

# DIOCESE OF LEEDS



## DIOCESAN BOARD FOR INSPECTIONS

### CANON LAW 806 FINAL INSPECTION REPORT INCORPORATING SECTION 48

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

Mount St Mary's Catholic High School  
Ellerby Road, Leeds LS9 8LA

School URN	3834753
Date of S48 inspection and OE grade	4-5 April 2019 Good
E-mail address	<a href="mailto:thehub@mountstmarys.org">thehub@mountstmarys.org</a>
Chair of Governors	Clare Skinner
Headteacher	Mark Cooper
RE Subject Leader	Cath Dickinson
Date and grade of last S48 Inspection	23-24 October 2013 Good
Section 48 Inspector/s	Meg Baines Rosa Flanagan

## 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 is the school in providing Catholic Education.

2

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

**CATHOLIC LIFE**

1

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

2

**COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

1

### Summary of key findings:

#### **This is a good Catholic school**

- Mount St Mary's Catholic High School is a joyful place and has an authentic mission, which is well illustrated by its motto, "Quid Retribuam". It is clearly embraced by all the school community and fosters a passion within the community for desiring to 'give back to God' by their actions and efforts.
- Leaders have developed a nurturing school, one in which there is a strong sense of responsibility towards each other. They are committed to the Church's mission in education and are highly motivated role models to this end.
- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. It has been a school since 1853 and staff and students are proud of the school's Catholic heritage, seeking new and innovative ways of both continuing the mission of the early years and developing new ways to bear Christ's witness in their community and beyond.
- Collective Worship is outstanding. The diverse student body is a real strength in this regard. This diversity brings a high level of energy, variety and enthusiasm for worship and is greatly valued by all. Chaplaincy across the school is strong.
- Teaching of Religious Education (RE) is mostly good with some outstanding practice. Previously the highest performing department in school, the most recent Key Stage 4 (KS4) results were disappointing. Senior leaders have robust systems of tracking and monitoring in place and indications are that this year results will be positive. Lessons are delivered in an environment which is bright, well resourced and conducive to learning with display that supports learning.

## **What the school needs to do to improve further**

- Improve outcomes for students in RE at KS4 by
  - Further developing rigorous departmental assessment and feedback to students
  - Working to ensure all teaching is outstanding.
- Increase curriculum provision for Year 7 to 10% in line with the recommendations from the Bishops' Conference.
- Improve the provision for Catholic Life and Collective Worship further by:-
  - Exploring the possibility of a dedicated full time lay chaplain
  - Widening the chaplaincy team to include more students.

## **Information about this inspection**

The Inspection of Mount St Mary's Catholic High School was carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with the Leeds Diocesan Framework and Schedule for Section 48 Inspections approved by the Bishop of Leeds. 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).

The inspector reviewed in detail the following aspects:

- Observation of lessons by all teachers of RE in both key stages with the exception of Year 10 who were on work experience.
- The scrutiny of students' written work, teacher assessments and redacted performance management documents.
- Through meetings with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the chair of governors, vice chair of governors, middle leaders, faculty leader, the RE lead, the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo), pastoral leads, Catholic social care worker, lay chaplain, clergy, students from both key stages and parents.
- Examination of school and departmental documentation, school DSEF and school and department improvement plans, monitoring and evaluation documents, minutes from governor meetings and school policies.
- Two large scale Acts of Collective Worship and six form group prayers. Staff Friday prayers, Stations of the Cross and Mass band practice.

The inspection was carried out by two inspectors over two days, with a third inspector attending in a training capacity.

### Information about this school

- Mount St Mary's is a larger than average school in Richmond Hill, overlooking the regeneration happening in the centre of Leeds.
- It serves the parishes of St Patrick's; St Joseph's, Hunslet; Christ the King, Bramley; Holy Family, Armley; St Francis of Assisi, Holbeck; St Anthony's Beeston; St Philip's, Middleton.
- There is a cultural, socio- economic diversity within school. 43% of students are baptised Catholics. When combined with students of other Christian denominations the total number of students from Christian backgrounds rises to 75%. A relatively low number of students, 9.5% are of other faiths.
- 48% of the school roll have English as an additional language, which is above the national average. There are 46 languages and 42 nationalities represented in school.
- The proportion of students eligible for pupil premium is 49%, which is above the national average. Students in this category are lower performing in terms of attainment but are in line with expectations for progress.
- Attendance is above the national average.
- Numbers of students with education health care plans (EHCP) or needing support from school is in line with national averages.

## Full report - inspection judgements

### CATHOLIC LIFE

#### 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

- All students at Mount St Mary's greatly value the Catholic Life and strong ethos of the school. It is succeeding in its drive to develop 'character education' amongst the student body. Students live out their faith through being actively involved in a range of events raising funds for local and regional charities. For example, the school has long been a friend and supporter of St Gemma's Hospice. The Young CAFOD workers raise funds, interest in and awareness of the needs of others thus living out the school's mission.

- Every house has a designated chaplaincy team which works to deliver charitable events such as the Senior Citizen's party. Such events help students strengthen their faith and provide opportunities for personal growth. This work is ably supported by the school's chaplaincy lead.
- The Young Leaders scheme and prefect system embedded at school provide ideal opportunities for students to develop leadership skills. Highly successful Year 9 interviews as part of this process were observed. Students are polite, confident and respectful in the way they treat each other and interact with staff and visitors. Those spoken to were highly articulate and proud of their school and their personal accomplishments.
- Behaviour in school is excellent and a strength of the school as it reflects its Catholic character. The young leader portfolio process encourages students to give back to their community, an aspect of faith in action, this is a theme common throughout school in particular in its policies and processes. This clearly demonstrates a commitment to ethical, civic and moral duty. Most impressive is the way in which the students speak to this subject. They fully understand the implications of 'Retribuam'. These activities and efforts are formally logged and monitored by the pastoral team through the school's recently launched 'Aspire' programme.
- Chaplaincy within school is strong and highly valued. It supports the school charitable events and this reflects the school's desire to reach out to the community. It has been well supported in the past and more recently by clergy. A strong emphasis on celebrating the Mass has been the focus. At the last Year 7 Welcome Mass, the congregation swelled to over 400. An indication of the importance of the Mass to the community. Chaplaincy can currently be found in the part-time chaplaincy lead, support from the clergy and house student and staff chaplains. Chaplaincy would benefit further from being led by a full-time person whose sole responsibility is chaplaincy.
- Senior leaders and governors are attentive to the pastoral needs of students. Indeed, pastoral care is regarded as very important by the students themselves. It is seen by teachers and leaders as critical to the development of each person. The school takes great pains to ensure that students' needs are fully met. This level of care is illustrated by past students returning to school in times of sadness and pastoral need.
- The school currently arranges day retreats for students. This is under review. A larger than usual number of students will be attending the diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes this year.
- There is a highly effective and well-resourced pastoral team. Both Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) are delivered through the pastoral system with the support of specialist teachers from the RE and science departments throughout the school year. They are age appropriate and in line with Catholic teachings and principles.
- Students have a very good understanding of what it means to have a vocation and through their charitable work give service to others.
- Students are deeply proud of their school, its traditions and history. They are supremely confident and feel safe in expressing their own cultural heritage, identity and beliefs.
- The school's mission is clear. All staff regard Catholic Life as central to the mission of the school and this is reflected in the mission statement, in monitoring and self-evaluation documents, prayer, CPD and retreats. Catholic Life is given a high priority by leaders and is under constant review. Leadership within school is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education.

- Through staff 'ethos days' the school shares its purpose and commitment to the church and its teachings. Staff are fully committed to this.
- There is a strong sense of community. Everyone talks about school being a family. Parents speak highly of the school. They believe the school works hard to remain engaged with parents and say that prayer is central to this. The pastoral staff and Catholic care workers in school are crucial to this connection. Examples of staff visiting homes where parents find it difficult to engage with school and staff stepping in 'in loco parentis' at parents' evenings, when support from home is missing illustrate their total commitment to supporting every individual in school and this is admirable.
- The school environment effectively reflects the Catholic nature and identity of the school.
- Staff are excellent role models in their behaviour, service to the community and dealings with the students. They emphasise the importance of forgiveness in daily life.
- This is a cohesive community where forgiveness and respect are in evidence. Almost all students contribute to this cohesion. To quote one KS4 student, "I like the diversity and how we are all one community under one ethos", and a KS 3 student said, "We have endless opportunities to make better our mistakes".
- Policies, schemes of learning including PSHE programmes reflect a commitment to Catholic social teaching and the dignity of person. They are carefully planned and delivered, sometimes by specialist staff and they celebrate Catholic teachings and principles.
- Pastoral care is a strength of the school. Staff, students and parents all say that it is important to them and they value it. The Catholic care workers work with all the school community.
- The school's leadership is greatly committed to the Church's mission. Governors are ambitious for the school in all its aspects. Their focus on the Catholic Life of the school is evidenced in governor minutes, in their challenge to the leadership, in their quality assurance and in attendance at key events such as ethos days, whole-school Masses and social events. They ensure that policies in school are in line with the Bishop's vision for the diocese.
- Catholic Life provision is monitored by senior leaders in school and this is reported to governors, whose involvement in staff ethos days demonstrates further their commitment to Catholic Life.
- Planned improvements for Catholic Life are documented at whole-school level and through chaplaincy and department monitoring.
- Induction for staff new to a Catholic school and on-going CPD are effective. Staff have an excellent understanding of the school's mission and both support and help deliver it.
- Relationships with most parents are very good. There are a number who, for a variety of reasons, are difficult to connect with. This does not stop staff and school trying. The school's mission is transmitted to parents through communications, actions and deeds.
- The governing body is highly effective in setting the standard for Catholic Life. They make a great contribution to the Catholic Life of the school through their own personal service, challenge to leaders and example.
- The school actively promotes the Bishop's vision for the diocese across the school community.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### 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	2

- Most students in Key Stage 3(KS3) are making good progress and in Key Stage 4(KS4) are beginning to make good progress. Staff work well as a team in RE. Most students enjoy their learning. Outcomes at GCSE were below expectations last summer but show strong indications of improvement for this summer. Progress at KS3 is good with gaps between sub groups narrowing. Students' attendance is now largely above national average and monitoring by the Diocesan Joint Review Group has meant interventions for groups and individuals are beginning to improve outcomes. Effective and robust tracking systems straddle pastoral and academic areas. This twin approach to improvement is appreciated by the students who say they feel both challenged and supported.
- The previously consistent three-year trend at KS4 showed a downturn last summer by both national and diocesan measures. Steps have been taken to address this at senior leadership and governor level. They are proving effective.
- Most students are religiously literate and some have highly developed knowledge of the bible. They are beginning to think ethically and theologically.
- Students' behaviour for learning is outstanding. They are engaged with learning and eager to improve their knowledge base and make progress. Most understand how well they are progressing and what to do to improve. Students feel that the level of challenge in RE is the same as in other humanities subjects. They respond well to their teachers and are grateful for the efforts made by them on their behalf.
- Teachers plan well but although assessment is in place, there is limited teacher feedback in books. Teaching is usually good with some outstanding practice.
- At best, teachers are confident in their subject expertise and have a very good understanding of how students learn; consequently, students apply themselves and are engaged in lessons.
- In outstanding lessons teachers consistently use time effectively, question skillfully and plan tasks that engage students. Here teachers also communicated high expectations and passion in their teaching which caught the imagination of students who responded with enthusiasm and effort.
- All books are marked according to the departmental scheme and students are given the opportunity to respond to marking.
- Both effort and achievement in RE lessons are rewarded with praise and encouragement, meaning students are well motivated.

- Teaching is well planned and linked to assessment. As a result, teaching is mainly good.
- Recent changes to the GCSE syllabus and a decision to change board have made it difficult for some students with language difficulties to access the curriculum. Consequently, a number of students are continuing to use the old board for one more year. There is therefore a mixture of syllabuses currently being delivered. Staff work well together to ensure that appropriate resources are available for both syllabuses.
- Teachers employ a limited range of strategies. Where pedagogies were varied however, students applied themselves extremely well and progress in lesson time was identified.
- The RE department's self-evaluation is good. It is currently successful in identifying students for intervention. The department uses drop down days and Saturday school for intense intervention. These extra support sessions are appreciated by the students. The department is good at differentiating materials for students with additional needs. Some staff engage students in the lower ability groups through highly effective modelling of answers and employment of a range of pedagogies to meet the needs of these learners. This is having an impact and the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged is closing.
- In lessons observed the time was managed well. Evidence of progress over a sequence of lessons was seen in books.
- In the best lessons, the use of effective questioning improves learning.
- The RE department's high expectations of behaviour and progress are communicated to students who respond well.
- Leaders and governors ensure that syllabuses and schemes of learning for all year groups meet the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.
- With the exception of Year 7 who have 9% curriculum time allocated to RE all other year groups enjoy the minimum of 10% curriculum time. In all other respects leaders and governors treat RE as a core subject in terms of resources, staffing and rooming.
- The RE curriculum lead is held to account by the leadership through 'target setting' and 'standard review' meetings. Action points are discussed with the governing body. Regular performance reviews take place and senior leaders are very clear about the teaching and learning confidence scores, which allow them to monitor quality within the department. This has resulted in strategic action taken by senior leaders to help improve standards. This is in line with actions taken across the school to raise progress.
- The faculty leader is an experienced teacher and leader. She has a clear vision and a very good level of expertise in securing this vision. She effectively promotes and monitors teaching in the department supported by her senior leader link, thereby ensuring that teaching is mostly good.
- Senior leaders ensure that RE is effectively planned in order to meet the needs of the different groups within the school. It is to the school's advantage that the line manager of SEND is a member of the RE department. She brings her expertise and advice to the RE department at the planning stage, thereby ensuring a level of coherence across the different phases and key stages.

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

### 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

- A great enthusiasm exists for Collective Worship, which engages staff, students and visitors. Collective Worship is well planned for and follows a theme connected to the Church's liturgical year, occasionally responding to current affairs. A moving staff prayer session was witnessed. Students join in respectfully and reverently with their own communal prayer during form time which are distinctly Catholic in nature.
- Students are involved in planning and leading Collective Worship. An outstanding Year 9 assembly was witnessed which was entirely planned and delivered by Year 9 students. Students were completely engaged and uplifted by this experience.
- A range of liturgies is experienced through lessons, year Masses, music and planned liturgies such as the Stations of the Cross, which was observed during our visit.
- Even greater creativity in involving more students and delivering liturgies in a wider variety of forms of collective worship would benefit the school further.
- The school has the support of a member of the clergy who leads major events and celebrates Mass at the start of and throughout the year. The school has its own Chapel, which is well resourced and well utilised.
- Regardless of their own faith, all of the school community is happy to embrace the liturgies, celebrations and activities the school promotes. Students are comfortable and confident in expressing their own faith journey. A moving moment was observed when a Muslim teacher lit the candle and led her class in the school prayer. An inclusive atmosphere exists where all the community feels safe and respected.
- Historic statuary and displays of a Catholic nature have a high impact in reflecting the history and current Catholic Life of this school, for example the stained glass windows imported from St Michael's school when it was amalgamated with Mount St Mary's.
- Students, when questioned were able to demonstrate a very good knowledge and understanding of the Church's liturgical year. They gave details of specific events that happened in school at certain times such as Lent, Advent and Christmas.
- Almost all students are confident and happy in their use of prayer and scripture in their daily lives. Parents commented, "The school has good religious and family values". They also spoke of the high commitment staff showed, saying it was excellent.
- Students are afforded the opportunity through their forms, houses and in whole school events to experience worship in a variety of ways, for example prayer dice and candles, images and use of artefacts to stimulate reflection and prayer. Year 10 student, "We mean every word of our prayers".
- Prayer for this largely Christian community forms the ethos of the school. It is embedded in the school mission statement, apparent in the way the students say their

school prayer and has an impact on the spiritual and moral development of the whole school, which is a joyful community, where everyone feels like part of the family. Year 11 student, “I am not from a Catholic home but it helps me in life to appreciate the Catholic way of life”.

- Provision for Collective Worship is outstanding. Praying together is part of the daily routine and is both timetabled and informally delivered. The school is steeped in Catholic tradition, of which all the community is justly proud. The buildings and work places all reflect Catholicity and the strong ethos the community is so proud of.
- The school uses themes, which reflect the Catholic tradition of the school. Often prayers are translated into some of the different languages the school community uses, enabling all to access the words.
- Staff are highly skilled at supporting the students in their preparations for prayer. An example of this was the lunchtime rehearsal of the school’s Mass Band. Each house has its own chaplaincy team and house staff, regardless of their own faith are effective in supporting the students in their planning of large-scale acts of Collective Worship.
- Staff participate in all aspects of Collective Worship and those who are not Catholic ask for advice and help from those who are. Staff encourage a dialogue about faith through sharing their own personal faith journeys.
- Parents believe that this is an outward facing and welcoming school. They and others in the local community are invited into school for celebrations and to the church for the voluntary welcoming Mass which is incredibly well attended.
- The quality of resources for worship is good. The school has a medium sized chapel which is open for all to use.
- Leaders and governors have an excellent understanding of what it means to worship in a Catholic school and how to plan for engaging acts of Collective Worship. These occur throughout the school year. Senior leaders reflect on and evaluate the experience staff and students have of Collective Worship. This in turn is reported to governors who monitor its effectiveness. They know their school community well and therefore ensure that worship is relevant and meaningful.
- Leaders understand well the seasons of the church they take the Church’s liturgical year into account when planning. They attend diocesan events, looking for ways to deepen their own understanding of Catholic theology and liturgy. A number of staff have the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies.
- Creating ways of worship which are relevant and meaningful for the school community, leaders look for ways to bear witness to Christ’s message.
- Through their regular ethos days leaders ensure that the spiritual development of staff is given a high priority.
- The headteacher provides outstanding leadership in his witness to the faith. He models the ethos and through his relentless focus on the school motto “Quid retribuam” (How can I give back to God) he has formulated a template for outstanding servant leadership, placing faith at the heart of this ‘giving community’ through example.
- Leaders and governors review Collective Worship as part of their on-going self-evaluation procedures, offering both challenge and support where needed, thus ensuring that all statutory and canonical responsibilities are met.