



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for Our Lady's Catholic Primary School

URN: 148082

Carried out on behalf of the **Most Rev. Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham** on:

Date: 13-14 July 2023

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.....	1
The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' 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	Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- Our Lady's lives out its mission very well as a Catholic school with Christ firmly at its heart.
- Catholic social teaching is taught across the entire school curriculum. All staff take responsibility for weaving it into every aspect of school life.
- There is a powerful sense of community, belonging, and commitment to the mission. The example and personal witness of the head teacher inspire this.
- The liturgical year and rich pattern of daily prayer drive the rhythm of school life.
- Meticulous care and attention towards the inward and outward signs of the Catholic school create a dignified and spiritual space to work, learn, and pray.

What the school needs to improve:

- Review policy and practice on how work is presented in religious education books to ensure greater consistency of high standards.
- Develop more robust monitoring systems for religious education so they lead to sustained improvements.
- Redefine the policy on prayer and liturgy so that autonomous pupil-led worship is consistently facilitated.

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:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

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

1

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



Pupils have a firm understanding of Our Lady's distinctively Catholic identity. They can confidently articulate how they live out the mission, 'Follow your dreams using the guiding light of Jesus' by explaining how they think about Jesus' teachings and ask themselves, 'What would Jesus do?' Pupils know they are loved and valued by everyone in their school because they are unique individuals and part of God's family. Pupils have a deeply embedded understanding of Catholic social teaching because it is central to the school's curriculum, and they can explain various ways they put it into action, with community litter picks, the work of the Mini Vinnies, flower planting along the route to church, and active campaigning being some examples. Pupils have also contributed to the Church's synodal process. Pupils' behaviour and conduct inside and outside lessons is incredibly kind and respectful. They understand the importance of profoundly valuing and respecting every individual as special, and they are also unique, made in God's image and likeness. Pupils highly value the chaplaincy provision at the school and the many varied prayer opportunities and experiences they encounter.

Being guided by Jesus' light is vitally important to everyone at Our Lady's, and pupils describe numerous practical examples of how they do this. 'Missionary disciple day' provides a focus for pupils and staff to think about making a positive difference through practical action. The annual whole school focus on creation, together with all schools in the Our Lady and All Saints Multi Academy Company (MAC), shapes how pupils think about protecting our common home through stewardship. The school community reaches out to the most vulnerable through the food bank and extensive charity work, which helps pupils think about how God calls them to use their gifts. Relationships are positive and deeply rooted in dignity, kindness, and respect. Staff set an extremely positive example to everyone through their care and respect for others.

Our Lady's is a welcoming community where individual difference is celebrated. Pastoral care is a strength for pupils and staff; families are also provided with bespoke support. The school is a safe haven for pupils and their families where all share the love of Christ. The school environment is a beautiful Catholic space that promotes prayer and spirituality. The school provides extensive opportunities for pupils and staff's spiritual and moral development through retreat days, creative praying methods, and the curriculum offered.

Leaders and governors have a robust understanding of the Church's mission in education. The head teacher's personal witness and the leaders' and governors' dedication ensure that Christ is firmly at the heart of the school. There is a positive relationship with the local parish and its priest. Parents and carers are welcomed into the school to participate in its Catholic life, and the school effectively uses social media to share its work. Leaders and governors are very successful in actively celebrating the school's Catholic life. Staff are respected and cared for because of leaders' and governors' focus on respecting their dignity. The curriculum has Catholic social teaching deeply woven throughout. Catholic life is given the highest status by governors, who actively evaluate alongside leaders. Pupils also contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of Catholic life through groups such as the 'young governors'. Extensive staff training opportunities are high quality, and a well-considered induction provision for new staff are hallmarks of the school. Alongside other schools in the MAC, leaders and staff have opportunities to participate in several high-quality, extended formation programmes.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

2

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.....

2

Leadership

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

2

Pupils have secure religious knowledge and understanding. They make good progress, know more, and remember more because of a well-sequenced approach to religious education. Disadvantaged pupils and most pupils with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) progress similarly. Pupils are religiously literate and thoroughly enjoy their religious education because it 'helps them to follow in Jesus' footsteps'. Pupils can connect their current learning to their previous knowledge. They concentrate well because they find their lessons interesting. Pupils' work is often well presented, though not always to the highest standards. Approaches to marking and feedback are primarily helpful but are not consistently used to enable pupils to understand how well they are doing. Behaviour in religious education lessons throughout the school is always good because pupils are engaged and motivated by teachers and love learning about Jesus. Pupils make steady progress in religious education, and by the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils meet or exceed age-related expectations. Attainment outcomes for pupils with SEND are steadily improving.

Teachers and teaching assistants have very secure subject knowledge because of the ongoing training provided by the school. There are very effective systems in place to help new staff with their subject knowledge, and the head teacher supports staff with religious education. All adults are deeply committed to the value of the subject. Teachers and teaching assistants ensure that religious education is given high status and is treated as a special lesson. The curriculum is covered in detail. Pupils know that religious education is important and respond positively and enthusiastically. Planning in a small number of classes is insufficiently matched to some pupils' prior achievements, meaning their unique needs are not always met. Teachers use questioning to challenge pupils to think deeply about what they learn from the Bible. Leaders, teachers, and teaching assistants understand the impact religious education has on

pupils' moral and spiritual development. Consequently, religious education is seamlessly linked to the whole school curriculum and the wider Catholic life of the school. The religious education provision is effective, and it is central to school life.

Leaders and governors ensure that religious education has at least full parity with other core curriculum subjects. They ensure that the entire curriculum for religious education is taught following the requirements of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*. Staff training is an evident strength of religious education leadership at Our Lady's, and staff are provided with a wealth of development opportunities. Leaders have researched and selected several effective programmes to help develop staff subject knowledge. The head teacher is the subject leader for religious education, and she has a high level of expertise. During her relatively short time in post, she has improved teaching and learning in religious education by providing practical support to all staff, particularly those new to the school. Religious education is enhanced by several enrichment activities and focus days across the whole curriculum, all of which help to set the subject within the school's broader Catholic curriculum. Leaders' and governors' self-evaluation is accurate, however monitoring does not yet ensure consistent application of the school's policies, such as those relating to presentation of work.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

1

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

Pupils experience a wide range of prayer and liturgy opportunities. Pupils describe prayer as 'exciting' because they speak to Jesus, and He speaks to them. They know they can pray at any time and in any place. Pupils are reverent and respectful, and they sing joyfully. During Mass, several pupils play instruments. Pupils pray through meditation, listening to music, traditional prayer, silent prayer, spontaneous prayer, and groups such as the Rosary Club. Leaders have focused on developing pupils' ability to plan, organise, and lead their own prayer and liturgy. Whilst much progress has been made in this area, and pupils confidently explain how they are making their own choices about music, readings, and resources, they are not yet fully using these leadership skills with complete independence. Pupils have a detailed understanding of how prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school community – they give numerous examples of when they have prayed for others and how the liturgical year influences their prayer life. When visiting the cenotaph during visits to London each November, pupils pray for peace, and last year prayed especially for all those experiencing conflict in Ukraine.

Prayer and liturgy are carefully planned, and the pattern of daily prayer is deeply embedded. The head teacher has dramatically expanded the range of prayer and liturgy pupils experience. Pupils in all year groups take prayer bags home to help them to pray together with their families. The school offers contemporary and traditional approaches to prayer and liturgy, which helps engage pupils. Scripture is carefully and thoughtfully chosen for all liturgies, and leaders provide exceptional support for all staff in selecting and interpreting readings and psalms. The head teacher provides an inspirational model of excellent practice when leading prayer and liturgy, and all leaders and staff are strong role models. Staff are further developing the skills to empower pupils to plan and deliver their prayer and liturgy independently. Staff use their own talents and skills to enhance prayer and liturgy through music and artwork.

Beautiful, well-kept spaces for prayer and reflection are abundant around the school; staff and pupils maintain these. Parents, carers, wider family members and parishioners are all welcomed into school for regular prayer and liturgy. The parish priest visits and celebrates Mass every week and is highly valued by the community.

The school's high quality of support for all staff ensures that prayer and liturgy at Our Lady's is of a very high standard. The school calendar and timetable are planned around the liturgical year, and the entire school community attends the weekly Mass. Pupils and staff go to Mass in the parish church on holy days of obligation and for sacramental enrolment Masses. Leaders have ensured continuous improvement in prayer and liturgy through significant training and support for staff. Leaders use high-quality published resources, diocesan training, external partnerships, and in-house training and support. Staff feel exceptionally well supported as both leaders of and participants in prayer and liturgy. Leaders understand many ways of praying and are deeply familiar with the lectionary, missal, and liturgical calendar. They impart this knowledge to all staff very effectively and pay particular attention to inducting new staff. Leaders and governors ensure prayer and liturgy are prioritised in terms of resources. Monitoring and evaluation are rigorous and accurate. Governors are actively involved in evaluating and tracking outcomes, and pupil groups such as the young governors and liturgy leaders help leaders to monitor and evaluate too.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Our Lady's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	148082
Full postal address of the school	East Meadway, Tile Cross, Birmingham, B33 0AU
School phone number	0121 464 4459
Name of head teacher or principal	Sarah Cahill
Chair of governing board	Paul Bentley
School Website	www.ourladys.bham.sch.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Our Lady and All Saints Catholic Multi Academy Company
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	4 to 11
Trustees	Archdiocese of Birmingham
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	April 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Mark Hinton	Lead inspector
Marina Smith	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