



# St Wulstan's Catholic Primary School

URN: 141444

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Birmingham

16–17 January 2025

## 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

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

2

## Compliance statement

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

## What the school does well

- Catholic life and mission are inspirational to all and central to the school's community. Pupils and staff consistently demonstrate compassion and gospel values.
- Strong relationships, built upon mutual respect, allow all pupils to feel valued and cared for as individuals.
- Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons; they are engaged and enthusiastic about their learning.
- Teachers effectively ensure pupils recall prior knowledge in religious education to ensure that lessons build upon previous learning, allowing them to know and remember more in a well-planned learning sequence.
- Prayer is central to school life and integral to staff and pupils' spiritual formation.

## What the school needs to improve

- Ensure the entire curriculum is a cohesive and comprehensive expression of the school's Catholic mission.
- Develop the range of tasks given to pupils in religious education lessons so that they can present their work in various ways.
- Provide pupils with regular opportunities to express individuality and creativity in planning and delivering prayer and liturgy.

## 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

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

1

As the mission statement is clearly defined, well understood and regularly used by pupils, they are clearly able to explain how it can be put into action. They use sign language to make it accessible to all, and joyfully and fully embrace its meaning in their everyday lives. Pupils told inspectors, 'In every part of our lives, we try to live up to Jesus' mission' and understand that by following the school mission of 'We learn and grow with Jesus to love, inspire and serve others', they put others before themselves. Pupils understand the demands of Catholic social teaching and often initiate their own ways of supporting others and the environment; for example, through choosing their own charities, initiating fundraising, and developing the Wildlife Warrior pupil group, who work to support the stewardship of God's creation. Pupils willingly embrace their responsibilities to help others and state that 'as disciples of Christ, we have to try and reach as many people as possible.' Pupils show great respect for each other, and because of strong relationships built on mutual respect, behaviour is exemplary across the school. Pupils feel valued and enjoy sharing their achievements inside and outside of school.

Staff describe the school mission as 'infectious' and are fully committed to its implementation and the school's work in the local community. This makes them exemplary role models to pupils as they support each other and the families they serve. Therefore, a strong sense of community is created, which benefits all. This sense of community, which is carefully nurtured, ensures that everyone is welcome despite their differences; subsequently, everyone in the school cares for each other. Because Christ is at the centre of the school and its daily work, pastoral provision is of a high quality, and there is a commitment at all levels to support the most vulnerable. This is seen in a well-resourced pastoral room and 'safe speak' boxes, ensuring that everyone receives the support they require. The school has created an environment which serves as an excellent

witness to its Catholic mission. This is appreciated by all in the school, especially the chapel, which is well cared for, purposefully used and described by pupils as a 'calm place for prayer and reflection.' The school rightly celebrates a well-planned programme of vocational and chaplaincy opportunities within which pupils enthusiastically serve as Minnie Vinnies and Wildlife Warriors.

Leaders and governors share an ambitious vision for the school where everyone is valued and cared for. This informs all decisions made, with the school's mission remaining central. School leaders and governors work hard to create links with the parish and parents, as seen in opportunities for parents and carers to attend Mass and other workshops such as helping Year 6 pupils research and choose their 'inspirational' confirmation saint. All leaders and governors have a strong commitment to Catholic social teaching. Consequently, there is an ambition to make purposeful links in all curriculum areas to the principles, including stewardship and solidarity. Some impactful work on this has begun; for example, in Year 4, pupils have considered stewardship and sustainability when learning about the benefits and disadvantages of dredging rivers as part of their geography project. However, this is not yet fully embedded across the curriculum in all year groups. Leaders, governors, and pupils are all involved in monitoring and evaluating the school's Catholic life. As a result, all stakeholders can lead in planning improvements.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

**Pupil outcomes**

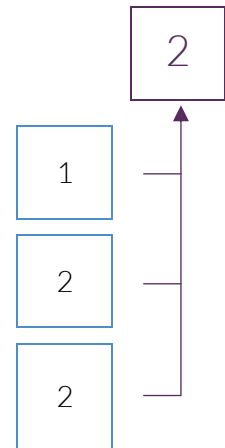
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

**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



Attainment in religious education is at least in line with the other core subjects and often exceeds them. This is sustained over time and is an example of how pupils develop excellent knowledge, understanding and skills as they move through the school’s scheme of work. Pupils talk articulately about their learning and are religiously literate, confidently talking about what they have learned, using extended vocabulary and making links with previous learning. Pupils can recall prior knowledge, consolidating what they have covered before moving on to new learning. Pupils approach their religious education lessons with great enthusiasm and engagement; consequently, their behaviour in lessons is exemplary, allowing pupils to work effectively independently, with a partner, or in a larger group. This high level of enjoyment also leads to pupils producing work of a high quality. Pupils’ religious education books are consistently well-presented, showing pride in their work. Pupils can reflect spiritually on what they have learned, and as a result, they begin to consider how what they have learned might impact their daily lives and actions.

Teachers have very good religious education subject knowledge and understand how pupils learn effectively. As a result, they skilfully plan flashback quizzes at the beginning of every lesson to ensure pupils retrieve appropriate knowledge before moving on to new learning. Therefore, planning effectively extends pupils’ knowledge, and they learn extremely well and make good progress. Teachers have consistently high expectations for all pupils, and teaching is adapted to ensure all pupils can access tasks whilst providing suitable challenges for pupils who require opportunities to be stretched further in their learning. Consequently, all pupils’ needs are met within the activities they are given to complete. Questioning is used well by teachers to clarify understanding. However, it is not used as effectively to challenge thinking during lessons or to encourage pupils to move on to the next stage in their thinking. There are also limited

opportunities for pupils to ask their own questions during religious education lessons, thus expressing their curiosity and wonder. In the best religious education lessons, pupils are requested to present their work in various creative ways and are given some choice about how to show it. However, this opportunity is not provided consistently. Teachers understand that religious education can impact pupils' spiritual and moral development and, as such, allow them to reflect on their learning and what it means to them.

Leaders and governors ensure that religious education is as important as other core subjects. Consequently, teachers are provided with regular updates and training to support their teaching of the subject. The subject leader for religious education has a strong vision for the subject and is inspirational and supportive of others. She aims for 'everyone to have the figure of Christ in their lives.' Leaders ensure that the religious education curriculum is sequential and meets the needs of pupils as they move through the school. For example, they have carefully considered the learning sequence at key liturgical points of the year to ensure that new content is introduced systematically. Consequently, teachers clearly understand what pupils in their class must cover and learning is not lost through unnecessary repetition. Pupils experience a range of enrichment opportunities that complement their religious education lessons, such as spiritual retreats at Alton Castle and visits to St Chad's Cathedral. Monitoring and evaluation in religious education is regular, robust and accurate. However, how this has led to strategic improvement is not always clear.

## 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

2

**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

2

2

Pupils are reverent when praying due to the importance placed on it within the school. Pupils engage well in the opportunities to pray and immediately respond to times of silence and reflection when in Mass. They sing beautifully, resulting in a peaceful atmosphere being created during times of communal prayer. Pupils understand different ways to pray and are particularly confident in knowing a wide range of traditional Catholic prayers introduced to them systematically throughout their time in school. However, they are less confident in praying in more creative, spontaneous, or contemporary ways as they experience this less regularly. Pupils routinely lead prayer at St Wulstan's and work collaboratively with each other to do so. They particularly enjoy these opportunities and explained to inspectors that this is because they 'enjoy helping people know God.' Pupils are confident in planning and delivering prayer to their peers using the 'gather, listen, respond, go forth' model, as it is an embedded part of the school's weekly prayer cycle. Sound systems are in place for pupils to evaluate the prayer they have planned, and they can identify what might make it even better. The liturgical year is familiar to the pupils, and they can articulate different times of the year when they celebrate, for example, the birthday of the Blessed Virgin Mary and other special feast days and memorials. While some pupils can articulate the influence prayer has on them, many cannot consistently make links between worship and their everyday lives.

Prayer is central to school life and is given the highest priority. It is a regular and embedded part of daily life at St Wulstan's and includes staff prayer, Mass, pupil-led prayer, and daily prayers. Scripture is central to prayer and is used effectively to share the gospels' message and provide opportunities for reflection. Staff are committed to the school's prayer life and are skilled in leading prayer and supporting pupils to lead their peers. As a result, the school is a prayerful community, and prayer is a routine feature of any gathering. However, pupils need further

guidance in leading their peers in a broader range of creative ways to pray. Space around the school is utilised exceptionally well, including the beautiful school chapel. Families are invited to participate in prayer routinely and appreciate how they are included in the parish and school partnership.

The school's prayer and liturgy policy is helpful to staff and clear in its expectations. Leaders and governors have ensured a clear progression in expectation for traditional prayer, which is age-appropriate. However, the progression in other elements of prayer, such as the expectations of pupil-led prayer at different ages and stages, is more limited. Staff appreciate the professional training they receive in prayer and the support they receive in their spiritual formation, including that from the multi academy company. Leaders and governors always ensure that sacramental and liturgical celebrations and patron feast days are prioritised in the school. For example, a beautiful Mass was shared with inspectors at which the work of St Wulstan was celebrated and considered a source of inspiration to the whole school community. Governors monitor and evaluate prayer and liturgy through their visits and by speaking to visitors at school celebrations. This allows them to recommend improvements which are swiftly acted upon. They ensure prayer is appropriately resourced, as seen in prayer spaces and displays around the school.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Wulstan's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	141444
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	885 3380
Full postal address of the school	Elmfield Walk, Stourport-on-Severn, DY13 8UB
School phone number	01299 877808
Headteacher	Emma Brocklesby (Executive Principal)
Chair of governing board	Joanna Griffin
School Website	stwulstans.sch.life
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Emmaus Catholic MAC
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	January 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

## The inspection team

Michelle Walsh  
 Laura Cole

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