



# St George's Catholic Voluntary Academy

URN: 138666

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham

12–13 November 2025

## 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

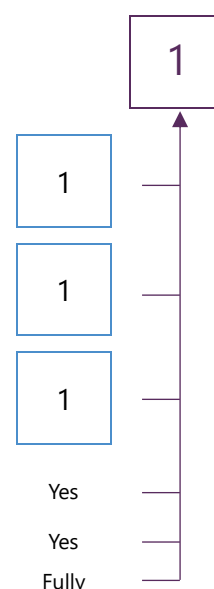
#### Collective worship (p.7)

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

The school is fully compliant with the 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



## Compliance statement

- The school is compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- The school is fully compliant with the additional requirements of the Bishop of Nottingham.
- The school has addressed all areas for improvement identified in the last inspection.

## What the school does well

- The dedicated and focused leadership provided by the genuinely inspirational headteacher, and her impressive senior leadership team, ensures that this school is always striving to improve. Leaders continuously seek new ideas which will positively enhance the experiences of pupils and improve the outcomes they achieve academically, spiritually and as children of God.
- Catholic social teaching and the school's mission are deeply embedded in the fabric of the school and everything it does. These values are celebrated, and implemented in tangible ways within the school community, the parish, the local area, nationally, and globally.
- The behaviour and attitudes of pupils are truly exemplary. They undertake a wide range of valuable leadership roles, demonstrating genuine respect and support for one another. They know they are valued and cared for by the adults with whom they spend their days.
- Religious education lessons are challenging and well thought through, so that all pupils, including those who find learning more difficult, can be fully included and attain high standards of skills and knowledge.
- The provision for prayer and worship is varied, vibrant, creative and well planned. This gives pupils experiences which help them to come to know God and to understand their faith in many special and unique ways.

## What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that the full implementation of the Religious Education Directory provides all pupils with the knowledge and skills to know more and remember more, and to therefore make good or better progress over time.

## 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

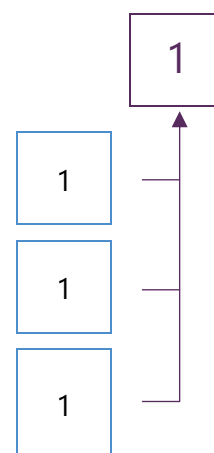
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### 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 St George's clearly know they are valued and cared for as unique persons, created by God. They exhibit highly positive attitudes to school life, having understood and embraced the values of kindness, respect, faith, perseverance, acceptance and service. They understand the theology, in child-friendly terms, of the Catholic mission of the school, and how they can help to implement it. Their behaviour is exemplary, and they have deep respect for themselves and others. 'It is a great school because everyone is kind to you', is a comment that typifies the views of pupils. They relish the junior leadership opportunities the school provides. These are plentiful and varied, ensuring that all pupils experience an identified responsibility of being in a group that has clear purpose within the Catholic ethos. The well-established chaplaincy team and school parliament are active in promoting the school's mission and attending to the needs of others, as part of their developed understanding of Catholic social teaching. They delight in regular opportunities to organise and participate in a wide range of fund-raising activities for carefully chosen local, national and global charities.

The school mission statement, 'Grow in faith, have faith in growing', has a significant impact on the life of the school, helping to unite the community, and embed its particular charism, so that the school is a beacon of Catholic practice, rooted in the word of God in scripture. The embedded culture of welcome creates a sense of belonging for everyone, regardless of their cultural and faith backgrounds. All understand and embrace the mission statement, and it pervades the school's daily life. Staff are excellent role models in embracing and promoting the mission, and their enthusiasm and active participation in implementing it is clearly evident. The school works hard to understand the needs of all members of the community and shows particular concern for those who are most vulnerable. The highest levels of pastoral care prioritise those with

greatest need, but also reaches out to all, exemplified in the charitable works undertaken and the school's active role in the local community. Chaplaincy provision is a central and celebrated aspect of the life and mission of the school.

Leaders are fastidious and energetic in promoting the Catholic mission and are a source of inspiration to staff. They are thoughtful and reflective, joyful and determined, and have skilfully embedded an ethos that ensures that Christ is at the heart of the school. Leaders actively promote the bishop's vision for the diocese through their generous service and support of other Catholic schools and, consequently, there is a dynamic partnership between the school and the diocese. There is a flourishing partnership between the school and the parish which enables pupils, staff and families to participate in the school's mission with the wider community. The carefully planned and well considered religious education curriculum is inspiring and engaging, and permeates through all subject areas. Subject leaders have planned opportunities to make explicit connections between Catholic social teaching and other areas of the curriculum. As a result, pupils across the school can articulate the theology that underpins the demands of Catholic social teaching and how they can live these out in their daily lives. School leaders are very well supported by governors and the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust, who are active in evaluating, challenging and supporting all developments. They are highly ambitious in their desire for continuous improvement. Leaders ensure that excellent structures are in place to support the wellbeing of staff. Continuing professional development on the Catholic life of the school is regular and very effective.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

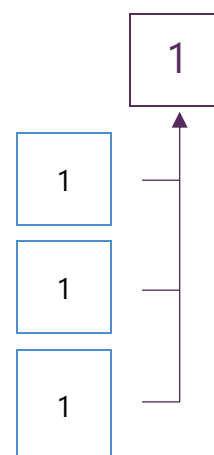
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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



Pupils demonstrate excellent knowledge, understanding and skills in religious education lessons, appropriate to their age. Behaviour is exemplary. Almost all pupils, including those with additional needs, make good progress and achieve well, relative to their age and starting points. Pupils' ability to speak with confidence about what they have learnt in religious education is very strong. There are high levels of religious literacy, with the older pupils being particularly skilled in explaining how religious commitment impacts on their daily lives. The consistent lesson structure in religious education is providing regular opportunities for pupils to make links to their prior learning within lessons. Pupils are independent learners who can think for themselves and apply what they have learnt in their oral and written work. They state that they enjoy their lessons due to the creative and varied activities teachers plan for them. Pupils like to take care with their written work and present it well. From their earliest years, they show sustained engagement in their lessons because they are interested in what they are learning. They collaborate with their peers very easily and respectfully. Pupils understand what they need to do to improve, giving examples of how they respond with 'next steps' to add more information or make their work more accurate.

Teachers have a high level of confidence based on secure subject knowledge, and are committed to the value of religious education. Staff have an accurate view of the pupils' prior knowledge and starting points for new learning due to well embedded assessment practices. Adaptations to teaching strategies and task design enable pupils with the most significant needs to access the religious education curriculum successfully. Curriculum developments provide pupils with secure, sequential knowledge of scripture: reception children can re-enact the Annunciation story with puppets; Year 1 pupils can share their ideas about why Jesus was born in a stable, and Year 2 can explain what a prophet is and place prophets on a timeline before and after the birth of Christ. In Key Stage 2, pupils become 'scripture detectives' and can

confidently discuss their ideas about scripture from the Old and New Testaments. Due to the demands of the *Religious Education Directory*, leaders are completing regular curriculum reviews and providing deliberate, additional content to enhance pupils' knowledge. Teachers communicate high expectations effectively, and the effective use of questions during lessons ensures that they can identify where pupils are in their understanding. Pupils are given regular opportunities to reflect on key themes from their learning and how these impact on daily life.

All leaders, including governors, ensure that the curriculum for religious education is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Directory*. The religious education leaders use their expertise to inspire a vision of outstanding teaching and learning. Strong practice within the school is regularly shared within the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust and the wider diocese. Leaders regularly scrutinise work samples and report their findings to governors. The highest priority is placed on high-quality professional development for all staff. As a result, religious education subject knowledge and pedagogical development is secure and impactful in all areas of school. Curriculum planning is monitored by the headteacher and subject leaders for religious education. Consequently, it ensures clear progression of knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith and other world religions. The school ensures that world faith focus weeks provide pupils from other faith backgrounds with opportunities to celebrate and share their religious practices and knowledge with their peers. Leaders' self-evaluation of religious education is informed by regular monitoring, analysis and self-challenge. As a result, strategic action being taken by leaders is strengthening outcomes.

## Collective worship

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

### Collective worship key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

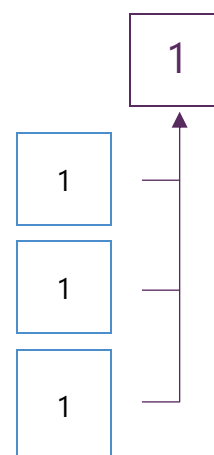
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

#### 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. They demonstrate this each time they come together, whether in class, as a whole school in the hall, or in church. This is witnessed through: their respectful silence on entering a sacred space, and in reflective moments; their confident responses to learned prayers; the strength and joyful nature of their communal singing. Pupils are attentive to the readings from scripture and willingly suggest ways in which these can lead to action beyond the celebration. Pupils have a detailed understanding of the wide variety of ways of praying in the Catholic tradition. Pupils work well with others, such as the lay chaplain, teachers, and other pupils, to prepare and lead engaging celebrations of the word. The chaplaincy team confidently take on ministries associated with larger gatherings in school, modelling practice which other pupils can take example from in class celebrations. Regular monitoring and evaluation of the quality of prayer and liturgy across the school is ensuring that the spiritual development of the pupils is well supported and prioritised by leaders.

Prayer and liturgy are at the heart of the school, ever-present and central to gatherings of pupils and staff. There is an excellent breadth and richness of the Catholic tradition of ways of praying. Scripture is chosen well, informed by the liturgical year, with links developed between these passages and actions to take into daily life. With the guidance of the prayer and liturgy lead and the lay chaplain, pupils regularly plan and lead liturgy with confidence. Creative and artistic skills of pupils and staff have been identified, nurtured and practised to enable them to use their gifts to enhance prayer and liturgy. The modelling of different types of prayer by leaders has played a key role in enabling members of staff to demonstrate this to pupils and include them in their gatherings in class. Four-part celebrations of the word, lectio divina and visio divina sit alongside more traditional practices such as the Stations of the Cross and recitation of the

rosary. There is imaginative and creative use of spaces for prayer celebrations, with a strong desire to make each classroom a sacred space at appropriate times, in addition to the settings elsewhere. Families are welcomed regularly into school Masses and celebrations of the word, and they appreciate these opportunities.

The school's policy on prayer and liturgy has been reviewed and is fit for purpose, with ease of use for staff and amendments made to suit the school's context. Leaders, including governors, have a clear understanding of how pupils' skills of participation should be built as they mature, and the quality of prayer and liturgy that should be provided. School leaders and governors are effective guardians of the Catholic prayer and liturgy provision, striving consistently for the best possible experiences for pupils. Leaders ensure that provision for prayer and liturgy is given the highest priority when allocating resources. Staff are supported by leaders and the lay chaplain in developing high quality experiences of prayer and liturgy for all pupils. The liturgical year has been clearly mapped out to ensure that the school community can gather to celebrate significant days and events in the Church's calendar. Leaders are committed to prioritising the evaluation of the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy by all stakeholders. They ensure that it is embedded in the school's cycle of self-evaluation and leads to strategic improvements.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St George's Catholic Voluntary Academy
School unique reference number (URN)	138666
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8313531
Full postal address of the school	Uplands Avenue, Littleover, Derby, Derbyshire, DE23 1GG
School phone number	01332 766815
Executive headteacher	Not applicable
Headteacher	Rachael Snowdon-Poole
Chair of local governing body	Donato Maffione
School Website	<a href="https://www.stgeorgesderby.srscmat.co.uk/">https://www.stgeorgesderby.srscmat.co.uk/</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	5-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	4 October 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	2 - Good

## The inspection team

Alixena Lubomski  
Lucy Gunton

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