



DIOCESAN CANONICAL INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL, RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Christ the King Catholic Voluntary Academy

Glenfield Road, Leicester, LE3 6DF

School URN:	146158
Inspection Date:	22 November 2021
Inspectors:	Mrs Fionuala Boucher, Mrs Amanda Greaves, Mr Gregory Hughes, Mr Anthony Harrison

Overall Effectiveness	Previous Inspection:	Outstanding	I
	This Inspection:	Outstanding	I
Catholic Life:		Outstanding	I
Religious Education:		Outstanding	I
Collective Worship:		Outstanding	I

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

Christ the King Catholic Voluntary Academy is an outstanding Catholic school.

- The overall effectiveness of Christ the King Catholic Voluntary Academy is outstanding. This school, led by an exemplary headteacher, is filled with highly effective leaders at all levels: they exude the quality, principles and conduct of an educational setting which places Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship at the forefront of its work. Through the attention to detail in relation to action plans, meetings, lessons, displays and the physical environment, notwithstanding the excellent rapport between members of the school community, pupils thrive.
- Catholic Life at Christ the King is outstanding. The deeply meaningful *Christ the King Way* clearly supports the positive culture for relationships, behaviour and the learning environment, rightly placing Jesus Christ, and his teachings, at the heart of all that is undertaken. The mission of the school is embedded in policies and practices; it can be articulated by adults and pupils alike. The commitment of leaders, governors and the staff team to the school's values and vision is strong and unequivocal, culminating in continued and strong improvements since the last inspection.
- Religious Education at Christ the King is outstanding. Pupils are engaged in their learning and show commendable religious literacy: their verbal responses, across the school, are impressive. Workbooks could further reflect this high level of spoken response and do so with greater consistency. Pupils use what they learn to reflect and think ethically; they show and speak of care for others, living what they learn. Leaders and governors are highly attentive in striving for the best possible outcomes in Religious Education.
- Collective Worship at Christ the King is outstanding. It is evident from speaking to and observing those in Key Stage 2 that pupils benefit greatly from ongoing formation. The wide range of opportunities for members of the school community to participate in worship, spend time in quiet reflection and deepen personal spirituality is striking. This is an area which has developed significantly since the last inspection, showing that Christ the King is a place which continues to flourish in its prayer life.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- Christ the King is a larger than average, three-form entry primary school which converted to an academy on 1 September 2018 as part of the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust.
- Since the last diocesan canonical inspection, the school has expanded and is now based on two separate sites, which lie half a mile apart; one site is for juniors and the other site is for infant pupils.
- The school serves the parishes of: Most Blessed Sacrament, Gooding Avenue; St Peter's, Hinckley Road; Mother of God, New Parks.
- 78% of pupils are baptised Catholics; 14% have another Christian faith; 5% are from other faith backgrounds; 2% identify as having no faith.
- The majority of pupils come from non-White British families (77%) with the largest ethnic groups being white European and Black African. 51% of the pupils speak English as an additional language.
- 10% of pupils receive additional support for the special educational needs and/or disabilities; 1.4% of pupils have an educational health and care plan which ensures enhanced provision.
- 14% of pupils are in receipt of pupil premium funding to mitigate against any disadvantages they face.
- The headteacher was appointed in 2019, promoted from within the school.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Religious Education:
 - Further develop the independent writing skills of pupils to better reflect in books their theological literacy
 - Ensure that higher ability pupils move to deeper tasks in lessons more quickly, recognising their capacity to make rapid and sustained progress
- Collective Worship:
 - Increase the opportunities for Key Stage 1 pupils to respond within pupil-led liturgies in order to further engage and motivate them in leading and participating in worship

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school – outstanding

- Pupils are very proud of their school, and rightly so. They actively and willingly take part in a wealth of activities contributing towards the highly effective Catholic Life of the school. Pupils understand the mission to walk in communion with the poor in society; they are whole-heartedly committed to supporting local, national and global charities, having already reached their ambitious annual fundraising target for the year.
- The pupils at Christ the King demonstrate a deep and reverent respect for one another, which is modelled through the positive relationships between all stakeholders. This is the result of a carefully planned curriculum which explicitly teaches pupils the '*Christ the King way*'. The headteacher reports that behaviour is exemplary due to the clear and structured teaching of the Catholic ethos, values and virtues: this is evident for visitors to experience. Pupils are able to articulate that virtues are 'good habits' and can apply these to their daily routines.
- Pupils value the outstanding provision of chaplaincy within the school. This is well supported by the expertise of adults in school, the parish priest and lead lay chaplain for the St Thomas Aquinas Trust. Pupils appreciate the range of worship available to them. Key Stage 1 pupils report that they find the regular opportunities for Christian meditation 'calming and prayerful'. The experience of Lectio Divina enhances the theological literacy of Key Stage 2 pupils, allowing them to link the impact of this worship with both their relationships and their Religious Education lessons.
- Almost all pupils show a deep respect for Catholic traditions which are manifested in the rich experiences strategically planned and offered by the school. Pupils benefit hugely from the positive links between school, home and parish. The school has strong links with the St Thomas Aquinas Trust and the diocese and, as a result, pupils respond enthusiastically to joint celebrations, irrespective of their own faith backgrounds.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school – outstanding

- Christ the King is a joyful and inspirational school community. Staff work closely with stakeholders, ensuring that all work collaboratively to ensure that provision is nothing less than outstanding. As a result, pupils benefit from the strong and harmonious partnerships at work.
- Leaders ensure that the mission of the school is known and understood by all. The headteacher has recently led a review which explicitly defines ethos, mission, values and virtues: this has been shared outside the school and has inspired colleagues to follow suit. Pupils in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 can articulate the values and virtues of Christ the King, saying, 'We learn about the Gospel values... we Believe and Achieve'. Parents also report that the school gives the children excellent guidance within Religious Education and worship.
- The environment reflects the high standards expected at Christ the King. Concrete and effective signs of the school's Catholic character can be found in carefully placed artefacts and eye-catching displays. The curriculum reflects a deep understanding and passion for Catholic social teaching.
- Staff are fully committed to the mission and ethos of the school. They talk about the school and its provision for their pupils with pride and love. Staff new to the school feel well supported, valued and benefit from numerous opportunities to immerse themselves within the *Christ the King* way. The induction process is well structured with professional and personal development at the heart of strategic action planning.
- The school's relationships and sex education curriculum is well designed and carefully planned and sequenced. As part of this, all pupils from years 1-6 are encouraged to maintain journals: these enable leaders to ensure the intent, implementation and impact of the newly revised content is of the highest quality and reflects the key principles embedded within the teachings of the Catholic Church.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school – outstanding

- Leaders are whole-heartedly committed to providing an outstanding Catholic education for its pupils. There is a clear ambition for all areas of school life, including the drive for Catholic Life to be a beacon of excellence. Leaders ensure they involve all stakeholders in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the Catholic Life of the school, demonstrating confidence in team members and reflecting strong and mutually supportive relationships.
- Distributed leadership is a feature of systems at Christ the King. The school's senior leaders work in harmony with staff and key members of the trust, including the lead lay chaplain, to ensure that, despite the split site arrangements, the school operates as a cohesive community of faith. This has been skillfully managed and is a significant development since the last inspection, following the growth in pupil numbers.
- Leaders continue to have successful strategies in seeking views from parents and carers. As a result, parents and carers feel welcomed, involved and heard. Parents and carers have a sound understanding of the mission, ethos and vision for Christ the King and are fully committed to the Catholic nature of the school. Attendance by members of the governing body at parent evenings keeps their role highly visible, highlighting their position as key partners in developing the school's Catholic Life.
- Governors specifically mirror and enhance the commitment of leaders. They carry out their roles of responsibility and accountability with a deep commitment and a rigour, which enables the school to maintain high levels of excellence. Governors provide an integral link between the school and parish: they are passionate about promoting the Catholic identity of the school in the local and wider community.
- The strategies for promoting, monitoring and evaluating the Catholic Life of the school are deeply embedded. Leaders can demonstrate how provision has been refined following clear and concise feedback from all stakeholders. This reflects the school's commitment in always looking for opportunities to improve and grow.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education – outstanding

- Pupils enjoy Religious Education and behaviour for learning is exemplary. They participate with keen interest and are quickly settled and ready to work. Pupils listen to each other with respect when working individually, with partners or in small group work. Pupils throughout the school are extremely articulate and have a commendable understanding and knowledge of scripture. In Key Stage 1 pupils respond well to the 'my turn your turn' strategies employed by teachers. Similarly, Key Stage 2 pupils benefit from 'call and response' input. Pupils' attention and understanding is focused and well captured.
- Pupils at Christ the King make outstanding progress in Religious Education. Attainment has been consistently above diocesan averages in recent years. There is clear evidence that strategies used, such as the 'pre-write' and 'post-write' strategies, enable pupils to enjoy amassing increased knowledge. Pupils can make strong links between the work they learn in Religious Education and how they live their lives: in Year 3, pupils identify that, 'A virtue is a good thing you do'. In Year 6, pupils refer to 'the theological virtue of hope', linking this to the teachings of Jesus in *the Beatitudes*.
- Diocesan initiatives, such as the use of 'driver words' and the use of the 'big question' are evident, all of which highlight important elements and relevant vocabulary within the lesson. Pupils fully understand the symbols of the head, heart and cloud and use them effectively to develop their critical thinking and subsequent answers. Pupils feel supported in classrooms that are bright, engaging and well resourced. Religious displays celebrate and support pupils' work.
- Pupils enjoy learning about other faiths and are respectful of other beliefs. They have a clear understanding of British values and the curriculum for relationships and sex education. Surveys endorse the fact that their pupils enjoy all aspects of Religious Education.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education – good

- The quality of teaching is at least good with a number of examples of outstanding practice. Strong foundations are laid in the early years and, as a result, pupils make a good start in developing their understanding of Religious Education. Teachers have a sound theological knowledge: they skilfully link topics to the promotion of Catholic virtues, which guides pupils in their daily interaction with each other.

- Teachers prepare lessons thoroughly and carefully. Lessons refer to 'sticky knowledge' and encourage pupils to 'go deeper'. Teachers model answers in detail and use a call and respond method to embed key knowledge. During the pandemic, the school identified that pupils require and benefit from 'sentence starter prompts'. Whilst this modelling captures teacher and pupil ideas, there is a risk it could restrict independent answering and the expansion of individual ideas. More opportunities for independent learning and research would provide freedom for pupils to explore their own thinking and understanding, thus enhancing current provision.
- The 'Come and See' programme is used creatively. Unit planning is a strength and clearly defined for each week. Interactive whiteboard slides are carefully prepared to assist understanding. A spiritual atmosphere is at the heart of lessons with art, music and drama creating a rich environment for learning.
- The quality of pupil work in terms of output, coverage and presentation is good. There is evidence of extended pieces captured in Religious Education books: given the religious literacy demonstrated in their verbal responses in lessons, there is scope to give pupils further time and freedom to capture and demonstrate more personally their knowledge and understanding in their written work, particularly for the more able group.
- Marking is developmental and follows a whole school policy. Constructive feedback is personalised and linked to driver words. Pupils have time to respond to teacher statements and there is clear evidence of peer review. Teaching assistants are well deployed and support pupils to access their learning.
- Assessment is used effectively and efficiently. Teachers are clear about what children know and do not know. Moderation is precise and the view of the diocese is sought to further validate levelling of work. Staff use this information to plan challenging and carefully sequenced work.

The extent to which leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education – outstanding

- The headteacher, together with the heads of school and Religious Education lead teacher, make a significant impact on the quality of provision throughout the school day. They ensure that all stakeholders are prepared to embed Religious Education firmly at the heart of the school's mission.
- The subject leader works closely with the diocese, attending Religious Education meetings and training days. She is keen to quality assure assessed pieces and trial new diocesan initiatives. The Bishop's themes of Encounter, Discipleship and Missionary Discipleship are clearly in evidence. Christ the King has been a forerunner for championing Catholic Virtues: the school's work has been widely shared.
- Monitoring and evaluation is thorough and planned carefully throughout the academic year. Regular scrutiny of work and pupil progress meetings takes place each term. Leaders are self-analytical and have looked carefully at what is needed to fill any curriculum gaps. Outcomes are discussed in detail and acted upon accordingly. The school uses their tracking system effectively: leaders analyse rates of progress, including for groups of pupils, and intervention is immediate when any child is at risk of falling behind.
- Governors make regular contact with school leaders and maintained this commendably throughout the pandemic. Governors participate in diocesan training, allowing them to ask the right questions, provide challenge and act as helpful, critical friends. As a result, they are able to challenge leaders and verify the quality of teaching and learning and the validity of outcomes.
- The Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs and fulfils the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. The curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. Leaders and local governors ensure that the episcopal requirement to provide 10% of curriculum time to Religious Education is followed.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.
- The quality of provision for the Collective Worship.
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

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How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship – outstanding

- Pupils at Christ the King eagerly partake in a well-developed programme of Collective Worship which has further flourished since the last inspection. As a result, pupils are well-versed in a variety of ways in which to pray and worship: they use Christian meditation, Lectio Divina, class prayer times, prayer books and materials. Around the Christ the King prayer tree and in a variety of prayer areas throughout both school sites, pupils can follow their own thoughts and ideas when praying.
- Pupils embrace opportunities for worship at different times and in different contexts. They engage enthusiastically and respond with deep reverence. Older pupils in particular are creative, resourceful and imaginative when leading Collective Worship – they display a thorough understanding of the Church's liturgical year and seasons. Pupils show a willingness and desire to prepare and lead worship; a more strategic approach will ensure that all pupils in Key Stage 1 get the opportunity more frequently to prepare and lead worship.
- At Christ the King, the chaplaincy teams offer voluntary prayer opportunities for pupils during lunchtime and at different times in the Church's year, such as holding a Rosary club in October. As a result, pupils benefit from many rich and varied opportunities to take part in additional times of prayer and worship. The chaplaincy teams are held in high esteem by their peers. Consequently, other pupils see modelled liturgy planned and delivered by the chaplaincy teams; many younger pupils comment that they aspire to the role when they are older.
- Pupils are rightly proud of the extent to which they contribute to this prayerful community: they are intensely aware of the effect prayer and spirituality have on their lives and the lives of those around them. Collective Worship therefore has an outstanding impact on the spiritual and moral development of each pupil – and the impact is felt throughout the community; pupils show a deep respect for those of different faiths and cultures, demonstrated in curriculum learning and through participation in initiatives such as Kindness Warriors and Magnificent Missionaries.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship – outstanding

- Prayer is central to school life, enhancing the pupils' understanding and experience of faith while providing opportunities to reflect on the Gospel values and virtues. The very positive impact of Collective Worship in the school is witnessed in the words of the school mission statement and the '*Christ the King Experience*' document, which shape the attitudes and actions of the members of the community towards fulfilling their ambitious vision.
- The quality of provision is outstanding. Resources are used effectively to create meaningful and thought-provoking liturgies that are appreciated and treasured by the whole community. The themes demonstrate a deep understanding of the Church's mission and respond well to the Bishop's initiatives.
- The confidence of the teaching staff in developing class worship has increased through continual professional development. A supportive partnership exists between the parish and trust, which boosts expertise. There is a wealth of resources to support the planning and delivery of whole school and class Collective Worship. In addition, the Religious Education leader is a highly experienced teacher who leads by example when planning and providing training for all staff.
- Staff equip pupils well so that they are able to take ownership of the focus areas for prayer. The chaplaincy teams ensure that these areas are well looked after and transitional, with each item, artefact, scripture or image having a role and purpose. Pupils in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are supported in contributing to the planning of liturgies: as pupils move through the school, Key Stage 2 pupils emerge as confident and competent in planning all elements of the class liturgy.
- Masses are held at school and also in the three parish churches which serve the school, providing an opportunity, for example, to celebrate the commissioning of the school Chaplains with parishioners. The views of parents and parishioners are sought on a regular basis, as attendance at Masses and Acts of Worship is strong: evaluations and responses are extremely positive and this aspect was noted as a strength when the school reached out to families during the pandemic.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship – outstanding

- The head teacher and senior leadership team have the knowledge and understanding of what constitutes a high-quality liturgical experience. They have a thorough and comprehensive understanding of the church's Liturgical Year and lead staff and pupils in a deeper appreciation of these traditions through modelling high-quality worship, including the induction of and training for new staff. Diocesan and external training is well attended and valued. Parish links are being re-established following recent lockdown periods due to the global pandemic.
- Leaders recognise the talents and gifts that staff members bring to enrich the prayer and liturgical life of the school family. In support of this work, members of staff have their own purposefully designed prayer space in which they are encouraged to spend time praying and meditating in order to grow in their own personal relationship with God.
- Monitoring and evaluation procedures for Collective Worship are robust. Views of stakeholders are sought regularly and are acted upon. Feedback from all monitoring is given promptly and responses are systematic and thorough, leading to a continued development of outstanding practice. Governors are proactive: they understand extremely well the strengths of Collective Worship and the next steps to take. Leaders need to continue this high-level approach to training and, in doing so, develop and support all pupils in planning high quality child-led liturgies throughout Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 alike.
- Christ the King is a deeply prayerful and spiritual community as a result of school leaders' deep commitment to this aspect of school life. Leadership is ambitious, rigorous, and effective, empowering the whole staff team to be highly committed in providing the highest quality of Collective Worship for pupils. Christ the King is used as a beacon for other schools, spreading this strong practice across the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi Academy Trust and diocesan schools.

SCHOOL DETAILS

School Name	Christ the King Catholic Voluntary Academy
Unique Reference Number	146158
CMAT	St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust

The inspection of this school was carried out on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham under Canon 806 of Canon Law in accordance with the *evaluation schedule* for diocesan canonical inspections in the Diocese of Nottingham. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. The process begins with the school's own self-evaluation and the inspection schedule is in line with the criteria set by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA).

During the inspection, the inspectors observed 16 Religious Education lessons and 5 Acts of Collective Worship.

Meetings were held with the headteacher, the subject leader for Religious Education, the Trust's lead lay chaplain, the Trust's CEO, a director of performance and standards and a governor. Discussions were also held with pupils and parents. A telephone call was undertaken with one of the local parish priests.

The inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including reports of the governing body, action plans, the school development plan, monitoring forms, assessment information and parental response forms. Inspectors also examined the work in pupils' Religious Education books.

Chair of Governors:	Mr Malcolm Rossa
Headteacher:	Mrs Annie Carter
Date of Previous School Inspection:	23 April 2015
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WHAT INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS MEAN

Within the report, the following grades are used:

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires Improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

In the context of the whole school, the overall effectiveness grades have the following meaning:

Grade 1	Outstanding	The school is a highly effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are exceptionally well met.
Grade 2	Good	The school is an effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are met well.
Grade 3	Requires Improvement	The school is not yet a good Catholic school, it is not inadequate however, and there are aspects that require improvement. There will be a monitoring visit within the next 18 months and the school will be re-inspected within 3 years.
Grade 4	Inadequate	There are features in need of urgent and immediate attention. The school is not meeting the basic minimum requirement for adequacy as a Catholic school. The school will receive an annual monitoring visit and will be re-inspected within 3 years.