



Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Primary School

URN: 139621

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham

22–23 May 2024

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

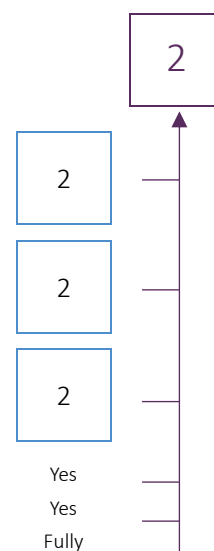
Collective worship (p.7)

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

The school is fully compliant with the 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



What the school does well

- There is a strong sense of community at Our Lady of Good Counsel, which is seen through the positive relationships established between staff, parents and pupils: everyone is kind, respected and supported.
- Pastoral care and commitment to the most vulnerable are strengths of the school.
- The learning environment is bright and vibrant, celebrating the Catholic life and mission of the school.
- There are clear systems in place for religious education which ensure that all pupils revisit prior learning and build on this knowledge as they progress through the school.
- Pupils engage in prayer and liturgy opportunities provided for them, singing a wide range of hymns with enthusiasm and vigour.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that the school's mission statement is clearly understood and articulated by all members of the school community.
- Plan lessons in religious education which incorporate careful scaffolding and challenge to support all pupils in deepening their knowledge and understanding.
- Develop pupils' independence in planning, delivering and evaluating a variety of 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

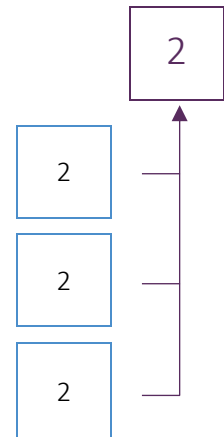
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 Our Lady of Good Counsel understand the Catholic ethos of the school. They can talk about how everyone is treated equally, following the teaching of Jesus: ‘We all get to learn about the good news and that Jesus is the Saviour’. Pupils recall their knowledge of values and virtues and are beginning to link these to the school’s mission statement. There are a wide range of opportunities for pupils to engage in Catholic Social Teaching activities, including class charities where money is raised for The Cystic Fibrosis Society, Macmillan Cancer and animal rehoming centres. Pupils in Year 6 explain that they, ‘follow the Catholic Social Teaching idea of the common good, and the virtue of solidarity, when we go to the care home’. Pupil groups, such as the Mini Vinnies, have visited a local care home to sing Christmas carols and deliver Christmas cards, as well as collecting food for the local food larder. The ‘Shining Stars’ chaplaincy team undertake their role enthusiastically, delivering retreat days for pupils by preparing prayer stations and activities based around liturgical themes. Pupils discuss their knowledge of other faiths, especially recent learning around Islam, during religious education lessons. Pupils show respect for a wide variety of cultures and recognise how everyone is ‘unique and made in the image of God’.

Members of the school community show an awareness of how the school mission statement begins: ‘To live, love and learn in the light of Christ’. However, the mission statement, in its entirety, is not well known by all. The sense of community across the school is strong as staff know pupils well and relationships are nurtured carefully. Parents feel supported by the staff and comment on how well they are welcomed into school. Pastoral care goes ‘above and beyond’ and staff seek ways to ensure that everyone is supported. Staff, such as the family support worker and an emotional literacy support assistant (ELSA), exemplify the school’s approach to helping families and pupils. The learning environment around the school has recently been enhanced to promote and celebrate its Catholic identity, displaying Catholic charities and Catholic values. The vibrant biblical timeline and liturgical year displays are exemplary and inspiring. There are many sacred spaces around the school highlighting the Church’s year, with a dedicated area which celebrates all faiths within the school family. Provision for relationships, sex and health education is well sequenced, planned and implemented.

School leaders, including governors, are deeply committed to the mission of the Church and actively promote this through daily school life. The bishop’s spiritual themes are well promoted and are integral to the curriculum, with displays confirming that these are embedded. Leaders have developed good relationships with the local

parish and organise a variety of events both in school and in the parish: they continue to seek ways to promote this partnership even further. There are effective strategies in place to engage with parents. For example, leaders have arranged for parents to come to classroom doors each morning to engage with staff; a school leader is available to speak to parents on arrival each day, on the playground. Resources are deployed to support the most vulnerable: leaders work with charities to increase access to winter coats, shoes and trainers for pupils; a food larder is openly accessible to all. Staff feel well supported by leaders in their professional development and well-being through, for example, the employee assistance programme available through the Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust. A staff well-being team provides encouragement, such as ‘a hug in a mug’, to value and recognise the committed work of staff.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

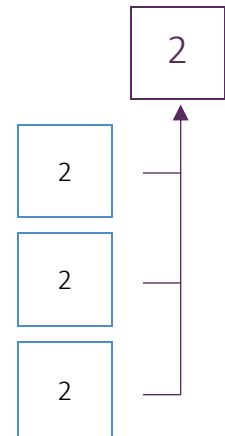
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that pupils make a strong start in religious education and these pupils are eager to discuss their ideas and experiences. Good progress continues throughout the school leading to most pupils being able to explain their ideas using religious vocabulary. For example, Key Stage 2 pupils discuss their understanding of absolution and how this links to forgiveness; Key Stage 1 pupils share their learning of how Zacchaeus was sorry for his sins. In the majority of lessons, behaviour for learning is good; pupils show high levels of engagement, demonstrating enjoyment in religious education and eagerly participating in lessons. Workbooks are neat, demonstrating pupils' pride in their work which they present in a range of different ways. Where teaching is at its strongest, pupils have a clear understanding of how well they are doing: they share their understanding of self-assessment activities and can explain the use of 'I can' statements. Sometimes pupils are not given enough opportunities to work independently. Pupils know their teachers will help them and they explain how 'teachers break down the learning for us, if we are stuck'. Although good overall, attainment in religious education in some year groups, and especially at the end of Key Stage 2, is below the standards expected by the school. Leaders recognise that this is due to previous inconsistencies in teaching and have put actions into place to address gaps in pupils' learning.

Due to high quality professional development provided by school leaders, the Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust and the diocese, teachers have the secure subject knowledge to deliver lessons effectively and plan appropriate tasks linked to previous assessment. Teachers recognise and value the importance of religious education: all lessons start in prayer and with a moment of reflection. There is a consistent approach to lesson pedagogy across the school, with adoption of systems such as 'power up' retrieval which enable pupils to reflect on what they have learned in the current and previous year groups. Skilful questioning is used effectively by adults to prompt pupils to think more deeply. Effective lessons are sequenced well and key learning is clearly identified. Adults are used effectively in classrooms to support the needs of pupils, though resources are not fully adapted or scaffolded to support learning and maximise progress. Teachers provide moments for spiritual reflection through 'wonder moments' and assessments where pupils reflect on the impact of their learning on their own lives.

Leaders are ambitious for the religious education curriculum and they ensure that it is given the highest priority in school in comparison to other core subjects. Leaders implement clear systems of monitoring to evaluate

religious education, leading to the identification of areas for development and concise actions to drive improvement. Much of this change, and its implementation, has been recently introduced and is at an early stage of development. An example of this working well can be seen in the evaluation of pupil enjoyment in religious education lessons, leading to timetable changes being made so that religious education is now taught daily in shorter lessons, enabling pupils to build up deeper knowledge over time. A wide range of professional development is planned by leaders, in line with school development priorities, to enhance teachers' knowledge, in school and through access to training from the diocese and the Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust. Leaders, including governors, ensure that the curriculum for Religious Education is planned carefully.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

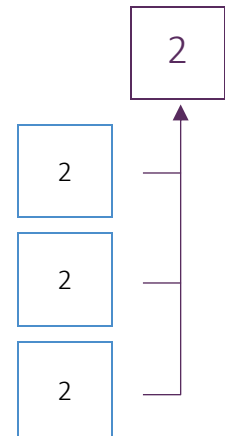
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

Leadership

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



Pupils are active participants in class and whole-school celebrations of the word, singing with confidence and enthusiasm. Pupils explain how prayer and liturgy influences both the wider life of the school and their own behaviour. There is a less developed understanding in pupils about different ways to pray. Pupils have a basic knowledge of the liturgical year and can explain some of the liturgical colours, such as 'green for ordinary time'. Wider knowledge around events within the liturgical year is not secure. Pupils are developing their knowledge when leading and evaluating prayer and liturgy. They enjoy using the 'Let us Pray 2Gether' resources: all pupils have an opportunity to do this, and they do so eagerly. However, pupils are sometimes limited in their ownership of these activities because they are heavily scaffolded by adults. Opportunities for creativity can be limited at these times, restricting some of the spiritual impact on pupils as leaders and participants. Prayer and liturgy experiences follow a four-part liturgy structure, where the community gathers, hears the word of God, responds to scripture and departs with a mission.

Systematic planning for prayer and liturgy is in place, ensuring that key themes are identified weekly across the school – such as the theme of wisdom. Because daily prayer routines are well embedded, pupils confidently recite prayers at relevant times of the day. Staff, supported by experienced school leaders, work with pupils to plan seasonally appropriate celebrations of the word and, recently, a whole school retreat day. The occasions which have the most impact include a variety of music and scripture to enhance the mood and create a prayerful experience: for example, pupils in Key Stage 2 responded by choosing to create rosary beads during the month of May, linking this to the theme of wisdom, 'because Mary was wise'. Some celebrations of the word are more formulaic, missing opportunities for spiritual depth or moments of reflection. The recently enhanced sacred spaces are calm, welcoming and inviting for all: they are used at lunchtimes for chaplaincy groups to lead prayers. Planned staff prayer is established: this is planned with significant events in mind. Families are invited into school on a variety of occasions such as Christmas carol services, Easter celebrations and weekly 'gospel assemblies'.

Although the school has a carefully planned policy for collective worship, the range of prayer and liturgy on offer is sometimes limited. A progression model shows the expectations set out for pupil-led worship, but pupils are not always given opportunities to lead these times independently. The liturgical year incorporates a wide variety of events, including the Stations of the Cross, harvest celebrations and Masses on feast days of the

Church. School leaders work well alongside the parish to prepare pupils, and families, for the Sacraments of First Holy Communion and Reconciliation. Professional development is planned by leaders in school, in partnership with the Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust and the diocese, though the impact of this work is in its infancy. Although some evaluation of prayer and liturgy takes place, it is not within a planned cycle, nor is it evaluative enough to drive further improvement. A newly appointed lay chaplain works alongside school leaders and the parish to plan a cycle of events linked to the liturgical year. Resources are prioritised for prayer and liturgy: these include investment in the aforementioned artwork around the school, beautifully celebrating Catholic life and mission as well enhancing prayer and liturgy.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	139621
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	9253331
Full postal address of the school	Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Primary School, The Drove, Sleaford, NG34 7AT
School phone number	01529304373
Headteacher	Paul Tibble (Acting)
Chair of Local Governing Body	Nick Spolton
School Website	https://www.our-lady.lincs.sch.uk/index.html
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Our Lady Of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	31 January 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Ruth Elmore
Andrew Monaghan

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