



Our Lady's Catholic Primary School

URN: 139477

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Birmingham

04–05 December 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

1

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

1

Collective worship (p.7)

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

1

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

What the school does well

- Its ethos and mission are deeply rooted in the Salesian Values, understood and lived by pupils and staff.
- Leaders and governors are passionate and enthusiastic in their ambition for the school's Catholic life and mission, and they place this as the highest priority.
- Prayer and liturgy demonstrate a richness of Catholic tradition and are central to daily school life.
- Leaders willingly share their religious education subject expertise within and beyond the school to benefit others.

What the school needs to improve

- Provide opportunities for pupils to take a leading role in responding to the demands of Catholic social teaching locally, nationally, and globally.
- Develop consistency in standards and work presentation in religious education exercise books across the school.
- Ensure pupils can articulate what they have learned in religious education and what they need to do to improve their learning.

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

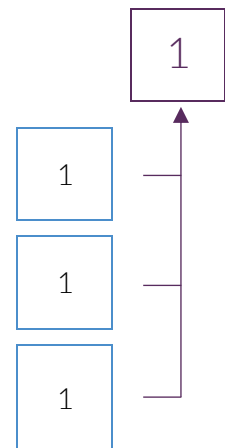
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 at Our Lady's Catholic Primary School demonstrate a strong understanding and appreciation of its unique Catholic identity. The school's mission statement, 'You are young, you are precious, and you are loved', following the words of St John Bosco, is clearly understood and lived out by pupils and staff. Being a Salesian-founded school, the school values its distinctive purpose and heritage, and pupils can articulate their significance with pride and have excellent knowledge about the Salesian saints. Pupils speak passionately about Our Lady's being a school that 'Helps us to know we can make a difference in the world and be future saints.' Pupils willingly take on their responsibilities by reflecting on 'big Catholic social teaching questions' and showing commitment to caring for the planet and serving those in need. One pupil commented, 'We are following in Jesus' footsteps because Jesus said, whatever you do for the poor, you do for me.' Although pupils eagerly support charities such as Cafod through the Big Lent Walk, Father Hudson's Caritas and local foodbanks, they cannot always choose specific social action projects for the benefit of others. Respect for others' dignity is deeply embedded, and pupils show empathy and consideration for others from all faith backgrounds. The school's chaplaincy program is particularly appreciated, with pupils eagerly stepping into leadership roles such as being part of the growing in faith together team (GIFT).

Our Lady's is deeply committed to fostering a supportive and joyful community, ensuring everyone feels welcomed and valued. Staff serve as exemplary role models for the Salesian values in their everyday actions. The Salesian values of RUAH (respect, understanding, affection, and humour) permeate all aspects of school life. The RUAH Award is upheld as an aspiring way to encourage acts of service within and outside the school. The school environment, values, and mission powerfully reflect its Catholic identity and can be seen in high-quality, communal

displays such as about the Year of Prayer and Creation. Chaplaincy is the cornerstone of the school, with the spiritual and moral growth of staff and pupils being embraced as the highest importance. A staff member described the school atmosphere as 'One of warmth, kindness and deep commitment to service reflecting the values of Christ.' The school approaches Relationships, Sex, and Health Education (RSHE) thoughtfully, and the programme is planned to meet all diocesan requirements fully.

Leaders and governors are passionate and resolute about pursuing the school's mission. They exemplify Catholic social teaching with service at every level, inspiring the school community. Each policy and procedure is carefully crafted to underscore the importance of the school's Catholic identity and purpose, ensuring that Salesian values are at the heart of school life. The school fully participates in diocesan services, with senior leaders selflessly offering service to the diocese and multi-academy company (MAC) by leading training in Catholic life and religious education. Leaders work diligently to nurture a fruitful service to the local parish in various ways, including invitations for parishioners to attend Mass in school, such as for the International Day Mass, thus strengthening their connection further. Parents and carers understand the school's mission and highly support its Catholic vision. One parent commented, 'I deeply appreciate how the school's Catholic teaching, centred on the values of RUAH, creates a nurturing and holistic environment.' The school's self-evaluation reflects monitoring and critical analysis, driving strategic improvements. Governors are ambitious in their vision for the school's Catholic life, engaging in thorough evaluation and contributing to its mission. Training, including targeted support for early career teachers (ECTs), focuses on Catholic mission and staff formation, further strengthening the school's Catholic character.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

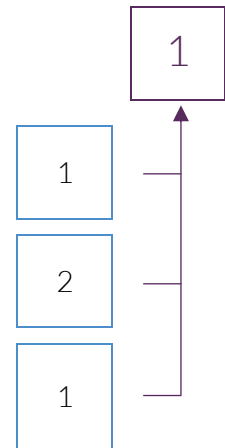
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 build an excellent foundation in religious education, developing knowledge, skills, and understanding. They consistently progress in learning more and can apply their knowledge according to the structured curriculum for each year. Pupils display religious literacy appropriate for their age and abilities, engaging thoughtfully in lessons and responding eagerly to questions and tasks, as was seen in a Year Six lesson about the gospel writer's portrayal of Jesus as the Messiah. Excellent strategies for recap at the start of lessons, including questions with varying challenge, help pupils draw on prior learning and access new learning. Pupils use subject-specific vocabulary but sometimes need help articulating what they have learned in prior lessons and what they need to do to improve their work. Given opportunities for self-directed learning, pupils show great independence and initiative and stay focused; this is a strength. However, consistently high presentation standards are variable in books across the school. Behaviour in religious education lessons is excellent, and pupils hold the subject and their books in the highest regard and thoroughly enjoy it. They can competently reflect on the impact of religious belief on everyday life due to the effective links with the Salesian values and Catholic social teaching in their religious education lessons. Pupils achieve above-average attainment compared to other core curriculum subjects, which almost all pupils have sustained for the last three years.

Teachers exemplify a deep commitment to religious education and communicate this effectively to their pupils. They demonstrate confidence when teaching the subject and have a good knowledge of the religious education content relative to the age group they teach. This was seen, for example, during a lesson in Reception, where the continuous provision for learning was carefully planned to consolidate understanding of the liturgical season of Advent. Lessons are planned and structured consistently, and throughout lessons, teachers use the question-answer model to assess pupils' levels of understanding, allowing them to adapt explanations to enhance

and embed learning. This responsive approach helps ensure that pupils make good progress. However, although teachers offer a range of opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their understanding when recording in books, there is less for pupils to express themselves through more creative mediums. Teachers recognise religious education's impact on pupils' moral and spiritual development, and one staff member shared, 'Religious education in our school is not just about learning facts, but about fostering a deeper relationship with Christ.' Teachers effectively use additional adults to support learning, especially for those with special educational needs.

School leaders and governors are dedicated to ensuring the religious education curriculum aligns faithfully with the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*. They prioritise the subject alongside other core subjects regarding staff training, resources, time allocation, and staffing. The curriculum is thoughtfully planned to address pupils' diverse needs, ensuring continuity and cohesion across all key stages and phases. The religious education subject leader provides ongoing staff training, enhancing their subject knowledge and suggesting teaching methods that effectively elevate educational practices and outcomes. The production of excellent knowledge organisers, encompassing all units of work across the school, has supported staff with their knowledge of religious education. The quality of subject leadership is recognised beyond the school, and senior leaders willingly share their expertise to benefit staff within other MAC schools. Leaders and governors evaluate the provision and outcomes of religious education through rigorous and detailed monitoring, comprehensive analysis, and reflective self-assessment. This self-evaluation process drives strategic actions that contribute to the school's continuous improvement in religious education.

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

The school offers enriching prayer and liturgical experiences, which pupils participate in fully and wholeheartedly. Their active engagement is evident in their thoughtful responses during prayer and liturgy, focused attentiveness, considered reflection, and enthusiastic involvement in high-quality communal singing. Pupils understand stage-appropriate traditional prayers, including the Angelus, the Rosary, and praying a novena. Pupils display an excellent grasp of the Church's liturgical year and know how it is woven into the school's prayer life. Pupils collaborate effectively with teachers and peers in their POP (Power of Prayer) groups to create meaningful, well-organised prayer and liturgy experiences. This is seen, for example, in the confident pupil-led prayers throughout the school during the season of Advent. Regular pupil-led opportunities enhance the depth and creativity of pupils' spiritual engagements, as seen in the whole school assembly about the solemnity of The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Following prayer and liturgy opportunities, pupils are starting to reflect on and evaluate the experiences they have helped plan, suggesting thoughtful improvements for the future. Pupils talk confidently and clearly about how prayer and liturgy experiences influence their worldview, including praying for those experiencing need. This ongoing reflection and commitment to improvement underline the school's success in fostering pupils' spiritual growth and active participation in their faith community.

Prayer and liturgy are central to the school's life. This can be seen in the detailed scheduling of prayer and liturgy experiences planned for the whole school community. The 'Power of Prayer' folders ensure that staff provide regular opportunities for pupil-led prayer and liturgy, detailing key liturgical seasons, feast days, and relevant religious artefacts to enhance these experiences. This has led teachers and relevant staff members to acquire high-level skills in guiding pupils to confidently plan and deliver well-structured prayer and liturgy. This has empowered pupils to

participate actively in their spiritual development, fostering a strong sense of ownership and responsibility in the community's prayer life. Carefully selected scripture passages, aligned with the liturgical season, form the foundation of prayer and liturgy, helping to guide pupils' spiritual reflections. Staff, including senior leaders, demonstrate commitment to nurturing the school's faith life and set an exemplary standard by selecting reflective scripture and leading worship. The school creatively and thoughtfully uses its available spaces, ensuring that environments are conducive to prayer and reflection. This includes the cherished school chapel, the outdoor prayer garden devoted to the Sacred Heart, an outdoor nativity scene, and a Reception class role-play church. Time and care are invested to ensure these spaces are well-maintained and used appropriately, creating a sacred atmosphere that enhances the overall liturgical experience for all participants.

The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is thoughtfully crafted, regularly reviewed, and well-aligned with its goals. Leaders have established a clear and comprehensive strategy to develop pupils' participation skills, ensuring they grow in their ability to engage with prayer and liturgy throughout their time at the school. The success of this strategy is evident in the increasing confidence and ease with which pupils participate in liturgical practices as they advance through the years. School leaders, including governors, have carefully planned the school calendar to ensure regular opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist, especially during key moments in the liturgical year and significant events in the school's life. Similarly, the Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered to students during pivotal times such as Lent and Advent, reinforcing the spiritual rhythm of the year. Leaders prioritise the well-being of staff, with one staff member commenting, 'There is a nature of support for all who are not Catholic and who are immersing themselves in the faith.' Inspirational training, both in-house and beyond, for all staff, focusing on liturgical formation, is well-established. Leaders place great importance on evaluating the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy, incorporating feedback into their ongoing self-assessment and continuous improvement process.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Our Lady's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	139477
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	931 3836
Full postal address of the school	Oxford Road, Cowley, Oxford, OX4 2LF
School phone number	01865 779176
Headteacher	Tara Davies
Chair of governing board	Paul Concannon
School Website	www.ourladyscowley.co.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	The Pope Francis Catholic Multi Academy Company
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	May 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Melanie Elliott
Rachael Batson

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