



# St Augustine's Catholic Voluntary Academy

URN: 139626

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham

20–21 March 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

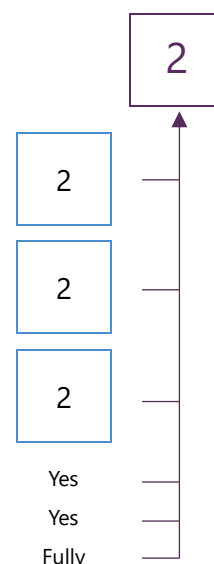
#### Collective worship (p.7)

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

- Leaders and governors are fastidious in demonstrating faithful witness to the Church's mission in school, having made outstanding improvements in Catholic life and mission and collective worship through their inspirational leadership.
- Pupils, staff, parents and governors clearly express, understand and demonstrate the Catholic virtues of their school.
- Leaders, governors and staff provide outstanding pastoral care, especially for the most vulnerable.

- Pupils are passionate and enthusiastic in participating in all aspects of learning in religious education.
- Leaders and governors have ensured robust and rigorous systems are in place for the evaluation and development of prayer and liturgy.

## What the school needs to improve

- Develop teachers' questioning skills in order to encourage greater challenge, reflection and independence for pupils in religious education.
- Establish a monitoring and evaluation system for religious education which demonstrates termly impact and clear progress.
- Support pupils so that they can lead celebrations of the word which include purposeful, quiet reflection.

## 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

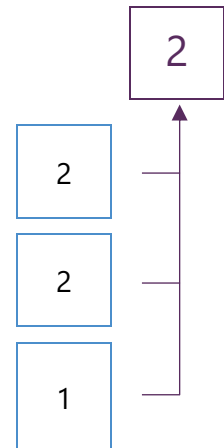
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### 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 Augustine's understand that they are members of a Catholic community, confidently saying, 'we care for one another, and this makes us better people'. Pupils show respect for one another. They talk about how they welcome new pupils and visitors from all faith backgrounds, and none, to their school. Pupils know their mission in following Jesus and how they care for God's creation through their 'Laudato Si' work, linked to Catholic Social Teaching. Pupils clearly understand their school's Catholic virtues and connect these to other areas of school life saying, 'We come together as a community in the name of God'. This is evident through pupils' voluntary involvement in 'George's Food Hub', from which surplus food is available on a 'pay as you feel' basis. Chaplaincy provision is valued by pupils, who can articulate clear examples of their practice in sustainability and stewardship of God's world. Pupils are becoming confident in leading a range of celebrations of the word. They can talk about different prayer spaces in school and how they use these.

Catholic virtues are the foundation for school improvement. At St Augustine's, Christ is at the centre of all relationships within and beyond the school community. Class teachers say, 'the mission statement of the school is well and truly lived out at St Augustine's'. Staff are actively involved within the parish, leading children's liturgy and reading at Mass. There is a sense of community within the school: parents, governors and staff confirm this as a lived reality. St Augustine's is a witness to its Catholic values, affirmed by parents in their feedback. Good practice includes the provision of an enhanced resource for those pupils who are unable to access the whole curriculum alongside their peers. There is good chaplaincy provision throughout the school, with pupil chaplains appointed from Key Stages 1 and 2. The lay chaplain has had a positive impact in several areas, including building pupils' confidence and competence when delivering celebrations of the word. Relationships, sex, and health education is sequential and taught across the school in line with diocesan requirements.

Leaders and governors are inspirational in their clear vision for the Catholic life and mission of the school, ensuring that all pupils, staff and parents are at the forefront of decision making. The headteacher is passionate in her drive to celebrate the Catholic character of the school within the local and wider community; she has been inspirational in improving many areas of school life with a specific focus on Catholic life and mission. The school has strong relationships with the parish. St Augustine's has highly successful strategies for parental engagement. Feedback from parents for the pastoral care and faith development of their children is exceptional, and parents offer no further recommendations to improve it: one response cites that, 'our family would not be a family without this school'. The leader for special educational needs and disabilities is passionate about supporting the most vulnerable in society. Leaders thoroughly embrace the fact that parents are the first educators of their children. Staff speak highly of the support and well-being provision that they receive. The curriculum is built around the school's Catholic virtues, which are the foundation for all aspects of school improvement. Leaders and governors are fully aware of which strategies need to be embedded further in order to make them outstanding. Professional development is well planned and effective, and staff feel that they are well prepared to live out and teach the school's mission. Governors and leaders have had a significant impact on the development of the school and are passionate about it being a beacon of Catholic education in Stamford.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

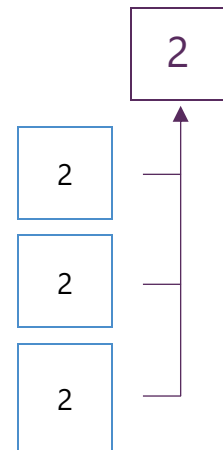
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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' knowledge of previous learning is secure. They say, 'We do retrieval at the start of each lesson to help us to remember key facts'. All pupils, including the most vulnerable and those with special educational needs and disabilities, have a good understanding of key knowledge and vocabulary, and therefore make good progress in lessons. Most pupils can speak with confidence about their learning in lessons and are religiously literate. Most pupils engage within the lessons and behaviour is good. Pupils generally respond to teacher feedback. However, pupils are not consistently stretched through challenge questions or teachers following up on pupils' verbal responses. Pupils' work demonstrates a good standard of work across all ability ranges. Upper Key Stage 2 pupils are beginning to make links with the school's mission and virtues in written work. Pupils enjoy religious education: they are enthusiastic and engaged within these lessons. Pupils say, 'RE is really calming and it helps me to learn a lot more, including lots of scripture'. Pupils' attainment continues to improve, despite the high percentage of pupils who need additional support, as teachers present work using a range of methods. Pupils have a much better understanding of what attainment looks like, and how to achieve it, since the last inspection, though this is not consistent across the school. Pupils can make good links: for example, they connect the stations of the cross to the school's Catholic virtues of forgiveness and honesty; they link the miracle of Lazarus to Jesus' resurrection.

Teachers' subject knowledge is at least good in all classes. Teachers demonstrate a good understanding of how pupils learn. Teachers have a much better understanding of what attainment looks like, and how to achieve it, since the last inspection, though this is not consistent across the school. Lessons are well planned and are engaging for most pupils. Much questioning is varied and appropriate to pupils' stages of development. Misconceptions are sensitively addressed, and accurate responses are celebrated. Teachers generally provide regular feedback to pupils, both verbally and recorded, and this ensures pupils make progress. In the best examples, teachers stretch pupils and

record their responses carefully, though this is not consistently the case in every classroom. Teachers refer to aspects of Catholic life and mission within religious education lessons, thus enhancing learning. All lessons demonstrate a variety of learning strategies and activities, including drama, art, and peer work which supports the engagement of pupils. Pupils from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 6 are provided with a range of religious education resources to support learning. Learning environments consistently display key vocabulary, 'knowledge mats' and liturgical artefacts which are referenced within the lessons. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed to meet the needs of all pupils. Good practice is used effectively and demonstrated: for example, personalised learning charts on tables ensure all pupils access the learning at an appropriate level, based on their needs.

Leaders and governors ensure that religious education is taught in line with diocesan requirements. Religious education is classed as a core subject and has the same parity. There is a full and comprehensive range of professional development opportunities for all staff. Leaders have planned a coherent and inclusive curriculum to meet the high needs of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, though they have not considered and reviewed how to fully evaluate and monitor progress for these pupils. Leaders and governors are regular visitors to school and undertake a range of monitoring activities, though these are not evaluated clearly or systematically enough to have a positive impact on a termly basis. The religious education leader has made future plans for the introduction of the new Religious Education Directory.

## 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

1

2

Most pupils participate in prayer reverently and confidently, with responses, gestures and reflection on the issues and themes presented to them. Pupils have a good knowledge of traditional prayers and welcome the daily prayers of the school, recognising that these provide a sense of belonging within the St Augustine's school community. Pupils experience a variety of liturgy and celebrations of the word, including Mass, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, stations of the cross, the rosary and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Pupils are becoming more confident in planning and leading prayer both in the classroom and in whole school occasions, though they rarely include time for spiritual reflection. Pupils are able to evaluate the quality of these times with suggestions on what went well and also areas for improvement. The number of pupils being involved in the preparation of prayer is increasing. Pupils are developing their ability to articulate how prayer influences their lives and how this relates to other parts of the curriculum. Pupils say that, 'prayer helps me to be calm and happy and thankful for all that God has given me'. Most pupils value and recognise prayer as a fundamental part of every day at St Augustine's. They enjoy the range of opportunities provided by staff: a good number of pupils also attend a prayer club at particular times of the liturgical year, to reflect and pray for others less fortunate than themselves.

Prayer and liturgical celebrations are central to the day-to-day life of the school. Resources used include those from 'Ten:Ten', Cafod and engagement in diocesan initiatives, including 'the Lord's Prayer in different languages'. Although some celebrations of the word may encourage pupils to reflect silently, this is not an aspect which is well developed. Scripture is a central part of prayer and liturgy, and pupils are encouraged to help select appropriate readings for class and whole school gatherings. The lay chaplain, teachers and teaching assistants are skilled at enabling pupils to plan, organise and lead their own acts of prayer and liturgy and so pupils are becoming more confident in doing this. Prayer spaces in all classrooms, and other sacred spaces, are based on the school's virtues:

these are carefully looked after by pupils and changed to reflect the liturgical year. Parents are invited into celebrations of the word and to join visits to the parish church, which is greatly appreciated.

Prayer and liturgy at St Augustine's are meticulously planned throughout the year alongside the parish priest. This is firmly focussed on the liturgical year, providing opportunities for pupils to experience and celebrate key liturgical times and religious feast days. Leaders have a clear, detailed, and progressive strategy for building pupils' participation and skills as they move through school. Leaders clearly understand the Catholic traditions of the Church and its mission, and how this can be delivered. The formation of staff is given a high priority by leaders and governors; the prayer and liturgy leader and lay chaplain are highly effective in supporting others in leading prayer and liturgy: for example, teaching assistants can now support class celebrations of the word. The prayer and liturgy leader has completed an in-depth range of professional development, with support from the lead lay chaplains from the Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust. This ensures staff are becoming more confident in leading prayer both in the classroom and around school. The liturgical life of the school is robustly monitored and evaluated by leaders and governors, who have prioritised a clear and strategic plan to improve this further.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Augustine's Catholic Voluntary Academy
School unique reference number (URN)	139626
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	9253332
Full postal address of the school	Kesteven Road, Stamford, PE9 1SR
School phone number	01780762094
Headteacher	Tina Cox
<b>Chair of Local Governing Body</b>	Anthony (Tony) Williams
School Website	<a href="http://www.st-augustine.lincs.sch.uk">http://www.st-augustine.lincs.sch.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Our Lady Of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	28 February 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	2 - Good

## The inspection team

Patricia Chapman  
Tom Reilly

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