



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy

URN: 146322

Carried out on behalf of the **Right Rev. Patrick McKinney, Bishop of Nottingham** on:

Date: 18-19 May 2023

Overall effectiveness The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....	2
Catholic life and mission (p.3) How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.....	1
Religious education (p.5) The quality of curriculum religious education.....	2
Collective worship (p.7) The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.....	1
The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- St Mary's is a welcoming and inclusive Catholic school, which lives out its mission statement in an outstanding manner for the benefit of all pupils.
- Strong leadership with clear vision drives the school to continue to evolve in providing the best possible Catholic education.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary in lessons and throughout the school.
- Standards in religious education have risen markedly since the last inspection and are now securely good.
- Pupils participate with reverence and enthusiasm in collective worship and willingly take on roles in its planning and leadership.

What the school needs to improve:

- Raise the standard of religious education to outstanding through further developing consistency in the quality throughout the school.
- Develop pupils' knowledge of how well they achieve and how they can improve in religious education through improvement in their self-evaluative skills.
- Continue to develop, and subsequently implement, the policy for the progression of pupil-led collective worship.

Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Catholic life and mission key judgement grade:.....

Pupil outcomes

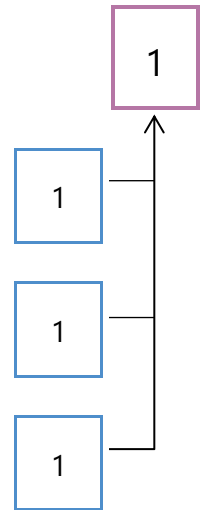
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school



Pupils have an excellent understanding of the distinctive identity of the school, and play a full role in promoting its Catholic life and mission. They understand that they are all valued and cared for, and that the school has helped them to know that God loves them. They have a clear understanding that the school community is committed to follow Jesus' teaching: they willingly involve themselves in action to care for the needy through charitable and voluntary activity, such as for the Glossop foodbank and Cafod, because 'that is what Jesus would want'. This can be seen most visibly through the way pupils take on roles, such as in the chaplaincy team, the green team, pupil parliament, and the lunchtime stewards. Pupils have an awareness of the needs of others, visible through the care of each other: 'In this school we are safe because we are all equal'. Pupils highly value the chaplaincy provision, and want to be a part of it, taking on leading roles.

The school's mission statement, revised in 2019, has become an integral part of the school's daily life. All know and understand its motto, '*Learn to Love, Learn to Believe, Learn to Achieve*', and pupils can talk about the meaning of the full mission statement, acknowledging words such as 'Christ is at the centre', and 'resilient, hard-working', and how they apply this to themselves in school. Staff are fully committed to supporting it and its implementation, thereby focusing the school within its Catholic ethos and holding high aspiration for the achievement of the pupils. There is a visible sense of community, with a high degree of welcome from all and inclusivity for all. Staff are exemplary role models, building and fostering excellent relationships. There is an excellent, comprehensive approach to pastoral care, built on a thorough analysis of the needs of the community, and a clear commitment to those most in need of support. The school environment is attractively presented; all displays mirror the Catholic mission of the school, with sections devoted to Catholic Social Teaching, a celebration of former pupils, chaplaincy, and the phase of the liturgical year. Chaplaincy

is a celebrated aspect of the school's provision, shared between staff and pupils. Relationship and sex education is carefully planned, rooted in the teaching of the Church.

The development of the Catholic life and mission is embraced with passion by leaders and governors alike. All policies and procedures are referenced to the mission statement, and influenced by it. The school is fully involved in the initiatives promoted by the diocese. The school has been supported by the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust and the diocese, and contributes willingly to them in turn. The bishop's spiritual themes for the diocese are clearly in evidence. There are close links with the parish through the celebration of Mass, contributions to the parish newsletter and the new parish ambassadors being drawn from the pupil body. Partnership with parents has flourished thanks to the school's admirable efforts during the pandemic to keep in touch. These have strengthened community links, and the school has seen a much greater response to invitations for parents to come into school. The Catholic curriculum is enhanced through innovative initiatives such as 'character education', the commitment to involve Catholic Social Teaching principles, forest school provision, and a commitment to sustainability. Governors' ambition for the school is evident in their challenge and support of the leadership and the community, developed over recent years. This is exemplified in their monitoring and analysis and their regular evaluation, which includes pupils and parents. Professional development opportunities related to Catholic life and mission are provided for staff regularly.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

Pupil outcomes

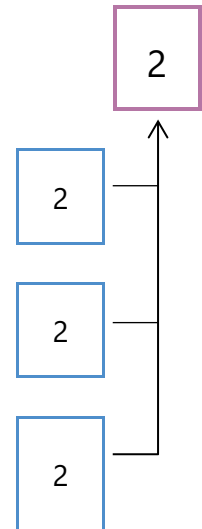
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.....

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education.....

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for religious education.....



On entry, pupils have very little religious literacy. Through the provision offered by the school, they quickly build knowledge, understanding and skills, making good progress. They become religiously literate young people, able to articulate their understanding and to express themselves, often with relevant subject specific vocabulary. All pupils enjoy studying religious education. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is outstanding: they are enthused by religious education topics, and participate actively. They speak confidently to the class as a whole and collaborate very well in pairs or groups. They develop sustained concentration, evident through their extended writing in workbooks. There is pride in their work, seen in the high level of presentation. Pupils' response to teaching is not yet outstanding because they do not always have a clear understanding of how well they are achieving, or what they need to do to improve. Pupils achieve at least average attainment and in some instances above average, when data is compared with other diocesan schools.

Teachers generally have good subject knowledge. They adapt lessons to suit the ability levels of pupils, and to ensure all are engaged. They have successfully communicated the value of religious education, as seen in the response of pupils in a recent survey, where nearly all recognised the importance of this subject. Teachers use questioning regularly throughout lessons. While engaging pupils' active response, they do not always give pupils enough time to discuss answers and express themselves fully, or in some instances to challenge pupils to give more depth to their contributions. Pupil effort is celebrated through frequent praise, helping to motivate pupils to do their best. Marking and feedback takes place in line with the school policy in most instances, but with some inconsistency. Opportunities for pupils to reflect fully on the 'big question' and their achievements at the end of a topic are not taken to promote a deep reflection of strengths and next steps towards improvement. All lessons start with a period of reflection, often looking at a question, a photograph

or a piece of art, in order to enhance spiritual and moral development through the discussion that follows. Pupils are able to present their learning in a variety of forms, including through scripture detectives, art, design, and role play. The development of extended writing is a strength of the religious education provision. Teaching assistants support pupils well, particularly those needing specific help to achieve, also encouraging their independence.

The religious education programme is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory (2012)*. Religious education has parity with other subjects in terms of continuing professional development and financial resources. The school has ensured that teachers benefit from opportunities to attend courses within the diocese, and through bespoke support in-house. The subject leaders have a clear vision of the quality of religious education that could be achieved, and have worked tirelessly to raise standards. These have seen a marked increase since the last inspection, and are now securely good. Standards are not yet outstanding because consistency of high expectations has yet to be achieved across the whole school. However, modelling of expectations is being effectively carried out, and innovations developed within the school, such as the journals that include knowledge organisers and scripture banks, have rightly been recognised by the diocese as worthy of being shared with others. The school has benefited from active links within the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust, the diocese and organisations further afield. Leaders' and governors' monitoring and analysis is regular and searching, leading to well-planned improvements.

Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship
.....

1

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school
.....

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for
collective worship

1

All pupils are engaged fully by experiences of prayer and liturgy. This is exemplified in the reverence and respect accorded to gatherings, the quality of moments of silent prayer, the eager response to questions from presenters and the joyful singing, often accompanied by appropriate actions. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the liturgical year, seasonally appropriate scripture, and liturgical Catholic traditions. Pupils' collaborative planning of acts of liturgical prayer is very well developed. They understand how to prepare the four stages of a liturgical celebration, and how to choose appropriate resources that enhance the setting. They use the *'Let Us Pray 2 Together'* planning tool very effectively, alongside a completed planning template. Choice of scripture is the starting point for their preparation, chosen appropriately for the season of the Church's year or the theme related to study in class. They develop ways of evaluating what worked well, and how to improve, after an act of worship. Pupils are very articulate in speaking about the prayer life of the school and how it is linked to, and influences, social action, such as the focus on sustainability and support for charitable ventures. Members of the chaplaincy team host voluntary prayer opportunities in the prayer room at lunchtimes twice a week, leading the praying of the rosary, for instance, in May and October, eliciting a positive response from their peers.

Prayer and liturgy are integral to all gatherings, and prayer punctuates each day. A weekly cycle has been created that encompasses different approaches and experiences of prayer. These include whole-school celebrations such as 'Come and Worship', focused on the Sunday gospel reading, 'Come and Praise', which develops pupils' knowledge and love of a range of hymns, and 'Come and Celebrate', which applauds pupils' achievements. These are complemented by class gatherings using the Mark 10 Mission videos and the weekly 'Statement to Live By'. 'Respond' celebrations prepared and led by a class, are held in the hall at the end of a topic of study. This range of provision serves the pupils extremely well in helping them to have a range of experience of prayer and liturgy

within the Catholic tradition. The leadership of prayer is distributed among all staff, having been modelled by leaders, with staff gathered into teams to share and develop expertise. Staff members, exemplify appropriate response to prayer for pupils in whole school gatherings, are highly skilled in helping pupils to plan. They themselves meet together in prayer at morning briefings. Creative use is made of space for prayer, with the hall, the prayer room, the outside environment and each classroom serving for gatherings. Each classroom has a well-presented prayer focus area. The school has been pro-active in encouraging parents and parishioners to join in celebrations.

The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is revised regularly. It gives clear guidance to staff members. However, it does not yet describe the different levels and skills of participation and leadership that would be expected in relation to the age and capacity of pupils. A draft addition to the policy is in the early stages of development. The school liturgical calendar and timetable is carefully planned. It includes eucharistic celebrations on important feast days and significant times in school, such as the leavers' Mass, the Sacrament of Reconciliation in Advent and Lent, the Christingle service, and May devotions. Leaders and other members of staff are highly effective in facilitating others to plan and lead liturgy. This is given appropriate priority in times of time and resourcing. Self-evaluation of collective worship is conducted regularly, with teachers, governors, pupils, and parents all contributing.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy
School unique reference number (URN)	146322
Full postal address of the school	Gladstone Street, Glossop, SK13 8NE
School phone number	01457 854473
Name of head teacher or principal	Paul Ackers
Chair of governing board	Samantha Buller
School Website	www.stmarysglossop.srscmat.co.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	4-11 years
Trustees	Nottingham Roman Catholic Diocesan Trustees
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	12 November 2015
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Alan Dewhurst	Lead inspector
Gregory Hughes	Team inspector
Name of inspector	Lead/team
Name of inspector	Lead/team

Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement

