



St Charles' Catholic Primary Voluntary Academy

URN: 146105

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham

10–11 December 2025

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

Catholic life and mission (p.3)

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

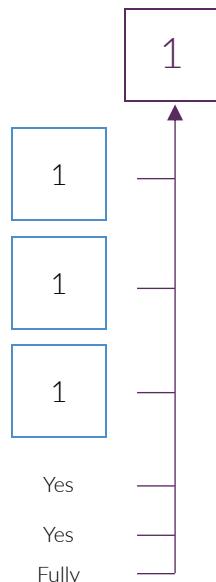
Collective worship (p.7)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection



Compliance statement

- The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection.

What the school does well

- St Charles' is a welcoming and inclusive Catholic school which promotes the welfare and wellbeing of all its pupils and staff.
- Leaders are driven, approachable, respected and committed. Together with staff, they are ambitious for the future success of the school.
- Pupils are proud of their school. Their behaviour is exemplary throughout the school day.
- Pupils enjoy religious education lessons and become increasingly articulate about their faith as they progress through the school.
- Pupils and staff value, and spiritually benefit from, the rich variety of prayer and liturgy provided on a daily basis.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that pupils can consistently work independently and creatively to produce high-quality work in religious education.
- Provide pupils with clear success criteria to enable them to achieve, and exceed, expectations in religious education lessons.
- Support pupils to find ways of taking ownership for planning and leading a wide range of prayer and liturgy to deepen their spiritual formation.

Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Catholic life and mission key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

Pupils value the part they play in the Catholic life and mission of St Charles'. They live out the school motto, 'Let all that you do be done in love'. Pupils are happy, calm and orderly. They feel cared for and part of a family community. They say, 'We feel proud; everything we do is with Christ. We look after each other'. They do this by supporting the local food banks and other charities, such as Cafod, Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) and St Michael's school in Ghana. The school shares the same grounds as the former parish church, which has been turned into a chapel where pupils attend regularly for celebrations of the word, Masses and other services. Pupils are eager to join Catholic social teaching groups, and these are thriving. Catholic life badges are worn with pride for the Cafod Crew, Global Goliaths, Mini Vinnies, Eco Warriors, the Chaplaincy Team and ACN Apostles. The choir sings in support of fund-raising events such as the Menphys charity for children with disabilities. Pupil behaviour is exemplary; they care for each other and look up to staff. Parents say, 'Our children really understand how to live their Catholic faith out in the world'. Year 6 pupils are all active members of the chaplaincy team and work effectively under the expert guidance of the lay chaplain.

Staff are invested in the mission of the school to provide a faith-filled and safe environment. They are inclusive, ensuring that all pupils are supported. Staff feel valued; they appreciate the compassionate and nurturing ethos of the school. They support each other to develop best practice, saying that they, 'endeavour to keep love at the centre of our days and to do our best to follow in His footsteps'. The school reaches out and supports the most vulnerable families ensuring they feel included and valued. They welcome new arrivals and ensure that they are immediately part of the St Charles' family. Leaders are positive role models, working across school providing support and guidance. Displays promote many aspects of Catholic life around

school. A prayer garden allows pupils the opportunity to reflect and interact with their faith outdoors. Lay chaplains are an asset to the school, modelling excellence and promoting high quality opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of staff and pupils. The school's curriculum for relationship, sex and health education is well designed and appropriately flexible to the needs of mixed year groups, and staff have received the necessary training.

Leaders and governors are committed and driven to ensure that the Catholic faith is at the heart of daily practice. They engage with the diocese and the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust. Leaders ensure that the parish is involved and linked closely throughout the liturgical year. Leaders are committed to building for the future, inviting the next generation to be part of the St Charles' family. All staff know the school well, and this continuity enables a strong base of faith promotion. Links with other trust schools are well developed and have led to the sharing of expertise. Staff attend diocesan training and formation, ensuring that they stay up to date with new initiatives. Support for new staff is prioritised and supported fully by the rest of the team.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

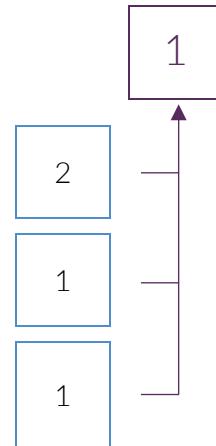
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education



In the past two academic years, St Charles' has welcomed a high number of new pupils across both key stages. They have arrived with little religious formation. Similarly, on entry to reception, pupils have a limited knowledge of religious education. Pupils make good progress through to the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils then make further progress through Key Stage 2. Attainment is in line compared to other core curriculum subjects. Pupils say that they enjoy their lessons as lessons evolve and build upon previous learning. They aspire to be 'St Charles' Superstars'. Pupils are focussed and enthusiastic in lessons. They are given time to think and time to talk to their partner to formulate answers. Pupils are religiously literate and can use their prior knowledge, illustrating that they know more and remember more from religious education lessons. Pupils can articulate the key vocabulary around religious seasons, such as Advent. They receive helpful feedback, and the use of visualisers helps pinpoint examples of high-quality pieces of written work. There is sometimes a lack of opportunity for pupils to be independent and to show their individual creativity, but workbooks show signs of some emerging individuality and originality. Although pupils know that they are expected to do their best, they do not always know how to fully achieve, or exceed, expectations.

Teachers have embraced the new *Religious Education Directory* programme of study. They are following diocesan planning, and this helps to ensure there is sequential coverage which is tailored to the needs of all pupils. Teachers have been supported to deliver subject and pedagogical knowledge; they are competent and confident practitioners. All staff follow corporate planning and marking systems to ensure year-on-year consistency. Teachers show a deep commitment to their preparation and delivery of religious education. Pupils are invited to actively contribute to a prayer at the beginning of the lesson. Lessons have a clear focus which builds on prior learning, helping pupils to be able to revise and recall previous lesson content.

Work is planned to take account of all ability levels. The 'big question' is included to gather thoughts as the lesson theme evolves. Teachers use praise warmly and this encourages pupils to offer their thoughts and ideas readily. Celebration of work leads to motivation of pupils in lessons. Different teaching methods, such as the use of scripture detectives, role-play, music and art, add interest and variety. Sometimes there is a lack of opportunity for individuality and creativity, and this affects the richness of pupils' written outcomes. Teaching assistants support pupils effectively and with empathy, ensuring that all pupils can access the curriculum, engage and take full part in peer group learning.

The *Religious Education Directory* has been implemented with fidelity to the scheme. Religious education has parity with other subjects in terms of continuing professional development and financial resources. Leaders are committed to embedding the new programme. Catholic social teaching is skilfully interwoven into the whole curriculum, ensuring Christ is at the centre of delivery. Teachers have access to high-quality professional development to enhance subject content and provision. As a result, they feel supported and mentored effectively. The subject leaders are driven and have an aspiring vision for religious education. Moderation takes place regularly, internally and externally, within the wider diocese, as well as within the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust. This ensures that teaching and learning has a clear focus. Governors are aware of standards in religious education through scrutiny of work and reviewing pupil progress. They are accurate in their self-analysis and are able to identify 'next steps' to maintain and improve outcomes for staff and pupils. Leaders are ambitious to maintain the drive for consistently high standards.

Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

1

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

1

1

1

Pupils are at the heart of liturgical preparation and delivery. They all participate in celebrations of the word in both the whole school setting and in their classes. They sing joyfully and approach prayer with reverence and prayerful silence. A common planning format for class-based celebrations of the word is in place and firmly embedded. Pupils are proud to be involved in prayer in classrooms and show knowledge and understanding during class and shared celebrations of the word. They can collaborate with each other, and they work closely with the lay chaplain to develop prayer and liturgy to a high standard. They demonstrate an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical seasons. Pupils can reflect upon their experience of prayer and liturgy with confidence. Their care and respect for one another transfers to all aspects of their daily interactions. They are self-evaluative and can confidently talk about the links with the wider curriculum and how they are inspired to live out their faith in their actions.

There is a developed daily pattern of prayer throughout the week. Morning, midday and end of day prayers are observed in all classes, allowing pupils to pause and spend time together in focussed reflection. The liturgical year is followed, ensuring that scripture is carefully chosen to reflect the liturgical season. As a result, teachers ensure that pupils have a clear awareness of the religious seasons and can make links to Catholic social teaching. There are a variety of opportunities for prayer and liturgy. Lectio Divina and Visio Divina, currently led by teachers, add to the richness of tradition. There is scope for pupils to take a lead in these forms of prayer, though this is not fully developed. Rosary club is offered in May and October. During Advent, all pupils end the day by taking part in a quiet meditation. Each classroom has its own prayer focus area space which reflects the liturgical year. Teachers oversee a common planning format for celebrations of the word. Mass is offered throughout the year, and feast days are routinely celebrated in school and within the parish. The parish priest is an active visitor to the school.

Classrooms and the hall are used very effectively for prayer gatherings. An outdoor sacred space gives further opportunity for pupils to gather with staff and peers in the presence of God.

Leaders and governors are committed to ensuring that there is high-quality provision, including Lectio and Visio Divina. These forms of prayer are currently led by teachers, with pupils taking a leading role less frequently. Governors act as critical friends and are committed to their role. Lay chaplains are a key strength, supporting all classes to plan and develop meaningful prayer and liturgy linked to Catholic social teaching. Work has been undertaken by leaders to establish a clear planning structure for celebrating class and whole school celebrations of the word, with teachers guiding and supporting pupils. The school liturgical calendar and timetable are carefully planned. The school has an excellent relationship with the parish priest, ensuring Eucharistic celebrations take place on important feast days and significant times in school. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and confession are timetabled for pupils to attend. The school has invested in religious artefacts and liturgical cloths to create a focal point for celebrations of the word. Resources are readily available in all classes to provide high-quality experiences of prayer and liturgy. Staff have received professional development in relation to liturgical formation and the planning of prayer and liturgy. Self-evaluation of prayer and liturgy is given the highest priority, and this is conducted regularly, with contributions gathered from teachers, governors and pupils alike.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Charles' Catholic Primary Voluntary Academy
School unique reference number (URN)	146105
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8553338
Full postal address of the school	Bosworth Road, Measham, Swadlincote, Derbyshire, DE12 7LQ
School phone number	01530 270572
Executive headteacher	N/A
Headteacher	Felicity Knight
Chair of local governing body	Robert Hicklin
School Website	www.st-charles.leics.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	19 November 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	2 - Good

The inspection team

Greg Hughes

Lead

Bernie Twomey

Team

Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement