



St John's Catholic Primary School

URN: 142213

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Birmingham

08 July 2026 – 08 July 2026

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 RE

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

2

2

2

2

Yes

Yes

Fully

What the school does well

- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary throughout the school. They consistently demonstrate kindness, respect, and compassion, showing genuine care and support for one another and living out the school's Catholic values in their daily interactions.
- Staff are deeply committed to the school's mission and ethos. They model Gospel values through their relationships, professionalism, and dedication, serving as exemplary role models for pupils.
- The school environment visibly reflects its Catholic identity and mission.
- Provision within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provides rich and meaningful opportunities for children to engage with religious education.
- Prayer and liturgy are central to the school's daily life, providing a consistent rhythm of prayer in which pupils engage positively and reverently.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop routine opportunities for pupils to play an active role in evaluating the school's Catholic life, enabling them to contribute meaningfully to self-evaluation processes and to help shape future improvements.
- Provide a broad and engaging programme of enrichment opportunities that deepens pupils' understanding of the Catholic faith, enhances their religious education and enables them to make meaningful connections between faith and everyday life.
- Consistently provide opportunities for pupils to engage and participate in a wide range of different forms of prayer.

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

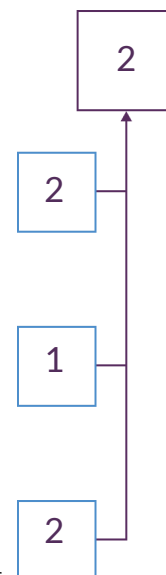
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 understand and value the school's mission, 'Learning to Know God and Share His Love', as central to the life of the school and show through their actions that it has meaning for them. Pupils confidently articulate the mission and demonstrate its impact through the way they care for, respect, and support one another, following the example of Jesus. They recognise that every person is created in the image and likeness of God and speak positively about feeling valued, safe, and nurtured within the school community. Pupils actively respond to the Church's call to stewardship by caring for our common home through litter picking and serving those in need in partnership with Fr Hudson's Caritas. They participate enthusiastically in charitable initiatives, including fundraising for Cafod and Macmillan Cancer Support. They are increasingly able to explain the Gospel values and Catholic social teachings that underpin these actions. Displays throughout the school celebrate these acts of service and demonstrate pupils' commitment to living out their faith. Pupils show respect for those of different faiths and backgrounds and understand the importance of dignity, inclusion, and compassion. They are developing a growing knowledge of other faiths and religions, recognising that living out the Gospel means treating all people with kindness, respect, and love.

Staff fully embrace the school's mission and consistently demonstrate their commitment to living out Gospel values in all aspects of school life. They actively support the local community through a range of charitable and outreach initiatives, including a sponsored swim, reflecting their dedication to service and the common good. Christ is at the heart of St John's, fostering a culture of welcome, belonging, and inclusion. Every member of the community is known, valued, and supported as a unique person. Staff celebrate and respect the diversity of

cultures and backgrounds represented in the school, ensuring everyone is welcomed with dignity and compassion. Staff are exemplary role models whose words and actions reflect the school's Catholic life and mission. They work collaboratively as a family, nurturing positive relationships rooted in mutual respect and care. Staff provide exceptional pastoral support for pupils and their families, recognising individual needs and responding to them sensitively through initiatives such as 'coffee and advice' mornings to support families experiencing challenge. Staff adapt provision sensitively in response to individual circumstances, enabling pupils to remain well-supported and to flourish. The school environment effectively witnesses to its mission through explicit signs of its Catholic character, strengthening pupils' sense of faith and belonging.

Leaders and governors clearly understand the school's mission and are committed to ensuring that Christ is at the heart of school life. They promote the archbishop's vision for Catholic education and work collaboratively with staff, parents, the parish, and the wider community. Leaders and governors are developing strong links with the local parish and encourage pupils and families to participate in Mass and parish events. Opportunities such as 'stay and pray', school Masses, and celebrations of the word enable parents to engage with school life and deepen their understanding of its mission: The Gospel and the principles of Catholic social teaching guide leadership. Leaders demonstrate respect for the dignity and well-being of staff through a supportive and caring working environment. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and priorities. Through regular visits, they provide appropriate support and challenge to leaders. Staff training on Catholic life and mission is well planned and enables staff to develop their knowledge and confidence. Pupils' involvement in the self-evaluation of the school's Catholic life and mission is not yet sufficiently developed for them to contribute fully to planning improvements.

Religious education

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 key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

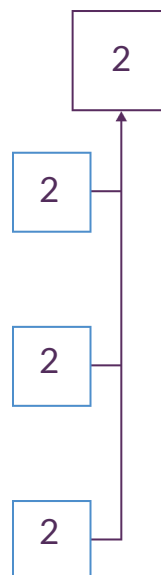
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 engage positively in religious education lessons and demonstrate good attitudes to learning. They respond confidently to questions, willingly share their ideas through paired and class discussions, and respect others' views. Pupils work independently when required, sustain concentration, and take pride in presenting their work to a good standard. Pupils respond well to opportunities for deeper thinking and produce work that reflects secure understanding. Pupils develop their knowledge, understanding, and religious literacy over time, although this is stronger where expectations are high. Pupils are interested and engaged in their learning, resulting in calm, purposeful lessons where behaviour is consistently good and supports effective learning. Pupils' ability to explain how well they are achieving and identify what they need to do next is stronger in classes where the learning is presented clearly and sequenced well. When pupils can do this, their progress is well-supported over time. Pupils achieve standards in religious education that broadly align with those attained in other core subjects.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and a good understanding of how pupils learn. They are committed to the value of religious education and communicate this effectively to pupils. Teachers use questioning to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding, enabling teachers to adapt learning and address misconceptions. Teachers often provide feedback, though pupils' progress is clearer and stronger where their achievements are recognised and celebrated. Teachers give pupils opportunities to reflect on scripture, Catholic social teaching, and their life experience in religious education lessons, supporting their spiritual and moral

development. EYFS teachers provide pupils with a wide range of resources that reinforce explicit learning; Indoor and outdoor activities provide meaningful opportunities for children to explore, apply and deepen their understanding through purposeful play. Where adults are deployed effectively in lessons, they enhance pupils' learning, though this is inconsistent across the school. Leaders and governors ensure that the religious education curriculum fully reflects the requirements of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*. This is evident in the long-term curriculum planning and the work in pupils' books, which reflect the directory's requirements. Leaders prioritise staff training, ensuring staff access a range of diocesan training opportunities alongside bespoke training delivered by the subject leader. This has strengthened teachers' subject knowledge and confidence, improving the quality of teaching and learning. The subject leader has a clear vision for religious education and provides effective guidance and support for colleagues. Through monitoring, support, and professional dialogue, the subject leader is developing greater consistency in teaching and helping staff to improve their practice. A programme of enrichment opportunities that explicitly enhances the religious education curriculum has yet to fully materialise. Leaders ensure that religious education is planned to enable different groups of pupils to access the curriculum successfully, with appropriate adaptation where needed. Additional challenge enables pupils to deepen their knowledge, understanding and religious literacy, although this is not yet consistently evident.' Governors are developing their role in monitoring religious education, with increasing challenge and support, strengthening their contribution to evaluating the subject, though this is not yet fully developed.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

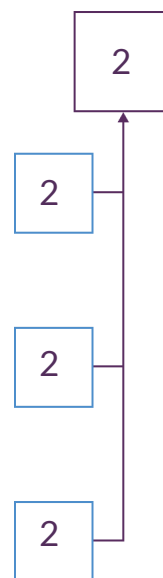
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

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



Pupils respond positively and reverently to the experiences of prayer and liturgy provided by the school. They engage and participate enthusiastically and respectfully in whole-school prayer, including Masses, demonstrating an understanding of the importance of worship within the life of the Church. Pupils have a good knowledge of the Church's liturgical year. They are familiar with prayers associated with particular seasons, such as the Hail Mary during October and May and the Eternal Rest prayer during the month of the Holy Souls. They understand how prayer and liturgy reflect the liturgical calendar and connect these themes to the religious education curriculum. Working alongside teachers, pupils contribute to preparing prayer and liturgy, helping create meaningful and engaging experiences for their peers. Pupils are beginning to recognise how prayer can inspire action, making links between prayer and service; for example, through the Poppy Appeal and praying for those who have died, rather than solely through remembrance. Pupils' involvement in evaluating prayer and liturgy is not yet sufficiently developed for them to reflect fully on its impact or contribute consistently to its improvement.

Prayer and liturgy are central to the school's life and woven into the daily experience of the whole community. The school provides regular opportunities for prayer through celebrations of the word, Masses, class worship, and daily prayer. Prayer at the beginning and end of the school day, and before and after meals, establishes a clear daily rhythm of prayer, which aligns with diocesan requirements. Teachers provide meaningful prayer experiences and increasingly use a variety of prayer styles that reflect the Church's liturgical year. Scripture is carefully chosen to support pupils' understanding of the liturgical seasons and Gospel

message. Staff are positive role models who lead prayer with reverence and support pupils effectively in planning and leading prayer and liturgy. Music, art, and other creative forms are increasingly used to enhance pupils' experiences of prayer and liturgy. Prayer spaces throughout the school provide opportunities for reflection and are now being used more purposefully to support pupils' spiritual development. Staff work well with families through initiatives such as 'stay and pray', while developing links with the parish supports the school's prayer life.

Leaders have established a clear, well-formulated prayer and liturgy policy that provides effective guidance for staff and supports a consistent approach across the school. A progression of skills for prayer and liturgy is in place and supports pupils in developing confidence and independence in preparing, engaging, and participating in prayer and liturgy. Pupils regularly experience the sacramental life of the Church through attendance at Mass, celebration of feast days, holy days of obligation, and other opportunities for prayer. These experiences support pupils' understanding of the Church's liturgical year and their spiritual development. Leaders prioritise training to ensure staff understand the importance of prayer and liturgy and have the knowledge and confidence to provide meaningful experiences for pupils. Leaders support staff to develop pupils' skills in preparing to celebrate the liturgy and share effective practice to enhance the quality of pupil-prepared prayer. Leaders and governors allocate resources carefully to support high-quality experiences of prayer and liturgy for pupils. Resource allocation supports the development of prayer spaces and pupils' experiences of prayer and liturgy, although aspects of this provision remain under development.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St John's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	142213
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	9343460
Full postal address of the school	School Lane, Stafford, ST18 0SL
School phone number	01889 343106
Executive Headteacher	Karen Bennett
Headteacher or Head of School	Karen Bennett
Chair of Governors	Stephen McAuley
School Website	www.st-johns-greathaywood.staffs.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Gabriel the Archangel Catholic Multi-Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non Selective
Age-range of pupils	3 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	11 December 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The Inspection Team

Veronica Gosling

Lead

Jonathan Clinton

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