



St Julie's Catholic High School

URN: 104712

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Liverpool

28–29 February 2024

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

2

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

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

Fully

What the school does well

- There is a strong sense of welcome, purpose and aspiration from all in St Julie's. Staff and students are passionate about the Notre Dame values and are driven to keep the message of St Julie Billiart alive and relevant in today's world.
- Strong relationships and values underpin the effective pastoral support students receive. There is a tangible sense of mercy and forgiveness through restorative processes and pastoral systems, indeed one parent stated, 'Catholic values of inclusivity and acceptance are beautifully in evidence.'
- Staff recognise and deeply appreciate the compassionate support they receive from leaders who ensure there are effective support systems readily available. These include an in-school counsellors, staff wellbeing days and weekly Friday treat days.

- Religious education staff possess strong knowledge, and they demonstrate clear pedagogy which ensures students' progress well. Through engaging in relevant continued professional development, assessment systems are now becoming embedded and, as a result, there are *green shoots* in current data tracking and student work.
- There is a wealth of student leadership opportunities which empower students to go out into the world and make it a better place.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that the school evaluation of Catholic life and mission, together with prayer and liturgy, both include maximum involvement of governors and students.
- Create opportunities for students to plan, lead and actively participate in prayer and liturgy on a more consistent and regular basis.
- Establish a structured schedule of quality professional development for 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

1

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

2

1



Students truly understand and embrace the charism and mission of St Julie's. They speak with pride about how they live out the Notre Dame values in their daily lives. Students feel valued, supported, safe, happy, and confident. They understand the high standards expected by staff. Students embrace opportunities to care for our *Common Home* through such projects as the *Global Citizenship Ambassadors* scheme in Year 9 culminating in the *DOT Fest*. The *Justice and Peace* group has participated in a successful climate change event in the local parish. The newly introduced *Live Simply Award* has ignited the students' proactivity with litter-picking events in the local community, caring for the elderly, and recycling responsibilities in school. Students show a deep respect for themselves and others; they are welcoming to those of other faiths. Indeed, older Muslim students met with a new intake student to reassure her of the strong inclusivity in school. Students highly value the school's lay chaplain and one commented, 'she is everywhere and always present and available for us.'

The mission is known and witnessed throughout the school. Staff and students describe how God is present here. This is further reinforced through the various visible icons, artefacts and displays around school, which are explicit reminders of its charism. Everyone is welcome, including those most vulnerable, with a spirit of generosity and joy. The high level of pastoral care given to the students is commendable; the school provides care packages, pre-loved uniform, Christmas hampers and breakfast allowances to ensure they are clothed, fed and feel loved. Staff are exemplary role models for students; they demonstrate warm, professional relationships with their colleagues and loving and respectful relationships with the students. Students describe staff as being available to talk to about any issues or worries they may have. They say staff listen and help. Chaplaincy provision is central to the school. There are

opportunities for many students to spiritually develop through weekly Mass, prayer breakfasts, chaplaincy prefects, and the newly introduced *Faith in Action Award*. Relationships, sex and health education meets statutory requirements and is thoughtfully and strategically planned, with a relevant local context. Students articulate, 'PSHE is interesting because it's about the things you need to know'. They enjoy the drop-down days because they are different and Years 10 and 11 value the opportunity to plan and deliver to younger students.

Leaders and governors can articulate the school's mission and are strong guardians of the Notre Dame values in the school. They are models of Catholic leadership. They actively participate in the events and training the archdiocese has to offer. Partnerships with local churches and clergy are very strong. Students speak of a recent visit to the cathedral which they enjoyed. Leaders are strong witnesses to Catholic social teaching at every level. Leaders ensure there are continued initiatives in school which enable those in greatest need, or those most vulnerable, to thrive. These include mentoring schemes (using Alumni and senior leadership), additional reading schemes and home visits. Through an award scheme there is a comprehensive Personal, Social and Health Education programme and regular collaborative planning time. Leaders have ensured different subject areas make connections with the programme to highlight the Catholic understanding of the realities of life. Students describe the connections made between religious education, history, and English through *Black History Month* events. Whilst governors are ambitious for the Catholic life of the school, and their attendance at key events is good, their involvement in self-evaluation of Catholic life and mission is limited. Students participate in the Catholic life self-evaluation, but some contributions lack impact. Although staff are committed to supporting the charism of the school, professional development for Catholic life is not sufficiently explicit, scheduled, and structured.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

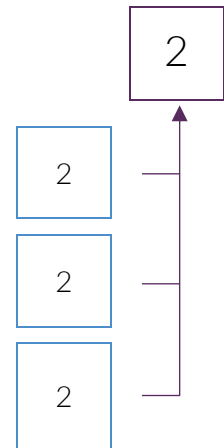
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Lesson observations and book scrutiny demonstrate secure student knowledge which reflect the requirements of the *Religious Education Directory* and the GCSE specification. A clear focus on recall and retrieval is evident across all lessons and book scrutiny. Students confidently explain that this helps them to know and remember more and to know how to improve. There is strong evidence of religious literacy. There is a clear understanding of the need for students to have a secure understanding of the key religious terminology and key scripture to ensure they can then make further progress. Students can confidently apply their religious language to articulate what they are learning and why. Skilful modelling and scaffolding are used to extend understanding of knowledge to GCSE style questions. Lesson planning in religious education effectively reflects a whole school structure of the considered lesson format. Students show good levels of engagement in lessons and focus well. They work well independently and readily ask for help and offer answers when prompted. Students say they enjoy their learning in religious education. There are embedded self-assessment practices across the department. Students can articulate the purpose and impact of why they self-assess and use *purple pen*.

Exceptional subject knowledge is a strength of the department and, from all lessons observed, teachers display a passion and enthusiasm for their teaching and love for their subject. This is reflected in the planning and adaption of lesson content to encourage deeper learning and making links to other aspects of the curriculum. Strong relationships, commitment and high expectations are evident from the staff. They work in close collaboration for planning and preparing high quality resources to support learning. The curriculum is well planned with a clear plan for the *Religious Education Directory* roll-out. Effective questioning is clear across lessons to develop deeper thinking. The department follows the recently revised whole school reward systems; they have additional subject specific rewards for *Star of the Week* and the *Purple Pen*

Prize. Students respond positively to merits and rewards. Scripture is evident in some lessons with references made to how it can impact upon and shape life today. However, there is a need to develop further opportunities to explore the Catholic view. Students are given time to reflect upon the issues discussed and debated in class.

Utilising the weekly identified department planning time enables staff to ensure the curriculum is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Directory*. Allocated curriculum time and funding are comparable with other core subjects. Professional development for subject staff is good and the subject leader attends archdiocesan network meetings. The subject leader also marks for the exam board and recently completed the *National Professional Qualification in Leading Teaching*. Access to subject knowledge enhancement and further professional development for a re-trained member of staff demonstrates that leaders ensure opportunities for pedagogical development. The subject leader has a clear vision and is passionate for her subject and department. She has invested in further developing her team to work in further collaboration, sharing planning and evaluating student progress. The curriculum is clearly sequenced and meets the needs of different groups of students. Summative assessment at Key Stage 4 reflects an awareness to build on prior learning through the assessment of double units to strengthen and support the building of schema. There is a strong focus on formative assessment, which is consistent in clarifying any gaps in learning and adaptation needs. There are opportunities to visit places of worship such as the cathedral, mosque and synagogue, which connect with the delivered curriculum. However, there is scope to increase opportunities which extend beyond the religious education curriculum to further enhance students understanding and love of the subject. There are clear quality assurance systems across the department which ensure thorough monitoring, analysis, and self-challenge.

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

Students respond well to prayer and liturgy, but daily practice is inconsistent. An interesting student-led assembly by members of the sixth form and an engaging sacred time prayer were observed during inspection. Students know the themes of the liturgical year and could explain how they celebrate key events in the calendar including the main Christian festivals as well as Notre Dame events, and national events such as Remembrance Day. Students are willing to lead prayer in form assemblies but need more opportunities to lead and participate in *sacred time* and evaluation of the quality of prayer and liturgy. Students spoke confidently about how Notre Dame values inform their actions in school and beyond, and gave many examples of how they put their faith into action. Students can articulate how they reflect on prayer and liturgy but need more opportunities to do so.

Through excellent lay chaplaincy support and the inviolable allocation of *sacred time*, prayer and liturgy are a central and a routine part of school life. Students and staff can describe occasions where the whole school has united in prayer for occasions of sorrow and joy. There is a daily rhythm of prayer based on excellent resources. However, a more structured start and end is needed to separate it from *non-sacred time*. Students benefit from a range of ways in which to pray. This is more evident in the larger-scale liturgies which staff and students have described and clearly value, but there is an opportunity to increase the range of practice to enrich creativity. Scripture is well-chosen and used as part of prayer and liturgy. This opportunity could be increased and made more explicit to inform students' understanding of their faith. Performing Arts play a significant role in whole-school liturgy. Students and staff referred to the use of dance, drama, and music in liturgy, but not as a regular event. The chapel is an impressive resource which is valued and used; students and staff spoke about how it is central to school life and a place of calm and reflection in times of need. Students of other faiths have a place for

prayer which reflects the school's inclusivity. Strong parish links are evident through clergy being on a rota for weekly Mass. There are some opportunities to include parents in liturgy for example, the Year 7 Welcome Mass. However, responses within the parental survey demonstrated a wish to be invited to more events involving the prayer life of the school.

School has a lengthy prayer and liturgy policy, but it is unclear what the impact is. There is differentiation in delivery of and participation in prayer because of colleagues' freedom to use resources as they wish, but this lacks strategy. There is a clear calendar of liturgical themes produced by the lay chaplain and it is supported by quality resources which ensures that key events are celebrated. Weekly Mass is starting to attract more students as well as staff. Leaders, including the lay chaplain, understand Catholic tradition and prayer practice particularly linked to the school's charism. Catholic understanding needs to be made explicit through regular professional development for staff on how to lead the community in prayer, so as to develop participation and leadership from students. Staff are effusive about the support they receive from the lay chaplain and senior leaders, and this gives them confidence to lead prayer and liturgy but there is scope to upskill them. Governors and leaders are committed to resourcing prayer and liturgy as shown through the chapel and the provision of a full-time experienced lay chaplain who feels that she has the resources she needs, including supporting retreats and the Year 7 cathedral visit. Leaders regularly evaluate prayer and liturgy, but governors and students need a more specific and explicit role in reviewing quality and impact.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Julie's Catholic High School
School unique reference number (URN)	104712
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3414790
Full postal address of the school	St Julie's Catholic High School, Speke Road, Woolton, Liverpool, L25 7TN
School phone number	0151 428 6421
Headteacher	Kate McCourt
Chair of Governors	Brigid Smith
School Website	http://www.stjulies.org.uk
Trusteeship	Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Secondary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Date of last denominational inspection	21 May 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Alison Rigby	Lead
Ivan Gaughan	Team
Marie Rishton	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