



St Christopher's Catholic Primary Academy

URN: 148318

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Birmingham

09–10 July 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

1

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

2

Collective worship (p.7)

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

2

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

Fully

2

Compliance statement

- This school fully complies with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- This school is fully compliant with the additional requirements of His Grace.
- This school has fully addressed all previous areas for improvement.

What the school does well

- The Gospel-inspired ethos is powerfully lived out through relationships, behaviour, and a curriculum deeply rooted in Catholic values. The motto, 'Love one another', is not just a phrase but a guiding principle that shapes the school's identity and daily life.
- The school provides a nurturing and inclusive environment where pupils flourish emotionally, spiritually, and academically. Pastoral care is exceptional; pupils feel safe, valued, and supported by a compassionate and attentive staff team.
- Religious education is consistently well-delivered, underpinned by strong subject knowledge, knowledge retrieval, and the use of effective questioning.
- Prayer and liturgy are central to school life, fostering a respectful, reflective, and spiritually rich culture of worship that engages both pupils and staff.
- The headteacher exemplifies servant leadership, with a clear and compelling vision that cultivates a culture of compassion, high expectations, and Gospel-rooted excellence throughout the school community.

What the school needs to improve

- Embed Catholic social teaching across all subjects so that pupils can make deep connections between their faith and their learning.
- Adapt tasks in lessons more effectively to challenge all learners, particularly those with higher prior attainment, to maximise progress.
- Enhance the creativity of pupil-prepared prayer by providing greater opportunities for pupils to use a wider variety of liturgical resources and art forms.

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

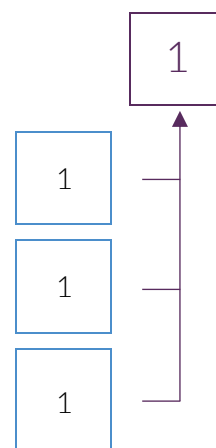
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

Provision

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

Leadership

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



Pupils actively embrace and contribute to the school's Catholic identity and mission, rooted in Gospel values and lived out across the community. A key example is the Mini Vinnies, where pupils reflect on how to serve the poor and marginalised. Pupils' leadership roles are filled through thoughtful self-reflection and staff-guided discernment. As one pupil shared, 'We chose to be part of the group to help the poor and older people; to be with those who don't have others.' The impact of this is significant: pupils hold regular meetings, organise charity events, visit care homes, and support parish activities. This reflects the school's dedication to forming faith-filled, active citizens who live out Christ's teachings through service and leadership. Pupils are happy, confident, and supported by a culture of excellent pastoral care and mutual respect. Behaviour is respectful and inclusive. Diversity is celebrated through events like 'One World Day' and interfaith learning, with pupils affirming, 'It doesn't matter who we are, we are unique.'

The school offers a strong, consistent provision for its Catholic life and mission, underpinned by a clear, shared understanding of its identity and purpose. The mission is visible in the environment, relationships, and curriculum. Staff and pupils confidently articulate the school's values, with Gospel teachings guiding behaviour and decision-making. The mission statement 'Christ on my shoulder saying to me: Love one another, be the best that you can be. Make the world a better place for everybody,' is central to daily life. This ethos is evident in relationships, behaviour, and the curriculum. Visitors often comment on the school's welcoming and loving atmosphere. Pastoral care is a priority: staff feel valued and supported, contributing to a nurturing environment. Pupils feel safe, loved, and known as individuals, enabling them to thrive emotionally, spiritually, and academically. The physical environment reflects Catholic identity, and relationships are warm and respectful. Strong partnerships with parents and the parish enhance the school's mission. Pupils actively engage in Catholic social teaching, leading initiatives that support those in need locally and globally. They articulate the theological principles behind

their actions, demonstrating a deep understanding of justice, dignity, and care for Creation, though not all can yet explain how this is embedded across the curriculum.

Leaders and governors show a strong commitment to the school's Catholic life and mission, ensuring it is reflected in policies, practices, and daily life. The mission is visible and lived, with Christ at the centre of decision-making and relationships. Governors describe the school as a place where 'Love is in the walls,' highlighting how deeply the mission permeates the community. Leaders are authentic, trusted, and well-informed, with a clear understanding of strengths and areas for growth. They foster a culture of care and inclusion, prioritising pastoral and spiritual support for both pupils and staff. Staff wellbeing is valued, contributing to a strong sense of community and shared purpose. The school maintains positive links with the parish and seeks to involve parents, though there are missed opportunities for more regular engagement. Resources are used effectively to support those in need, with decisions reflecting a growing awareness of the common good and care for creation. Governors are skilled, committed, and visible, enabling strong partnerships between home, school, and parish. As part of the St Francis and St Clare Multi Academy Company (MAC), the school benefits from shared values and collaboration across a wider Catholic community. Self-evaluation processes are in place and improving, with leaders using monitoring to inform planning. There is scope to embed stakeholder feedback further, but the school is on a positive trajectory concerning this.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

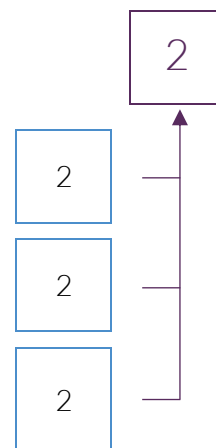
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Pupils demonstrate good achievement and enjoyment in religious education. From their starting points, learning is strong, supported by secure routines, effective use of visual prompts, and a clear sequence for learning. Pupils show good recall and retrieval of prior knowledge, supported by strong religious literacy and vocabulary development across the school. Opportunities for oracy and links to other subjects, such as science and art, enrich pupils' understanding and engagement. Pupils feel safe and secure in their lessons, and their behaviour reflects a positive attitude to learning. Staff-pupil relationships are strong, contributing to a 'family' feel that supports spiritual and moral development. However, while most pupils make good progress, there is limited evidence of adaptations to learning, particularly for pupils with higher prior attainment, whose progress is not yet extended through more challenging tasks. Pupils' work is of a very high standard due to the staff's high expectations in religious education. Creativity is evident in all year groups, enabling pupils to deepen their faith through a variety of tasks, such as using religious artwork as a stimulus for discussions.

Teaching in religious education is consistently good across the school. Staff demonstrate strong subject knowledge and use effective questioning techniques that encourage deeper thinking, particularly through 'how' and 'why' questions. Lessons are well-structured, with clear routines, modelling, and scaffolding that support pupil understanding. Knowledge retrieval practice is embedded within lessons, and pupils' learning behaviours are positive. Sacramental preparation within religious education lessons is robust and contributes effectively to pupils' spiritual development. For example, in one lesson, pupils were interpreting letters from St Paul and told inspectors, 'It teaches and inspires me to lead a good life; to be at one with God – to be humble, meek and the best you can be.' Staff model the school's values authentically; consequently, pupils are happy, polite, and reflective, showing that religious education is not only well-taught

but also meaningfully impacts their lives. There is a strong focus on vocabulary and religious literacy, and pupils are given opportunities to express their learning through discussion and creative links to other subjects. Learning is not always appropriately adapted to meet the needs of all pupils, primarily through tasks in the main part of lessons, which are often narrow in scope. As a result, learning can be capped, because pupils are not consistently challenged to think more deeply or apply their knowledge in various ways.

Leadership of religious education is effective, and leaders are committed to continuous improvement. Leaders ensure consistency in teaching and learning across the school, with a clear sequence for progression and a focus on developing religious literacy. Staff are well-supported and demonstrate a shared understanding of the school's Catholic mission and the importance of religious education within the curriculum. Leaders and governors demonstrate a commitment to pupils' formation, regularly monitoring the subject's quality and impact. They support staff through targeted training, ensuring that teachers are confident, knowledgeable, and inspired in their delivery. The subject leader demonstrates an inspiring vision of teaching and learning, underpinned by a deep understanding of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*. They lead with passion and expertise, ensuring that the curriculum is thoughtfully designed and sequential. Their leadership results in consistently high-quality teaching, with imaginative enrichment opportunities that deepen pupils' engagement and understanding. Resources are allocated effectively, and leaders ensure that assessment is purposeful and informs planning, while also promoting creativity, dialogue, and theological reflection. The school's engagement with diocesan networks and the wider Catholic educational community strengthens leadership capacity and enriches the curriculum. Monitoring and evaluation processes are in place, and there is a strong culture of collaboration among staff.

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

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

Leadership

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

2

2

Pupils engage respectfully and meaningfully in worship, which is valued by the school community. It is well structured, helping pupils to understand and participate in the rhythm of prayer. Pupils demonstrate a mature attitude, showing respect and attentiveness. They are given opportunities to contribute to planning and evaluating worship through structured templates and reflection sheets, which support their spiritual development. Pupils demonstrate a very secure understanding of the liturgical year and its influence on the school's prayer life. Pupils can articulate the significance of the different liturgical colours and their connection to the Church's calendar. Sacramentals, such as candles, scripture, and symbols, were used thoughtfully to support the theme of Creation, linking them both to the liturgical season. In some classes, worship is a deeply reflective and spiritually enriching experience. It supports pupils with their connection to God by creating a calm and reverent atmosphere. However, pupil feedback suggests that some aspects of worship feel overly repetitive or controlled, indicating a desire for greater creativity and ownership.

Worship is well-planned and central to school life. It is embedded in the daily rhythm and reflects the liturgical calendar, along with drawing on a range of Catholic traditions and includes seasonally appropriate scripture, which supports full and active participation. Prayer and liturgy are inclusive and accessible, inviting all pupils, regardless of their faith background, to engage meaningfully. It is a joyful and reverent expression of the school's mission, shaping the daily rhythm of school life and inspiring pupils to live out Gospel values in their relationships and actions. Singing is of a very high quality and a joyful expression of prayer, with the headteacher being an accomplished musician, enhancing the spirituality of the staff and pupils. The school environment reflects the ethos of the school. Through pupil voice, leaders developed a 'micro chapel' to enhance spontaneous prayer opportunities, which is regularly used by staff and pupils.

Staff, including leaders, model good practice in leading worship and are skilled in supporting pupils to plan and lead liturgical experiences. Music and other art forms are used in some classes to enhance worship, but it is not consistent, along with prayer spaces being well-maintained and conducive to reflection. The school works well with families and the parish to support pupils' prayer, though there is scope to further develop creativity and pupil ownership in prayer preparation.

Leaders and governors are committed to the school's spiritual life and ensure that worship is a central and valued part of daily life. They provide a clear structure for worship and support staff and pupils in planning and delivering high-quality experiences. The use of planning tools is effective and reflects a consistent approach; however, monitoring and evaluation are not yet robust enough to enable leaders and governors to articulate standards across the school. Training is offered regularly, equipping staff to lead and support worship effectively. Leaders assist staff in planning and delivering high-quality worship in some classes, though this is not consistent, and resources are allocated appropriately to support this. The impact of worship is reviewed as part of the school's self-evaluation cycle, with pupil voice contributing to ongoing improvement. The prayer and liturgy progression document lacks clarity in outlining the expected progression of skills and theological understanding across year groups, resulting in pupils lacking confidence and liturgical competence as they move through the school. In some classes, creativity is inspirational, but there are missed opportunities to embed more creative opportunities for pupils to lead worship in ways that reflect their spirituality and understanding, moving beyond formulaic approaches and fostering a more profound sense of ownership and joy in prayer.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Christopher's Catholic Primary Academy
School unique reference number (URN)	148318
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	860 3483
Full postal address of the school	Wolverhampton Road, Codsall, WV8 1PF
School phone number	01902 297820
Headteacher	Karl Babarczy
Chair of governing board	Christopher Walker
School Website	www.stchristophersprimary.org
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Francis and St Clare Catholic MAC
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	February 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Paul Madia
Deborah Enstone

Lead
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