



## Saint Francis Catholic Primary School

URN: 146180

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham

03 June 2026 – 04 June 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 RE

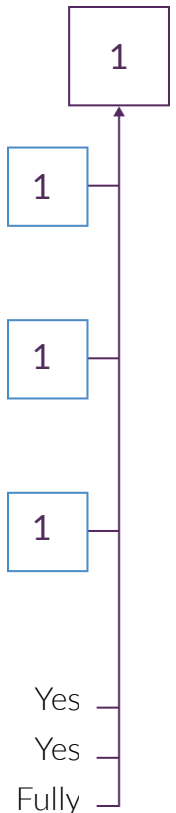
##### Collective worship (p.7)

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



## What the school does well

- The school's distinctive Catholic identity is carefully woven into all activities, enriching the lives of all involved, and having the highest impact on the school community.
- Highly effective strategic leadership, that has included leaders, governors and the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust, has resulted in rapid improvements since the last canonical inspection.
- The school has given the highest priority to ensuring the inclusivity of all, engendering a culture of welcome, belonging and deep respect for self and others.
- Leaders have excellent strategic vision of the development of religious education; this has led to consistent and effective approaches to implementing a new curriculum.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and knowledgeable in the planning and ministry of prayer and liturgy, and recognise its importance in their spiritual and moral development.

## What the school needs to improve

- Adapt teaching strategies to enable active learning for pupils at the earliest opportunity within religious education lessons.
- Review and revise the religious education curriculum to meet the needs and context of the school.
- Ensure that assessment procedures have a clear focus on identifying individual pupils' understanding and lead to subsequent actions that secure achievement in religious education.

## 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

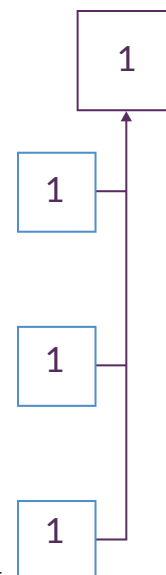
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### 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 know and live out the school's mission statement, underpinned by knowledge of the distinctive identity of the school and its rich Catholic heritage. Pupils demonstrate a strong understanding that they are valued as individuals. They show high levels of respect for themselves and others, with a strong realisation of the importance of the inclusivity of everyone regardless of their background, faith or ethnicity. 'Everyone is important, everyone respects each other', as one child summed it up. The behaviour of pupils is exemplary in lessons, in corridors and on the playground. Pupils flourish as they seek to grow in virtue through their actions. They are very keen to take on responsibilities: 'It shows that we care about others, those who need our help, doing what Jesus wants' being a typical comment. They link these actions knowledgeably to Catholic social teaching principles. Examples can be seen through the extensive charity fundraising, and the work of the pupil parliament, eco team and prefects. These roles are highly prized, as seen in pupils' earnest application forms. The chaplaincy provision is highly valued and impactful in helping all pupils to participate in the Catholic life and mission of the school.

The mission statement, vision and values have significant impact: they are embraced by staff and pupils alike. Staff are fully committed in all aspects of school life to promote the mission, whether it be explicitly modelling the mission statement, supporting pupils or each other. The school goes above and beyond in reaching out to all members of the school community, but also extends this to the wider community associated with the parish and the town, valuing all without exception. This is a joyful, united and supportive community, with staff as exemplary role models through their relationships with each other: 'Our Franciscan values and the love

of God and our neighbour - is at the heart of everything we do'. Those in need are supported fully but with respectful dignity in a variety of ways, and by different members of staff. Pastoral care of pupils is exceptional, with close attention to their individual needs. The distinctive Catholic identity of the school is witnessed in the physical environment, through its displays and prayer spaces. Chaplaincy provision is dynamic, and is skilfully developing the spiritual and moral development opportunities for pupils. A key example is the flourishing pupil chaplaincy team. Provision for relationships, sex and health education meets diocesan requirements and is effective in enabling pupils to articulate what they have learned.

Leaders and governors have a well-developed strategic vision for the school, with Catholic life and mission at its heart. This includes thorough review of policy and procedure, and thoughtful decision making. Priorities are established accurately and actions taken to implement positive change. The school has a dynamic partnership with the diocese. Links with the parish of St John the Baptist are strong, and mutually beneficial. This is further augmented by the relationship with the Sisters of the Franciscan Minoresses, and by the involvement of staff members in the parish. There are very successful strategies for engaging parents, including through the regular newsletters, a breakfast welcome for new parents, the sharing of pupils' successes on the online portal, and the invitation to celebrations. Leaders and governors are highly ambitious for the school. They recognise that the school's Catholic identity calls them to put Catholic social teaching principles into decision making, including welcoming those who are most in need through the admissions process. Staff members are grateful for the support and respect for their wellbeing shown by leaders, governors and the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust. Leaders and governors know their school well and therefore have an accurate view of its strengths, shown in the school's self-evaluation.

## Religious education

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 key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

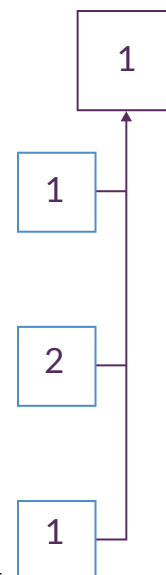
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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 developing secure knowledge, understanding and skills in religious education, which enable them to make consistently good progress. This includes pupils of all abilities including those with special educational needs and disabilities. Pupils are religiously literate at an age-appropriate level; they can express the theology that underpins their thoughts and actions arising from their learning: for instance, they take inspiration from the examples of Saints Carlo Acutis, Oscar Romero and Maximillian Kolbe, identifying the key messages to take forward from their lives. They show confidence in the recall of what they have learnt, and use religious vocabulary naturally once this has been explained. They concentrate well, giving lessons their full attention, and have a desire to be actively involved, collaborating well with their peers. Pupils produce good work that is generally well presented, with some emerging creativity where given the opportunity. Pupils have a desire to be actively engaged in lessons, and relish these opportunities when provided. There is a clear enjoyment and interest in religious education learning, resulting in outstanding behaviour. This is remarked on by parents, who see pupils eager to carry on and discuss their learning at home. Pupils have an understanding of how well they are doing and teachers' feedback supports them in knowing how to improve their work. Pupil attainment in religious education is strong in comparison with other core subjects.

Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge. They communicate the value of religious education to their pupils well. Planning follows a sequential path, with full curriculum coverage. Teachers have taken on the challenge of the new *Religious Education Directory* model

curriculum enthusiastically. Lessons follow a consistent structure for the implementation of the curriculum, which leads to positive outcomes. In some instances, opportunities are missed for pupils to be actively engaged in learning tasks early within a lesson, because of an over-emphasis on teacher exposition, and inappropriate levels of content. Some teaching lacks a focus on high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly in creative and independent tasks. Pupil effort is celebrated consistently, giving pupils security in volunteering answers even when unsure of their accuracy. Good examples of work are highlighted for the rest of the class as ways to improve the learning of others. Teachers' understanding of the impact religious education has on spiritual and moral development can be seen in the priority given to purposeful reflection in lessons. Resources are used well to assist learning, with a variety of tasks and adaptive learning present. Support for pupils with special educational needs is skilfully and sensitively provided by teaching assistants, enabling them to access learning alongside their peers. Assessment procedures are at an early stage of development, and do not focus specifically on individual pupils' improvement.

The curriculum is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Directory*, and it has been skilfully introduced by leaders through effective strategic implementation. High quality continuing professional development has been prioritised, with diocesan advice augmented by contributions from a variety of sources. The subject leader for religious education has a well-developed understanding of teaching and learning and the requirements of the curriculum. She has skilfully and sympathetically supported staff and her advice is valued highly. She has an excellent understanding of the present strengths of the school and a strong strategic vision for its continuing improvement. The diocesan religious education curriculum, *Meet in my Name*, has been introduced systematically and consistently. Its adaptation to the specific context of the school has not yet taken place. A wide range of enrichment activities are provided to promote pupils' learning. Leaders' and governors' evaluation of religious education is forensic and challenging, leading to well-targeted planning and action.

## Collective worship

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

### Collective worship key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

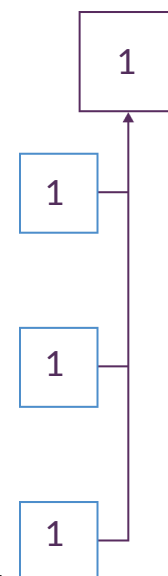
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

#### 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 deeply engaged in the experiences of prayer and liturgy offered by the school. The quality of their prayerful silence at moments of reflection is significant: 'When we have time to reflect, that's time on your own with God, even though everyone else is there' was one comment. This is matched by the enthusiasm and quality of their communal singing. They are consistently attentive and respectful in all celebrations. Pupils understand about different forms of prayer in the Catholic tradition, and how these change according to the liturgical calendar. They have a sound understanding of aspects of the Church's year and how this is celebrated. Knowledge and use of scripture is excellent, and always appropriate to given themes or times of year. They understand the use of religious symbols, gestures and artefacts to enrich a prayerful setting. Pupils plan collaboratively with teachers, the lay chaplain and their peers to prepare creative experiences of prayer that will lead to a deep spiritual experience for those attending. Pupils are confident in ministering to others, taking on these roles seriously. Evaluation of prayer and liturgy is a consistent feature that is used to enrich future gatherings. Prayer and liturgy have a noticeable impact on pupils. They express the importance of prayer in their lives and its influence on their actions: 'Prayer is like air – it helps me to breathe and live' is a typical comment.

There is a centrality of prayer to the life of the school. The weekly pattern of prayer includes whole-school gatherings, and a variety of class-based celebrations. Themes are chosen carefully, with attention to appropriate scripture and a weekly mission, and these are re-visited through different forms of prayer throughout the week. A rich diet of the wide range of prayer includes regular opportunities to attend Mass in the convent, reconciliation, 'visio

divina', praying the rosary, 'lectio divina', singing celebrations, and celebrations of the word. Significant feasts, such as that of St Francis and St Thomas Aquinas, are celebrated, as are those traditions associated with the different seasons of the Church's year, such as Marian processions, and stations of the cross. All staff engage enthusiastically, modelling participation in exemplary fashion. Staff are highly skilled in planning and leading celebrations and supporting pupils in growing independence as they move through the school. Music and other art forms significantly enhance experiences. Space is used creatively, including in the hall, the chapel, in classrooms and outside. Families are welcomed into the prayer life of the school on several occasions, including in partnership with the parish, such as through sacramental preparation.

The policy for prayer and liturgy supports staff well to ensure consistency and to give clear guidance. The *Annual Plan of Provision* is an extensive and comprehensive document, setting out expectations throughout the year. It includes an effective strategy for the development of skills of participation of pupils, evidenced by the increasing independence of pupils as they progress through the school. Leaders and governors have given the highest priority to the formation of staff and professional development, leading to the high level of staff skill and confidence. Leaders are highly effective in facilitating others to plan and lead experiences of prayer and liturgy. The impact is evidenced in the consistently high quality opportunities for prayer across the school. Leaders have effectively brought their understanding to meet the particular needs of the community. Investment in resources has been important and significant in impact, examples being the *Mark 10 Mission, Let Us Pray 2gether* and the diocesan *Ordo*. Evaluation of the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy is holistic and thorough, including contributions from governors, staff, pupils and parents.

## Information about the school

Full name of school	Saint Francis Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	146180
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8553342
Full postal address of the school	Dalby Road, Melton Mowbray, LE13 0BP
School phone number	01664 562891
Headteacher or Head of School	Gosia Brown
Chair of Governors	Mary Barber
School Website	st-francis.leics.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Religious Order Franciscan Minoreesses
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Thomas Aquinas CMAT
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non Selective
Age-range of pupils	4 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	11 February 2020
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

## The Inspection Team

Alan Dewhurst Lead

Tracy Lane

## 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