CATHOLIC SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE INSPECTION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND ACADEMIES

Bishop Ullathorne Catholic School

URN: 147345

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Birmingham

15–16 October 2026

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

1

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

1

Collective worship (p.7)

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

1

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

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 Catholic life and mission of the school are evident in all aspects of its work. The 'Ullathorne Way' articulates what it means to be a school member and is embraced by all stakeholders.
- The chaplaincy provision is well led and inclusive, enabling all members of the community to deepen their understanding of prayer and liturgy
- Catholic social teaching is embedded across the curriculum and is well understood by students.
- The religious education department is focused on ensuring all students make progress and are religiously literate young people able to make connections between faith and life.
- Leaders, governors and staff are committed to the support of the most vulnerable.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure consistency of planning within Key Stage 3 religious education.
- Agree a consistent way to summarise pupil voice so that leaders have a clear overview of the impact of their views across Catholic life and mission, religious education, and collective worship.
- Explore further strategies for involving parents in the prayer life of the school so that this area continues to develop.

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

1

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

1

Students fully understand and embrace the Catholic identity of the school. They speak with confidence of the 'Ullathorne Way' and strive to put into practice the virtues the school promotes. In Years 7 and 8, students work towards obtaining a character passport, which further enhances their understanding of the Catholic nature of the school and provides opportunities for service. Students appreciate the support and care that staff provide, describing the school as 'a welcoming, caring, and safe environment'. Some students offer their time to create welcoming bags for students and staff who join the school mid-year. Sixth form students recognise that the school values everyone and see the ethos of the school made evident through the words and actions of the staff. Parents are similarly appreciative, with a new parent saying, 'Attending this school for a half term has completely reinvigorated my daughter's passion for Catholic life.' Students are encouraged to understand how faith informs action and are provided with many opportunities to show care for the environment and to support those in need, through fundraising for charities like Cafod and a local food bank. Students also speak with passion about the need to really listen to others, to be inclusive and learn about other faiths and cultures. The school fosters these attitudes by enabling students to meet with refugees and listen to their stories, for instance. Chaplaincy is highly valued by students. Each form group has one or two chaplaincy representatives, who seek the views of other students, help lead prayer ministry, monitor classroom prayer areas, and take part in a variety of Catholic life activities. Students typically describe this role as a calling, helping others to discover and talk about their faith.

Staff fully embrace the Catholic nature of Bishop Ullathorne and are exemplary role models. Staff say the lived experience within the school is what really matters and offer support not only to students but to each other. They describe the school as a real community and as 'by far the

school that has most fostered a sense of Christian identity'. Staff support the many charitable aspects of school life and go above and beyond to support those in need. One example of this is when staff support the provision of a Christmas Day Dinner for vulnerable families, giving their time and energy to cook and deliver meals on Christmas Day. Pastoral care is a strength of the school. Form tutors know their students and liaise with parents and outside agencies to ensure appropriate support is provided. Strategies also target mental health with regular events like 'Wellbeing Wednesday'. There is also a 'take what you need station', where students can access products to support them in school and daily life. Clear programmes are in place to support and fully include students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in every aspect of school life.

Leaders and governors are inspirational leaders of the school's Catholic life and mission. Through a programme of monitoring and evaluation they know their school well and have a clear vision for future development. The emphasis on Catholic social teaching has led to all departments reviewing their curriculum to see how this can be expressed in their subject. This has reinforced the understanding of students enabling them to have a more holistic view and appreciate that faith affects all aspects of life. The school engages with the diocese and local parish with students supporting the diocesan Chaplaincy Commissioning Mass, for example. Leaders and governors are proactive in involving students in the evaluation of Catholic life and there are many opportunities for students to contribute, including student voice and the school council. There is a clear programme of professional development focussed on Catholic life and mission for existing and new staff.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

1

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

1

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

1

Students value their religious education and are religiously literate young people able to speak with confidence about key concepts. They are adept at making connections between faith and life. The belief that exploring faith is important extends to the sixth form, where students say the core religious education programme helps them analyse their own beliefs and gives a context to current issues in society. Progress and outcomes in Key Stages 4 and 5 are consistently above the diocesan and national average and students achieve above average attainment when compared with other curriculum subjects. Students concentrate well in class and are reflective in their practice. Questioning by teachers often promotes a deeper understanding. In a lesson on Judaism, for example, students were asked to think not just about Jewish rituals, but why rituals are important for belief. Work produced is often exceptional; for example, a Year 7 student wrote an evaluative piece of work on what it means to be created in the image of God. As a consequence of their engagement, students' behaviour in lessons is outstanding. They have a clear understanding of how to improve their own work. Students are adept at peer review and understand the importance of relating work back to the success criteria.

Teachers are confident in their delivery based on authentic subject knowledge and have expectations for their subject which they convey effectively to students. Lessons normally begin with recall activities which enable students to consolidate their learning and correct any misconceptions. Recall activities also link back to previous learning and modules, encouraging students to make connections. Teachers have a profound understanding of the impact religious education can have on the spiritual and moral development of students and, where appropriate, make links to Catholic social teaching, scripture, and the diocesan mission. The majority of teachers use questioning well to promote reflective thinking. Currently, there is some inconsistency in the planning of lessons within Key Stage 3. This has already been identified by

the subject leader and support strategies are in place to address this. Teachers offer constructive feedback either to individuals or when going through assessments to the class. There is an increasing use of art within lessons; for example, when looking at Creation, the use of Michelangelo's *The Creation of Adam* is used to promote reflection, and students consider how Moses is portrayed in art. Teachers also include opportunities for debate and group work. Teachers celebrate success and offer encouragement and praise to students.

Leaders and governors ensure that the religious education curriculum is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Directory* and has parity with other subjects. GCSE courses are in line with the corresponding diocesan directive. The core religion course for sixth formers is challenging and stimulating and valued by students. High-quality training is provided for staff who attend diocesan courses and a programme of internal departmental development, including the regular sharing of good practice, resources, and effective teaching strategies. A raft of strategies is in place to support students with SEND and enable their progress including providing sentence starters, word banks, and writing frames. Collaboration between students also helps to promote deeper understanding. The subject leader has a clear vision for the subject and, although new in post, has already carried out monitoring activities which enable them to clearly identify strategically informed priorities for improvement. Together with the subject leader, governors have carried out a searching analysis which enables them to challenge effectively and to have a clear overview of the department's work. The commitment given and the time offered by the link governor for religious education is exemplary.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

1

Pupil outcomes

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

1

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

The experiences of prayer, including voluntary activities, provided by the school are valued by students and engage them deeply. Students who attend chapel for voluntary adoration during break time are respectful and participate in prayerful silence and refection. Students understand the wide variety of ways of praying within the Catholic Church and have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, which is reinforced through prayer areas and activities. Students plan collaboratively to develop high-quality experiences of prayer; for example, a group of sixth form students led a prayer focused on black history month, linking this to Catholic social teaching and scripture. All students were then invited to contribute, by reflecting on what they could do to further enhance the respect shown for the dignity of all people. Students are encouraged to be both self-evaluating and to seek the views of others. One student explained, for instance, that student feedback on form group prayer resulted in the development of more interactive approaches. Working with the lay and priest chaplains, students are encouraged to take on liturgical ministries by altar serving and proclaiming God's word in church, for example. Students understand the need to pray about life and events. The opportunity to take part in retreats has proved inspiring for many, enabling them to deepen their faith.

Prayer is central to the school life, reflected in parents' comments, such as 'Catholic life is clearly thriving in the school, and prayer and liturgy is at the heart of all the school does.' Planned prayer and liturgy are always a part of routine gatherings of staff, students, and families. Every department is linked with a patron saint whose life and witness reflect the values and purpose of that area of the school and departments are encouraged to celebrate their saint's day. The school lay chaplain runs a chaplaincy activity every day during a break including voluntary Mass every Wednesday. The chaplain and other relevant staff are highly knowledgeable and skilled in

promoting student participation and formation. The creative and artistic skills of different departments help enhance prayer experiences; for example, the design and technology department lends its expertise to enhance prayer spaces. The school makes good use of the available space including outdoor space, where an annual Mass for the whole school is held in summertime. The chapel is a beautiful prayerful space well used by staff and students. Each classroom has a prayer space reflecting the changing liturgical seasons. Parents are encouraged to be part of the school's prayer life and are invited to the welcome Masses, as well as Year 11 and Year 13 leavers' Masses. When the school hosted the relics of Carlo Acutis, parents were invited to attend with one parent explaining that 'This was a deeply moving and spiritually rewarding experience'.

The school has an effective policy on prayer and liturgy which includes the prayers that students will know in different age groups. The school calendar is carefully planned to offer many and varied opportunities for staff, students, and parents, to take part in the school's prayer life. This includes opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Stations of the Cross, Rosary, carol services and the weekly celebration of the Eucharist. The lay and priest chaplains work closely together to plan various events and services. Students attend Mass within the parish regularly, and this is much welcomed by parishioners. Retreats to centres of pilgrimage including Assisi, Lourdes, and Medjugorje enhance the connection with the universal Church. There is a programme of staff training enhanced by input from the chaplains. The lay chaplain also helps support other schools within the multi-academy company (MAC). Prayer and liturgy are monitored and evaluated on a regular basis and students are encouraged to be part of the evaluation process.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Bishop Ullathorne Catholic School
School unique reference number (URN)	147345
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3314701
Full postal address of the school	Leasowes Avenue, Green Lane, Coventry, CV3 6BH
School phone number	02476 414515
Headteacher	Sarah Boyle
Chair of governing board	John Teahan
School Website	www.bishopullathorne.co.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Holy Cross Catholic Multi Academy Company
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	June 2022
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Ann Fowler	Lead
Martin Baker	Team
Susan Docherty	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