

St Martin's Catholic Academy

URN: 138290

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham

30 April–01 May 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

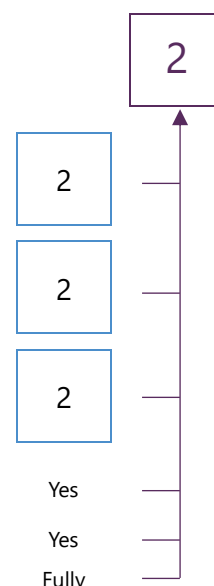
Collective worship (p.7)

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 fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements laid down by the bishop of Nottingham.
- The school has responded fully to the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection.

What the school does well

- The explicit development of virtues is a distinguishing feature of St Martin's and one which is highly impactful on the lives of students and staff.
- Students are shining lights and strong witnesses to the culture and ethos established by school leaders. This is exemplified in their personal dignity and the way they see good in others.
- Student outcomes for religious education are outstanding, exceeding national averages for all groups.
- Chaplaincy leadership in the school is very strong. As a consequence, students gain a profound benefit from the Catholic character of the school.
- Leaders and governors show great skill in ensuring that St Martin's is not just a Catholic school, but a successful one.

What the school needs to improve

- Implement systems for self-evaluation which provide accuracy of judgement, and better articulate the school's strengths and weaknesses, to support continuous improvement.
- Implement a programme of training to ensure that student-teacher questioning in religious education lessons offers challenge to students and provides opportunities for wider interactive dialogue.
- Distribute chaplaincy responsibilities across the staff team so that involvement in the prayer and faith life of the school is embraced by all.

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

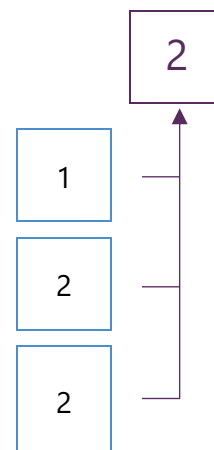
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



Students are confident when proclaiming the school's mission statement, 'Knowing that we are loved by God, learning the best that has been thought and said, and living a virtuous life'. In particular, students show high skill in relating this statement to virtues. This is a distinguishing feature of St Martin's, providing an insight for students into their collective responsibility for our common home. In describing the concept of Imago Dei, several students are able to use scripture as a starting point and explain how this impacts on self-esteem and the security they feel at St Martin's. Students, in particular those with roles in chaplaincy, thrive in contributing to the whole school drive on Catholic social teaching. Among many and varied examples, students signal their commitment to action by using social media, writing to members of parliament and engaging with speakers in school. As a result, they show maturity in drawing links to important principles. Relationships between students in all year groups are dignified and supportive, showing an intelligent understanding about inclusivity developed in the school's wider curriculum. Numbers of students involved in the chaplaincy team are healthy and have potential for growth.

The school's mission statement, frequently shared and visible everywhere, accurately describes what is seen in the students in their confident self-image and their thirst for knowledge. Catholic values are central to St Martin's, and many staff say this is why they choose to work there. Senior staff explicitly nourish and model community support. Their sensible and compassionate leadership is valued by staff. St Martin's is a highly inclusive school, often sought by families with children exhibiting additional needs. This is because the most vulnerable are well-supported. Systems for pastoral care are comprehensive and secure in delivery. Since St Martin's is small in size and oversubscribed, there are accommodation challenges. Nevertheless, the school chapel is a beautiful centrepiece, worthy of the reservation of the Eucharist. Signs and symbols around

the school are effective expositions of the school's Catholic heritage with many classrooms containing prayer spaces for worship. The flourishing chaplaincy provision is a result of strategic and speedy development - something to be admired and celebrated. Although providing sensible guidance, the policy and model for delivering content in the area of relationships, sex and health education has not been reviewed recently. Nevertheless, given that content is underpinned by a scheme recommended by the diocese, this is still secure.

Leaders and governors are highly committed to the development of Catholic life, recognising what is distinctive and valuable in the school's provision. The bishop's vision is promoted with staff benefitting from collaborations with other schools and events organised centrally. Links with parishes are good and have become stronger since the last inspection. Students show familiarity and ease with visiting clergy who provide a reassuring presence to students and staff. There are effective systems for liaising with families. Catholic social teaching is not just present in subject curricula but referred to in lessons, so that students' knowledge is enhanced, inspiring action in a variety of ways. Leaders show intelligence when supporting staff, and this begins by removing barriers and treating them with dignity. Statements of intent lack depth in references to the fact that Christ is at the heart of the curriculum in a Catholic school. The Catholic life and mission of the school is a priority for governors who are tenacious in their enquiry, challenge, and support. Even so, there are weaknesses in self-evaluation, both in the manner in which the school describes itself and the accuracy of some judgements. Training is provided in Catholic life and mission, and what it means to teach in a Catholic school.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

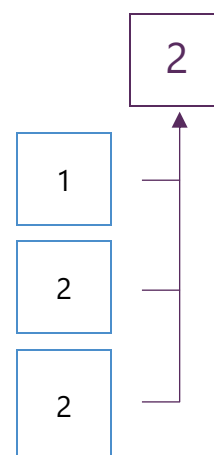
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Students develop strong knowledge, show high levels of understanding, and possess the skills to be successful in religious education. As a consequence, outcomes are outstanding - well above national averages. Almost all students recognise the impact of religious education on their behaviour and often see how this impacts their moral and spiritual development beyond school. They are fluent in the explanation of what they are learning, and use subject-specific language with ease, showing curiosity and insightfulness. Opportunities for this dialogue are not always present in lessons for them to share this. Students demonstrate high levels of independence and concentration - the result of well-established routines and clear expectations. Students are committed to their work and standards of presentation seen in books are high, even though the format of learning sometimes lacks variety. There is evidence of students' pride in their work and their drive to make progress as well as consistent expectations from teachers. Their conduct is exemplary and a direct outcome of the established culture and routine seen everywhere. Students know their personal targets and how to seek help if they don't understand. This assists their route to success.

In religious education, teachers possess the expertise to deliver the curriculum to a high standard. Whole school standards, characterised by well-defined expectations for every child, regardless of starting points, are impactful in religious education. Planning is effective with schemes that demonstrate a faithful reflection of the 'Religious Education Directory' as well as the respective key stage schemes, 'Source to Summit' in Key Stage 3 and 'Eduqas' in Key Stage 4. In Key Stage 3, students are all equipped with text books funded by the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust. On closer inspection, adaptations, which could be designed to either support weaker students or challenge more able students, are not always present and sometimes only briefly referenced in lessons. Also, related to this, learning support staff are not

always used well. Consistently, interactive questioning is constricted. Teacher-student transactions lack sophistication, preventing open discussions with other students, and therefore limiting opportunities for wider debate. Praise is used well, valued by students as helping them gain confidence and develop knowledge. Books are marked in line with school policy, providing developmental feedback to which students are given the opportunity to respond. Students recognise that teachers' use of visualisers supports good whole class feedback, but say they find the more personal approach, adopted after key assessments, to be most effective.

Resources, training and time are proportionately allocated to religious education ensuring parity with core subjects. Shared by the team, the subject leader has a clear and ambitious vision for the department. This characteristic is impactful on high expectations and is visible to other staff and students. Leadership of the subject is exceptionally strong, but team members do not sufficiently share responsibilities or take on tasks to distribute leadership, despite having the capacity to do so. The substantial breadth and depth of topics in the key stage three scheme requires interpretation with sequencing deliberately adjusted for St Martin's students as they prepare for Key Stage 4. Planning here is strong, and a direct contributor to the exceptional GCSE outcomes. The needs of students with higher needs are met through effective collaboration with the special educational needs team, but this does not always transmit to specifics in the religious education curriculum. Opportunities for enrichment are extensive across all year groups and these make a strong contribution to students' development.

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

1

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

With the advantage of a trust-wide viewpoint, the student chaplaincy team leads and works collaboratively to plan, implement and evaluate prayer and liturgy using a variety of approaches relevant to the liturgical year. Experiences are rich and offer opportunities for spiritual formation. As a result, students are highly respectful, showing reverence when listening to scripture, engaging with liturgical provision, and reflecting in silence. One student commented, 'St Martin's is a place that allows Catholic life to thrive'. This is impactful in supporting students to live virtuous lives. The chaplaincy team is fully aware of their role and purpose in school. They ensure that all members of the school community are invited into spiritual experiences. Students are able to articulate the influence of prayer and liturgy on school life and make connections between their faith education and their life experiences, including how they are inspired to take action. There is a strong membership and innovative approach to the chaplaincy team including 80 leaders. Students undertake different roles aligned to their God-given talents, and these include leaders for prayer and liturgy who plan, lead and review assemblies and whole school celebrations of the word.

Prayer and liturgy permeate the curriculum. Opportunities for prayer are present in appointed gatherings, at the start and end of the day, including standing assemblies and during formal registration. Assigning a lengthier act of worship at the end of the day allows for reflection and sends students away with a key spiritual message. Time for all of this is well-planned and consistently provides appropriate occasions for students to pray. As a result of all of this, almost all students engage in each opportunity with authenticity and concentration. Key leaders, particularly the lay chaplains, are skilled, passionate and dedicated although this is not yet distributed across the staff team, where some do not perceive the need for greater commitment. Provision is thoughtfully planned, 'meeting children where they are at'. Consequently,

relationships between lay chaplains and students are positive which, in turn, results in high levels of engagement. The chapel is at the heart of school. It is a focus for reflection and prayer and has been designed and cared for to an excellent standard. The chaplaincy team are active in its upkeep and take pride in ensuring that it is a place where all feel welcomed, irrespective of faith.

The school has skilled Catholic leaders who provide quality materials, and experiences, for prayer and liturgy. Mostly, staff engage with enthusiasm and share the teachings of the gospel with the students. Many staff speak highly of the prayer provision, with one member of staff reflecting that their 'personal faith life has been enhanced at St Martin's'. Training in Catholic life is included as a regular element in the school calendar and there is an abundant supply of prayer and liturgy materials to share with students in form time. Staff engage with these opportunities differently with most showing confidence and enthusiasm but, since this is open as a choice, some defer the opportunity. This leads to a marginally inconsistent picture and, as a consequence, not all staff benefit fully from formation in faith. Among staff, there is a tangible sense of community, strengthened by opportunities to pray together and underlined at times of personal loss, when leaders care for their colleagues and provide time for reflection. Leaders, including governors, have given significant attention to making chaplaincy accessible to all students, with the high numbers involved illustrating success. Leaders recognise that the Catholic community surrounding the school is relatively small and carefully prepare opportunities for students to immerse themselves in Catholic life on entry to Year 7.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Martin's Catholic Academy
School unique reference number (URN)	138290
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8554602
Full postal address of the school	St Martin's Catholic Academy, Stoke Golding, Nuneaton, CV13 6BF
School phone number	01455 212386
Headteacher	Clive Wright
Chair of local governing body	Jim Connolly
School Website	http://www.saint-martins.net/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi Academy Trust
Phase	Secondary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	11-16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	28 November 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	2 - Good

The inspection team

Philip Mooney	Lead
Claire Groom	Team
Siobhan Kent	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