



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection Report

HOLY SOULS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Part of the St Teresa of Calcutta Catholic Multi Academy Company
Mallard Close, Acocks Green, Birmingham, B27 7NB

Inspection dates:

19 – 20 May 2022

Lead Inspector:

Mark Hinton

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:

Outstanding

Catholic Life:

Outstanding

Religious Education:

Outstanding

Collective Worship:

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection:

Outstanding

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

This is an Outstanding Catholic school because:

- The provision for Catholic Life has a deeply profound impact on pupils' moral and spiritual formation, bringing them ever-closer to Christ.
- The quality of learning and teaching in Religious Education is of a very high standard. It is very well-led, monitored and evaluated. As a result, pupils' religious knowledge and understanding are exceptionally strong. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the Religious Education provided at the school.
- Pupils and the entire school community are engaged and inspired by the school's high-quality provision for Collective Worship. They value the worship opportunities provided by the school and respond with enthusiasm and commitment. Collective Worship is meticulously planned, and its impact is carefully monitored and evaluated.
- There is a very effective partnership between the school, parish and governors that supports and nurtures outstanding progress for pupils. Governors provide robust challenges and support to the school. The parish priest, assistant priest and parish sister have a strong relationship with the school, and their work has a powerful impact on pupils' spiritual development.
- The school is the beating heart of the community. Its contribution is valued, appreciated and widely respected. As a result, it wholeheartedly fulfils its mission as a Catholic school.

FULL REPORT**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Embed Catholic social teaching across the entire school curriculum, building on the positive start already made.
- Build up pupils' independent skills for leading and organising prayer and liturgy, so they can participate with even greater ease and confidence as they mature.
- Further reinforce the monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship by validating findings from pupil and staff voice with evidence from direct observation.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The quality of the Catholic Life of the school	Outstanding
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	Outstanding
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school	Outstanding
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school	Outstanding

CL1 The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school**CL2 The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school**

- Pupils and the whole school community have a deep and practical understanding of the school's mission statement: 'Holy Souls School welcomes you. Holy Souls School is a place where we pray together. Holy Souls School is a place where we care. Holy Souls School is a place of learning. Holy Souls School is a place where everyone is important.' The mission statement is taught and explored as a lived experience every day. As a result, pupils can confidently describe how they contribute to and benefit from the school's mission.
- Discipleship is at the heart of the way the school lives out its mission statement, and even the youngest children can explain how they are disciples who 'shine for Jesus and bring good news.' They embrace discipleship enthusiastically and seek to make a difference, inspired by Jesus' teachings. For example, pupils and their families, together with staff and the parish community, are highly supportive of the local food bank and work together to support those in need within the community.
- Pupils' active involvement in evaluating Catholic Life is a strength of the school. Pupil voice plays a significant part in the monitoring and evaluation process, and pupils are proud of the active contribution they make. Because of this thoughtful involvement of pupils, their views and opinions are considered meaningfully when leaders are planning improvements to the provision for Catholic Life.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They are kind, welcoming, forgiving and respectful. The high expectations of staff and the positive example they set, combined with the prominence of the school's mission statement in all of its day-to-day work, support pupils to behave well.

- Pupils are actively involved in leading many aspects of Catholic Life. The 'young disciples' group works together with leaders to monitor, evaluate and improve the provision. Pupils are proud of their contributions, and they know the school values their ideas. The 'climate heroes' group works together to lead the school's response to *Laudato Si'*. It has introduced a wide range of initiatives to care for the environment, such as recycling crisp packets into blankets for the homeless and organising a 'go green' campaign day to take action and raise awareness about climate change.
- Pupils participate enthusiastically and thoughtfully in Catholic Life. Catholic Life is central to daily life at Holy Souls and is an integral part of the curriculum. Pupils are proud of their work as 'holy helpers' visiting the local senior citizens club in the parish. They thoughtfully learned how to support people with dementia before visiting the dementia day centre to socialise with service users and participate in craft activities.
- Chaplaincy provision at Holy Souls is integral to the day to day life of the school. The parish priest, assistant parish priest and parish sister are actively involved in the Catholic Life of the school and are well known by the pupils and staff. Because of this, pupils demonstrate an excellent response to chaplaincy, and they recognise how they are supported to be 'closer to Jesus.'
- Central to the Catholic Life of the school is high-quality pastoral support at all levels. Pupils feel safe and well supported at Holy Souls because they know they are loved. They have complete confidence in the staff to look after them, help them and keep them safe. Pupils are supported by a specialist drop-in provision in the 'Romero Suite' where they can go and access support for their mental and emotional wellbeing. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities emphasises pupils' pastoral care, resulting in all pupils feeling equally loved, valued and well supported.
- The school's pastoral team is a staff group dedicated to ensuring the highest standards of pastoral care. This level of care and support extends to providing support for those most in need in the wider school community. Parents and carers appreciate the school's support and care for the pupils and their families. As a result, pupils are well supported, and well looked after so that they can attend school and make the most of everything it offers to them.
- The school environment is a beautiful, well maintained, distinctively Catholic space indoors and outdoors. Pupils' written work is beautifully displayed, and pupils' religious art and craftwork, often produced at after-school art club, is used to enhance the environment. The indoor and outdoor environment is a unique strength of the school and has been nurtured over several years and continues to evolve. Pupils describe how they use the internal and external signs of their Catholic school to help them pray and be discerning about their choices.
- Forest school provision enhances Catholic Life. Pupils enjoy the sense of awe and wonder at God's creation that forest school sessions provide. They also use the beautiful prayer garden and grotto, planting flowers and using the spaces as a prayer and meditation focus.
- Pupils have a strong understanding of right and wrong, and they readily link this to the teachings of Christ through Bible stories because they are so familiar with them. Pupils' work related to protecting the environment and helping those in need in the local community supports their ethical development in an age-appropriate way.
- Pupils' response to the school's relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) programme is positive. This is because the scheme of work is well sequenced and thoughtfully planned. Pupils particularly enjoy the opportunities provided within the programme for discussions and say this helps them learn more.

- Opportunities for pupils' vocational development are well embedded in the curriculum. Several displays inside and outside the school help pupils think about vocation in the fullest sense. Seminarians visit the school to work with pupils, and pupils visit the diocesan seminary or vocations experiences. Pupils understand vocation as who God calls them to be both now and in the future. The school has identified that it wants to develop its provision for vocations even more by inviting an even more comprehensive range of people in to speak to pupils about their vocations.
- Pupils' involvement with the parish and local community is robust. Pupils regularly attend Mass in the parish church, and the parishioners highly value their presence. They have a positive relationship with the parish priest because he is actively present and involved in the Catholic Life of the school. The parish is actively involved in the school's work and vice versa. For example, the parish 'Legion of Mary' group visits the school to lead voluntary Rosary groups, to which pupils respond positively. Pupils enjoy working with the parish sister on CAFOD's programme for Catholic social teaching. They value the work of the assistant parish priest who leads the Confirmation and Year 7 transition programme. The school and parish have innovatively designed this programme to form a bridge between primary and secondary school to sustain pupils' faith lives. Pupils speak with pride in their school, parish and their own beliefs.
- Staff in all areas of the school's work are exceptionally committed to the school's mission. The school caretaker plays an active role in ensuring pupils, parents and visitors are made to feel welcome and valued. The staff in the office understand their contribution to the school's mission because leaders involve them fully in the Catholic Life of the school. The site team ensures the Catholic environment is maintained with dignity and care for the community because they are equally committed to the mission. Lunchtime and catering staff uphold the mission in the kind and caring way they support pupils. Teachers, teaching assistants and leaders all work together to ensure the mission is an inspiring reality for the whole community. The whole staff's commitment to the school's mission is exceptional.
- The headteacher's inspirational, calm and caring leadership is guided by her faith and dedication to the school's mission. The headteacher leads and motivates the entire community through her commitment to the mission and her belief in what the community can achieve together with Jesus at its centre. The headteacher is well respected by pupils, parents, staff and the entire school community. She is well supported by the equally dedicated deputy headteacher and assistant headteachers who work together to embed and secure the school's mission in its day to day life. As a result of this strong and determined Catholic leadership, staff and pupils are committed to the school's mission, and they are proud to be part of the Christ-centred community of Holy Souls.
- Staff feel valued and appreciated, and they are proud of the work they do to fulfil the school's mission statement. They value the care and support provided for them by leaders and governors and are confident that their welfare is considered. Pastoral care and support are systemic at Holy Souls – everyone is supportive of each other as part of a genuine, whole-community approach, which is a distinctive strength of the school.
- Staff understand the importance of their own spiritual development and formation and the contribution this makes to the Catholic Life of the school. They treat this very seriously and genuinely value the opportunities provided by leaders and chaplaincy for their spiritual development. Staff retreats occur in school and the parish church and are very much appreciated and well attended by staff in all areas of the school's work. This commitment helps staff keep their faith alive and enables them to inspire the faith lives of the pupils and their families.

- Opportunities for staff prayer in various forms help ensure the staff is a prayerful community. Innovative approaches such as the 'secret saints' project, where staff pray for each other regularly, are valued and appreciated by all staff.
- Staff are positive role models in their behaviour and conduct. They inspire the pupils because they show genuine love and care in every aspect of their work. Pupils respond positively to the example they are set because staff behaviour models kindness, forgiveness and respect.
- Catholic social teaching is currently taught discretely, and the pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning. They can speak confidently about how the teachings of the Church translate into action for the poor, the needy, and the environment. This positive work now needs to be extended across the entire school curriculum to enable more links with learning in other subjects.

CL3 How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school

- Guided and inspired by the headteacher, leaders have an exceptional commitment to the Catholic Life of the school. They are wholly focused on the school's mission, and they are highly effective in leading and upholding the school's Catholic Life.
- Monitoring and evaluation are very rigorous and systematically organised. No stone is left unturned by the school's processes, and the contribution of pupil and staff voice is a strength. As a result, Catholic Life is constantly evolving and improving and is planned around the needs and views of the pupils, meaning it is highly engaging and effective.
- Leaders are deeply evaluative and reflective and make rigorous use of self-evaluation to improve the provision for Catholic Life. Leaders are aware of the need to streamline systems in some areas to reduce unnecessary workload.
- Induction procedures are thoughtful, robust and effective. Leaders and staff are well aware of how important it is to methodically and effectively induct new staff, including those new to Catholic education. Great care is taken to induct staff before they take up posts wherever possible and provide training that goes above and beyond the basics. The result of this is that new staff, including early career teachers, feel exceptionally well supported to make a positive contribution to the Catholic Life of the school right from their first days. This, in turn, means that pupils experience consistently strong provision.
- Surveys and questionnaires are used regularly to gather parents' and carers' views. Before and after school, leaders and staff are also on duty to meet parents and carers and engage with them. Parents and carers appreciate that talking to the headteacher and other leaders is easy. They praise the school's parent communication platform as an effective means of communicating with the school. Before the pandemic, parents had regular opportunities to visit the school and be part of its Catholic Life. The school is actively planning more opportunities for parents to be invited into the school now that COVID-19 restrictions are easing.
- The dedicated and effective governing body makes a significant contribution to the high-quality Catholic Life of the school. They challenge leaders and question what is reported to them, seeking evidence to help them quality assure the school's self-evaluation. At the same time, the governing body is supportive and recognises its responsibility to manage the headteacher's workload, other leaders and staff. Governors are actively involved in the school's life and are valued and respected for the contribution they make. They are highly effective in holding the school to account and providing support for leaders to ensure continued improvement.

- Pupils' spiritual and moral development is embedded across the entire curriculum at Holy Souls. The provision is meticulously and thoughtfully monitored and evaluated, with pupil voice at the heart of the process. Leaders and governors actively promote pupils' spiritual and moral development, and as a result, this is firmly placed at the heart of the curriculum and all of the school's work.
- Leaders and governors ensure the school fully meets the bishop's requirements relating to Catholic Life.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of Religious Education	Outstanding
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	Outstanding
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	Outstanding
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	Outstanding

RE1 How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

RE2 The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education

- Most pupils start school in Reception with a very low baseline of religious knowledge and understanding. They make substantial progress in Reception and Key Stage 1, with the majority of pupils meeting age-related expectations by the end of Year Two. This strong progress continues in Key Stage 2 and typically, by the end of Year 6, most pupils meet age-related expectations, and approximately one-third of pupils exceed them.
- Most groups of pupils make similarly substantial progress from their starting points, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs or disabilities. Historically, boys have not made such strong progress as girls, and the school has carefully adapted its provision to close this gap. Whilst girls still perform more strongly on average than boys, the gap is closing year on year, and rates of progress for boys are improving.
- Pupils can draw on their well-sequenced and challenging Religious Education to be deeply reflective. Even the youngest children are supported and challenged to think very deeply. Older pupils are empowered to be discerning and evaluative about what they learn. They are successful in their work because they have experienced a challenging, well planned and thoughtfully delivered Religious Education curriculum throughout their time in school.
- Pupils are deeply engaged in their Religious Education learning. In lessons, behaviour and conduct are exemplary because pupils are fascinated by what they learn and are well supported to connect new content to previous learning. The well-sequenced curriculum promotes high levels of engagement and enthusiasm for Religious Education.
- Pupils demonstrate positive behaviour for learning in Religious Education lessons because they are immersed in the lessons due to high-quality teaching. Pupils listen attentively, answer thoughtfully and engage independently. Even the youngest

pupils demonstrate high levels of perseverance and motivation because they enjoy Religious Education so much.

- The quality of pupils' work is of a very high standard. Across all key stages, pupils can demonstrate what they learn from Christ and about Christ. This is consistent throughout the school and is a strength of the provision. Sometimes pupils' written work could be more neatly presented, but their books show in-depth coverage of the curriculum and thoughtful and robust engagement with what has been taught.
- There are effective arrangements in place for both formal and 'in the moment' assessment of pupils' work, and as a result, teachers can identify the gaps and next steps in pupils' learning. Lessons and work units are organised methodically to ensure pupils know more and remember more as each lesson and unit is completed. Assessment informs the planning from one lesson to the next, and teachers are skilled at ensuring their teaching meets the needs of the pupils.
- Teachers' strong subject and pedagogical knowledge and understanding help pupils make rapid and sustained progress in Religious Education. Teachers' confident and enthusiastic teaching helps to inspire and motivate pupils because they enjoy their learning in Religious Education. Teachers understand the critical knowledge pupils need to make progress and plan their lessons very effectively. As a result, pupils make good progress throughout the school.
- Teachers use a range of strategies to help children make good progress in Religious Education. Lessons include artwork, discussion, evaluation and detailed scripture studies. Pupils' books show ample evidence of a wide range of approaches to learning. A consistent feature is the level of detail and understanding that pupils' work shows throughout the school. Pupils' work in Religious Education is challenging, and they respond positively to the challenge as a result of consistently good and often outstanding teaching.
- The school's approach to monitoring and evaluation values pupil voice, and pupils are heavily involved in evaluating their work and that of others. This is an embedded feature of the day to day work of the school, and pupils are skilled at identifying their successes and areas for development. They can evaluate their learning experience within a lesson or unit of work, and teachers make full use of the pupils' feedback to help them plan future learning.
- Lessons are well-paced, and teachers' use of time is highly effective. Pupils' attentiveness and concentration are strong because teachers are skilled at planning lessons and using their time effectively. There is virtually no low-level disruption in classes because pupils are engrossed in their learning. Religious Education books demonstrate that pupils have sufficient time to finish their tasks and consolidate their learning. Teachers' time management within lessons and across work units is very skilled and well-matched to pupils' stages of development and maturity.
- Skilful and well-pitched questioning is a strength of the teaching at Holy Souls and is used consistently well throughout the school. Teachers and teaching assistants constantly monitor and evaluate pupils' learning within and between lessons, and they use questioning to move the learning forward whilst consolidating key knowledge and understanding. Questioning is used widely and effectively during lessons and when feeding back to pupils with the use of 'spiritual questions' to help pupils reflect upon and consolidate what they have learnt in lessons.
- Teaching Assistants make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning. They support pupils' learning by leading activities within lessons and supporting teachers in delivering content. Teaching assistants throughout the school are skilled at promoting pupils' independence, and pupils are provided with very well-matched support that enables them to do their best. The use of teaching assistants is consistently well planned throughout the school, and they make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning and independence.

- Teachers have very high expectations of both themselves and of pupils. Religious Education rightly has a very high status in the curriculum, and teachers challenge themselves and the pupils to achieve the highest standards of learning and teaching. There are consistently high expectations and high aspirations throughout the school. Pupils respond positively to teachers' high expectations because high-quality teaching supports them exceptionally well.
- Teachers provide helpful feedback to pupils and help them to improve their work. Pupils respond positively to feedback because it is embedded within their lessons. They are equally used to providing constructive feedback about their learning to teachers and leaders. As pupils develop throughout their time in school, they become even more skilled at using feedback to help them improve their work. Teachers and pupils use two-way feedback to help improve learning, which is a feature of Religious Education at Holy Souls.
- Recognising and celebrating effort and achievement is central to the school's culture. As well as providing pupils with feedback on their work, all staff actively celebrate pupils' achievements in Religious Education with rewards and incentives. The weekly 'Gifts from God' praise assembly, 'disciples of the week' and 'staff disciple of the week' underpin the culture of recognising and celebrating achievement in the fullest sense.

RE3 How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

- Religious Education meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and the additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- Leaders and governors ensure that at least 10% of curriculum time is dedicated to Religious Education across at least two sessions per week.
- Governors ensure that Religious Education is at least comparable to other core subjects in terms of resourcing, staffing and status.
- Leaders' and governors' monitoring and evaluation of RE is rigorous and methodically planned. Governors have the opportunity to work alongside leaders when they monitor the quality of Religious Education and, as such, have a first-hand experience of the quality of provision. Governors challenge leaders about their findings and support leaders to think deeply about how to continue improving the quality of provision for Religious Education. Governors keep their professional development up to date and, as such, are well placed to support and challenge the school.
- Learning walks, book scrutiny, team teaching, data analysis, and staff and pupil voice all contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of religious Education. Leaders and governors meticulously analyse the findings of monitoring activities and use them to inform improvement planning. Leaders and governors have a very up to date, well-informed view of the quality of Religious Education at Holy Souls as a result of targeted and effective self-evaluation.
- The curriculum leader for Religious Education is exceptionally effective and is highly regarded by staff for the support and expertise she brings to the role. Religious Education is led and monitored with dedication and care. This results in positive outcomes for pupils.
- The curriculum leader has developed highly effective and productive relationships with pupils, staff, leaders, governors, the parish, and the wider diocesan family, leading to a continuous and sustained improvement culture.
- Leaders and governors effectively ensure Religious Education is planned to meet the needs of pupils through their monitoring and evaluation. Governors study data and

ask helpful questions to challenge leaders and ensure the school is doing all it can to support the learning of all groups of pupils. Leaders drill down into all of their monitoring data and evidence and challenge themselves and other staff to ensure the pupils' needs are met. This detailed level of care and analysis ensures all pupils receive high-quality Religious Education.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The quality of Collective Worship	Outstanding
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	Outstanding
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	Outstanding
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	Outstanding

CW1 How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship

CW2 The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

- Pupils are extremely reverent and respectful when joining in with Collective Worship. They listen attentively and participate enthusiastically. They eagerly answer questions and join in with responses. They are engaged and enthused by the Collective Worship provided at the school. This is because Collective Worship is well planned and matched to the pupils' ages and stages of spiritual development.
- Pupils' singing is enthusiastic and joyful. Pupils enjoy music and singing as a form of prayer and respond with exceptional enthusiasm.
- Pupils are used to organising and leading their own acts of Collective Worship, which is an embedded feature of Collective Worship. The school closures caused by the pandemic have impeded progress in this area for some children. The school now needs to foster greater pupil independence to continue improving pupil-led Collective Worship.
- Prayer is at the heart of the school, and a wide range of approaches are used. Pupils learn traditional prayers for their year group, and these are prominently displayed in classrooms and cross-referenced in assemblies. Sacred silence is valued and appreciated by the pupils, and they enjoy 'time out of the busy day to talk to Jesus.' Pupils are used to writing their prayers and enjoy reading out intercessions during assembly and Mass. The school environment is conducive to worship with its many beautiful displays, prayer garden and grotto.
- Pupils have a firm understanding of the liturgical year because it is the driver of the curriculum and rhythm of school life. Even the very youngest pupils know and understand the liturgical year and can explain the religious seasons confidently. This is because teachers and leaders continually explain and reinforce the seasons, colours, themes and practices of the liturgical year so that they become embedded in pupils' memories.
- Prayer plays a significant role in pupils' spiritual and moral development. Pupils willingly pray for others in the local community and beyond, and they can also

explain how their own prayer lives bring them closer to God. The school is a prayerful community, and the pupils' response is enthusiastic and thoughtful.

- Collective Worship is planned strategically. Leaders ensure that the liturgical seasons are covered in depth. The Catholic Schools Pupil Profile values are embedded, and as a result, Collective Worship has a powerful impact on pupils' learning and development.
- Collective Worship is given a very high status by leaders, teachers and all adults in school. It is central to the life of the school and is delivered, evaluated and resourced with great care. As a result, pupils embrace their opportunities to worship together, and their response is very enthusiastic. Pupils' behaviour in assembly, Mass and other gatherings is exceptional.
- The strong subject knowledge that staff have developed as a result of their ongoing formation and continuous professional development is reflected in the high-quality opportunities for worship provided by the school. Leaders have very high expectations for Collective Worship and empower staff to deliver high quality, inspirational and uplifting gatherings. The entire team come together to make Collective Worship a special time for the whole community.
- Staff are skilled at supporting pupils to organise and lead their acts of Collective Worship, and this is reflected in the confident way many pupils can lead. Some pupils need to be able to lead their acts of Collective Worship with even greater independence, and teachers need to focus on improving this skill with pupils carefully.
- Before the restrictions imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, parents and parishioners were frequent visitors to the school for Collective Worship. Now that regulations are easing, the school is looking forward to welcoming the community back into the school for Collective Worship.
- The school has worked closely with the parish priest to encourage pupils and their families to return to church after the pandemic. Both the school and parish understand the importance of the community coming together to worship and have taken positive action. A brilliant example of this work is how sacramental Masses have been organised as part of several parish Sunday Masses (rather than a standalone event), enabling the school and parish community to be together.

CW3 How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship

- Leaders have high levels of expertise and are skilled at planning and delivering inspirational acts of Collective Worship. They employ a wide range of resources such as very well-chosen music, film clips, personal interaction, reflective displays, meditation, religious art and different approaches to prayer. Their delivery is personable, engaging, and confident, leading to a very enthusiastic response from the whole school community.
- The provision for Collective Worship reflects leaders' strong knowledge and understanding of the liturgical year. During the inspection, the school celebrated a whole school 'Mary Day' in honour of the month of May. Collective Worship and the day's activities immersed the pupils in the month of Our Lady and created a memorable experience.
- Collective Worship opportunities are very well pitched and accessible for pupils. Creative use of media, music and images makes for a contemporary approach whilst the traditions of the Church are upheld and celebrated. The pitch of Collective Worship is very well matched to different groups of pupils, which positively impacts their response.

- Leaders are exceptional role models of practice for pupils and other staff. The headteacher's assembly during the inspection demonstrated a very well-informed understanding of their needs, discerning selection of resources and a positive, mutually respectful relationship with the pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants supported the headteacher by playing instruments, assisting with technology and modelling respectful responses. Pupils confidently told inspectors that this was typical of their Collective Worship experience and that they thoroughly enjoyed learning about Jesus in assemblies, Masses and other gatherings.
- Leaders are deeply committed to their own continuous professional development and that of the entire staff team. There are numerous opportunities for professional development concerning Collective Worship throughout the year, not least the regular opportunity to be part of the assemblies so skillfully led by the headteacher and other leaders. This effective modelling is instrumental in training and supporting staff to be confident when delivering acts of Collective Worship.
- Collective Worship is rigorously and effectively monitored and evaluated. The school's processes, supported by the work of the governors, ensure that Collective Worship is constantly evolving and improving to meet the needs of the pupils. Partly due to the restrictions on gathering caused by Covid-19 restrictions, there has been a greater focus on pupil and staff voice and less emphasis on direct observation in the past two years. Direct observation of Collective Worship now needs to be fully used again to triangulate the evidence from staff voice and pupil voice and provide leaders and governors with even greater insight into the quality of provision.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the school meets the requirements of the diocesan bishop for daily prayers and participation in diocese-wide Collective Worship activities. The school is often actively involved in supporting these events.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Unique reference number	147009
Local authority	Birmingham
<i>This inspection was carried out under Canon 806 of Canon Law and under Section 48 of the Education Act (2005).</i>	
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	390
Appropriate authority	The board of directors
Chair	Canon Jonathan Veasey
Headteacher	Rachel Girling
Telephone number	0121 272 1776
Website address	www.holysoul.bham.sch.uk
Email address	enquiry@holysoul.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	June 2015

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL

- Holy Souls is a larger than average primary school serving the parish of Sacred Heart and Holy Souls in Acocks Green.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 72.0%.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The percentage of SEND pupils is above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic origins is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with EAL is below the national average.
- Attainment on entry is below average.
- Since the last inspection, the school has become an academy within the St Teresa of Calcutta Catholic Multi Academy Company. It has a new headteacher, deputy headteacher and Religious Education subject leader, a new governance structure and has temporarily reduced its published admission number (PAN) to 45 pupils.

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

- Two diocesan inspectors carried out the inspection: Mark Hinton and Christine Finnegan.
- The focus of the inspection was on the impact, quality and leadership of the school's provision of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship.
- The inspectors observed teaching across 14 Religious Education lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning, and assessment quality. All of these lesson observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspectors completed work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic Life, the impact of Religious Education teaching on their learning over time, and their collective worship experience.
- Meetings were held with the chair of governors, the Catholic Life link governor, the parent governor, the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the RE subject leader and the parish priest. Inspectors also spoke with parents and carers about their views.
- The inspectors attended a Mass with Year 6 in the parish church, Key Stage 2 Collective Worship; pupil-led worship across the school and undertook a learning walk to look at aspects of learning and teaching in Religious Education, the presentation of the Catholic Life of the school and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' attainment and progress, Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR) data, the school development plan, the RE, Catholic Life and Collective Worship action plan, teachers' planning and monitoring files.