CATHOLIC SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE INSPECTION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND ACADEMIES

Our Lady of Hartley RC Primary

URN: 141532

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Most Reverend John Wilson Archbishop of Southwark

06–07 March 2025

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

1

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

1

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

1

Collective worship (p.7)

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

1

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference	Yes
The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop	Yes
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

Compliance statement

- Religious education is taught for a specified portion of each repeating cycle, and this constitutes 10% of the taught curriculum time.
- The school is fully compliant with the requirements of the Archbishop.
- The school has fully met the recommendations from the last report.

What the school does well

- It is a profoundly spiritual Catholic school. The internal and external learning environment tangibly proclaims a flourishing Catholic identity.

- The relevance of scripture for today is a central theme in religious education lessons and supports pupils' understanding of Catholic social teaching.

- Prayer and liturgy are part of the natural rhythm of school life and enrich pupils' faith development.

- Leadership at all levels is outstanding. In their vision for and commitment to pupils, leaders and governors demonstrate an understanding of their vocation to lead a school in which all members thrive is exemplary and greatly appreciated by everybody.

- The level of pastoral care for all pupils and their families is exemplary and greatly appreciated.

What the school needs to improve

- Apply for the participator level of the Oscar Romero award.

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

1

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

The love of Christ is evident in the wonderful relations between pupils and staff. Pupils are happy and at ease in this family because of the way their uniqueness as a child of God is recognised. Pupils fully embrace their responsibilities by playing an active role in shaping the Catholic mission and ethos of the school with exemplary behaviour and mutual respect. For example, they look out for pupils who may be upset or who may be sitting alone on the buddy bench. This makes for a joyous, harmonious community in which no child is ignored. Pupils understand and live the great commandment to love. By accepting the values inherent in Catholic social teaching, pupils show an awareness of the most disadvantaged in society. They willingly respond to the need to bring Christ's love to them. Their response is best exemplified by the number of charitable projects the school engages in. The Mini-Vinnies understand Jesus' call to serve and speak proudly of their work, for example, organising the coffee morning for Macmillan cancer and donating their pre-loved books to the link school in Ghana. One pupil said their mission was to 'turn concern into action.'

Christ is truly at the heart of the school. The mission statement, 'together in faith, love and learning', is evident at every turn. It is supported by core values, for example, kindness, forgiveness and fairness, which sustain a strong partnership between parents and school and creates a family that celebrates diverse cultures, abilities and beliefs. All staff are steadfast in and deeply aligned with the mission. They go to great lengths to care for each other and their pupils. It is evident in the exceptional pastoral support for all pupils with a particular focus on the most vulnerable. The Nurture UK programme enhances this genuine level of care by helping staff respond to each pupils', often complex, needs. A parent said, 'stand on the playground and soak in the love and happiness that you witness'. Pupils agree that teachers care for and respect them. The Catholic identity of the school is extensively evident in displays and religious imagery in the main entrance, all corridors and in every classroom. The

programme for relationships, sex and health education are in place and planned with Christ's teaching in mind. They are appropriate to each year group.

This authentic Catholic community, in which staff and pupils are flourishing, reflects the impact of experienced and genuine Catholic leadership at all levels. Catholic values are explicitly embedded within the school. They underpin decisions at every level across the school, for example in the behaviour policy and providing staff training. One governor described their role as 'mission drives everything and everyone'. As a result, leaders and governors are proud of the way that Catholic social teaching is clearly understood and lived by pupils. Governors are highly effective in their monitoring role, both challenging and supporting school leaders. They know the school well because they visit regularly and organise governor days. Many governors are local parishioners and speak highly of the links with the parish community and their families. In their vision and in their commitment to pupils, school leaders provide a caring, spiritual environment, strongly underpinned by Gospel values of love and compassion. The headteacher and senior staff are excellent role models, recognising the dignity of each person. Teachers know their happiness is a priority for leaders. As a result, staff enjoy working at the school. They know their well-being is looked after. A teacher said, 'I feel like I belong in this school and part of a wider community.'

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

1

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

1

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education

1

Pupils genuinely enjoy religious education lessons and know they are important. They say they learn about the faith but they can also explain how it influences them in their lives. For example, in one lesson, pupils took a gospel story about forgiveness and were able to relate it to saying sorry when they make wrong choices. Behaviour in lessons is always excellent because teachers praise pupils and allow them to be heard. Pupils are encouraged to think independently. When asked to reflect on the story of Zacchaeus, some pupils focussed on the anger of the crowd rather than Jesus. As a result, they engage with teachers and each other in a high respectful manner. The support of other adults ensures all pupils engage and learn. The high quality of pupils' work, both written and oral, shows they have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and what they can do to improve further. As a result, pupils become religiously literate, often beyond their years, for example using and understanding phrases such as Jesus the Servant king. Outcomes in religious education, including for pupils with special educational needs and /or disabilities are in line with school outcomes in this high achieving school.

Religious education is a significant strength of the school, reflecting its position at the core of the curriculum. Teachers successfully engender a positive climate in lessons. They want every pupil to learn and enjoy learning because they understand that helping pupils learn about the faith is central to the mission of a Catholic school. Inspiring and well-planned learning across the school is exemplified in nearly all lessons. Teachers link learning to pupils' lives with examples of the meaning and impact of the Gospel. For example, in a lesson on the Good Samaritan, pupils reflected on the meaning and wrote their personal responses to the parish priest explaining how they can be good Samaritans. Building on prior learning and the use of developmental questioning are consistent features in lessons. This enables pupils to think for themselves and to challenge each other. Teachers confidently use other strategies, such as art, that pupils say motivates them. One example was when pupils were looking at the washing of the feet and confidently speculating on the characters and their feelings, such as

working out which one was Judas. The range of answers reflects how teachers successfully encourage independent thinking. Teachers track progress through regular assessments that are regularly moderated internally and with other Trust schools. This leads to accurate and effective assessments and well-planned support for all pupils of all abilities.

Religious education has a high profile as a core subject because leaders and governors understand the significant role it plays in a Catholic school. They are passionate about their role in not only sustaining standards but improving them further. Governors work effectively with the headteacher and subject lead. They share a coherent vision for embedding Catholic education across the school. Governors ensure they are fully informed of the standards of teaching and learning through regular visits to the school to carry out learning walks, book looks and have frequent meetings with school leaders. This leads to well-targeted and timely improvements, for example with training for the new *Religious Education Directory*. Strong subject leadership is evident in the high level of consistency in teaching in all key stages. Teachers appreciate the support they receive and as a result feel valued. There is a strong collaborative culture with teachers. Leaders have attended training on the new directory. There are also regular, planned professional development opportunities for all teaching staff.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

1

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

Pupils consistently participate fully and meaningfully when at prayer. They know prayer is important and are keenly responsive to opportunities to deepen their spiritual development. It is evident in the way pupils gather in prayer each day, either as a class or whole school. They show great reverence and mindfulness because they understand what they are doing is before God. This impact is further evident in their high degree of spiritual maturity that can be seen in the ease with which they talk about why prayer is important. Weekly pupil-led liturgies encompass a range of activities such as singing, scripture and prayer. Morning reflections are quiet moments to which pupils respond prayerfully. They show in a special way that pupils are comfortable with silence, talking to God in a way they understand. Pupils in the chaplaincy team play an important role in planning and leading prayer and liturgy across the school. Music and singing are strengths of all liturgies. Pupils join in happily because they know they are happy talking to God. Starting with the sign of the cross, pupils learn traditional church prayers and, through silent reflection, begin to formulate personal prayers.

Prayer is central to the daily school life as evident in the provision of a wide range of varied religious experiences for prayer and liturgy. They reflect the school's strong prayerful character. The wide range of liturgical experiences helps pupils understand the value of prayer in creating a school and a world that cares for others. This is reflected in the tangible sense of harmony that permeates the lives of the community. Chaplaincy support from the parish priest through his regular visits and effective spiritual support is both welcome and helpful. He also welcomes the school community to the church throughout the year to celebrate major liturgical feasts. Staff set a positive example as spiritual leaders and participants, which in turn inspires the pupils. The outdoor Marian space is used daily by staff and pupils who gather each morning to say a decade of the rosary. Staff are confident leading prayer and serve as inspiring role models to pupils and each other, participating with reverence and commitment. The parish priest said, 'the seed of faith sown in the children is a good seed. Over time, staff nurture these seeds.' Parents enjoy attending Mass in school, celebrating their faith as a school family.

Leaders and governors are deeply committed to the prayer life of the school, evident in the wide provision of spiritual liturgical celebrations. This reflects a commitment based on their faith and understanding of the importance of prayer. They have an expert awareness of their responsibility and provide opportunities in line with the Church's liturgical year. There is a clear, well-formulated policy for prayer and liturgy which is reviewed regularly. The headteacher and senior leaders are experienced in planning and delivering prayer and liturgy that meets the needs of all pupils and which enables them to participate fully and spiritually. Leaders and governors have cultivated a thriving collaboration between the school and parish, which is fundamental to the Catholic identity of the school. For example, the sacramental preparation for Reconciliation and First Communion is in place with pupils now ready to receive these sacraments. In this way, the whole community supports each other in contributing to the prayer life of the school. The headteacher, strongly supported by senior leaders and members of staff, ensures planning reflects the four elements of a meaningful liturgy, gather, word, response and mission. This was exemplified in a school assembly. Pupils were encouraged to 'go forth' as followers of Christ.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Our Lady of Hartley RC Primary
School unique reference number (URN)	141532
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8865217
Full postal address of the school	Our Lady of Hartley RC Primary, Stack Lane, Hartley, Longfield, DA3 8BL
School phone number	001474706385
Headteacher	James Baker
Chair of local governing body	Barry Mullan
School Website	http://www.ourladyhartley.kent.sch.uk/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Kent Catholic Schools' Partnership
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	14 November 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Damian Fox	Lead
John Bonnici	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