



DIOCESAN INSPECTION REPORT

St Mary’s College (Part of St Cuthbert’s Roman Catholic Academy Trust)

Cranbrook Avenue, Kingston upon Hull, East Yorkshire, HU6 7NT

School Unique Reference Number: **144104**

Inspection dates:	11 – 12 May 2022
Lead inspector:	Meg Baines
Team inspector:	Helen Pepper & Kathryn Humphrey

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Catholic Life:		Outstanding	1
Collective Worship:		Outstanding	1
Religious Education:		Outstanding	1

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Mary’s College (Part of St Cuthbert’s Roman Catholic Academy Trust) is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- St Mary’s is a deeply committed, caring Catholic community, characterised by outstanding leadership and a dedicated staff. A strong Catholic ethos permeates all aspects of school life. Catholic life is outstanding and can be found in the relationships between staff and pupils and between staff and leadership. Good works and charitable giving are high on the school’s agenda.
- Pupils and staff are proud of the Catholic heritage of the school and are warm and welcoming to visitors. The Catholic nature of the school is tangible, however there are some areas that do not have outward signs of the Catholic nature of the school.
- Collective Worship is outstanding and highly prized by the school community. Pupils often plan for and lead prayers and liturgies. The lay chaplain and the chaplaincy ambassadors work with school leaders to provide opportunities for Collective Worship. Unable to celebrate the Mass during lockdown, the school is keen to reinstate this. Pupils speak with pride, knowledge and understanding about their faith.
- The quality of Religious Education (RE) is outstanding. Progress and attainment in RE are high. Teaching is consistently good with much outstanding practice. The RE department is a beacon of excellence within the school. It is very effectively led.



FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Mary's College is a larger than average Catholic secondary school in the heart of the city of Kingston-Upon-Hull. It is part of the St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust, which also includes the 7 Catholic primary schools in the city. St Mary's is situated in University ward. Its catchment area is much wider than this however, and pupils are bussed into school from parts of East Riding and Yorkshire.
- There are 2,488 pupils on roll. In some year groups the planned number of admissions of 360 is exceeded.
- The proportion of pupils who have English as an additional language is above the national average.
- St Mary's serves 13 Catholic parishes and draws pupils from over 75 primary schools.
- 60% of pupils are baptised Roman Catholic, 28% are from other Christian backgrounds. 12% have no religious affiliation.
- 41% of pupils are from ethnic backgrounds and 16.1% of pupils have special needs.
- Within the RE department 10 teachers are RE subject specialists and 5 are non-specialist.
- The timetable provides pupils with the required 10% of curriculum time for RE in key stages 3 and 4. In key stage 5 the allocation is 5%.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Continue to celebrate the Catholic nature of the school by:
 - Creating more faith-based display and uncompromising markers of Catholicity
- Provide pupils with greater opportunities to attend Mass by:
 - Reviewing the annual schedule for Masses
 - Strengthening relationships with parishes
- Develop further the confidence of students to answer in lessons in order actively to engage them by:
 - Using strategies for more 'targeted questioning'

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

1

- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

1

1

1

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- All pupils spoken to were able to articulate the school's mission statement. Almost all pupils at St Mary's are committed to the school's mission. They say they benefit greatly from being part of a Catholic community and are involved in a wide variety of Catholic Life activities. Their behaviour around school and attitude towards staff and each other is outstanding and reflect an understanding of the school's ethos, demonstrating a commitment to their faith.
- Almost all pupils are aware of what it means to be part of the St Mary's Catholic community. They are alert to the needs of others and embrace opportunities to demonstrate this through their charitable efforts in school and beyond the school gates. Each year group forms a school within a school and they, led by the Student Council, plan charitable giving in these year group. Examples include Saint Vincent de Paul Youth Group, food parcels for struggling families during lockdown, shoe box appeal which provided 75 gift shoe boxes, jolly jumpers and seasonal socks which raised over £800 for charities. Pupils spoke eloquently about their experiences of serving their community.
- The charity work comes from a strong sense of moral justice and respect for others less fortunate than themselves. It is part of the school's mission statement which states a desire, "to educate pupils, academically, morally and spiritually".
- Pupils and staff speak with warmth about their experiences on retreat.
- The strength and effectiveness of the pastoral system reflect the school's commitment to caring for all the community and specifically the most vulnerable. Pupils all have a personal tutor who meets with them at least 5 times a year. Pupils were able to articulate occasions which led them to seek support from school on a personal level. This is a school that cares about individuals. All are seen and nurtured. The SENCo works closely with teams from across the school to ensure learning reflects the needs of the pupils and that their individual backgrounds are also part of the equation in effective planning and monitoring.
- Pastoral support is a strength of the school. Middle leaders are effective in ensuring pupils are cared for. This strong pastoral care is driven by Catholic teachings and principles and is appreciated by pupils. Middle leaders said, "staff and students assimilate the Catholic ethos of the school regardless of faith or background". Pupils have good relationships with their personal tutors who usually stay with them throughout their school journey. The recent addition of Tea and Talk Days, held on different day for each year group, focuses on well-being. These offer another opportunity

for the community to talk, highlighting the importance the school places on well-being across the community.

- St Mary's offers a well-planned personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme alongside a specialist taught relationships and sex education (RSE) programme. Pupils say they enjoy these sessions and appear confident in their own stage of physical, emotional and spiritual growth. Sixth form pupils value the general RE programme offered.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- The school's mission statement is depicted in posters throughout the school. It highlights the liturgical focus the school has and is understood by the whole community. It is at the heart of all planning, helping also to shape and create opportunities for pupils and staff to develop their own faith.
- All staff are fully committed to the Catholic Life of the school. Leaders provide induction and staff formation which combine to strengthen everyone's engagement with the Catholic Life of the school. Pupils in the sixth form said, "Teachers are invested in all that we do, they are really helpful".
- St Mary's has International School status. The school extends its mission worldwide. A visit to Nepal in 2018 gave assistance to villages and the link with Kingston Junior Academy in Kenya enabled the Academy to benefit from fund raising which in turn allowed it to have access to electricity.
- Pupils are supported in order to take part in a wide range of charitable events. The school also continues to work on projects in their own local community such as the local food bank.
- Following the restrictions of the recent pandemic the lay chaplain works closely again with parishes.
- Staff speak passionately about the strength of relationships in the school and are able to highlight areas of Catholic life which affect their own subject for example evidence of Laudato Si was seen in planning in Geography.
- The school has a 'Polish school' which runs outside of the normal school day. They celebrate Easter and Christmas festivals with their own liturgies incorporating Polish traditions.
- All pupils were spoken to about COP26. The student Council took the lead on looking for ways to make the school more sustainable.
- High standards of behaviour are promoted by staff who themselves are strong role models. The hugely successful pastoral system supports the themes of forgiveness and reconciliation. Pupils are aware that this is the case and appreciate the opportunity to be given a second chance.
- Opportunities for prayer and reflection occur throughout the school year as part of on-going formation. These are led by key staff, clergy and outside speakers.
- Chaplaincy provision is exemplary, supporting effectively the Catholic Life of the school. During lockdown 'The Chaplaincy Sharepoint' was a great success, combined with the 'Live well with SMC' for pupils. Staff also had access to 'St Cuthbert's Community Hub' Sharepoint. These opportunities offered the whole community a way of keeping in touch during the pandemic.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- Leaders and governors are highly ambitious for the Catholic Life of the school, supporting the head of school in her mission to develop and sustain the strong ethos evident across the school. They are actively involved in its evaluation and monitor and challenge regularly throughout the academic year. Directors form 'Cluster Teams' which are dedicated to various areas of school life. Tracking documentation for Catholic Life demonstrates effective leadership in this area. A member of the local clergy and a foundation director expressed a clear focus on inclusivity, a point also confirmed by the head of school who said, "no one is turned away". The head and her team take a lead role in scrutinising the Catholic Life ensuring monitoring is in place and high standards are maintained. They in turn report to the directors.
- The development of Catholic Life by leaders and governors is highly evident. Governors say that Catholic Life is critical to the life and the ethos of the school and see Catholic Life development as a core leadership responsibility. The head of school stated, "Working in a Catholic school is a vocation. We give students the opportunity to encounter Christ".
- A very accurate Diocesan self-evaluation form and school monitoring records demonstrate a level of self-challenge and an understanding of what it means to have Catholic Life as a focus.
- Discussions about developing the Catholic Life of the school are on-going and attract the attention of staff, pupils and the parent body who value the strong ethos they engender. Parents say the school keeps them informed and that "Social and spiritual care for their children is really good." This is evidenced in parent interviews and questionnaires.
- Continuous professional development (CPD) occurs frequently and engages all staff. As a teaching school there is a constant focus on the authentic Catholic nature of the school and those new to teaching benefit from this modelling. There are a large number of teachers who themselves previously attended the school, returning to work in an environment they describe as one of faith and support.
- The school has successful strategies for communicating with parents. One parent stated that 'School keeps us informed and is always trying to get people involved'. Parents are supportive of the school's mission.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

1

- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.
- The quality of provision for Collective Worship.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

1

1

1

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship is outstanding.

- The pupils at St Mary's act with quiet reverence during acts of Collective Worship. They are extremely well behaved and engage with community prayer with confidence. Every lesson begins with a Sign of the Cross thus dedicating the lesson to God.
- Pupils often prepare and take a lead in Collective Worship with the support of the Chaplaincy Team. During the inspection a number of class worship sessions were observed. The Year 11 session was expertly delivered and thoughtful. All students were engaged and reflective. Liturgies include prayers that pupils have written themselves, a sacred display as a focal point and in some their own choice of music along with a power point prepared together with their teacher. It was apparent that much thought is put into planning.
- Almost all pupils spoken to were able to demonstrate an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts. Agape ambassadors (6th form chaplaincy team) coordinate 'Thought for the day' and the Chaplaincy Reps assist with SLT lead Collective Worship.
- A variety of approaches to prayer was evidenced in chaplaincy records and on the Chaplaincy Sharepoint, including use of scripture, religious artefacts and liturgical music. Excellent resources are produced by the lay chaplain for use throughout the year and a highly organised calendar of events related to Collective Worship is circulated. It often follows the themes from the Sunday Gospel. The calendar is coloured, linking it to the liturgical season. Pupils say they value the resources made available to them and use them to enhance their prayer life. There are various voluntary opportunities for Collective Worship, examples being a Holy Week service at the local parish church, an Advent service and the Christmas Carol Service. The introduction of 'Prayer Journaling' as part of form time worship is evidence of pupils' participation in prayer.
- There is a small chapel and an additional prayer room. Both are based in the 6th Form building and is available for anyone to use. Outside there is a Memorial Garden.
- The pupils feel they benefit from living and working in a faithful, praying community. It is clear that it is having a positive impact on many. A connection to prayer is apparent. Pupils at St Mary's have first-hand knowledge in school of cultural diversity. They have a highly developed sense of respect for those of other faiths and where they find difference in school they are both inclusive and welcoming. This is testament to their teachers and families.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- Praying together is central to school life and part of the daily experience for pupils and staff at St Mary's and it is carried out with respect for those for whom it has great meaning. This is evidence of the positive relationships pupils have with each other and adults with whom they work. A memorial service was held during the inspection for a pupil of the school who recently died. This was carried out with great sensitivity, affection and understanding and offered the whole year group and opportunity to reflect and pray.
- Collective Worship has a clear purpose and message which is often linked to the Gospel of the week. All groups including staff are given the opportunity to lead prayer. Themes for Collective Worship reflect the Church's liturgical year and reflect the knowledge and understanding the team has of the liturgical seasons, reflecting the Church's mission in Catholic schools. All staff have an excellent understanding of the turn of the Church's year. Resources to support the different stages are available. All staff, including the senior leaders have received training on how to deliver Collective Worship. Observations of other more experienced staff are encouraged.
- Collective Worship is extremely well planned for by the lay chaplain and her team of chaplaincy ambassadors and Agape ambassadors. The lay chaplain is highly thought of across the school and is a source of inspiration and ideas for staff and pupils. The Team provided weekly YouTube Collective Worship during lockdown.
- Teaching staff and the lay chaplain are highly skilled in supporting pupils when they plan and deliver Collective Worship. It is planned in such a manner as to facilitate attendance by other adults associated with the school. The pandemic has had an impact on the frequency of holding Mass in school. There is a desire on the part of the school and the local parishes for this to be addressed post pandemic.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- Directors and senior leaders have an excellent understanding of how to plan and deliver effective Collective Worship. They are themselves deeply rooted in faith and have a great understanding of the Church's liturgical year. They are passionate about ensuring that the pupils at St Mary's have high quality experiences of the Church's liturgical life. Close liaison with local clergy is ensuring that opportunities for receiving the sacraments are available. The Blessed Sacrament is present in the tabernacle in the school chapel.
- Senior leaders and the lay chaplain have expert knowledge in this field and are themselves excellent role models of faithful living for pupils and staff. St Mary's is an inclusive, outward facing school. All concerned with Collective Worship regularly receive updates from the diocese and attend CPD when possible to keep their own knowledge refreshed. The school has robust quality assurance systems which extend to Collective Worship and all staff are offered whole school CPD focussed on Collective Worship.
- The professional development of staff in liturgical formation and planning Collective Worship has a high priority. As a Catholic Teaching School, senior leaders take their role of formal induction of teachers to a Catholic environment very seriously and plan accordingly.

- Leaders and directors are steadfast in their view that their self-evaluation and rigorous monitoring continually energise the standards and efficacy of Collective Worship. It is reviewed regularly and is reported upon at Cluster Board meetings.
- Directors are wholly invested in the Catholic Life of the school. They observe acts of Collective Worship and themselves lead or participate in Worship.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1

- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

1

1

1

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is outstanding.

- Almost all pupils from their varied starting points make excellent progress in Religious Education (RE). Particularly successful are the GCSE and A-level outcomes. GCSE results show over 40% of pupils achieving grade 9-7 routinely over the last 5 years. Teacher assessed exams over the last 2 years have also followed a similar trend with results exceeding national and local averages.
- At key stage 3 students make very good progress. The curriculum is both ambitious and accessible for all pupils including SEND. Individualised differentiation enables pupils from lower starting points to achieve.
- A focus on critical thinking skills provides pupils with a toolkit to be able to make progress. The most recent Progress 8 scores of +0.78 for all pupils is above the national and local average. Lessons follow the 'SMC Learning Cycle'.
- Lessons are calm and pupils are fully engaged. Behaviour for learning across the key stages is outstanding. Pupils like RE. A pupil voice survey suggests that 90% of key stage 4 pupils enjoy their RE lessons. They are respectful to their teachers and listen carefully to others. They are sometimes hesitant about raising their hands to answer questions. In key stage 5 lessons were purposeful and upbeat. Students made very good contributions to the discussions, demonstrating previous knowledge and clarity of thought.
- Pupils are religiously literate and demonstrate very good subject knowledge. They are able to express their ideas and thoughts well, can think ethically and show excellent recall of previous areas of work and topics covered. The current programme of study, a 'spiral curriculum' ensures that both engagement and continuity exist across the key stages. This continuity allows for linear learning and enables pupils to build on and revisit prior knowledge. Pupils know what to do to improve. A recent survey indicated that 97% of key stage 4 pupils say they know what to do to improve.
- In every lesson seen almost all pupils were actively engaged in learning, showing a real commitment to improving and making progress. Most were able to articulate how they have made progress. The quality of work seen in books is of a high standard.
- Pupils in key stage 3 relish their RE lessons, approaching the topics with interest and enthusiasm. They respond extremely well to both teacher-directed parts of lessons and to pair work. They are keen to please their teachers and take pride in the work in their books.

- Behaviour in all lessons seen was outstanding. Pupils were never off task. They spoke of their enjoyment and their appreciation of their teachers. Relationships between pupils and staff are exemplary. Pupils expressed their thanks to their teachers for their support during lockdown.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is outstanding.

- All those who teach in the RE department are highly dedicated professionals. They are effective in their planning and deliver high quality lessons which inspire their pupils. The system used in the department (the SMC Learning Cycle) to recapitulate previous work and consolidate learning is highly effective. Pupils enjoy this approach and are making good progress.
- The majority of teaching is outstanding and never less than good.
- Teachers show high levels of confidence in delivering lessons and making them interesting. Many are experts in their subject. Those who are not have an extremely good understanding of the subject and confidently inspire their learners.
- A range of pedagogies was employed. Post-pandemic teaching is beginning to embrace a greater variety of pedagogies when the environment allows. There is evidence to show that programmes of study have been thoughtfully planned in order to reach all groups including the most vulnerable. Teaching groups are not set until year 9.
- Staff ensure that all pupils are involved in evaluating how they are achieving through peer marking and self-correcting in red pen. Teachers continually give verbal feedback. Use of questioning was seen providing further opportunities for feedback, encouragement and praise and use of the school's award systems. Very good use of additional adults in the classrooms was observed. The teaching assistants (TAs) are well briefed thus effectively optimising learning for those who needed support.
- All lessons observed were carried out with excellent pace and in all classes demonstrated a real passion for the subject. Pupils responded very well to this enthusiasm in written work and tasks. They want to please their teachers.
- High expectations from teachers and the place of RE on the curriculum are central to life at St Mary's. Pupils respect their teachers' knowledge and enthusiasm and respond accordingly. This leads in turn to high levels of engagement, interest, achievement and ultimately progress.
- Work scrutiny showed very good standards of both written work and assessment at the end of topics. Work follows the planned curriculum. Having access to SEN profiles has enabled teachers to plan work carefully and to differentiate for those who need it. Regular updates and input from the SENCo facilitate this.
- Success in RE is celebrated through the school's reward system. This includes letters of praise, post cards sent home and laudatory texts. This is well understood by pupils and they value it. Pupil work has not yet been displayed in RE rooms, although good work in general is celebrated and rewarded.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is outstanding.

- Leaders and managers ensure that the RE curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in all key stages in curriculum terms, namely 10% across key stage 3 and 4 and 5% for key stage 5. General RE (Core RE) in the sixth form runs alongside a well-planned Personal Development Programme (PDP) which delivers RSE.
- RE has full parity with other subjects in terms of staffing, CPD, rooming and resources. It is considered a core subject and as such is held in high esteem by leaders and managers. The recently appointed subject lead is supported by a Vice Principal (VP) as the senior link to the department. Two of the school's VPs have previously been head of RE at St Mary's. They spearhead Catholic leadership through their promotion and monitoring of the subject.
- Additional requirements of the Bishop regarding the RE curriculum are embraced and fully implemented including, for example, the move to the study of Judaism at key stage 4.
- The RE department is extremely well led and ably supported by a strong team of dedicated teachers who are capable and open to innovation. With a focus on teaching and learning, the subject lead is inspiring staff to a quality of teaching which is mostly outstanding and never less than good.
- Thanks to strong leadership (currently and over time) and positive attitudes, relationships within the department are outstanding. Staff model high standards and behaviour expectations to all those in their care. The RE department deserves the high reputation it has within the school community.
- Monitoring of RE takes the form of lesson observations, drops ins and work scrutiny.
- Leaders and directors of the Trust are very experienced professionals, many of whom have a background in education. They are rigorous in ensuring that RE is well planned and is also both thoughtful and imaginative. This careful monitoring is providing pupils with a first-class department and a learning environment conducive to success. In a school where none is excluded this is a huge achievement. Pupils, relative to their age and stage, develop over time the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to demonstrate religious literacy and ultimately perform well at the end of key stages. This prepares them well for future life.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION:

1

CATHOLIC LIFE:

1

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 managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

1

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:

1

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 managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

1

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:

1

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

1

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.

1

How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

1

School details

School name	St Mary's College (Part of St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust)
Unique reference number	144104
Local authority	Kingston upon Hull
This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt Reverend Terence Patrick Draine the Bishop of Middlesbrough under canon 806 of Canon Law. For voluntary aided schools it also fulfils the responsibility the governing body has to inspect the school under s48 of the Education Act 2005.	
Chair of governors	Peter Fearnley
Choose School Leadership Type	Maria Stead
Date of previous school inspection	March 2015
Telephone number	01482 851136
Email address	mstead@smchull.org