

# St Philip's Catholic Primary School

URN: 141929

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Birmingham

26–27 March 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

- 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

- The school has a welcoming, inclusive, and supportive Catholic ethos, ensuring that everyone within its multifaith community is valued and respected for who they are as members of God's family.
- The school is a sanctuary for pupils whose circumstances have made them the most vulnerable due to the staff's dedication to providing exemplary pastoral care. They ensure that every pupil feels loved, valued, and secure, which enhances their overall well-being and achievement.
- Leaders are inspiring examples of faith and have embedded a supportive and positive culture where the whole community can thrive.
- Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons; they are enthusiastic and engaged in their learning.
- The prayer and liturgy policy is well-planned and effective, enabling staff and pupils to expect progression in participation skills over time.

## What the school needs to improve

- Empower pupils to take a proactive leading role in responding to the demands of Catholic social teaching, locally, nationally, and globally.
- Consistently provide opportunities for pupils to reflect deeply on their learning in religious education.
- Ensure pupil-prepared prayer and its evaluation provide opportunities for pupils to plan creative and innovative experiences for all independently.

## 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

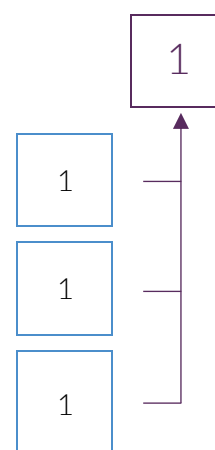
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### 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



There is an inclusive and welcoming Catholic culture at St Philip's underpinned by the school's mission statement, 'Learning and Working through Christ', which is understood and lived out by the whole community. Pupils understand it well because it is well known and used daily. They openly discuss the importance of welcoming and respecting other faiths, reflecting a culture of inclusivity and belonging. Pupils are rightly proud of their school, and their behaviour demonstrates a well-developed respect for one another, as evidenced by their exemplary behaviour across the school. Pupils demonstrate stewardship, actively leading and contributing to chaplaincy opportunities, such as the mission group, Mini Vinnies and Eco Warriors, supporting the local community by prayer, fundraising, providing food parcels, singing at the local residential home, and caring for our common home. Some pupils respond to the demands of Catholic social teaching; however, the whole curriculum is not yet sufficiently embedded to express these principles in a way that enables all pupils to articulate confidently how it reflects the Church's mission to respond proactively locally, nationally, and globally.

Christ is at the heart of this school, and there is a real sense of family, where everyone, regardless of faith or culture, is treated equally; the children of St Philip's know they are loved. Staff live out Christ's teachings by readily modelling the Faith to the pupils. Living like Jesus is recognised by angels of kindness nominations from staff and pupils, celebrating aspects of various cultures and beliefs, and going the extra mile to understand and support the community's needs, which is greatly appreciated by the families they serve. Pupils are happy and confident, feeling safe in their school environment, described by a staff member as 'a sanctuary.' The staff know that they make a difference. The school environment reflects its mission well, with well-resourced prayer areas and displays around the school, which reflect the liturgical seasons and the current Jubilee

Year, 'Pilgrims of Hope'. The mission group undertakes active roles in monitoring, checking prayer areas and the school environment, and feeding back to class teachers concerning areas for improvement. The provision for relationships, sex, and health education (RSHE) is carefully planned. Pupils talk confidently about their learning in this subject and its application to their lives.

Leaders and governors are deeply committed to promoting the school's Catholic life and mission. The principal is inspirational in modelling this commitment to ensure all pupils and staff encounter Christ, resulting in a community firmly rooted in its mission and faith. Leaders and governors are highly effective in evaluating the school's Catholic life and mission because they visit the school, complete learning walks and participate in school events, enabling them to know the school's strengths and areas for improvement. This leads to effective, well-targeted, and consciously planned school development work. Leaders ensure staff receive high-quality training and induction so that the school's Catholic life and mission are consistently strong. Staff highly value the attention leaders give their well-being, resulting in a very dedicated staff team. The multi academy company's (MAC) 'SHINE,' (serving together, high expectations, inclusion, nurturing faith, excellence) values, enables the school's leaders to show staff how they are valued and appreciated. Close collaboration with the parish ensures strong sacramental preparation and supports parents as the primary educators of their children. Staff use many highly effective strategies to engage with parents, including inviting them to meetings, prayer services, assemblies, and Masses and sharing pupils' experiences on social media.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

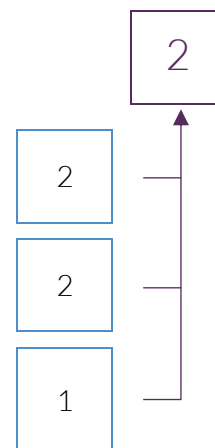
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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 are well-motivated in religious education lessons as they know their work is valued and celebrated. They demonstrate good prior knowledge because teachers ensure this is planned for and recapped in lessons. As a result, most pupils' progress in knowing and remembering more is good, as reflected in the work recorded in their exercise books. By the end of Year 6, most pupils attain age-related expectations or exceed them. The progress of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) is not yet consistently as substantial as it is for other groups of pupils. Pupils are religiously literate, and most can communicate their views and knowledge. Because pupils thoroughly enjoy religious education, engagement and behaviour is good. The school is beginning to use deeper thinking questions to challenge pupils. However, these do not always expose pupils to more opportunities to explain, analyse, and reflect in their written and verbal responses. Reflections happen in some lessons, but pupils' responses lack depth, so their knowledge is not extended. Nonetheless, attainment in religious education is strong and at least as good as other core subjects.

Teachers value religious education and communicate this well to pupils. There is a clear commitment to high expectations. Lessons are planned and structured consistently across the school, and teachers' subject knowledge is good, so they impart knowledge confidently to pupils. All lessons require pupils to recall prior learning, helping them to access new concepts. Well-chosen resources support engagement and promote learning. For example, during a nursery lesson, children were learning about Lent and the significance of forgiveness through an activity using prayer stones. Teachers understand the impact religious education has on pupils' moral and spiritual development, and questioning is used well in lessons to assess pupils' current understanding. It sometimes encourages them to qualify their thinking or give a more detailed response. For example, when reflecting on the role of liturgical music, one pupil stated, 'If the

Spirit fills you, you can change the world.' Sometimes, teachers do not adapt teaching effectively and do not maximise learning for all pupils. Teaching is almost always good because staff receive training relating to teaching and learning, and they feel confident and supported to teach the subject.

Leaders and governors ensure that the requirements of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* are taught through the diocesan strategy and organise the curriculum sequentially so that pupils build on prior learning securely. They are fully committed to the profile of religious education across the school and ensure that the subject has parity with other core subjects regarding staff training and resourcing. The subject leader is fully committed to her role and has a powerful vision for religious education in the school. She is inspirational in her aims for all pupils and works effectively with the link governor for religious education to achieve this aim. The link governor is generous in the time he gives to the school and in his commitment to supporting and challenging the school leaders. The subject leader works effectively with the link governor, ensuring standards improve. As a result of regular and robust monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum, the subject leader provides extensive, precisely targeted support for all teachers, including those new to teaching or needing additional guidance, offering invaluable coaching, mentoring, and advice. Consequently, pupils achieve high standards of religious literacy, regardless of their faith or background. The curriculum is enriched with various activities, projects, and opportunities to implement learning, making learning in religious education memorable and relevant for pupils.

## 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

2

#### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

2

2

Pupils enthusiastically participate in prayer and liturgy, singing, reading, writing prayers, and leading worship in various formats. Appropriate resources, including scripture and liturgical music, enhance the school's prayer life. Pupils respond well to whole school and class prayer and liturgy, demonstrating reverence and taking advantage of opportunities for silent reflection. They have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, and their prayer routines are well established; they are central to daily school life. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of the different seasons within the Church's liturgical year; for example, they can explain that Lent is a time of preparation for Easter. The pupil mission team is articulate when discussing the shape of the liturgical year and what this means within the school. They also monitor the prayer spaces around the school and have some knowledge of traditional Catholic prayers. Pupils enjoy participating in and organising prayer and liturgy for their peers, and this happens regularly and is central to the school's weekly prayer pattern. However, pupils lack confidence in articulating how the evaluation of prayer and liturgy in the classroom leads to future improvements or changes.

Prayer is central to school life and happens daily in many different forms. There is a range of prayer opportunities, including a gospel assembly led by senior leaders, a weekly assembly where pupils are encouraged to celebrate each other's God-given gifts and talents, and a weekly Mass celebrated by the parish priest. Scripture is used regularly and appropriately and remains the focus of each liturgy. Through training, staff have been upskilled so that the support given to pupils in planning and leading well-constructed prayer and liturgies has improved but is not yet embedded. Opportunities for pupils to confidently and independently plan, lead, and evaluate their prayers so they can articulate the process and the links between the scripture and theme chosen are not yet part of the school's regular provision. Engaging families in the school's prayer

life is carefully considered and planned. A range of creative strategies is used to develop pupils' prayer life, such as the 'prayer bag', which goes home with pupils to help them with their prayers. Prayer journals prove that this has supported families in praying together at home.

The prayer and liturgy policy is effective and lays out the expectations for all stakeholders, enabling clear expectations of progression when coming together to pray. This is not yet consistently embedded across the school in a way that positively impacts pupils' ability to prepare and evaluate prayer with increasing ease and independence. Leaders and governors offer regular training opportunities, which has increased the staff's confidence in supporting pupils to engage meaningfully in worship. Leaders have developed a long-term plan to ensure that significant liturgical events and significant days are celebrated, with regular opportunities for the school community to attend Mass in school or church, along with the parish priest supporting the pupils in Lent to offer the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Leaders and governors recognise that prayer and liturgy are central to the school and, as such, allocate appropriate resources, as seen in the school environment and prayer areas. Routine monitoring influences the school's self-evaluation concerning prayer. However, leaders recognise the need for more rigour in monitoring and evaluating pupil-prepared prayer to ensure that its findings directly influence the quality and impact of worship across the school.



## Information about the school

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| Full name of school                            | St Philip's Catholic Primary School  |
| School unique reference number (URN)           | 141929   |
| School DfE Number (LAESTAB)                    | 333 3404   |
| Full postal address of the school              | Messenger Road, Smethwick, B66 3DU   |
| School phone number                            | 0121 558 1643  |
| Headteacher                                    | Carmel Hinton  |
| Chair of governing board                       | Joanna Griffin   |
| School Website                                 | <a href="http://www.st-philips.sandwell.sch.uk">www.st-philips.sandwell.sch.uk</a> |
| 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                            | 3 to 11  |
| Gender of pupils                               | Mixed  |
| Date of last denominational inspection         | November 2018  |
| Previous denominational inspection grade       | 2  |

## The inspection team

Teresa Cotter  
Paul Madia

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 |