

# Mount St Mary's Catholic High School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108097
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leeds
<b>Inspection number</b>	337025
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 May 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joan McKenna

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	925
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Cinta Culkin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs B King
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2006
<b>School address</b>	Ellerby Road Leeds West Yorkshire LS9 8LA
<b>Telephone number</b>	0113 2455248
<b>Fax number</b>	0113 2005114
<b>Email address</b>	kingb01@leedsllearning.net

---

<b>Age group</b>	11–16
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 May 2010
<b>Inspection number</b>	337025

---

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2010

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 31 lessons taught by 31 staff and looked at students' work. They held meetings with governors, staff, groups of students and a representative of the local authority. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including data about students' progress, records of monitoring, policies, action plans, the 121 questionnaires returned by parents and those completed by students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the achievement of all groups of students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and especially in mathematics
- the effectiveness of the specialist subjects of mathematics, and information and communication technology (ICT)
- whether the school is catering equally well for its diverse groups of students.

## Information about the school

This is a broadly average size school. While most students are of White British heritage, the proportion from minority ethnic heritages is above the national average. Most of these students speak English as their first language. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above that typically found. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who have a statement of special education needs, is also above average.

The school is designated as a specialist college for mathematics and ICT. It has gained the following awards: Inclusion Chartermark; Stephen Lawrence Educational Standard level 2; Healthy Schools Standard; School Safemark and the Becta ICT Mark.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a good school which is committed to securing the best possible life chances for students. It provides outstanding care and support for them, including those who experience significant barriers to learning. This enables all students to benefit from what the school offers and they progress well academically and personally. The strong and caring leadership and clear direction provided by the headteacher has ensured a shared commitment to continual improvement among other leaders and staff. Comprehensive monitoring and evaluation by leaders result in the school's effectiveness being well understood. Strengths are built upon and action is taken to develop other areas and this has resulted in the school improving well since its previous inspection. This success shows a good capacity for further improvement.

Students enter the school with below average attainment and they reach average standards by the time they leave at the end of Year 11. This represents good achievement. Examination results have steadily improved over the past few years and standards are continuing to rise. Standards in mathematics lag behind those in English, however, and do not show the improvement seen in the school overall. The quality of teaching and the curriculum is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it to give clear explanations and appropriate and interesting tasks to students in most lessons. However, there is some variability in teaching and students are not always given precise feedback on how they can improve their work. The information and communication technology specialism is effective and makes a positive contribution to students learning; mathematics is less successful.

The very high quality care provided for students and the strong relationships they have with staff help them feel safe and secure in school. The large majority behave well and are polite and considerate towards each other. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and they have a very well developed sense of themselves and their responsibilities to others. This is heightened by the school's excellent promotion of community cohesion and students make an extremely effective contribution to their own community and beyond. Students are proud to belong to Mount St Mary's and are excellent ambassadors for it. Attendance has recently risen but not all students yet attend regularly or punctually enough.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and they appreciate what it provides for their children.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve students' achievement and raise standards further by:

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

- taking particular action to improve provision and outcomes for students across the whole ability range in mathematics
  - improving the quality of teaching so that students' learning is consistently good or better
  - ensuring that information about students' progress is used in lessons to match tasks closely to the full range of needs
  - ensuring that students are given precise information about how they can improve their work both in lessons and through marking.
- Adopt more strategies for improving attendance and punctuality.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Students are keen to do well. They respect their teachers and do as they are asked. They almost always work hard and give of their best, especially when work is interesting and they can get actively involved in tasks. They show good cooperative skills when working with others and particularly enjoy such opportunities. They learn best when work is well matched to their different needs and abilities and has the right level of challenge for them. When this is the case, they progressively acquire knowledge and develop their understanding well. In a minority of lessons learning is satisfactory rather than good, often because work is not pitched correctly for all and because they are not given detailed enough information about how to improve their work. Nevertheless, students make good progress overall during their time in school and in most subjects. This is the case for virtually all groups, including most that have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Some who are identified as having significant personal or social barriers to learning do not progress at as fast a rate as others, although their learning is still satisfactory overall because of the school's efforts to keep them engaged in education. The school usually meets, and often exceeds, the challenging targets it sets, including in the specialist subject of information and communication technology. It did not meet its targets for mathematics in 2009.

A high proportion of students take on positions of responsibility, undertaking such activities as teaching French to pupils in primary schools and acting as school councillors. An example of the impact of the school council is its involvement in a change of uniform which is well supported by students. They have a highly developed insight and understanding of the needs of different communities, both locally, nationally and internationally. Students communicate with those from different countries and cultures through well-developed links with schools in Spain and Uganda and emerging ones in Peru. Students can use and apply information and communication technology in a wide range of contexts. They mature into caring and thoughtful young people. The range of experiences they have and skills they acquire prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Teacher's good subject knowledge and enthusiasm for their subjects is evident in most lessons and is used to ensure interesting lessons which motivates students to want to learn. Teachers have a detailed understanding of the needs of students in their classes and in the best lessons use this well to plan to meet them and to ensure the right levels of challenge and support. Innovative activities are often used to promote students' active involvement and enjoyment, such as 'games' which promote learning in a fun way. A wide range of resources, including technological ones, are used to illustrate concepts being taught and reinforce students' understanding. There is often a fast pace in lessons with teachers using timed activities to maintain this. In a minority of lessons, while teaching is satisfactory and ensures that all students make some progress, teachers do not use their knowledge of students to adapt tasks to their different needs or to explain in sufficient detail what students need to do to attain different levels or grades. This is occasionally accompanied by other shortcomings such as unclear explanations and a slow pace. Students' progress is regularly checked, with the information used in a variety of helpful ways to promote it further. Students' work is sometimes marked well, giving clear guidance on how they can improve it, but this is not always the case.

The broadening of the curriculum to include different courses and experiences is helping to meet more students' needs more fully. Changes have recently been made to improve

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

effectiveness in some subjects, such as more time allocated to mathematics and better matching of students to courses in science. The provision for information and communication technology is good with students using it in increasingly variable ways, although in this subject, too, the school is taking steps to improve its effectiveness. A strong personal, health and social education programme, and a wide range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities broaden students' experiences and make a very positive contribution to their personal development. The uptake of some extra-curricular activities is limited, in part due to the constraints of students having to catch buses after school.

The school's commitment to the well-being of students is exemplified in its very well-organised and sharply focused support for students and their families. There are striking examples of where the school has had a major impact on individuals, so much so that some students return for guidance long after they have left the school. The school has a very good record of keeping students involved in their education and a clear understanding of where continued efforts are necessary. Students are helped to settle into school very well and receive detailed guidance about their next steps. Although a small minority of students do not yet attend regularly enough, the school's efforts to improve attendance have raised it from below average to just in line with the national average.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Led strongly by the headteacher, who is well supported by other senior leaders, the school has a very clear commitment to valuing all members of the school community equally. This informs the culture of the school so that there is a shared set of aims and direction. All staff and leaders are held accountable for their effectiveness and are well supported in their work, with steps being taken to further develop staff's knowledge and skills. Leaders have had much success in improving the school, although actions to improve mathematics have not yet had sufficient impact. The governing body are well informed about the school and are involved in actions to help it get better. They monitor its effectiveness in a variety of ways, although they do not use all of the available evidence when doing so. The school's promotion of cohesion within its own community and beyond is excellent, based on a clear understanding of the needs and issues faced by different groups. It takes active steps to promote equality and minimise barriers

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

internally and beyond, monitoring its impact and adapting actions accordingly. Outcomes for all groups of students are tracked carefully and analysed in detail, and action taken to reduce gaps identified means that almost all groups are achieving equally well. The school works well with a wide range of external agencies to meet students' needs and broaden their experiences and engages and works hard and effectively to engage with parents and carers. Student's safety is accorded high priority. Safeguarding arrangements meet current requirements and good efforts are made to ensure that students understand how to keep themselves safe.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Views of parents and carers

A relatively small proportion of parents and carers returned questionnaires to let inspectors know their views of the school, but the very large majority of those who did were positive about all aspects of the school's work. Inspectors endorse these views. Mount St Mary's is a good school and some areas of its work are outstanding. As a comment accompanying a questionnaire said, 'Well done Mount St Mary's'. The school is aware of areas that could be stronger, such as students' progress in mathematics, and is taking action to improve these.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Mount St Mary's Catholic High School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 121 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 925 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	37	68	56	6	5	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	54	45	64	53	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	63	52	51	42	5	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	58	48	58	48	4	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	55	45	59	49	3	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	45	37	64	53	7	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	31	75	62	4	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	56	46	57	47	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	49	40	67	55	3	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	57	47	57	47	4	3	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	30	71	59	9	7	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	58	48	59	49	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	66	55	49	40	4	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



14 May 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Mount St Mary's Catholic High School, Leeds LS9 8LA

Thank you for being so welcoming when my colleagues and I visited your school this week and for talking with us, answering our questions and showing us your work. I am writing to tell you about our judgements.

You told us that you think Mount St Mary's is a good school and we agree. Virtually all aspects of its provision are good; some are outstanding. This includes the care, support and guidance you receive, the way the school promotes cohesion within the school and beyond, and the contribution you make to that. Staff know you very well, you have very good relationships with them and you feel safe in school. You get on well with each other, are considerate, and behave well. You are mature, understand your responsibilities to others and are excellent ambassadors for your school.

The curriculum and teaching are good and you achieve well. You learn well in most lessons because teachers are enthusiastic about their subjects, explain things clearly, and give you tasks that are enjoyable. Your own hard work makes a contribution to your good progress too. A minority of lessons are less effective because work is not matched closely to your needs or you are not given enough information about how to improve your work or what to aim for. We have asked the school to make sure more lessons are good and that you are given more detail on how to improve your work. You do not make as much progress in mathematics as in other subjects and we have asked the school to improve this. We have also asked the school to take more action to improve attendance and punctuality, because, although most of you attend regularly, some are absent too often and are not always on time.

Your headteacher and other leaders are working hard and successfully to improve your school. You can help by continuing to work hard and attending regularly. I send you and your teachers very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Joan McKenna

Lead inspector

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**