school and used consistently by all staff including the effective use of the ‘Big Question’.
- Most pupils demonstrate passion and commitment in their lessons, they have positive attitudes and speak enthusiastically about their learning, some saying it is their favourite subject. They value and appreciate the support they receive from their teachers.
- Pupils keenly demonstrate their learning from Religious Education lessons in their responses to the Word in Collective Worship. They are making connections between their learning and how this knowledge can influence how they live their lives.

- Pupils generally are making good progress in Religious Education within lessons and over time. There is no significant difference in learning and progress between different groups of pupils or between the teaching of Religious Education and other subjects of the curriculum. They are all developing very well with their knowledge and understanding. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities are well supported and are achieving very well. The targeted support from teaching assistants ensures all groups of pupils make good progress.
- Pupils acquire knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate to their age, as well as developing their ability to reflect on meaning. Many pupils are articulate and reflective in their responses, showing signs of them becoming increasingly religiously literate.
- Books generally evidence a good standard of work but there are inconsistencies in quantity and quality between classes. Tasks do not always challenge more able pupils to achieve the higher levels of attainment.
- Pupils' understanding of other faiths has been enhanced and developed, such as by visits to Madina Masjid, virtual face to face meetings with young members of the Muslim community. Additionally, guests from the Jewish community have visited school during Judaism week.

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

- As a result of teaching that is mainly good, most pupils are achieving well over time. Teachers demonstrate a clear understanding of the value of Religious Education, which most communicate effectively to their pupils.
- Teachers have a clear understanding of the values of Religious Education; they use the 'Come and See' materials with confidence to plan lessons, with 'Philosophy for children (P4C)' and 'Scripture Sherlocks' approaches contributing effectively to the quality of teaching.
- There were instances of outstanding teaching observed: Pupils in Reception learnt they were all very special and unique. This well-paced lesson, creatively delivered, hooked all learners and maximised the learning opportunity. All adults involved ensured challenge for all, built on prior learning, made links to real life understanding and engaged the children throughout. Transitions to each part of the lesson were smoothly linked.
- However, in some lessons the level of challenge does not always deepen or extend learning because the tasks are not sufficiently maximising learning for every pupil. On occasions the pace of learning in Religious Education is too slow which results in low level disruption in some classes. There is an acknowledgement of the effect of the pandemic on teaching and learning.
- The standard of marking and feedback in books is variable. Opportunities for pupils to develop their responses to feedback are infrequent and questioning to extend pupils' knowledge is sometimes missed.

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

- The curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and contributes very effectively to the pupils' spiritual and moral development.
- Provision is monitored by the Governors' Teaching and Learning Committee who scrutinise information provided by the Headteacher and carry out Religious Education learning walks to see first-hand evidence of progress, such as in pupil's work or focussed on the Catholic identity.
- Two experienced Catholic teachers work in partnership with the Headteacher to engage in 'in house' challenge and professional discussions. This has ensured the school's vision is shared

through staff meetings, and staff attendance at diocesan training events. As a result, Religious Education has a high profile in the school.

- The Religious Education Coordinator, on taking up the role, quickly identified the need for professional development centred on planning, accurate assessment and understanding and use of the ‘driver’ words. She has skilfully delivered training and through careful monitoring and support, has ensured access for key staff to diocesan training, thereby ensuring sustained improvement.
- Governors give great importance to outcomes in Religious Education. They are therefore well informed and knowledgeable about practice in school.
- Sacramental preparation, rooted in the parishes, is in line with diocesan guidelines, has a high priority and is fully embedded in the Religious Education curriculum.
- Governors are highly visible around the school and are routinely involved in a range of monitoring and evaluation activities. They are extremely supportive and confident in their ability to challenge. They have great confidence in the headteacher and Religious Education coordinator and are extremely proud of the school.
- The wide range of links that the school has locally provides outstanding enrichment activities to promote pupils’ learning and engagement and this has a profound impact on pupils’ moral and spiritual development.
- The school has the capacity to improve quickly towards achieving outstanding provision and outcomes once the impact of the Covid pandemic, with its restrictions and related absences of staff and pupils, has diminished.

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

- The quality of Collective Worship at St Marie’s is outstanding. Opportunities for prayer are woven into the fabric of the school. Pupils, staff and parents are uplifted by their engagement with worship.
- There is a genuine enthusiasm for Collective Worship reflected in the prayerful silence, the respect and the quality of responses to prayer and singing.
- The confidence of many pupils in planning, leading and participating in worship is very striking and commented on by visitors, parishioners, parents and governors. They are encouraged to pray in a range of ways and have many opportunities to write and share their own prayers: For example, the recent Candlemas Liturgy was prayerfully planned by the Faith in Action group.

- Appropriate to their age, all pupils regularly plan and lead their own class Collective Worship linked to the liturgical cycle and current themes.
- Pupils are encouraged to give feedback and complete acts of worship evaluation forms which are used by the coordinator to plan future worship.
- Liturgy Leaders and Mini Vinnies lead class and whole school worship at key times in the year. This key role helps promote a depth of spirituality.
- Pupils are able to use a variety of resources in their prayer linking scripture, liturgical music and other forms of reflection.
- Most pupils have a good understanding of the liturgical year appropriate to their age and ability. Pupils have opportunities to attend Mass which allow the pupils to develop an understanding of the difference between Mass and liturgies.
- Pupils have a deep sense of social justice. They have a good understanding of world faiths and are very respectful of others.
- Worship and prayer are central to the life of the school and valued by all. Prayer is a natural part of the daily experience of all pupils and staff. Staff are skilled at guiding pupils so that they can have a deeper experience of prayer and worship.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is OUTSTANDING

- There is a clear policy for Collective Worship which is central to the life of the school and makes a significant contribution to the moral and spiritual needs of the pupils.
- Praying together is part of the daily experience for all pupils and staff which has a very positive impact on the school's sense of community.
- Acts of worship are well resourced and age appropriate, centred on themes and messages which are easily accessible to pupils. A planned programme of liturgies, Masses and other liturgical celebrations such as the 'Welcome Assembly' provide many opportunities for participation from the wider school and parish community.
- Staff are highly skilled at enabling pupils to lead Collective Worship. They have a thorough understanding of the forms prayer can take and are adept at sharing this with pupils.
- Developing the spirituality of all is seen as central in supporting the Catholic ethos of the school and this ensures that the needs of all pupils are well met.
- The school welcomes families to participate in worship which is well received by all. Families are becoming increasingly more involved in the pupils' religious and spiritual development. Parents commented that they value and enjoy the many opportunities the school provides for them.
- There is a great sense of community at all levels which is evident in the quality of relationships that exist between everyone, staff, governors, pupils and parents. One parent commented, 'St. Marie's is a truly inclusive school with a very caring staff who care for everyone'.
- Pastoral care for all pupils is outstanding as a result of all stakeholders. Clear policies and procedures are in place, which are rooted in Gospel values.
- There are strong and developing links with the parishes where many pupils and staff take an active part in Sunday Mass and other aspects of worship.
- In Key Stage 2 prayer journaling supports the contemporary context of responding independently to prayer life and collective worship.

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

- The school leaders have expert knowledge of how to plan and deliver high quality liturgy and worship. They understand the Church's liturgical year and traditions and are outstanding role models to both staff and pupils.
- The headteacher shows a real depth of passion and commitment and has a clear vision, sense of direction and understanding of what is required to bring about improvement, which is shared with all staff. He leads the school community to understand and appreciate these by making all forms of worship relevant to the children, appropriate to their age, needs, experience and background.
- Governors take part in training and are interested in finding out about the life of the schools' provision for collective worship.
- Excellent systems and structures are embedded throughout the school. This allows quality collective worship to take place across the school.
- The headteacher ensures that all staff throughout the school receive the quality formation that they require in the development of spiritual and liturgical understanding.
- The views of pupils, staff and parents are regularly sought through informal meetings and questionnaires. The views of everyone are valued by the governors and senior leadership team of the school.
- The dedication and commitment of the senior leaders and governors in the school are instrumental in the drive to provide high quality Collective Worship and quality prayer life throughout the school.
- Interviews with the Chair of governors, a parish priest, Religious Education coordinator and headteacher, reflect the importance of true partnership, evaluation and a mission to ensure the very best for all pupils at St Marie's school.
- Governors and the leadership team provide written monitoring information of collective worship to ensure outstanding practice continues both in the classroom and whole school celebrations.