



Maria Fidelis Catholic School FCJ

URN: 100055

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster

22–23 October 2025

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

2

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

Compliance statement

- The school is fully compliant in relation to the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' conference.
- The school is fully compliant in relation to any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- The school is fully compliant in relation to previous areas for improvement.

What the school does well

- The charism of the Faithful Companions of Jesus (FCJ) is strongly embedded and lived out by all members of the school community.
- Behaviour is strong and reflects a culture of respect and dignity for all.
- Teachers' feedback in religious education books provides opportunities for students to deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- Prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school and faithfully reflect the rhythm of the prayer life of the Church.
- Leaders, including governors, demonstrate outstanding leadership in the Catholic life and mission of the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Improve questioning in religious education so that it is adapted to the varied needs of all students.
- Improve the monitoring and evaluation systems in religious education to ensure consistent and sustained improvement.
- Improve the formation of students and staff so prayer and liturgy are consistently well planned, led and evaluated.

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

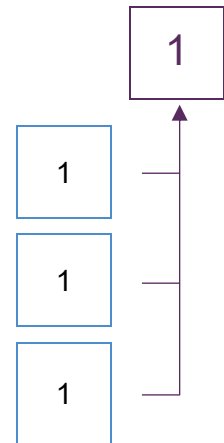
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



Students feel welcomed into the family of Maria Fidelis Catholic School FCJ regardless of their background, faith or ability. They take pride in belonging to this Catholic community and they speak confidently about the values and mission of the school. One student commented, 'to grow, like in our mission statement, means we always need to do our best to grow with Christ'. They live out the charism of the Faithful Companions of Jesus (FCJ) in concrete and meaningful ways and participate in numerous charitable activities for Euston food bank, Macmillan Cancer, and through a sponsored walk on Founder's Day supporting The Passage centre for the homeless in Westminster. Some students have even spoken in Parliament to ensure their voices are heard on issues around Catholic social teaching. They can relate the school's FCJ values to scripture and understand that caring for others is still central to everything they do. Students are proud to wear FCJ value badges, seeing them as daily reminders of how they should live. They have a profound sense of respect for themselves, others, and those of all faiths and none. The behaviour of students is exemplary, reflected by living out FCJ values and demonstrated by the pride with which they wear their uniform.

The school flourishes as a vibrant community rooted in FCJ values. Staff deeply understand that the mission of the school is integral to the foundation of their shared life together. One teacher commented, 'this is a community built on the common understanding of Christ's presence among us'. Staff are passionate about serving others and are involved in hosting the pensioners Christmas party and carol concert to strengthen bonds both within and beyond school. Such is the sense of belonging to the FCJ community, some staff have visited other FCJ schools in other parts of the world. Maria Fidelis is a true witness to its Catholic values, affirmed by parents in their feedback, but also in their promotion of the school to prospective parents. Staff provide the highest level of pastoral care, and this is rooted in the values of love, respect and service. Chaplaincy provision is central to the school

and as the staff group said, 'is everyone's job'. Relationships, sex, and health education is carefully planned and taught across the school in line with diocesan requirements.

Leaders ensure that Christ is at the centre of all they do. Catholic life and mission is the foundation of the school and they ensure that students, staff and parents are at the forefront of their decision making. Senior leaders know every student by name and take their role as guardians of the school's Catholic identity and FCJ charism with great seriousness. Leaders provide a thoughtful and inspiring induction programme for all new staff showing the FCJ charism is deeply embedded. The school has a strong link with the local parish, and the parish priest is a regular and welcome visitor in school. Leaders' respect for the dignity of every person is evident in how they value and care for their staff, and staff speak highly of the well-being support they receive. Leaders ensure the curriculum reflects the richness of Catholic social teaching and the governors are passionate advocates of this and the values of FCJ. Governors are well informed of the challenges the school faces and are supportive in ensuring their mission and values remain at the core of their decision making. Professional development is well planned, and staff feel that they are well prepared to live out and teach the school's mission.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

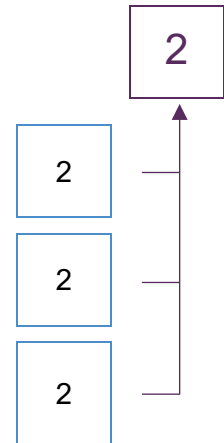
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Students enjoy religious education and are developing knowledge, understanding and skills as required by the *Religious Education Directory*. Religious literacy is a strength and in the best lessons students were able to apply subject specific vocabulary to moral and ethical situations like the war in Ukraine. Most students can talk confidently about what they have learnt, and in an observed lesson some raised challenging questions about the morality of assisted suicide. In the best lessons students' work shows independence of thought and examples of deep, well thought responses to questions that have been set. However, this is not consistent in all lessons. Progress is evident in books, and students respond consistently to the feedback they have received from their teachers. Many of the responses they make are thoughtful and perceptive and they can explain what they need to do to improve and most students know the level they are working at. Outcomes in GCSE improved by 10% in 2025 and students' progress is broadly in line with other core subjects in school. Foundations for extended writing are being built in Key Stage 3 and explicit links are made to examination skills and content.

Teachers have a strong subject knowledge and in the best lessons ensure their teaching matches the needs of all their students. In an observed Year 11 lesson the teacher used extensive and probing questions to elicit deeper responses from students about the painting 'The Creation of Adam' by Michelangelo, to help students understand the nature of God. Teachers are fully committed to the religious education department, have excellent relationships with students and are authentic witnesses to their faith. Lessons are well-planned, with most teachers using their student data sheets effectively. There are a growing number of opportunities for creative work especially in Key Stage 3. Questioning in the best lessons is used effectively and adapted to the needs of all students, though this is not consistent in all lessons. Teachers consistently celebrate students' progress both verbally and in books and this helps to develop a positive atmosphere in lessons. All lessons start with a prayer, and most teachers allow students time and space to reflect before answering questions. Policies on

providing feedback to students on assessment are fully embedded and applied. In Key Stage 5 core religious education is taught to all year 12 and 13 students following a sequential and engaging curriculum. A level teaching is strong, and students demonstrate a high level of knowledge and understanding and were able recall information they learnt in Year 12 in a debate on conscience. The department has good quality resources which are effectively used by most teachers to ensure good learning is taking place.

The curriculum faithfully expresses the new *Directory*, and the resourcing of the department is comparable to that of other core subjects in terms of curriculum time, staffing and homework. Department meetings have a pedagogical focus to support good practice being shared and they have developed successful links with other schools in the diocese and FCJ schools in the country. The subject leader has a clear vision and commitment to students and staff and has worked hard to develop a stable and committed team of teachers. The curriculum has been creatively structured across all key stages and phases, allowing students to build upon their prior learning. The monitoring and evaluation of religious education by leaders and governors needs to be more systematic and effective to support consistent and sustained progress. The new *Directory* is providing more opportunities to extend the enrichment curriculum and build on the good practice that already exists.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

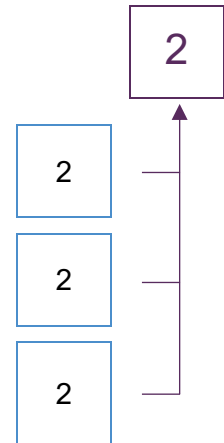
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school’s collective worship

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

Leadership

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



Students participate well in prayer and liturgy. They particularly appreciate the moments of quiet reflection afforded by the Daily Examen. Students understand a variety of ways of praying that are part of the Catholic tradition. The school embraces the fact that many students are from different faith traditions, recognising ‘all that is good and true’ in other faiths. Students are willing to take part in prayer and liturgy by reading scripture and bidding prayers during the Celebration of the Word. In an observed Year 7 and 8 assembly students offered up spontaneous prayers in areas of concern for them. Cafod Young Leaders have planned and delivered impactful liturgy to younger students, though students say they would benefit from being given more opportunities to plan, lead and evaluate prayer and liturgy. Students connect with young people from other FCJ schools at conferences and leadership development programmes. They can articulate how their prayer life has led them to take positive action in their lives. All year groups attend a popular retreat programme which is highly valued by students.

Prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school and form part of the daily routine for all students, staff and leaders including governors. The link governor is a member of the FCJ religious community and takes an active role in ensuring the prayer and liturgy of the school reflects the FCJ values and virtues. The daily pattern of prayer clearly reflects the rhythm of the prayer life of the Church. All staff observed support the school’s ethos and charism and some are able to model good practice. The week begins for all staff with a prayer during Monday briefing. All staff gatherings and meetings begin with reflection and prayer which is widely appreciated. Relevant staff help students to participate in prayer and liturgy and have a good understanding of the Church’s liturgical norms. There is scope for staff to ensure more student participation. Music is used to enhance and accompany the morning prayer said in tutor forms. The beautiful chapel provides a wonderful space for all the members of the school community. The Blessed Sacrament is reserved, and the space is regularly used by staff and students, including a Bible study group. There is also a prayer room set aside for Muslim students.

The school has an effective policy on prayer and liturgy available for staff use. Leaders are developing a clear strategy to improve levels of participation, and the skill set of students who wish to be involved in planning and delivering effective prayer and liturgy. Leaders, including governors, have planned the calendar to provide good opportunities for the school community to celebrate Mass. Mass is said on holy days of obligation and the Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered during Lent and Advent. Year groups attend Mass once per term in the parish church. The parish priest is very supportive of the school. Mass is also celebrated on Founder's Day and other important feast days. Senior staff have received training on prayer and liturgy which now needs to be cascaded down to a wider staff group. Leaders, including governors, are acutely aware of the importance of prayer and liturgy. Although there is no full-time chaplain the school has put in place measures to ensure that prayer and liturgy maintain a high profile across the school. Monitoring and evaluation of the impact of prayer and liturgy is part of the school's self-evaluation cycle, though this is an area that still requires further development. Students' views on prayer and liturgy are sought through an annual questionnaire.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Maria Fidelis Catholic School FCJ
School unique reference number (URN)	100055
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	2024652
Full postal address of the school	1 - 39 Drummond Crescent, London, NW1 1LY
School phone number	02073873856
Headteacher	Mark Anthony
Chair of governors	Elizabeth Carey
School Website	http://www.mariafidelis.camden.sch.uk/
Trusteeship	Faithful Companions of Jesus
Phase	Secondary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	20 November 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Tom Reilly	Lead
Evelyn Ward	Team
Paul Higginson	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