

Inspection of Mount St Mary's Catholic High School

Ellerby Road, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS9 8LA

Inspection dates: 9–10 October 2019

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| The quality of education | Good |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Good |
| Personal development | Good |
| Leadership and management | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils really like to attend Mount St Mary's school. They say that they feel safe and they are safe. Some pupils say that they can see how hard their teachers work to plan exciting lessons for them. Pupils call their school a community and it is. They are excited about many of the opportunities they are given. Many pupils aspire to become school Young Leaders as they get older. They say that this allows them to give the school something back for the help they have received. Staff have very high hopes for pupils' futures. Pupils are not worried about bullying and know that when it happens their teachers deal with it quickly.

Leaders at all levels want pupils from all backgrounds to do really well. They have high expectations for them all. In lessons the atmosphere is productive and calm. Disruption is rare. During break and lunchtimes, many staff are present to make sure that pupils are safe. The school has a caring ethos that underpins everything it does, from safeguarding to pupils' personal development. The school looks after a diverse range of pupils, who all work well together.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

In recent years, leaders have successfully transformed how a number of subjects are taught. Subject leaders work together so their staff deliver learning that helps pupils remember facts and concepts well. This is all strengthened by the school's vision to help children to become confident and resilient young adults.

Teachers know their subjects well. Pupils learn in stages that build upon earlier tasks. They remember more with activities such as the school's use of 'red zone' in all subjects. This gives pupils time to reflect on their work. Teaching helps pupils to gain knowledge and skills well in several subjects. However, in science they need more time to develop scientific skills to use the knowledge they have learned.

Pupils study a wide range of subjects in Years 7 to 9 and they can choose subjects that interest them for further study to examination in Year 11. There are lots of activities, such as 'Debate Mate' and 'Maths Doctor' offered after school that further develop pupils in their learning. Many pupils choose to take part in them.

Leaders are encouraging more pupils to follow an academic curriculum. In recent years, increasing numbers have followed courses in languages, history and geography. Leaders make sure that all pupils get the same opportunities to study the subjects that interest them. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/ or disabilities (SEND) and pupils who are disadvantaged.

Teachers make sure that pupils know how well they are doing. They use assessment to show pupils what they need to know, do and remember. However, the use of assessment is variable in mathematics. The school has considered the workload of teachers and designed the assessment cycle to help reduce this burden on staff.

The school ensures that pupils are aware of their careers options when they leave school. Some pupils said that they would like to know even more about future careers and governors are not clear about everything done to support this.

Generally, pupils' behaviours in and around school show they that respect and care for each other. However, punctuality to lessons for a few pupils is not as good as the majority and a very few pupils sometimes find it difficult to remain calm during social times such as break and lunch. This can be demonstrated in their high-spirited behaviours. In lessons low-level disruption is rare and teachers are usually able to spot and stop it.

Pupils know how to be good people. Teachers ensure that pupils learn about life in modern Britain. They teach them to respect the importance of equality. This includes those laws protecting a persons' sexual orientation or disability. This work helps pupils to respect others. They understand democracy. For example, they take part in school elections and know key issues about the law. Pupils are nurtured, and supported well by both staff and their peers.

Inspectors agreed with pupils and staff that their school leaders give good advice and look after them. The headteacher is singled out by them for his determination to keep improving the school. Attendance in the school has risen dramatically. Leaders are committed to excluding pupils only when all other the avenues have been exhausted. Governors hold leaders to account well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have made sure that pupils know how to keep and stay safe online. They make sure that checks on staff are made before they start working at the school. Those in charge of safeguarding know what they are doing. Systems are in place to help identify pupils at risk.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects there is variability in the impact of assessment. Assessment does not consistently help pupils to develop their understanding and memory of subject knowledge. Further work is needed to improve this.
- There is a strong sense of community and both pupils and staff look after and respect each other extremely well. For a small number of pupils, however, especially older pupils, self-regulation can be difficult. This is sometimes seen in their punctuality to lessons after break and lunch or their high-spirited behaviours in social time. More work is needed to support further those few pupils to be able to regulate their behaviours and punctuality.

- The personal development of pupils is strong in the school. Lots of work has been done to ensure that they have strong guidance for their future careers. While the school carries out many of the requirements of the Gatsby Principles for careers, further work is needed to ensure that all subjects support the school's ambition for pupils to 'dream big' by having clear links to how subjects can support those future aspirations.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 108097 |
| Local authority | Leeds |
| Inspection number | 10110561 |
| Type of school | Secondary comprehensive |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 935 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Mrs C Skinner |
| Headteacher | Mr M Cooper |
| Website | www.mountstmarys.org |
| Date of previous inspection | 16–17 May 2017 |

Information about this school

- The school received a monitoring inspection in June 2018.
- The school operates on a large site and is slightly over-capacity.
- There are four alternative providers used by the school for a very few numbers of pupils. These are Southway in South Leeds, Stephen Longfellow Academy in South Leeds, Elect at Temple Moor High School and Queenswood in Central Leeds.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with the headteacher and deputy headteachers to discuss the school's ethos, vision and provision for the curriculum.
- An inspector met with a representative of the local authority and from the Gorse Academy Trust.
- As part of the inspection process, we carried out in-depth considerations of four subjects, known as 'deep dives': English, mathematics, science and geography. We talked to leaders and teachers about their curriculum plans. We also talked to

pupils about what they knew and remembered in these subjects. We also visited lessons in these subjects and looked at pupils' work.

- We also spoke with children to explore how the school helped them to manage behaviour.
- We looked at the school's work to make staff and pupils aware of safeguarding issues. We also looked at safeguarding records to see how concerns over pupils' safety were recorded and followed up. We also explored how leaders checked the suitability of adults working on site.
- The responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires were considered. This included a pupil survey (over 100 responses), the staff survey (62 responses), Parent View (41 responses) and the free-text responses to Parent View (40 responses). A letter from a parent was also considered.

Inspection team

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
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