



# Our Lady and St Chad Catholic Academy

URN: 141802

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Birmingham

23–24 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

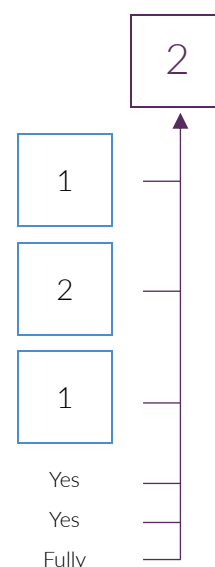
#### Collective worship (p.7)

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

- Our Lady and St Chad Catholic Academy offers an inclusive welcome to all, where students feel valued for who they are and what they achieve.
- The level of pastoral care provided for all community members is a strength of the school.
- All members of the religious education department contribute effectively to students' spiritual and moral development.
- Relationships between students and staff are very strong, build trust, and create an environment where students can learn purposefully.
- Leaders have embedded liturgy that is accessible to all students, which inspires thoughtful, spiritual responses.

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## What the school needs to improve

- Use the teaching and learning strategies introduced to raise the attainment of all students, particularly boys, in Key Stage 4.
- Ensure that best practice is shared across the department so that all students experience the same high-quality teaching in religious education.
- Develop student leadership to enable students to plan, lead, and evaluate 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

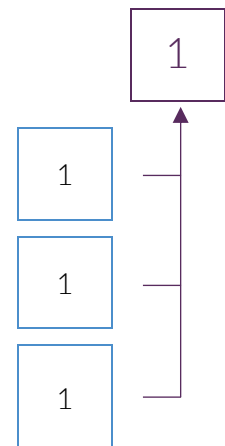
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### 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



Our Lady and St Chad Catholic Academy is an inclusive school where students feel welcomed into the school's family regardless of background, faith, or ability. Students are immensely proud of their school and speak enthusiastically about its distinctive Catholic character. They embrace the school's mission, 'Together we will emulate the love of Christ and become the people God created us to be' and how this applies to them daily. One student said, 'We get to be Apostles in our own way'. Students are encouraged to show respect for themselves and others and feel highly valued for who they are and their achievements. They respond overwhelmingly positively to the call to service to others and recognise how helping others enriches them in their own lives. Students take on leadership roles willingly through the work of the 'Next Chapter' group (Youth SVP), the student council, the Lourdes group, and the 'Show us your Change' school shop. They are very aware of their responsibility to the less fortunate. An extensive range of planned charitable events support Cafod, Macmillan Cancer Care, International Partner Schools Uganda, and Working With Classrooms Malawi. Students relish the opportunity this gives them to put faith into action in practical and enjoyable ways.

The school's environment reflects its mission and identity through effective signs and images visible throughout the school. Each classroom includes a prayer box display with religious icons and artefacts. Catholic social teaching is explicitly taught in all subjects across the curriculum. Consequently, students deeply understand and participate fully in activities and routines that promote the school's high expectations and standards. The 'Thrive' team contributes significantly to students' well-being. Pastoral care for all community members is a strength of the school. Staff actively encourage students to try their best, and they achieve excellent outcomes. This underpins the belief that each student has gifts and talents which are unique to

them. Staff are exemplary role models, and outstanding relationships exist between students and staff, with one student commenting that 'Everyone is made to feel they belong'. The personal, social and health education programme (PSHE) is well crafted, and relationships and sex education (RSE) is taught as part of this. These lessons are valued by students who acknowledge that they know how to be healthy and remain safe. Parents regard the school highly, as evidenced by the overwhelmingly positive parental questionnaires. They speak enthusiastically about the school's caring and supportive ethos.

Leaders and governors have a shared understanding of their responsibilities in leading a faith community and are committed to the further development of Catholic life. The head teacher has an inspirational vision for Catholic education and is ably supported by a dedicated and enthusiastic leadership team. The chair of the local governing board and the religious education link governor have detailed knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Systems for monitoring and evaluating Catholic life are formalised and include the head teacher's report to governors, records of governor visits and student reviews conducted regularly. Students report that they know what has happened from proposals made by the student council through 'You said, we did' feedback. Governors and leaders are committed to supporting high-quality staff induction and training, and everyone highly values investment in developing all staff. Outreach work includes collaboration with primary schools that regularly visit to use the 'Forest School,' an outdoor classroom.

## 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

2

#### Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

1

#### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education

2

2

Students respond well to various engaging activities, with one saying, 'Religious education makes my day better'. 'Do now' and retrieval tasks are used consistently in all lessons to review prior learning as soon as students enter the classroom. Students are challenged appropriately in most lessons, and they make good progress. Results in religious education are above those achieved by other core subjects in the school. However, results at GCSE last year demonstrated a dip in outcomes, and a significant gap remains in the attainment of boys compared to results achieved by girls. The department is fully aware of this, and strategies have been implemented to address the gap, including the 'Kagan' strategies for discussion and additional revision classes. Students treat each other respectfully, and nearly all listen attentively when discussing religious concepts and alternative views. The quality of work is typically well presented in books. However, boys' writing skills are less well developed when compared to girls' written work. Students learn about other faiths as part of the curriculum, and they recognise how this adds to the richness of their community.

Religious education is at the centre of the curriculum. The department is a strong team, and teachers have excellent subject knowledge. As a result, they can ask searching questions to test and develop students' understanding of lessons. Lessons are well planned, and opportunities for creative work are evident in books from Year 7 onwards. The department provides support for learners of all abilities through writing frames, and essential vocabulary is reviewed regularly to remove any barriers to learning. This is consistent across the department and in all year groups. 'Tier 3' words are provided for students by each theme being studied, which supports students in becoming religiously literate. Most students use religious language confidently and in context. Work is appropriately adapted for learners with lower prior attainment, whereby teaching clearly meets their needs. Foundations for extended writing are built at Key Stage 3,

and explicit links are made to examination content and skills. Pair and group work is used highly effectively to develop understanding in most lessons. The 'Big Question' is used consistently across the department and provides a focus for learning. It extends students' understanding of the studied topic and allows them to discuss and debate it. Teachers assess work and provide valuable comments for students to improve their work, and most students respond to advice given. However, not all comments are detailed enough to enable students to understand fully what they need to do to improve their work and effectively make progress.

The curriculum in religious education is planned coherently to build knowledge and skills, and schemes of work are being reviewed to meet the requirements of the *Religious Education Directory*. This has been introduced in Year 7 and will be rolled out further over the next two years. The resourcing of religious education is comparable with other core subjects in terms of curriculum time, staffing, and accommodation. Learning walks, lesson observations, and book scrutiny are part of the school's regular monitoring, evaluation, and review processes. Enrichment opportunities have been provided, including a visiting Rabbi, which is being developed further. The subject link governor has a good relationship with the department and meets to monitor progress and discuss issues for development; consequently, governors are well-informed to support and challenge school improvement in this area. Student reviews are also used to inform the department about future developments. The department participates fully in moderation work across the multi-academy company (MAC) in Key Stage 2 during the summer term, which is planned well and highly effective in avoiding lost learning in the transition between primary and secondary education.

## 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

1

1



Prayer is central to the school's life. There are many opportunities for students and staff to experience prayer, including staff prayer each morning, tutor group prayer, and the 'Celebration of God's Word' year group assemblies. Students are respectful and engage in prayer and liturgy reverently. Prayerful silence is observed before celebrations. Student participation is encouraged, and they are confident in leading and delivering prayer when called on. One student said it was 'A chance to show your beliefs'. Students' active participation in planning and preparing prayer and liturgy is developing through the 'Next Chapter' group, although the numbers involved remain small. Students know traditional Catholic prayers, including the Angelus and Fatima prayers. They are aware of different ways of praying, and Lectio Divina is used to reflect during prayer time. Opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation are provided during Advent and Lent; students participate willingly. Students of other faiths and those without faith are also encouraged to speak with the priest during these times. This adds to the inclusive nature of the school as a whole.

Praying together is embedded into the school's daily routine, and the 'Gather, listen, respond, go forth' structure is consistent across the school. The inclusive nature of the school ensures that students from all faiths feel welcomed and valued members of the community, which is a strength. One student said, 'Everyone is treated the same, and there is no discrimination of faith'. Students write prayers selected for use during tutor time, and themes are appropriately linked to the liturgical calendar. Following a request from students, Bible study is provided for students who wish to attend after school each week. The school benefits from the support of the local clergy, who visit each Thursday to celebrate Mass with students and staff. The 'Croi' prayer garden provides a quiet area where students can go when they wish to pray. Reflection is used effectively to allow students to make connections between current issues experienced by

communities around the world and their impact on their daily lives. Student retreats and pilgrimages to Alton Castle and Lourdes are provided in addition to staff provision in Walsingham and Assisi.

Leaders plan and deliver high-quality worship and fully understand the value of prayer for each community member. They place a high priority on the prayer life of the school and provide time and space for this to be developed. Leaders have embedded liturgy that is accessible to all students, which inspires thoughtful, spiritual responses. They have ensured that practical training is provided for staff, and prayer is modelled strongly so that all staff know what is expected of them to enable all students to have the same high-quality prayer experience. Staff articulate that good practice is shared, allowing them to be more confident in delivering different forms of praying to students. Students contribute to and participate in evaluating prayer and liturgy, which continues to be developed. The governing body is kept informed about the school's prayer life through the head teacher's report, meeting with the 'Next Chapter' group and attending important celebrations during the year. The governing body is fully involved in monitoring and evaluating collective worship. Consequently, systems are formalised to allow outcomes to be shared and ensure consistency in what is being delivered.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	Our Lady and St Chad Catholic Academy
School unique reference number (URN)	141802
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	336 4606
Full postal address of the school	Old Fallings Lane, Wolverhampton, WV10 8BL
School phone number	01902 558250
Headteacher	Louisa Craig
Chair of governing board	Christopher Walker
School Website	<a href="http://www.olsc.org.uk">www.olsc.org.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Francis and St Clare Catholic MAC
Phase	Secondary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	July 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

## The inspection team

Garry Maher	Lead
Philip Gray	Team
Anya Poole	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