

Inspection of Mount St Mary's Catholic High School

Ellerby Road, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS9 8LA

Inspection dates:	25 and 26 March 2025
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Mount St Mary's Catholic High School has a deep community spirit. Pupils enjoy coming to this highly inclusive school. Pupils benefit from a broad and ambitious curriculum. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils recognise the positive impact that the school makes on their lives. The school enables all pupils to achieve highly.

Pupils feel well supported by caring staff who know them well. They develop strong and purposeful relationships with staff. Pupils experience a rich and varied personal development offer. It is a strength of the school's work. Pupils are supported to grow as individuals. They learn to be independent and to develop the capacity to succeed academically and personally. Pupils are very effectively prepared for life in modern Britain.

Pupils feel happy and safe in the school. They behave extremely well. The school encourages pupils to be respectful and supportive to each other. As a result, bullying is very rare. Staff swiftly and effectively support pupils if they have any worries or concerns. This ensures that pupils learn in a calm and orderly environment.

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

Pupils learn a rich and well-developed curriculum. It is aspirational and carefully designed to build knowledge and skills. It has a clear focus to support pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils to excel. The school proactively identifies pupils with SEND. Pupils' needs are identified early and each individual receives targeted support that enables them to learn well. The school ensures pupils receive well-thought-out support as they progress through the school to their next steps in education and employment. They learn a range of skills and knowledge that prepare them extremely well for qualifications and post-16 education, employment or training.

Staff expertly deliver the curriculum. This ensures that pupils progress well from their starting points when they join the school. Pupils confidently apply the knowledge and skills that they learn to their classwork and wider learning. As a result, pupils' work is of a consistently high quality and they can describe their learning with clarity. Reading is an important part of the curriculum. Well-established school routines ensure pupils begin lessons with a period of reading. This prioritises reading across different subjects and supports pupils effectively to strengthen their reading skills.

The school has very high expectations of pupils' conduct. As a result, pupils behave impeccably in all aspects of school life. They learn to be independent and manage themselves impressively well. Pupils engage with classroom learning positively and value the support of staff to help them learn and develop. This means that lessons are consistently calm and purposeful. Pupils attend school regularly and punctually. Rates of attendance are consistently high. Pupils are very welcoming of visitors. They are willing to describe their learning and speak with enthusiasm about their school experience.

Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for life beyond school. They speak knowledgeably about diversity, culture and faith. They learn about healthy relationships and the importance of consent. They enjoy frequent opportunities to enrich their learning and gain new life experiences. Pupils participate in a wide range of lunchtime and after-school activities. These capture pupils' interests and develop their talents. Provision is targeted to include all pupils. For example, the 'E-Zone' enables pupils to share their experiences and diversity with other pupils. The school has high aspirations for all pupils through its 'limitless potential' approach. As a result, most pupils move on to positive post-16 destinations.

The school's leadership is exemplary. It has an unwavering focus to ensure all pupils succeed. The school is proactively supported by the diocese, the local authority and governors. They ensure that the school is supported to be the best it can be. There is a shared determination to improve pupils' life chances and positively impact the wider community. Governors challenge and support the school effectively to ensure it consistently provides a high-quality education to all pupils. Staff, including early career teachers, feel well supported. They have sufficient time to complete their roles effectively. Staff receive continuing professional development to further strengthen their practice and ensure pupils are safeguarded.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	108097
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10390054
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	942
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Clare Skinner
Headteacher	Mark Cooper
Website	https://mountstmarys.org
Date of previous inspection	1 December 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Mount St Mary's Catholic High School has a Catholic religious character. The school is part of the Diocese of Leeds. The last section 48 inspection took place in April 2019.
- The school uses four providers of alternative provision to support a small number of pupils. These providers are registered with the Department for Education and are subject to inspection by Ofsted.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and support staff. The lead inspector also met with a representative from the diocese and representatives of the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, history, art and design, physical education and citizenship. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The provision for teaching reading was also closely scrutinised.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects. Inspectors spoke to staff and visited lessons in geography, music, health and social care, drama, Spanish and business studies.
- Inspectors considered the support provided for pupils with SEND. They also held a meeting with leaders responsible for the use of the pupil premium. Several lesson visits focused specifically on the impact of the school's strategies with these pupils.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- An inspector spoke to one of the providers of alternative provision.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses from the Ofsted survey for staff.
- There were no responses from the Ofsted survey for pupils. However, inspectors spoke to a range of pupils during the inspection.

Inspection team

David Mills, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Zoe Helman	His Majesty's Inspector
Tony Guise	Ofsted Inspector
Gabrielle Reddington	Ofsted Inspector

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