



St James Catholic Primary School

URN: 141820

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Birmingham

28–29 January 2026

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

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

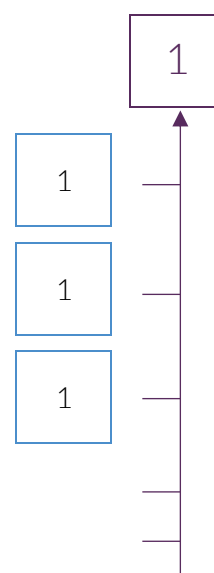
Collective worship (p.7)

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

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection



Compliance statement

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

What the school does well

- Leaders have established strong, trusting relationships with families and the parish, strengthening cohesion across the school and community.
- Leaders encourage pupils to actively live out their faith through service to others, demonstrating Gospel values in action and making a positive difference within the school and parish communities.
- As pupils learn more and remember more over time, they develop a deeper understanding of religious education and become increasingly religiously literate, enabling them to articulate their knowledge of faith with confidence and accuracy.
- Teachers provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to reflect on and respond to what they have learned and consider how this shapes their beliefs, thoughts, and actions.
- Pupils are offered varied opportunities to experience prayer and respond with reverence and respect.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure the whole curriculum is consistently shaped and taught through a Catholic lens, which is clearly evident across all subjects.
- Develop teacher feedback in religious education so that pupils clearly understand how to make further progress in 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

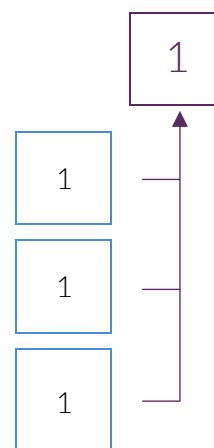
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



Because the mission statement, 'In the loving peace, justice and joy of Jesus, we achieve,' is deeply embedded and consistently lived, pupils demonstrate an authentic understanding of discipleship that shapes their attitudes, behaviour, and relationships. This understanding results in pupils translating belief into purposeful action within school, the community and globally. Pupils, including the active Caritas Ambassadors and Mini Vinnies, increasingly articulate their understanding of faith with confidence and accuracy, and explain how Gospel values and the Church's social teaching influence their decision-making. As pupils told inspectors, 'What Jesus did in the Bible, we should do in our lives.' Pupils consider thoughtfully how learning shapes beliefs, thinking and actions, strengthening spiritual and moral development. Relationships across the community are exceptionally positive; pupils feel known, valued and cared for, and consistently demonstrate respect for others. The school's welcoming culture ensures that all feel included; pupils articulate confidently how newcomers are supported to settle, reflecting a deep understanding of hospitality and community. Pupils recognise how faith informs their actions, demonstrated in their work with the Over 50s Group and in their fundraising for many charities such as Birmingham Children's Hospital, Fr Hudson's Caritas and Cafod. Consequently, pupils flourish spiritually and morally within a joyful, inclusive Catholic community and are well prepared to continue their faith journey with confidence and compassion.

Strong, trusting relationships underpin all aspects of provision and create a deeply cohesive community in which love and compassion are experienced daily. Highly effective partnerships with the parish strengthen this provision further, ensuring that pupils, families, and parishioners benefit from a shared sense of belonging, mutual care, and common purpose. Pastoral provision is a significant strength, exemplified through the Pathfinder project and the Zaccaheus initiative,

which provide targeted, compassionate support for pupils and families at times of need and reinforce dignity, hope, and inclusion. These initiatives operate alongside thoughtful day-to-day care, ensuring provision is responsive, consistent and firmly rooted in Gospel values. Parents speak positively about the school because they feel listened to, supported and welcomed, strengthening trust and engagement with both school and parish life. Staff demonstrate exceptional commitment to the mission and consistently witness to it through their actions, making them exemplary role models for pupils. As a result, Catholic life is a lived reality, shaping relationships, care and service, and enabling the whole community to flourish.

Leaders and governors demonstrate a clear and compelling commitment to ensuring that Christ remains at the heart of all aspects of school life. Parish partnerships are a significant strength and are actively promoted and sustained through shared worship, joint service, and mutual support. The parish priest, school leaders, governors, and parishioners speak consistently of a relationship rooted in trust and collaboration, recognising that the school and parish are not separate communities but work together in a shared mission of service. Leaders collectively model Gospel values with authenticity and conviction, providing clear direction for the whole community. Catholic social teaching is prioritised strategically and is made visible through leaders' determined commitment to meeting the needs of the most vulnerable, ensuring that faith is expressed through action rather than intention alone. This culture of care is grounded in strong relationships and trust, which leaders deliberately nurture. Governors demonstrate passion, ambition and a deep understanding of the school's mission, offering appropriate challenge alongside effective support. Their monitoring is purposeful and has a demonstrable impact on the school's Catholic life and mission. Leaders are developing a coherent Catholic curriculum, enabling pupils to recognise how learning informs faith, including in areas such as religious education and personal, social, and health education (PSHE); however, this is not yet embedded across the whole curriculum.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

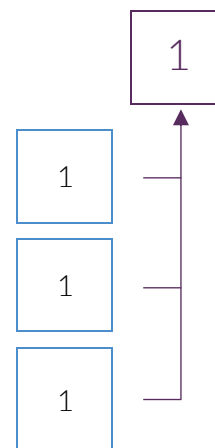
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 achieve extremely well in religious education and speak with confidence about what they have learned and why it matters to them. As pupils build knowledge over time, they remember more and develop a deeper understanding of faith, becoming religiously literate and able to explain ideas clearly and accurately. This strong progress is evident across the school, from early exploration of symbols and stories in Reception to older pupils confidently explaining how activities linked to Advent connect to living out Catholic social teaching, for example. Pupils use religious vocabulary accurately and naturally, drawing on key terms to support thoughtful discussion and written responses. They explain learning in their own words and reflect on how faith influences beliefs, choices, and actions. Pupils enjoy religious education and value the variety of ways they learn, typically commenting that lessons are engaging and allow them to express ideas in different ways, not just through writing. Engagement is strong across the school, with only minimal variation. 'Reflect and respond' sessions are a particular strength; pupils appreciate dedicated time to pause, think deeply and respond meaningfully to what they have learned. Pupils take great pride in their work, which is consistently well presented and of high quality, reflecting high expectations and the importance they place on religious education within the life of the school.

Teaching in religious education is highly effective and enables pupils to learn deeply and meaningfully. Lessons are characterised by a consistent and well-established structure, which supports retrieval practice and oracy and allows learning to build securely over time. Pupils routinely revisit prior knowledge, enabling them to make connections and remember learning more effectively. Questioning is used skilfully to probe understanding and address misconceptions; in the best lessons, it encourages pupils to think more deeply, resulting in thoughtful responses and strong engagement. Expectations for learning and presentation are

high, and pupils rise to these expectations, producing work of consistently high quality. Subtle and well-judged support enables all pupils to access learning without limiting challenge; pupils with additional needs are supported effectively, while those who are more confident are challenged to think more deeply. Teachers provide a range of ways for pupils to present their learning, which strengthens engagement and enjoyment. Pupils understand when they have been successful and take pride in their achievements, responding positively to teachers' clear celebration of effort. However, teachers' feedback does not always inform pupils how they can make further progress in their learning.

Leadership of religious education is highly effective and demonstrates clear ambition for the subject. Leaders and governors ensure that the subject has at least parity with other core subjects and, in some respects, exceeds it; expectations for presentation and quality of work are notably high, and reporting to parents reflects the priority given to the subject. Religious education is communicated clearly and consistently, enabling parents to understand its importance within the wider curriculum. Leaders ensure that the curriculum is carefully planned and sequenced so that pupils build knowledge progressively over time, with key themes revisited and deepened as pupils move through the school. Provision is thoughtfully organised to meet the needs of all pupils. Leaders deploy resources and additional adults strategically, adapting arrangements where necessary, including flexible groupings, to ensure pupils with additional needs are supported effectively to access the curriculum and consequently achieve well. This commitment reflects leaders' determination to secure high outcomes for every pupil. Enrichment opportunities across the school enhance pupils' learning and engagement in religious education. Monitoring and self-evaluation are shared and thorough, resulting in well-targeted actions and interventions with a positive impact on outcomes.

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

Pupils respond deeply and thoughtfully to the wide range of prayer and liturgical experiences provided, engaging with different forms of worship with reverence, attentiveness, and respect. They engage fully and consciously, demonstrating prayerful silence and confident responses. Pupils value the opportunity to plan and lead worship for their peers, and this develops progressively as they move through the school. Younger pupils are well supported, while older pupils prepare and minister liturgy with increasing independence, confidence, and skill. Pupils speak positively about the choices they are given when planning worship, explaining how this helps them engage meaningfully with Scripture and the school's mission. They evaluate their own and others' worship thoughtfully, and these reflections inform improvements to future experiences of prayer led by both pupils and adults. Pupils demonstrate a secure and age-appropriate understanding of the Church's liturgical year, confidently naming seasons and explaining associated practices and devotions. They articulate clearly how prayer influences their lives, explaining when and why they pray, including moments of gratitude, forgiveness, and reflection. Pupils describe prayer as a way of deepening their relationship with God, demonstrating that worship is central to the school and has a genuine and lived impact.

Prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school and are embedded naturally within its daily rhythm. Opportunities for worship extend beyond routine prayer and are woven into assemblies, class-based prayer, staff-led worship and shared parish celebrations, ensuring that prayer is a lived and visible aspect of school life. Senior leaders consistently model high-quality practice, setting a clear and inspiring example for pupils and staff, and ensuring that worship is purposeful, reverent, and inclusive. The school makes thoughtful and imaginative use of space to support prayer, while pupils also recognise that prayer is not confined to one location. Consequently, they speak confidently about praying in classrooms, dedicated prayer spaces, the

parish hall and church, as well as outdoors in the school's prayer garden. This reinforces pupils' understanding that prayer is accessible and meaningful in all aspects of life. Provision actively supports families to pray alongside the school community through initiatives such as 'stay and pray' sessions and parish-based events, strengthening home-school-parish links. Parishioners report increased family engagement in worship, including greater participation in Mass. As a result of this carefully planned and highly visible provision, prayer is experienced as a shared, inclusive, and formative practice that nurtures the spiritual life of pupils, staff, families, and the wider parish community.

Leadership of worship is highly effective and purposeful. Leaders have a carefully considered strategy for developing pupils' understanding and leadership of prayer and liturgy as they move through the school, and this planned progression is evident both in documentation and in practice. Provision throughout the year is thoughtfully mapped, ensuring that worship reflects the liturgical year and includes significant seasons, feast days, and celebrations. Leaders demonstrate strong expertise in leading prayer and liturgy while also prioritising the development of others. Pupils are supported progressively to plan, lead and evaluate worship with increasing confidence and independence. Staff are well supported through appropriate and timely training, which strengthens practice. Monitoring and evaluation of collective worship are rigorous and have clear impact. Pupils routinely evaluate worship experiences, leaders provide clear feedback, and findings are used effectively to refine and improve provision. This cycle is reflective and contributes to strengthened outcomes and sustained high-quality practice.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St James Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	141820
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3303 358
Full postal address of the school	Leach Heath Lane, Rednal, Birmingham, B45 9BN
School phone number	0121 464 9700
Headteacher	Matthew Ingram
Chair of governing board	Stephen Graham
School Website	www.stjamescatholicprimary.co.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Lumen Christi Catholic Multi Academy Company
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	May 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Michelle Walsh
Hannah Tebb

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