

St Augustine's Catholic Secondary School

URN: 147212

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Middlesbrough

25–26 June 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

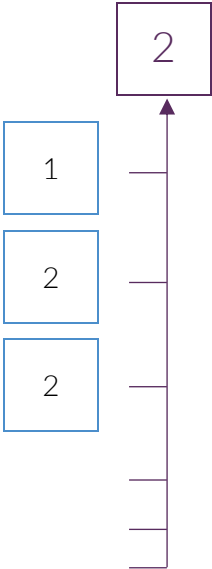
Collective worship (p.7)

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 curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishop’s Conference.
- The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection.

What the school does well

- The school fosters a warm, family-like atmosphere where respectful relationships between everyone creates a joyful, united school community rooted in care.
- The school's strong ethos of inclusivity cultivates a culture of respect and belonging, which is reflected in excellent behaviour both in classrooms and throughout the wider school environment.
- Pupils demonstrate enthusiasm for religious education, recognising its importance and approach lessons with attentiveness, engagement, and a readiness to learn.
- The school maintains a strong partnership with the local parish, enriching pupils' participation in the liturgy and deepening their connection with the wider Catholic community.
- The leadership of relationships sex and health education (RSE) is exemplary, providing clear vision, faithful guidance, and thoughtful provision that ensures the programme is both rooted in Catholic teaching and responsive to the developmental needs of all pupils.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that tasks in religious education are consistently aligned with curriculum aims, providing pupils with regular, structured opportunities to deepen their theological and ethical understanding, and to reflect on key issues in light of Catholic teaching.
- Develop and embed rigorous self-evaluation systems that effectively monitor and assess Catholic life and mission, religious education, and collective worship, ensuring findings inform ongoing strategic planning and improvement.
- Implement the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory* to ensure all pupils develop a clear understanding of its purpose and meaningfully engage in creating and experiencing prayer and liturgy that is both creative and spiritually enriching.

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

2

Provision

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

1

Leadership

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

1

1

Catholic life and mission is outstanding. The school radiates warmth and welcome, creating an environment where everyone feels valued. United by the shared mission "to love and serve Christ," pupils embrace school life with pride, cherishing their place in a supportive community. Pupils are familiar with Catholic social teaching, especially the principle of human dignity, and this is reflected in the way they treat one another with kindness. As a result, pupils regularly contribute to food collections for the Rainbow centre and sing at the local care home, demonstrating their commitment to social justice in action. The school lives out its Catholic mission by enabling students to participate in the pilgrimage to Lourdes, where they offer service to supported pilgrims. Pupils demonstrate reverence for the school chapel as a place for prayer and reflection, actively participating in the weekly rosary led by the Catholic life group and engaging in the celebration of the Eucharist at fortnightly Mass. Pupils take on some leadership roles within the school's chaplaincy by spearheading initiatives such as the Lenten walk, and by leading the increasingly active eco team, inspiring others to care for both people and planet. The 'Above and Beyond' reward system recognises pupils for achievement, effort, and living out the school's mission, which pupils value and appreciate.

Staff actively uphold the school's mission statement, integrating its values into all aspects of school life. They speak with passion about the school's strong sense of family. Staff members who are also parents, express genuine pride in having their own children attend the school, reflecting their confidence in the school's ethos and provision. The school is dedicated to the pastoral care of pupils, ensuring each pupil feels known, supported, and nurtured with a clear impact seen in the strengthened attendance figures. The school demonstrates an unwavering commitment to supporting the most vulnerable, living out the Christian values of love, respect, service, joy and responsibility. The outdoor prayer space reflects the value placed on pupil voice. The Catholic character of the school is evident throughout the environment. The chapel provides a reverent and sacred space for prayer and reflection, while the outdoor prayer area offers a peaceful place for quiet contemplation. Together with the inspiring mural of St

Augustine, they embody the school's mission. The school's relationship, sex and health Education programme is exemplary, rooted firmly in Catholic teaching and values; it nurtures pupils' understanding of relationships, dignity, and moral responsibility.

Leaders actively promote the bishop's vision and the school's mission. Through their example and service, they provide strong role models for pupils, embodying the values at the heart of Catholic education and fostering a sense of shared purpose. The school has invested deeply in building a meaningful relationship with the parish community. The parish priest describes the school as a "satellite for the Church," reflecting its vibrant role in extending the mission of the parish into the daily life of pupils and families. His frequent presence in school and connection with the wider community highlight the shared commitment to nurturing the faith and spiritual development of those at school. Staff express confidence in the school's leadership: the high levels of support provided; the sensitive management of workload; and the ongoing efforts to maintain wellbeing. This culture of care and respect contributes positively to staff morale, collaboration, and the overall sense of community. Governors bring a high level of expertise and strategic vision to their role. Their ambitious aspirations for the school's continued development reflect a commitment to excellence, but a more regular monitoring and evaluation of the Catholic life of the school by leaders and pupils is not yet in place.

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

2

Provision

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

3

Leadership

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

2

2

Religious education is good, with pupils speaking positively about their experience in lessons. There is clear evidence that recall is well embedded across lessons, and a variety of teaching techniques are being used by staff within the department. These approaches are helping pupils to build their understanding of key concepts and terms. While pupils can often recall key knowledge, opportunities to apply this learning more independently and at greater depth are still developing. Pupils generally display positive attitudes in religious education lessons and

there is a sense of enthusiasm for the subject. Many pupils show a genuine interest in the content, and lessons are calm and purposeful. That said, in some cases, there remains scope to provide more active, participatory opportunities to encourage deeper engagement with the material. In Key Stage 3, there are several missed opportunities for pupils to fully develop their ideas in more extended written tasks. In contrast, some strong examples of work in Key Stage 4 reflect more sustained engagement and a deeper understanding of key ideas. Leaders have identified the continued improvement of progress and attainment in religious education as an area of focus and are taking steps to address this.

Pupils report that they enjoy religious education lessons and often speak highly of their teachers, highlighting both enthusiasm for the subject and the positive impact of staff. Warm and respectful relationships between staff and pupils are well established, and pupils generally arrive at lessons eager to participate, displaying attentiveness and a willingness to engage with the learning. Classrooms are typically calm, and a positive learning environment is promoted, which helps to support pupils' focus and behaviour. Staff regularly praise pupils for good effort and behaviour, using reward systems such as house points and "Above and Beyond" tickets to encourage and recognise positive contributions. However, the impact of these strategies varies, and they are not always used in a way that ensures high levels of engagement and aspiration across all classes. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always ambitious, and at times, tasks lack the necessary level of challenge to stretch thinking. This can limit pupils' opportunities to fully develop their theological and ethical understanding. Although questioning is a feature of lessons, it is not always used effectively to prompt deeper thought. As a result, valuable chances to develop pupils' critical thinking are sometimes missed.

The introduction of the new *Religious Education Directory* is strongly supported by both leaders and governors, reflecting their commitment to high-quality Catholic education and staff are making good progress in implementing this with growing confidence in embedding its principles and content into curriculum planning and delivery. Appropriate support is being provided at multiple levels within the school, through the St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust, and via diocesan networks ensuring that staff feel increasingly equipped to meet the expectations of the *Religious Education Directory*. This layered approach to professional development is promoting more unified classroom practice and contributing to the ongoing enhancement of curriculum implementation. Religious education is afforded a similar status to other core subjects, with dedicated curriculum time, resourcing, and leadership oversight that reflect its central role in the academic and spiritual life of the school. While religious education is well established within the curriculum, there is further potential to enhance the subject by broadening enrichment opportunities that would support teaching and learning within the classroom. The religious education department is reflective in its approach and open to development, though a more systematic and robust process of self-evaluation has yet to be fully embedded in order to strengthen and align the department with diocesan expectations.

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

3

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 with morning prayer during form time, showing a willingness to take part in responses and moments of stillness. Whether reflecting on Catholic social teaching, the lives of the saints, or the Examen, pupils demonstrate a growing understanding of prayer life, though there is still scope to deepen participation and reflection. All pupils are offered various opportunities to engage in prayer, including traditional devotions such as the rosary, attending Mass, and reflective prayer. While some value these opportunities, engagement varies and overall participation in voluntary worship remains relatively low. Informal feedback shows that some pupils can articulate the significance of these celebrations and their role in the school's spiritual life. There is scope to encourage more active involvement by deepening pupils' understanding of the significance of prayer and exploring formats that are meaningful and accessible. Leaders recognise that some pupils could take more active roles in planning, leading, and evaluating prayer experiences. While the liturgical year is clearly represented throughout the school in visual displays, pupils are not yet able to confidently explain its influence on their prayer life or spiritual growth. Although they are exposed to the rhythms and symbols of the Church's calendar, there is limited evidence that this is being internalised or reflected upon meaningfully.

The school chapel is a beautiful and reverent space that provides a focal point for prayer and reflection within the life of the school. The presence of the Blessed Sacrament enhances its spiritual significance and offers pupils and staff a sacred setting in which to encounter Christ. To further support and embed a culture of prayer across the school, there is scope to develop additional prayer spaces within classrooms, encouraging pupils to engage in moments of quiet reflection as part of their everyday experience. A clear and consistent daily rhythm of prayer is well established across the school and is familiar to both staff and pupils, contributing to a shared sense of spiritual identity. This regular practice provides a shared structure that helps to shape the spiritual atmosphere of the school day, reinforcing its Catholic identity and can offer pupils some meaningful moments for reflection and connection with God. While the chaplain

plays a central role in guiding the school's prayer life, there is also potential for a wider range of staff members, across various roles, to contribute more regularly to leading acts of worship, further enriching the community's collective spiritual experience.

Holy days of obligation are thoughtfully integrated into the school calendar and celebrated with reverence and purpose, reinforcing the school's strong and distinctive Catholic identity. Leaders demonstrate a clear commitment to chaplaincy, recognising its central role in nurturing the spiritual life of the school community. Time is prioritised to support this vital work, ensuring it is a visible and valued aspect of school life. Resourcing for chaplaincy is strong at both the school and Trust level, enabling effective support for pupils' spiritual growth and pastoral care. The school clearly recognises the central importance of prayer and liturgy in shaping its Catholic life, and there is a consistent commitment to ensuring it features regularly and meaningfully across the liturgical calendar. However, the approach remains predominantly adult-led, which can limit the depth of pupil involvement and the opportunities for personal ownership and expression in worship. While staff demonstrate willingness, more embedded and intentional opportunities for ongoing formation would further enrich the school's prayer life, as would a clear and consistent system to monitor and evaluate the impact of professional development and prayer and liturgy experiences, supporting a deeper engagement with its spiritual mission.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Augustine's Catholic Secondary School
School unique reference number (URN)	147212
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8154604
Full postal address of the school	St Augustine's Catholic Secondary School, Sandybed Lane, Stepney, Scarborough, YO12 5LH
School phone number	01723363280
Headteacher	Aishling Robinson
Chair of governors	Andrew Carter
School Website	https://sasyorks.org/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust
Phase	Secondary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	11-16
Gender of pupils	Mixed

Date of last denominational inspection	09-10 December 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Clare Masterman	Lead inspector
Donna Burns	Team Inspector
Helen Pepper	Team Inspector

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