

St Richard's Voluntary Catholic Academy

URN: 141649

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Middlesbrough

05–06 March 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

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

1

Compliance statement

- St Richard's is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference. Religious education is at the core of the curriculum and at least 10% of the timetable is allocated to it.
- The school is fully compliant with the additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- The school has responded fully to areas of improvement identified in the last inspection.

What the school does well

- The mission of the school is exceptionally and authentically lived out by all and is the embodiment of the outstanding provision for the Catholic life of St Richard's.
- The school is at the heart of the community it serves with so many commenting that 'the school is the Church for the children.' Through the deep commitment of every person involved with the school, this has a tangible impact on all who experience life at St Richard's.
- Leadership is a strength of the school in all areas. Leaders truly are 'difference makers' not just to the school but to the whole community. They are role models and steadfastly ambitious in all areas.
- The prayer experiences offered by the school grows the pupils spiritually and deepens their faith through a variety of opportunities, enabling them to be closer to God and encounter Christ each day. Pupils live out this prayer life through work on Catholic social teaching as they 'act' as well as 'pray.'
- Leaders are adept at upskilling their staff to ensure that there are high quality learning experiences for all pupils.

What the school needs to improve

- To improve outcomes in religious education further by increasing pupil independence and opportunities to express their individuality and creativity when completing tasks.
- Enhance collective worship further by increasing the breadth and focus of scripture used within prayer.
- To develop further the flourishing partnership between the school and the parish.

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

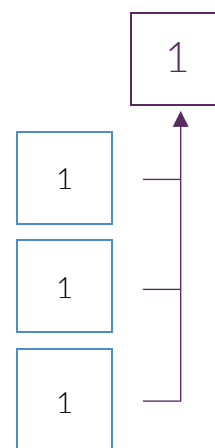
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



Pupil outcomes in Catholic life and mission are outstanding. Pupils at St Richard's fully embrace the school's mission, 'A place where all learn and grow knowing that Christ's love surrounds them, and all are valued for their uniqueness.' This is further developed through the unique creation of St@r values within the school rooted in Gospel values and, as one pupil remarked, 'We are united with God as we are all his family.' All pupils make an active contribution through these values as they know that their actions serve others as, 'All are friends of St Richard's.' Pupils show a deep respect for each other and are tolerant of all. The behaviour of pupils is exemplary and respectful throughout the school. They actively participate in and contribute to the vast array of chaplaincy opportunities provided by the school as they believe that chaplaincy brings them closer to God. They gladly embrace their responsibilities to serve in various ways as they know that little things can make a big difference. Pupils can clearly express an understanding that they are valued and respond positively to the demands of Catholic social teaching. Parish links are established, and parishioners are regular visitors to the school. The school is beginning a new development in its parish-school partnership, with the recent appointment of a new parish priest

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school is outstanding. The school mission statement is clearly lived out and is known and witnessed throughout the school and is at the centre of everything. All staff are fully invested in and embrace the mission of the school. There is a lived sense of community which is evident in the quality of the relationships and the strong culture of welcome. All adults, including support staff, provide high levels of pastoral care for pupils with further additional support for the most vulnerable. They are excellent role models. The school environment is a testament to the school's identity and mission through carefully chosen and explicit signs of the school's Catholic nature. Staff are fully committed to

the mission of the school and it is regularly revisited and linked with the values of the school so that everyone has the knowledge of how to love and follow Jesus each day. The Chaplaincy Team provision offered by the school is exemplary and compliments further the wonderful spiritual development and formation of each member of the community. The provision for relationships, sex, and health education is carefully planned, alongside creative and enhanced enrichment opportunities which clearly meet statutory and diocesan guidelines.

Leaders are outstanding in how they promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic life and mission at St Richard's. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the position of the school. This is a real strength. The Catholic life of the school is given the highest priority, supported by both the academy trust and governing body who share the leaders' ambition and vision for the school. Leaders are energised, joyful and determined in the pursuit of the mission and a source of inspiration for the whole community. Parents have a thorough understanding of the school's mission and are highly supportive of it. Parents describe the school like 'a home' and the school successfully engages pupils and carers to the obvious benefit of all pupils. The sense of welcome, family and respect are valued by the parents. Staff members value the commitment by leaders to support and guide them in their roles. One staff member commented that, 'Everyone accompanies each other as they walk alongside each other,' a true reflection on the support given to all at the school.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

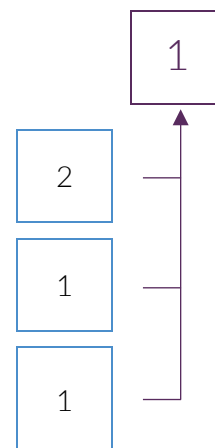
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Pupils' knowledge of religious education is secure in most classes due to the good levels of knowledge from staff. Pupils' speak confidently and fluently about what they have learnt from developing an understanding of the signs and symbols associated with the Mass in the Reception class to deepening their understanding of the Our Father prayer in Y6. Pupils make good progress from low starting points, and the development of opportunities to 'step back, recap' enables pupils to activate prior knowledge. Pupils enjoy religious education lessons across the school and as a result attainment is above or in line with other core subject areas. Evidence of religious literacy is clear across the breadth of teaching and learning and pupils ask and respond well to questions. Although pupils can work independently, sessions are usually highly supported and scaffolded which means that they rarely can take the initiative with their learning which also impacts on emerging individuality and creativity. The updated feedback and marking policy has enabled pupils to have a better understanding of how they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding. Teachers have a high level of subject expertise, confidence and authentic knowledge. They have a deep commitment to the teaching of religious education throughout the school. Teachers use questions skilfully to maximise learning for all pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2. The school has worked well to develop strategies to help pupils develop knowledge, understanding and skills. There is a tangible whole school culture that embraces a celebration of pupils' efforts and, as a result, pupils are engaged and motivated. This includes the support of vulnerable pupils who are nurtured and supported with equal measures. Relationships between pupils and adults are very strong and pupil's efforts are praised. Teaching assistants play an active role in lessons, adding

significant value. They are used to support the learning of pupils, and they do so skilfully and in an unobtrusive way.

The leadership of religious education is outstanding. Leaders and governors ensure full parity with other core subjects and that religious education is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*. The religious education leader has an inspiring vision of outstanding teaching and learning and has a high level of expertise to secure this vision. Her passion and commitment to the school, staff and pupils is evident and, as a result, the pupils thrive. Leaders of the school stated that they want to shine a light on the pupils of St Richard's, however they themselves are shining very brightly. Professional development is informative and thoughtfully planned. It is also tailored to meet the needs of the staff including the support offered to new members of staff and teachers, which is exemplary with a clear structure in place to help them contribute to the school vision. Governors are well informed and are included in key information regarding the forensic monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge that leaders at all levels achieve. The school is at the heart of the community and excellent links are forged with other agencies to provide enrichment activities to promote pupils' learning further.

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

Pupil outcomes in collective worship are outstanding. Observations show a rich variety of prayer from Ash Wednesday services, Catholic social teaching principles and simple moments of stillness through breath prayers. Creative opportunities for prayer are used frequently, including lunchtime, and in the words of the pupils this allows the pupils to 'feel at peace.' Experience of prayer and liturgy engage pupils at all levels. Pupils are deeply reflective and enthusiastic about prayer within the school. Pupils work collaboratively with staff, including from the chaplaincy team, to prepare creative well-constructed prayer experiences. Examples of this include in Year 1 where pupils prepared a beautiful Lenten prayer space which was guided carefully by the teacher and punctuated with moments of stillness and in Key Stage 2 the use of prayer journaling and sharing prayers with each other was well embedded. Pupils fully participate in and respond to these experiences provided by the school. Relative to their age, pupils plan a breadth of worship, initially with support, which develops through the phases so that Key Stage 2 lead prayer and liturgy independently. Junior chaplains are well established and they know that it is their role is to 'understand the Gospel and spread the good news'. They manage to do this through creative and joyful prayer experiences within the school. Pupils readily reflect on their prayer experiences and as one child said, 'Prayers are strong but not as powerful as acting upon it.'

The quality of prayer and liturgy provided by the school is outstanding. The school provides creative prayer spaces which are used effectively by the pupils and staff. These spaces are developed both inside and out as the school makes full use of the spaces it has, including a peace garden, retreat room and even spaces at the top and bottom of staircases. These spaces are well cared for, innovative in their creation and conducive to personal prayer which was evident throughout all phases. Staff have demonstrated through prayer and liturgy experiences their

personal faith commitment bringing moments of joy and reflection to the pupils with a deep empathy and understanding of their needs. There is a daily pattern of prayer to reflect a creative balance which incorporates traditional prayers alongside more spontaneous imaginative prayers. Opportunities to include a greater breadth of scripture in prayer is inconsistent. To mark the start of the season of Lent the pupils have experienced and been immersed in a wide range of prayerful experiences. Parents and families are included in the prayer life of the school at every opportunity, and this is genuinely valued and cherished. This has a tangible impact on the families who comment readily about the prayer life offered to the pupils.

The leadership of collective worship is outstanding. Leaders comment that they, '...lead pupils to encounter Christ each day' and prayer and liturgy at St Richard's delivers on this promise. This impact is not only felt at school but also at home as it impacts on the behaviour and attitudes of all pupils across all phases. Leaders, including governors, have a developed understanding of the different levels and skills of participation in prayer reflective of the age and stage of the pupils. The school's policy is carefully formatted. Leaders have ensured a carefully planned calendar of different events with significant days in the Church's year prioritised as was evident on Ash Wednesday and the start of the liturgical season of Lent. Leaders and governors have placed high priority on continuous professional development including chaplaincy. As a result, this enables staff to lead high quality prayerful experiences within school such as staff prayers before school starts which was an inspirational encounter with Christ for all. Engaging, high quality, accessible and meaningful opportunities are provided for the whole community. The impact of this is commented upon by all members of the St Richard's family.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Richard's Voluntary Catholic Academy
School unique reference number (URN)	141649
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8103510
Full postal address of the school	St Richard's VC Academy, Marfleet Lane, Hull, HU9 5TE
School phone number	01482 781928
Headteacher	Emma Cook
Chair of local governing body	Michael Pickering
School Website	www.strhull.org
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	June 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	2 - Good

The inspection team

Simon Geaves

Kendra Sill

Elizabeth Eddies

Lead

Team

Shadow Inspector

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