



Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

URN: 148498

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster

26–27 February 2025

Summary of key findings

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 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 is fully compliant in relation to the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' conference.
- The school is fully compliant in relation to any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- The school has fully addressed all areas for improvement from the last inspection.

What the school does well

- The school community actively embodies the mission statement, bringing it to life in their daily actions.
- Pupils take great pride in supporting charities, recognising that their efforts reflect Jesus' example of love and service.
- The headteacher's clear vision for the Catholic life and mission of the school serves as an inspiration, providing strong and motivating leadership.
- The school is dedicated to faithfully implementing the new *Religious Education Directory*, as reflected in the high-quality work seen in pupil books.
- Pupils deeply appreciate prayer and liturgy opportunities, enthusiastically sharing their faith with others.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen the role of the pupil chaplaincy team by increasing their involvement in the planning and delivery of provision.
- Ensure that learning objectives and tasks are effectively designed to enable pupils to achieve the desired outcomes and maximise learning.
- Enhance the use of effective questioning to deepen learning and enable real-time adaptations to support individual needs.

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

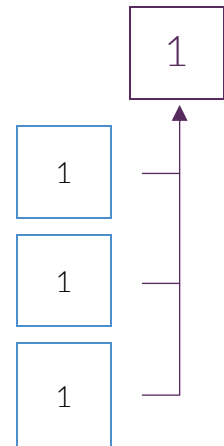
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 Sacred Heart live out the school's mission statement: 'Live, Love and Learn joyfully in the family of Christ'. The pupils are delightful, and their behaviour is exemplary. They are polite, welcoming and speak enthusiastically about their school. A culture of respect and inclusion is deeply embedded, reflected in pupil comments such as, 'You are respected no matter your background' and 'When I was new, I made friends quickly'. Pupils feel a strong sense of belonging and safety. One shared, 'Our school is a safe place to be, and all the adults support us if we are upset'. The school is committed to treating all pupils as valued children of God. The school fosters a deep understanding of Catholic social teaching, encouraging pupils to engage in charitable efforts, including support for charities such as Space Hertfordshire, Cafod and the local food bank. Their eagerness to serve and help those in need reflects their faith in action. Parental feedback confirms the impact of this ethos, with one parent stating, 'Both my children now have an extensive knowledge of Catholic life and mission and carry this out in their daily lives'.

Sacred Heart provides a rich and nurturing environment where Christ is truly at the centre of all activities. Staff and pupils embrace the mission and implement it throughout the school. A strong culture of welcome and respect is evident, with every class having an 'ambassador' to greet visitors warmly. Staff act as excellent role models, ensuring that the most vulnerable members of the community are valued, nurtured and fully involved in school life. The chaplaincy provision plays a key role in pupils' moral, spiritual and educational development, reinforcing the Catholic ethos in daily school life. Year 3 and 4 Mini Vinnies speak enthusiastically about their role and are keen to join the pupil chaplaincy team when they are higher up the school. The school meets all statutory requirements for the teaching of relationship, sex and health education which aligns with the Church's mission. Catholic social teaching principles are integrated into assemblies and

lessons, fostering a deep-rooted commitment to social responsibility. The pupils explained how the Eco Club had started following their learning on 'Care of Creation'.

Leaders, including governors are committed to delivering the Church's mission and the Bishop's vision for Catholic education. They believe that education at Sacred Heart extends beyond academic success to the development of the whole child. One parent shared, 'Sacred Heart is a wonderful community that leads by example, encouraging kindness and Catholic values in everything they do'. Decisions made by leaders and governors are firmly rooted in the teachings of Jesus and Catholic social teaching. Staff are treated with dignity and respect, with well-being prioritised. Governors have an in-depth knowledge of the school and actively contribute to its evaluation, confidently identifying strengths and areas for development. The head teacher values the support of the diocese and works collaboratively with the diocesan advisor. Additionally, the parish priest is a regular visitor and a member of the governing body, strengthening the bond between the school and the parish. Parents are encouraged to participate in worship and celebrations, fostering the home-school-parish partnership. Regular newsletters keep families informed and engaged. One parent noted, 'The leadership of the headteacher and Catholic faith shines brightly throughout all aspects of the school, and as parents, we are encouraged to be actively involved in the Catholic life of the school'. Leadership at Sacred Heart is both inspiring and faithful, ensuring the school community remains steadfast in its mission as a Catholic school.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

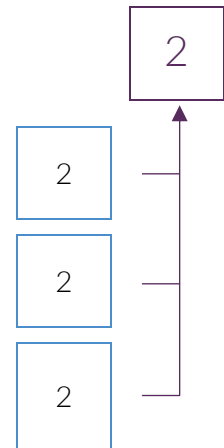
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Books and discussions with pupils demonstrate that they know more, remember more, and do more. They articulate their understanding clearly and make links between different aspects of their learning. Pupils had started their learning about Lent and appropriate to age and ability, were able to make links between Jesus’ time in the desert and giving up things or taking up new things. They also demonstrated an understanding about the importance of forgiveness during this time. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported in religious education lessons, with strategies allowing them to access the curriculum and make good progress. Differentiated tasks, targeted support and appropriate scaffolding enable pupils to engage in learning and develop their understanding. Pupils display strong religious literacy and enthusiasm in their responses, confidently reflecting on how their faith influences their actions and decisions. A parent commented, ‘He talks with pride about his learning and is linking what he is learning about the life of Jesus and Catholic social teaching to his own life’. Pupil behaviour in religious education lessons is exemplary. They concentrate well and engage meaningfully in discussions enabling them to produce work of a good standard. Pupils are motivated to improve their work and actively seek feedback on their next steps. Green marking by teachers, when used effectively, provides valuable feedback, helping pupils refine their understanding and make further progress.

Most teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and use metacognitive strategies to support learning. However, the effectiveness of tasks varies. In some cases, learning activities do not fully maximise learning or enable pupils to achieve the intended outcomes. More clarity in the design of learning objectives and tasks will ensure that all pupils reach their full potential. Religious education is highly valued as a core subject, with pupils’ work and contributions regularly praised and celebrated. Displays in classrooms and communal areas highlight the

significance of religious education within the school community. Additionally, the 'Gold Book' acknowledges achievements which are then shared in Friday celebration assemblies, reinforcing pupils' sense of pride in their learning. Questioning is used to encourage reflection and assess pupil progress. However, its effectiveness to challenge thinking and extend learning is inconsistent. To improve this, teachers should enhance their use of questioning, both verbal and written, to make real-time adaptations that support individual needs and accelerate progress. Pupils are given opportunities to present their learning in various ways, including written work, discussions and Godly Play.

Leaders and governors ensure that religious education is a faithful expression of the *Directory*. In line with the diocesan roadmap, the school is successfully delivering the new *Directory* in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Staff have benefitted from diocesan professional development and ongoing support from the head teacher, who also serves as the subject lead. Leaders and governors are committed to ensuring that religious education has full parity with other core subjects in terms of curriculum time, resources, budget and staff development. The headteacher has a clear vision for the teaching and learning of religious education. Monitoring is well structured, ensuring that teaching is evaluated and improved. Analysis of pupil progress, lesson observations and work scrutiny contribute to the self-evaluation process. All stakeholders provide input into the school's ongoing development of religious education. Governors receive regular, detailed reports from the head teacher, ensuring they are well informed about the strengths of religious education and areas for further development. Their active engagement in school life enables them to provide effective challenge and support.

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

At Sacred Heart, pupils engage deeply and reverently in a variety of prayer and liturgical experiences, with a particular enthusiasm for daily meditation. They have a secure understanding of the Church's liturgical year. Pupils demonstrate an appreciation of the Catholic tradition by confidently participating in communal prayer, engaging in reflective silence and singing joyfully. They work collaboratively with peers and adults to prepare creative and well-structured liturgical experiences, demonstrating skill and understanding of the liturgical norms of the Church. Opportunities for reflection are embedded throughout school life, and pupils can articulate how these spiritual experiences shape their actions and understanding of themselves and the world. One parent shared, 'He enjoys singing hymns and reciting the prayers he has learned, and we are so grateful to the school for enriching his life in this way'.

Prayer and liturgy are at the heart of school life, ensuring a naturally embedded daily rhythm of prayer that faithfully reflects the rich traditions of the Church. Significant liturgies, including Masses, Reconciliation and seasonal liturgical celebrations, are planned to ensure full, conscious and active participation from pupils and staff. The pupil chaplaincy team play a vital role in nurturing the younger pupils' understanding of traditional prayers, encouraging a strong sense of spiritual leadership within the school. They speak enthusiastically about their role in helping the younger pupils learn 'their prayers'. The role of the pupil chaplaincy team now needs to be strengthened by increasing their involvement in the planning and delivery of provision. Scripture is central to worship, carefully and thoughtfully chosen to align with the liturgical season. Staff serve as inspiring models of exemplary practice, leading prayer and worship, with skill and confidence. This was particularly evident in the Virtues Assembly, where pupils participated meaningfully, demonstrating a well-developed ability to connect prayer with action. The school makes imaginative and creative use of prayer spaces, ensuring they are cherished,

well-maintained and conducive to reflection. The Heart Room and prayer garden are particularly valued by pupils as sacred spaces where they can experience stillness and 'grow with God' in prayer'.

The school's prayer and liturgy policy is regularly reviewed to ensure the highest standards of worship. The headteacher ensures that the school calendar is well planned, integrating prayer and worship into every aspect of school life. Prayer progression is clearly mapped. Leaders have thought carefully about the different levels and skills of participation that are reflective of the age and capacity of pupils. Leaders and governors prioritise prayer and liturgy within the school budget, ensuring high-quality resources and well-maintained sacred spaces that inspire and enrich the community's spiritual experience. The beautiful stained-glass cross at the entrance reflects the centrality of prayer. Professional development in prayer and liturgy is frequent and formative, equipping staff with the skills and confidence to lead worship meaningfully. One teacher noted, 'We have regular staff meetings and inset on worship. It has made me confident to lead worship in school and to facilitate worship with my class lead'. This is reflected in the way staff and pupils wholeheartedly engage in and celebrate the school's rich prayer life, ensuring that worship remains a central and uplifting experience for the entire community.

Information about the school

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|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Full name of school | Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School |
| School unique reference number (URN) | 148498 |
| School DfE Number (LAESTAB) | 9193424 |
| Full postal address of the school | Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Broadmeads, Ware, SG12 9HY |
| School phone number | 01920461678 |
| Headteacher | Michelle Fusi |
| Chair of governors | Michael Payne |
| School Website | http://www.sacredheart312.herts.sch.uk/ |
| Trusteeship | Diocesan |
| Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable) | St Francis Of Assisi Catholic Academy Trust |
| Phase | Primary |
| Type of school | Academy |
| Admissions policy | Selective |
| Age-range of pupils | 4-11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Date of last denominational inspection | November 2018 |
| Previous denominational inspection grade | Outstanding |

The inspection team

Amanda Dowling
Stephanie Gavin

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 |