



# St Edmund's Catholic Academy

URN: 139891

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Birmingham

07–08 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

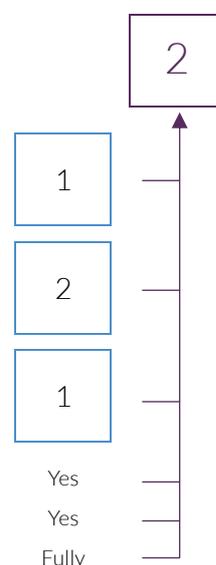
#### Collective worship (p.7)

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

- St Edmund's is enshrined in the CARE values. All stakeholders aspire to be calm, aspirational, respectful, and engaged, leading to a shared mission and identity.
- The school's mission to care, following in the footsteps of Christ, is evident in leaders' and governors' respect for the dignity of workers and their preferential option for the poor.
- A powerful culture of welcome, positive relationships, carefully planned pastoral care, and a well-maintained learning environment ensures St Edmund's is focused on the holistic development of all in the school's family. It is a true expression of Catholic identity.
- The newly appointed leadership of the religious education department, supported by senior leaders, has implemented a clear vision and sequenced curriculum.
- Prayer and liturgy are central to St Edmund's life and work and are an expression of its rich Catholic heritage and tradition.

## What the school needs to improve

- Establish a comprehensive Catholic curriculum in all subject areas that enables students to demonstrate their understanding of links to Catholic social teaching within them.
- Respond to students' individual needs, especially those with higher prior attainment, through meaningful challenge and questioning to secure positive outcomes.
- Include students' reflections on the impact prayer and liturgy have on their personal faith journeys in the self-evaluation process.

## 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

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

1

Students value the mission, and CARE values are enshrined in all aspects of St Edmund's. They recognise they are valued and cared for, which is notable in the high levels of attendance in addition to the positive opportunities for student leadership. Christ is at the heart of St Edmund's. Students recognise their vocation to respond to various charity and social actions, including Macmillan Coffee Morning, St Edmund's larder, uniform swap shops and eco-club. Sixth form students, reflecting their patron, Oscar Romero, have a developed appreciation of how St Edmund's mission has touched their lives and can articulate how their plans for the future are inspired by the experiences they have encountered. For example, students speak about their career choices being directly linked to wanting to contribute positively to the world and stand up for justice, 'Aspire not to have more but to be more.' Students value the diverse and inclusive nature of St Edmund's, where all are accepted, valued, and enabled to flourish. Chaplaincy is valued, and a significant number of students cherish the opportunity to take a leading role.

The mission statement of St Edmund's is a vibrant expression of the Church's educational mission in education and is embraced by staff wholeheartedly. Staff are entirely invested in the school's mission and the service it provides. There is a strong culture of welcome, and relationships are a powerful witness to going the extra mile and celebrating the presence of those with various cultures and beliefs. Pastoral care is a strength and clearly focuses on the most vulnerable, as seen through the extensive work with outside agencies and restorative behaviour strategies. Retreat and pilgrimage opportunities further enhance the development of the whole person. The school environment has been carefully designed to encapsulate the Catholic character and identity of St Edmund's with appropriate space and quality of provision. Chaplaincy provision plays a pivotal role in ensuring all can flourish. Relationships, sex, and

health education is faithful to the Church's teaching and exemplifies a holistic view of the human person.

Leaders and governors articulate the Church's mission in education with ease and model it in their policy and practice. Leaders and governors at St Edmund's work closely with the Bishops' vision and are active advocates. There is a flourishing relationship with local parishes, and students are actively encouraged to take on ministries within the school and parish. The school has made concerted efforts to support parents as first educators in the faith, enabling live streaming of voluntary Mass and Adoration and ensuring prominent witness through various communication channels. Leaders and governors place the highest priority on the dignity of workers, and there is an explicit commitment to staff well-being, including a very personal and much-valued approach from the principal. The Catholic curriculum extends beyond religious education and is becoming a more prominent feature of all curriculum areas, with opportunities to recognise the themes of Catholic social teaching, department feast days, and opportunities to respond through prayer and action. For example, in English, students have benefitted from lectures on faith in key texts; in design and technology, students have had the opportunity to make clocks reflecting the Catholic identity of St Edmund's, and in languages, prayer is spoken in the lesson's target language.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

**Pupil outcomes**

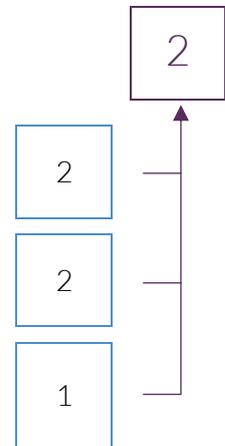
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

**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 are developing knowledge, understanding, and skills as required by the *Religious Education Directory* (RED), and they are beginning to make progress in knowing more, remembering more, and doing more through the embedded practice of recall activities in lessons. Religious literacy is a strength that provides opportunities to focus on phonics and develop enhanced subject-specific vocabulary. Consequently, students can articulate their knowledge and understanding appropriately. Some students have the confidence to accurately talk about what they have learnt, and some have the understanding to explain what they need to do to improve further. However, only some students have a specific understanding of what they need to do to improve and achieve the desired outcomes. Students can work independently when given the opportunity to do so. In the main, students are engaged in their learning and have a growing enjoyment and enthusiasm for religious education, as the newly sequenced and invigorated curriculum and teaching techniques are more apparent, particularly in Key Stage 3.

Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and have a growing understanding of ensuring their teaching matches the needs of their students. Non-specialist staff are well supported through a carefully sequenced curriculum, appropriate resources, and ongoing training. Consequently, religious education teachers at St Edmund's are effective practitioners committed to the subject's highest quality teaching and learning. Planning is beginning to reflect and respond to assessment outcomes; however, there is a need to ensure meaningful challenge for the most able students, optimise all teaching and learning opportunities to provide depth in knowledge and understanding for all, and maintain a good pace in learning. Questioning is inconsistent in eliciting and developing students' understanding. Whilst there is some significantly good practice, this is not currently consistent, so all students can benefit from it. The school-wide 'Loyola programme' provides opportunities for those with higher prior attainment

and a framework for the department to meet their needs, though it is yet to achieve the desired outcomes for religious education. Moral and spiritual development is recognised as a crucial part of the curriculum, with some opportunities to respond in classwork and through homework tasks. Learning takes on various formats, although sometimes tasks do not enhance students' learning.

The curriculum faithfully expresses the new RED and has parity with other core curriculum subjects. Training is of the highest priority and has made a crucial impact on the subject's development journey. The newly appointed subject leader, wholeheartedly supported by senior leaders and the governing body, has made substantial improvements in a relatively short time, securing the team's vision and implementing the strategies to sequence the curriculum and develop teaching and learning. The subject leader is well positioned to secure the full impact of curriculum development by ensuring it responds to all students' needs, most notably by challenging students with higher prior attainment. Plans to enrich the curriculum are in place. Self-evaluation is forensic and accurate. Indeed, self-evaluation is effectively leading the department's development and progress.

## 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

1

**Leadership**

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

1

1

Students are highly engaged and respond very well to prayer and liturgy at St Edmund's. They are respectful and attentive. They participate in a range of worship and liturgical opportunities, considerate to a variety of faith backgrounds. A wide variety of prayer and liturgical experiences are understood in the context of the Church's liturgical year and Catholic faith traditions. Students can work with others to prepare for prayers based on celebrations of the Word and liturgical experiences. Liturgical ministries are part of students' faith formation at St Edmund's; subsequently, students are willing and confident to read, altar serve and support prayer and liturgy through music ministry. Students' evaluation of prayer and liturgy is embedded and responded to. Students' individual opportunities to reflect on the spiritual outcomes of prayer and liturgy are not yet fully realised. Prayer and liturgy shape the curriculum and broader life of the school, providing numerous opportunities to pray in different languages within various curriculum areas and through department patron saint celebrations.

Prayer is central to school life. There is a daily pattern of prayer from the start of the day and continued through the personal development programme, further enhanced by the weekly rhythm of prayer in extended prayer, celebrations of the Word and tutor-based worship opportunities. Indeed, the school calendar prioritises the Church's liturgical year and corresponding provision. Prayer and liturgy cover the breadth and richness of the Catholic tradition, including a weekly voluntary Mass, Adoration of the Eucharist, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, praying the Rosary, and Stations of the Cross. Scripture is well-chosen and underpins all prayer and liturgy and the CARE values of the school. Relevant staff are well-skilled in helping students plan liturgy and, through the support of the chaplaincy team and youth ministry worker, ensure staff and students have the appropriate resources and skills to plan and deliver prayer and liturgy. Creative and artistic contributions are encouraged, notably in the

recently formed gospel choir. Prayer spaces are appropriate, with the chapel at the forefront of the school, and also include a prayer garden and prayer spaces in all rooms.

Leaders have ensured an appropriate and relevant prayer and liturgy policy, including the development of skilled student participation, has been carefully planned, considering people's faith formation journeys. Leaders ensure the school calendar provides opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist and celebration of significant moments in the liturgical year, including holy days of obligation and ample opportunity for the individuals to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Staff training concerning prayer is given the highest priority, from the point of induction to the ongoing formation of senior leaders through the EducareM programme. Chaplains are highly effective in facilitating the planning of prayer and liturgy, and their presence and impact are evident beyond the school's liturgical life. Prayer and liturgy are prioritised in budgets, and self-evaluation is accurate and leads to further developments. Students' reflections on prayer and liturgy's impact on their faith journeys are not yet part of this process.

## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Edmund's Catholic Academy
School unique reference number (URN)	139891
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3364605
Full postal address of the school	Compton Park, Compton Road West, Wolverhampton, WV3 9DU
School phone number	01902 558888
Headteacher	Maggie Hazeldine
Chair of governing board	Christopher Walker
School Website	<a href="http://www.stedmundscloud.co.uk">www.stedmundscloud.co.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Francis and St Clare Catholic MAC
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	February 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

## The inspection team

Rachel Waugh	Lead
David Bayliss	Team
Philip Gray	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