

# DIOCESE OF MIDDLESBROUGH

Inspection of Religious Education  
Collective Worship  
and  
The Catholic Life of the School



**School:** St Mary's RC Primary School

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**Headteacher:** Miss Jill Collins

**Chair:** Mr Stephen Lawson

**Date:** 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> May 2013

**Inspector:** Mrs Theresa Rogerson

A Report from:  
The Diocese of Middlesbrough Schools' Service  
Section 48 Inspection Team  
50a The Avenue  
Linthorpe  
Middlesbrough TS5 6QT

## INTRODUCTION

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

The report of the inspection is produced for the Bishop of Middlesbrough (Code of Canon Law 804 and 806) and for the governors of the school. The Inspection reviews, evaluates and plans further improvements in the school's witness to the Catholic faith and Curriculum Religious Education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation. The Inspection schedule follows criteria set by the National Board of Advisers and Inspectors.

### What Inspection Grades mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding Catholic school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a Catholic school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Requires Improvement	These features, though of adequate quality, require improvement to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate Catholic school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils.

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Mary's Roman Catholic School is a smaller than average size primary school located in the town of Richmond North Yorkshire. The school serves the parish of St Joseph and St Francis Xavier. The parish church is situated about 1.5 miles from the school. The school also serves the parishes of St Mary's, Wycliffe; St Joan of Arc, Catterick and St Peter and Paul's Leyburn. 53% of the pupils are baptised Catholics, 39% are Christians and 8% have no religion. Almost all the pupils are from white British backgrounds. There is one looked after child who recently joined the school.

The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average. Similarly the proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.

Since the previous inspection there have been a number of staff changes including three newly qualified teachers since September 2012 and other staff have changed their roles and working hours. The head and one part time teacher are the only Catholic teachers on the staff, however all the governors except one are Catholic.

**The school has achieved a number of nationally recognised accreditations including the Enhanced Inclusion Quality Mark and the silver Eco School award**

**Pupil Catchment:**

Number of pupils on roll: 163

Planned Admission Number of Pupils: 30

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: 53%

Percentage of pupils from other Christian Denominations: 39%

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: 0%

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: 8%

Percentage of pupils with special needs: 13%

**Teaching Staff:**

Full-time Teachers: 7

Part-time Teachers: 2

Percentage of Catholic Teachers: 21%

**Support Staff:**

Full-time Classroom Support Staff: 3

Part-time Classroom Support Staff: 1

Percentage of Catholic Classroom Support Staff: 0%

Percentage of teachers with CCRS: 12.5%

**Percentage of learning time given to R.E:**

FS 10%          Yr 1 10%          Yr 2 10%

Yr 3 10%          Yr 4 10%          Yr 5 10%          Yr 6 10%

**Parishes served by the School:**

St Joseph and St Francis Xavier, Richmond; St Mary's, Wycliffe;

St Joan of Arc, Catterick Garrison; St Peter and St Paul's, Leyburn.

# 1. OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

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## MAIN FINDINGS

St Mary's is a good school on a journey of continuous improvement. The school is well led by a dedicated and hard working head teacher, who together with the Governing Body, positively promote and develop the Catholic life of the school. The school's shared vision "learning with fun, friends, family and faith" is evident in all aspects of school life. Parents, staff, children and governors all speak highly of the head teacher and the positive impact her leadership is having on the life of the school.

St Mary's is a particularly welcoming school whose mission statement "Jesus is the heart of our school" is lived out fully. The children are delightful. They are proud of their school and appreciate the importance of working together as a team. They recognise that, "teachers make school special, they help us and teach us thoroughly" and they feel safe and happy.

Outcomes for pupils are good. Assessment, monitoring and tracking are having positive impact on attainment and progress. Progress is good and attainment is above average in oral and written work. The quality of teaching is good overall with some outstanding features, including the use of high quality lesson planning. Pupils are provided with stimulating and memorable learning experiences enabling the majority to engage effectively in the learning process and make good progress.

Leaders and managers have a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. The rate of improvement in the development of the Catholic life of St Mary's school over the past three years is testament to the vision, energy and drive of the head teacher ably supported by a dedicated team of governors and staff. The parish priest, who is a member of the Governing Body, is a frequent visitor to the school. He is held in high regard by the school community. There are good links between school and the local parish.

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

- Continue to develop and ensure consistency in the quality of assessment in Religious Education through ongoing rigorous application of Levels of attainment criteria
- Embed systems for tracking and targeting pupil progress and use these to ensure strategies are in place to both consolidate and accelerate learning
- Further enhance and develop the already good quality of pupil led collective Worship throughout the school

## 2. PUPILS

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### **How good outcomes are for pupils, taking into account of variations between groups.**

The pupils' response to the Catholic life of the school is good. They show a deep understanding of religious beliefs and are confident and secure in expressing their own views and values according to their age and capacity. They are proud of their school and recognise the part they have to play in responding to the needs of others. They were keen to talk about their fundraising activities for CAFOD and Mission Together. They are particularly proud of how their fundraising enabled Betty, a blind girl in Kumi, Uganda, to go to school. They explained about their efforts in looking after the environment through their work as Eco Councillors. Behaviour in and around the school is good. Pupils fully live out the school's vision statement, "learning with fun, friends, family and faith," They have a good understanding of what is right and what is wrong and they welcome the rules that are in place to keep them safe. They explained that coming to a Catholic school "helps us to learn more about religion and the power of God in our lives".

Outcomes for pupils at St Mary's are good overall. In all the lessons observed during the inspection, pupils had positive attitudes to learning and were keen to do well. Current data shows that attainment is above average with the majority of pupils achieving Level 4+ by the end of Key Stage 2. In-school monitoring indicates that pupils come into school with a below average level in baseline assessments. They make good progress through Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. By the end of Key Stage 2 the majority of pupils have made good progress. Where the school has identified pupils who have made slow or insufficient progress within a particular year group, the quality of assessment is monitored to ensure that judgements are accurate. The school has worked hard to ensure that planning is differentiated to pupils' learning needs enabling all learners to become increasingly literate in their religious knowledge, understanding and skills. Pupils demonstrate a high level of interest, engagement and enthusiasm in all aspects of their religious education. The pupils have a good understanding of religious seasons and feasts.

Pupils' response to and participation in Collective Worship is consistently good across all year groups. The school's work in providing opportunities for pupils to lead worship and share spontaneous prayer is highly commendable. Pupils are confident in their understanding of the structure, Gather, Word, Response/Action and Mission. Progression in developing the skills of using Scripture and other forms of prayer was clearly evident during the inspection. Pupils acted with reverence and were keen to participate. They sang joyfully, re-enacted Scripture skilfully through dance and drama, reflected in silence and showed a deep respect towards each other. In the Year 3 Act of Worship, the pupils leading were sufficiently confident to ask for feedback from the class at the end.

• The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school	2
• How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	2
• How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	2

### 3. PROVISION

#### How effective the provision is for Catholic education

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall with elements which are outstanding. Where teaching is outstanding excellent subject knowledge is applied consistently to challenge and inspire pupils, questioning skills are highly effective in probing for deeper understanding and learning opportunities reflect an in depth knowledge of pupils' capabilities and achievement. In a year 6 lesson the pupils were discussing ways in which they could personally witness to the love and care of others. Their responses were rooted in their secure knowledge of the significance of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and how the power of the Holy Spirit converted witnesses. In a Foundation Stage lesson the children were given excellent opportunities to develop a sense of wonder about the power of the Holy Spirit by flying their kites outside in the wind, witnessing the power of light inside "the dark den" and using different languages to greet each other.

All teachers and other adults have high expectations for children's learning. In the majority of lessons planning is linked to the current assessment of prior learning and is differentiated so that it consolidates, builds upon and extends learning for all pupils. "I can" statements are used effectively in the children's books providing pupils with regular opportunities for self assessment which is monitored and verified by the class teacher. Quality marking and feedback, including pupil responses, ensure that next steps in learning are identified. Support staff are effectively deployed in lessons. They have a positive impact on the learning of individuals and groups of pupils.

Staff from backgrounds other than Catholic, ensure that their religious education subject knowledge is of a high level: they use this knowledge to inspire and challenge the majority of the pupils, contributing to the overall good progress. Resources, including technology, are used creatively and imaginatively ensuring that all pupils are motivated and enjoy their work. The climate of mutual respect in all classes is tangible. Achievement and effort are celebrated at every opportunity. During the inspection a group of Year 5 pupils were applying their learning from the Transformation topic by making a collage showing how religious beliefs shape lives. Their work was then proudly displayed in the school hall for all to share and celebrate. Mini plenaries were used in all lessons to evaluate the quality of learning. In a Year 1 lesson, the children used a visualiser very effectively to share and explain their learning with the class.

The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning is outstanding. The school is innovative in the way it presents the curriculum. Pupils are given every opportunity in school to be enthusiastic and highly motivated learners, including the benefits of a wide range of extra curricular activities including retreat days. Long, medium and short term planning ensures full coverage of the Come and See programme for Religious Education. The Religious Education curriculum fully meets the external requirements of the Bishops, Conference and is responsive to Diocesan circumstances.

The quality of Collective Worship is good. The school has been thorough in developing provision for Acts of Collective Worship that is high profile and well resourced. Pupils are taught the skills of planning, leading and evaluating collective Worship. All pupils, from Foundation Stage to Year 6 are given the opportunity to lead prayer in school. Key feasts and seasons are celebrated within school and are

supported positively by parents, carers and members of the Parish. Parents are appreciative of the opportunities to share in the weekly Birthdays and Celebrations assemblies and in the termly celebration of Mass in school.

The quality of provision for the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. The learning environment throughout the school reflects the school's mission "Jesus at the heart of our school". It is well organised and clearly of a Catholic nature. Excellent display work is in evidence throughout school and sacred spaces and religious artefacts, for example, in the entrance and in the school hall, are high profile. Prayer areas in classrooms are well resourced and are conducive to prayer. Everywhere there are examples of children's work reflecting the school's belief in the uniqueness of every individual. The school has effectively used the Year of Faith to promote and extend the Catholic nature of the school into the community developing purposeful and harmonious relationships between home school and parish. An outstanding example was a competition where children and their families had to design a prayer boat for the Year of Faith. The response was overwhelming and the quality of the work was excellent.

• The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education	<b>2</b>
• The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning	<b>1</b>
• The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	<b>2</b>
• The quality of provision for the Catholic life of the school	<b>1</b>

## 4. LEADERS, MANAGERS AND GOVERNORS

### How effective leaders, managers and governors are in developing the Catholic life of the school

The effectiveness of leaders, managers and governors in developing the Catholic life of the St Mary's school is good. The commitment, energy and drive of the head teacher to securing improvement are evident throughout the school. Together with staff and governors she has worked tirelessly to ensure that the school lives out its mission fully within the whole school community. Catholic values are central in the day to day life of the school as evidenced in the warm welcome extended to everyone, the emphasis on providing a high quality learning environment and the respect shown by all for all. The governors know the school's strengths and what needs to be done to secure further improvement. The chair of Governors is a frequent visitor to the school and is pro active in the role of "critical friend". He has regular meetings with the head teacher offering both support and challenge for the school's continuing improvement based on sound evidence and current data. The governors know the school's strengths and what needs to be done to secure further improvement. They discharge their statutory and canonical duties well. Parents speak highly of the school. They appreciate and respect "the strong leadership provided by the head teacher who has got the best interests of the children at heart" and "her resolve to raise standards in the school". They talked about the many opportunities they had for involvement in the life of the school.

Monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education are good. The head teacher is currently the Religious Education co-ordinator, a role she adopted when the previous co-ordinator went on secondment to another school. She is highly skilled, knowledgeable and committed to supporting staff in raising standards. She attends the co-ordinator meetings and Religious Education training provided by the Diocese and disseminates information effectively to staff and governors. All staff have the opportunity to attend a Religious Education training day in the Autumn Term.

School self evaluation is good. Systems for monitoring and tracking pupil progress are in place; however, these systems need to be further developed and embedded to ensure that the already good outcomes continue to improve.

St Mary's has a good capacity for sustained improvement. The head teacher, senior leadership team and governors have an accurate overview of the quality of Religious Education in school. Actions to address areas for improvement have been rigorous and effective. The staff demonstrates a strong commitment to the school's Catholic ethos and have high expectations for teaching and learning. Pupils are actively engaged in their learning and motivated to achieve their personal best. Parents speak highly of the school; in particular, they value the commitment of the head teacher and staff to raising standards and securing the good pastoral care given to their children.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How well leaders, managers and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school, including collective worship, and plan improvement to outcomes for pupils</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How well leaders, managers and governors monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory and canonical responsibilities met</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>