



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

MOUNT ST MARY'S COLLEGE

DECEMBER 2016



SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	Mount St Mary's College			
DfE number	830/6014			
Registered charity number	1117998			
Address	Mount St Mary's College College Road Spinkhill Derbyshire S21 3YL			
Telephone number	01246 433388			
Email address	info@msmcollege.com			
Headmaster	Dr Nicholas Cuddihy			
Chair of governors	Fr. Adrian Porter			
Age range	11 to 19			
Number of pupils	315			
	Boys	185	Girls	130
	Day pupils	236	Boarders	79
	Seniors	239	Sixth Form	76
Inspection dates	07 to 08 Dec 2016			

PREFACE

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards following their inspection may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any unmet standards identified at their previous inspection.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is an EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection, reporting on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and grade descriptors from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

The headline judgements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Geoffrey Marston	Reporting Inspector
Mr Peter Hamilton	Team Inspector (Head, HMC school)
Mrs Linda Macfarlane	Team Inspector (Former deputy head, HMC school)
Miss Margaret Pepper	Team Inspector (Former head, ISA school)

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 Mount St Mary's College was founded in 1842 and is an independent Jesuit boarding and day school for boys and girls aged between eleven and nineteen. It occupies grounds of 250 acres adjacent to the village of Spinkhill in Derbyshire.
- 1.2 The Mount Trust, established in 2006, governs this school along with Barlborough Hall School, which is separately inspected. The current headmaster was appointed in 2014 and is the chief executive of the trust. Since the previous inspection, the school has undertaken significant refurbishment of two of its three boarding houses.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 Founded on the principles of Ignatius Loyola and the Society of Jesus, the school's aims are the care of the individual and the pursuit of excellence, in order to produce people of competence, conscience and compassionate commitment, who will, (in the words of St Ignatius) act as leaders in the improvement in living and learning for the greater glory of God and the common good. The school seeks to nurture and celebrate growth and success in a learning environment that is positive, supportive and challenging and which brings out the best in all pupils and staff.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Day pupils come from mostly within a twenty-five mile radius of the school and from a variety of backgrounds. Boarders come from a range of locations, both overseas and in the United Kingdom. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is in line with the national average. The number of pupils requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is 43. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs for dyslexia. No pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Forty-eight pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), but do not require specialist support.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. Where the school's own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below. In addition, pupils in Years 7 to 9 are known as in Lower School, those in Years 10 and 11 are in the Middle School and those in Years 12 and 13 are in Higher Line.

<i>Mount St Mary's College</i>	<i>National Curriculum name</i>
Upper Elements	Year 7
Figures	Year 8
Rudiments	Year 9
Grammar	Year 10
Syntax	Year 11
Poetry	Year 12

Rhetoric	Year 13
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Recommendations from previous inspections

- 1.6 The previous full inspection of the school by ISI was an interim inspection in Nov 2010. The recommendations from that inspection were:
- Ensure that good quality assessment and marking strategies are followed consistently by staff.
 - Provide time and appropriate in-service training to enable heads of department to properly evaluate the performance of their departments.
- 1.7 The recommendations of the intermediate boarding inspection in Nov 2014 were:
- Ensure a system of regular review and updating of school policies, ensuring that only a single version of each is published and on the school website.
 - Provide those boarders who study in their bedrooms adequate lighting for their desks.
 - Ensure that boarders have adequate opportunities to access information about the world outside the school.
 - Make more formal the arrangements for boarders to make known their views, and the school's responses to them.
- 1.8 The school has successfully met all the recommendations of the previous inspections. Further detail is in given in the main text of the report.

2. KEY FINDINGS

2.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.

- Pupils' attainment has been steadily rising in recent years and is good.
- Pupils make good progress so that they achieve well and have good skills, knowledge and understanding across all their learning, in successful fulfilment of the school's aims.
- Pupils also achieve well in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, sports and music.
- Pupils work extremely well collaboratively, when given the opportunity, but show more limited initiative and independence in their learning.

2.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

- Pupils have a very well developed moral sense; they are highly self-reflective and adaptable.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary.
- Pupils' spiritual awareness is highly developed. They strongly appreciate the non-material aspects of life.
- Boarding enables pupils to become resilient young people, who respond positively to change and respect other cultures.
- Pupils are not all able to show full understanding of the impact of decisions they make in terms of their future success and well-being.

Recommendations

2.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:

- Enable pupils to use increased and more consistent initiative and independence in their academic learning.
- Enable pupils to fully understand the importance of decisions they make in terms of their future success and well-being.

3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is good.
- 3.2 Pupils' good achievement demonstrates that the school is achieving some success in encouraging pupils to pursue excellence, in fulfilment of its aims, in order to produce people of competence, conscience and compassionate commitment. This is because the school successfully nurtures and celebrates pupils' growth and success and has created a learning environment that is positive, supportive, challenging and which is moving significantly towards bringing out the best in all pupils and staff.
- 3.3 The pupils' attainment is good. Senior school and sixth form academic results have been improving over the last three years, due to good progress made by all groups of pupils, including those with SEND or EAL. Results in GCSE examinations in 2013 to 2015 have been in line with the national average for maintained schools. Data provided by the school confirmed that attainment at GCSE for 2016 has risen from previous years. Results in IGCSE examinations have been similar to worldwide norms. Results at A-level were in line with the national average for maintained sixth forms in 2013 and 2014 but below the national average in 2015, when a higher proportion of EAL pupils at an early stage of learning English had joined the school. Results at A Level for 2016 show an improvement and school data show that sixth form pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points. Their progress accelerates as a result of the research projects that sixth formers are expected to undertake as part of their academic studies. This helps them develop research and enquiry skills that equip them particularly well for higher education or employment. High-quality teleological argument, concerning the existence of God as an intelligent designer, was observed with pupils' sensitive approaches during their presentations in a sixth-form religious studies lesson. A high proportion of pupils achieve offers from highly ranked universities.
- 3.4 The good progress shown from pupils' individual starting points, including the more able and those with SEND or EAL, is reflected in pupils' displays, written work and the observation of their performances in lessons. This is because teachers encourage pupils' active participation in lessons which means they stay engaged. Whatever their needs, pupils achieve well because of the high degree of support they receive in lessons. Adaptation of learning materials or use of technology is commonplace to help those with challenges such as dyslexia, for example, or those who have EAL. Pupils' progress is good because the curriculum is tailored to their ages, individual needs and abilities and teachers ensure that pupils build effectively upon skills and knowledge gained in previous lessons. Their progress is particularly good and their enthusiasm was strongly fostered in the recently introduced design course for Years 10 and 11, which is being run in partnership with an external company. This is a project devised by governance, leadership and management as an initiative to inspire the next generation of engineers and construction designers. Pupils also respond well to the range of trips and visits that complement the curriculum and which often give a meaningful context to pupils' studies.
- 3.5 Pupils, regardless of their ability, make good progress due to teachers' effective planning, which offers different levels of challenge and extension material when necessary. Pupils are enabled to make good progress because the leadership has improved the school's tracking and data monitoring system so that pupils have access to their own data and can therefore act upon it. Their progress is underlined for parents to enable their support, through the pupil progress reports that are available to parents regularly via a secure online portal. Governance, leadership and management have ensured that all staff have had adequate training with the system to ensure effective assessment and marking across the school and

the measurement of departmental performance, thereby successfully meeting recommendations from the previous inspection. A small minority of pupils, in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, disagreed that marking helped them to improve their work. However, this view was not supported by any of the inspection evidence, such as the pupils' work that was sampled by inspectors. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, most parents and almost all the pupils agreed with the inspection findings, that teaching enables pupils to make good progress. Almost all parents agreed that they receive helpful information about their child's performance and progress and that information about the school's routines and policies are readily available, showing that the focus by governance, leadership and management on improving the systems and thereby improving pupils' performance is successful and has ensured that other recommendations of the previous inspection have been met effectively.

- 3.6 Pupils show good skills, knowledge and understanding across a wide range of linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social subjects as well as physical, aesthetic and creative pursuits. Art displays around the school are of a very high standard and show a high degree of creativity and thoughtfulness. Pupils respond enthusiastically to teachers' excellent subject knowledge and encouragement, enabling good progress by encouraging pupils to be articulate, confident and eager to answer questions with high levels of technical phraseology, linguistic or mathematical skills. Pupils are good at reflecting on their own performance and persevering with any tasks set because teachers promote a classroom ethos that encourages these skills. For example, during a GCSE science practical lesson, pupils, through trial and error, improved further the designs of their egg-carrying carts to protect an egg from breaking after hitting a barrier, when learning about the concepts of momentum.
- 3.7 The range and quality of pupils' achievements in extra-curricular activities are significant. Pupils participate in a range of activities which include sport, music, drama, British Biology Olympiads, Young Enterprise, community projects in the UK and overseas as well as charity fund raising. Pupils achieve high success rates in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme (DofE) at all levels year on year, as a result of high quality training and support provided. A small number of pupils have achieved national levels of success in individual sports such as being selected for the England Schools international rugby and England under-16 golf teams, through to five pupils in the school's RAF Cadet Force being the first nationwide to trial and achieve their "blue wings" gliding licences. A few pupils have gained awards at county level in swimming, cross-country running, biathlon and athletics. Music is interwoven into school life with collective performances in assemblies, chapel, music lessons, concerts, jazz bands and community choirs being commonplace. Pupils achieve good standards in music and theory examinations, across a range of instruments, due to the effective support provided by and the expertise of tutors.
- 3.8 Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. For example, during a Lower School geography lesson, the more able pupils naturally helped other pupils with the saving and logging off from their computers at the end of the lesson, without being prompted. Pupils welcome and use any intellectual challenges given by staff but overall, evidence of these opportunities to show initiative and independence in their learning is patchy. Learning thrives due to pupils' eagerness to please and a culture of collaboration encouraged by teachers, which enables most pupils to develop study skills, such as planning and organising their work, reading critically and reflecting on any knowledge gained. Progress accelerates when, as in the best examples, teachers style questions which ensure a good understanding of the subject being studied and offer effective feedback and praise, particularly for SEND and more able pupils, which results in pupils being able to recall relevant information efficiently and make links

with other areas of study. Sixth formers speak highly of the opportunity to support teachers in English and mathematics lessons with pupils lower down the school, as well as being able to mentor younger ones at Barlborough Hall School. Spanish-speaking pupils are also actively involved in helping pupils studying A level Spanish. Pupils are very self-directed and are comfortable and confident in seeking help from teachers and their peers when needed.

- 3.9 Boarders achieve well with their studies due to the support given by their peers and boarding staff, often in the library during evenings and weekends. The strong sense of community among the wide range of cultural backgrounds is further enhanced by the range of extra-curricular activities provided, such as trips to theme parks, premier league football grounds, museums and theatres.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils respond strongly to the many aspects of personal development that are wholeheartedly promoted by the governance, leadership and management alongside pupils' academic studies, in line with the ethos and aims of the school. Consequently, pupils have highly developed self-esteem and self-confidence for their age. Teachers positively encourage all pupils to be self-reflective. Pupils take responsibility for the negotiating, setting and monitoring of their progress and of their own academic and personal targets recorded within their workbooks and this in turn leads to their high levels of self-knowledge.
- 4.3 Pupils know how to stay safe online at school, and at home, thanks to effective parental guides which are provided to ensure the safe use of the internet at home. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, almost all parents and pupils agreed that the school does all it can to ensure that their child learns in a healthy and safe environment.
- 4.4 Pupils understand how to be physically and mentally healthy, especially in terms of diet, exercise and balanced lifestyles through the comprehensive programmes for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) and sports, for example. Pupils also respond well to the opportunities to develop these skills provided in other subjects. In Lower School science lessons, pupils reflected on being presented with pictures of people who had under- or over-eaten, in order to appreciate why eating healthily is important. In a Higher Line creative writing lesson, pupils took time to appreciate and explore their own feelings around aspects of mental health. A minority of boarding pupils, in their questionnaire responses, felt that the food provided was not of sufficient quality and quantity. However, inspection evidence, based on checks on the quality and range of food and of menus over time, does not support that view. A majority of the responses to the boarders' questionnaire stated that boarders are unhappy with the balance of free time and activities in the evenings and weekends. Discussion with boarders showed that this refers to their view that too little free time is available at weekends. The school's policy on maintaining and developing the strong sense of community that exists in pupils requires that all undertake a trip or activity with other pupils at weekends. A check on the programme showed that times are also available for boarders to enjoy free time.
- 4.5 Pupils are fully aware that decisions they make can be important to their future lives, especially in terms of healthy food choices and choosing to exercise. They have fewer opportunities to understand the importance of subject choice as determinants for their futures. In their pre-inspection questionnaires, a small minority of pupils disagreed that they receive good advice about their choice of subjects or career. This view was not shared by parent responses, but pupils and staff, with whom this was discussed, did confirm that the school is working to improve the provision of careers advice to help inform subject choices at both GCSE and A Level. Highly effective pastoral support enables pupils to develop many of the necessary skills for the next stages of their lives. Interview workshops and university survival cookery and finance management sessions are put on by the school, which help pupils prepare for their future, but other preparations are not as well developed.
- 4.6 Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and what is fair. Pupils are encouraged to accept responsibility for their own behaviour, which is inherent in the school's ethos, traditions and culture. Pupils clearly understand that the decisions they make are important determinants of their own success and well-being. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, a small minority of pupils stated that the school did not treat them fairly, however this view was not given in the parent questionnaires and no other evidence could be found to support

the view. Pupils agree that recent changes in procedures mean that sanctions are now clearer and they are being applied consistently by staff.

- 4.7 Pupils exhibit exemplary behaviour in and around the school, being polite and courteous to each other and adults. Pupils report that the tutoring across year groups and the house systems enable older pupils to look after younger pupils very well and that they always look out for each other. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, a small minority of pupils disagreed that the school deals effectively with bullying if and when it occurs. However, on checking records, from observation and in discussion, it is clear that levels of bullying are very low and that if any does occur, the school is very quick to find resolutions.
- 4.8 Pupils have excellent rapport with staff and their peers due to encouragement by teachers to always celebrate achievements in a friendly but respectful environment and retaining a 'have a go' attitude in their learning. Sixth formers act as role models to their peers and are always available for support, further enhancing the sense of community in the school. Younger boarding pupils spoke highly of support they receive from older pupils and boarding staff. Pupils report that they feel safe in making their views known to staff and receiving feedback, through both formal and informal communication channels. Pupils relish their participation in the various organisations and arrangements, such as the school council, the year representative system, tutors or fire side chats with the headmaster. These popular opportunities successfully address the recommendation from the previous inspection. The strong lines of communication between pastoral and teaching staff enable pupils' academic and personal needs to be considered.
- 4.9 Pupils readily promote an understanding of their own and other cultures at the school. They are very tolerant of others and respect differences, particularly those who have particular needs or characteristics. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the cultural diversity of the school community, particularly in boarding. They have opportunities to learn and experience cultures from around the world by undertaking overseas trips, such as the choir tour to Rome or the Keyhole gardening project in South Africa. Access to information about the world is commonplace, seen in displays and student work, clearly demonstrating that the school has successfully addressed one of the recommendations from the previous inspection. Pupils have a clear awareness of the importance of the rule of law and the need to have rules in society. They appreciate the school's moral code which is promoted through 'golden rules' as well as a rich and varied assembly programme.
- 4.10 Pupils' spiritual awareness is excellent. The chapel is at the heart of the school community, and this is the focal point for the promotion of the school's Jesuit beliefs and values. Pupils spoke positively about their enjoyment of performing music, which compliments their spiritual awareness. Many opportunities to perform are provided, such as the school orchestra, ensembles, the combined cadet force band, singing in the choir or taking part in successful whole school drama productions, which have been held in commercial theatres, of *West Side Story* and *Les Miserables*. Pupils develop an excellent appreciation of the non-material aspects of life, as demonstrated through their numerous successful fund raising and charity activities. They have recently donated large amount of toiletries for a local homeless charity to give out as Christmas presents this year. A recent art competition allowed pupils to display their understanding of God's mercy, through the provision of plates of food for the hungry, three dimensional houses to shelter the homeless and a washing line of clothes to clothe the needy. Pupils also contribute and respond warmly to their opportunities to attend the 'Tuesday Club' which provides support for adults with mental health and learning difficulties. This has been established at the school for thirty years.

- 4.11 Pupils develop highly productive relationships with each other through an excellent range of extra-curricular activities that enable collaboration. For example, they participate in the Young Enterprise and The DofE Award Scheme as well as in sports teams, such as the newly formed school girls' cricket team.
- 4.12 The experience of boarding makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils report that boarding has helped them immensely with developing their own self-esteem, resilience and confidence, preparing them well for the future. Boarders benefit considerably from the houseparent system, which compliments the work of the form tutor. Without exception, all boarders who were spoken to during the inspection feel safe and well supported in the boarding house. Highly effective leadership and management of boarding has ensured good security and well-being for pupils through regular checks on the standards of accommodation, including bedroom lighting and regularly gaining the views of pupils, thereby successfully meeting two recommendations from a previous inspection. All pupils report positively about how they have developed as individuals and have a high degree of compassion and care for everyone, meeting the college's pastoral aims to an excellent degree.