

English Martyrs' Catholic School, A Voluntary Academy

URN: 146196

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham

12 March 2026 – 13 March 2026

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 RE

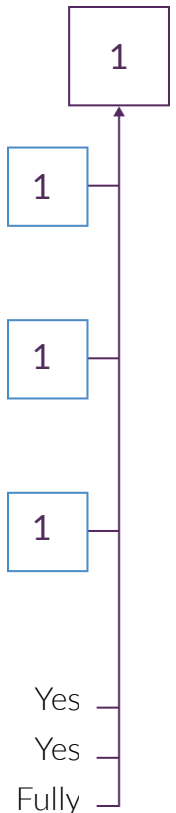
Collective worship (p.7)

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



What the school does well

- Pastoral care within English Martyrs' recognises the dignity and worth of each child. This is treasured and celebrated.
- Staff have a strong sense of belonging and shared purpose, strengthened by the high-quality, faith-based professional development that supports their own spiritual growth.
- The head of religious studies is the embodiment of servant leadership. His strategic overview and forensic planning is inspirational.
- Prayer and liturgy provides rich opportunities for students to encounter God. Students engage with reverence and enthusiasm.
- There is a strong vision for chaplaincy, which invites all members of the community on a journey of faith.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that assessment for learning strategies are applied consistently across the religious education department.
- Apply the most effective teaching strategies consistently in religious education lessons.
- Strengthen staff confidence in facilitating and supporting personalised, student-led prayer during form time.

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

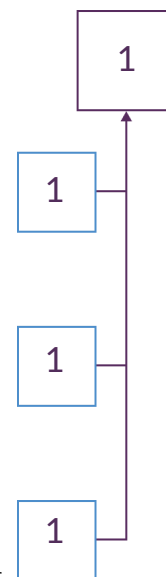
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



Leaders and staff ensure the school's motto, *'May they all be one'*, is embedded throughout daily school life. This message is consistently reinforced through religious assemblies, tutor time and everyday interactions, ensuring the importance of unity, respect and belonging. All stakeholders value the inclusive nature of the school and recognise that they are loved, and belong to one family. One staff member commented 'Our mission statement truly reflects the spirit of our school community. It shapes the way students, staff and families work together with a strong sense of belonging'. Students feel supported and empowered to grow as holistic individuals, called to make positive contributions to the world. The dignity of every person is evident in the impeccable manners shown by students and the respectful way they interact with one another. This dignity is reflected in the school's annual cultural day, where the diversity of the community is richly celebrated. Students are given opportunities to reflect thoughtfully on vocation and fulfilling their God-given potential; this includes responding to the needs of local and national charities, deepening their understanding of service and encouraging them to reflect prayerfully on the needs of others.

Leaders are clear that the purpose of the school extends beyond academic success; there is a strong focus on the kind of young people the school seeks to form and send out into society. Staff demonstrate a commitment to mission. They consistently model respect and positive relationships. Dedicated pastoral staff strengthen this provision, ensuring students feel known, valued and cared for. Pastoral care is exemplary. Strong relationships underpin a culture of forgiveness and reconciliation. Staff place a high priority on students' wellbeing, reflecting the school's steadfast commitment to ensuring that all students including those of

other faiths are welcomed, supported and fully included in the life of the community. Chaplaincy provision is outstanding. The lay chaplain is an inspirational role model. He actively guides students to deepen their participation in their faith life. This formation nurtures students who show an increasingly strong commitment to service and a genuine desire to contribute to the wider community through groups such as the eco-martyrs. The walls of the school proclaim the message of faith which is lived. The relationships, sex and health education programme reflects the teachings of the Church and recommendations of the diocese.

Leadership is a visible strength of the school, authentically shaped with faith, care and service. Collaboration with parish priests ensures that Mass is a regular part of school life. Students take an active role in the Church, with many expertly contributing to parish and diocesan music ministry. A strong sense of compassion and humility guide leaders' decisions. Families are supported through initiatives, such as provision of books, preloved uniform and discreet food hampers. Catholic social teaching is mapped out against the curriculum, although this is in its infancy. Leaders are committed to staff wellbeing which is prioritised through the 'staff charter'. A culture where staff are valued, listened to, and encouraged to offer their talents contributes to strong morale. Governors know the school well, offering both support and rigorous challenge. Their ongoing training and close links with leaders ensure that monitoring is purposeful and rooted in mission. Parents greatly appreciate the work of the school. One parent commented, 'My child has excelled at the school as a result of its supportive role models and ethos'. The lay chaplain and head of religious studies show unwavering commitment to ensure staff are confident and well-supported in delivering a Catholic curriculum through high quality professional development.

Religious education

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 key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

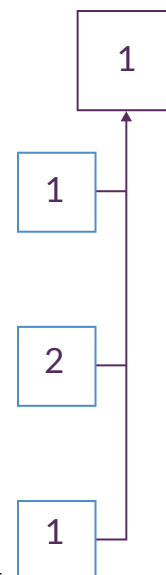
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Outcomes at GCSE and A level speak their own story about success at English Martyrs'. Students achieve above average when compared to their peers nationally. This is reflected in strong and adaptive teaching where students make very good progress over time. Where questioning is effective, students are given the opportunity to think critically, spiritually and personally. This deepens their learning experience. All groups of learners are monitored well and achieve their potential. Students have high levels of literacy which reflect their ethical and theological thinking. Because of this, learners speak accurately about their knowledge and can articulate religious concepts with confidence and accuracy. Workbooks show close attention to detail and excellent standards of presentation, though few opportunities are provided for self assessment. Students' pride in their work feeds into high levels of engagement and enjoyment. School initiatives to support teaching and learning give learners a choice in the way they record information and write their own notes. This has led to independence and a valuing of their written work as a source of recall and revision. Assessment is well embedded across all key stages and feedback practices allow students to make improvements.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge, which is reflected in their confident approach in the classroom. The vast majority of teaching is at least good with clear evidence of outstanding practice. When teaching is most effective, skilful questioning enables students to recall prior learning, make meaningful connections and deepen their understanding. Assessment for learning strategies are not maximised across the religious education department. The

department's work to develop oracy ensures that students are able to participate confidently. Provision at A level is strong. Teachers maintain high expectations. This well established culture means students take ownership of their learning. Students respond positively to this drive for accountability, engaging well in lessons, showing confidence in their contributions. Centralised planning from the head of department provides a clear and coherent structure for learning, while allowing teachers to adapt resources to meet the needs of their classes. Where teaching is strongest, teachers employ a range of effective teaching strategies, including modelling, visualisers and structured note-taking. These allow students to develop their knowledge and understanding. Feedback from assessments is used to address misconceptions.

The head of religious education is a visionary leader. His leadership is highly effective, marked by a clear strategic vision and a strong commitment to embedding the new *Religious Education Directory*. He has worked with determination to plan, sequence and resource the new curriculum, ensuring it is fully implemented and accessible to all students. Both specialist and non-specialist staff receive tailored support, enabling them to teach with confidence. Leaders have been thoughtful in deploying non-specialists, selecting colleagues with relevant faith backgrounds or strong subject expertise that enriches teaching and learning in religious education. Professional development has ensured consistency in curriculum delivery, with centralised resources and weekly updates supporting staff while allowing autonomy. Leaders also consider the wider impact of religious education on the Catholic life of the school, so that the subject contributes meaningfully beyond the classroom. Monitoring and evaluation are rigorous. Leaders analyse data carefully, and targeted intervention is implemented when needed. Assessment practice is well designed, to help students identify gaps related to knowledge or exam technique. Feedback lessons use model answers, self-reflection and improvement activities in order to close gaps. Non-specialist teachers enable cross-curricular links to enhance students' learning. This approach strengthens the subject's reach and contributes to a richer curriculum experience for students.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

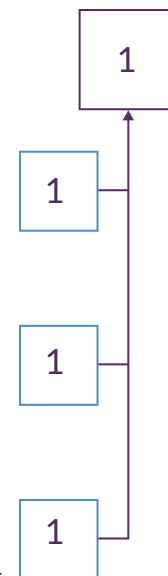
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

Leadership

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



Prayer and worship is at the heart of English Martyrs' and is valued by all. Worship is calm, reverent and reflective. Students actively participate with a strong sense of gratitude. Form-time prayer is well established as a daily routine, delivered confidently by students. Though some staff support form-time prayer with confidence, this is not consistent. Students describe the spiritual life of the school as 'part of who we are,' reflecting its depth of impact. Students benefit from a rich experience of Catholic tradition, including Mass, stations of the cross, the rosary and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Year 7 students describe learning the school prayer and researching the lives of their form martyrs as a mark of their belonging. Another student said the prayer opportunities are 'an encounter with God'. 'Spiritual life leaders' are a particular strength of the school. Ministry is well developed to include extraordinary ministers of holy communion, readers, altar servers, musicians and singers. Sixth formers articulate a mature understanding of service, explaining that leadership 'connects us with our faith'. Their involvement extends into parish life, charitable outreach and interfaith initiatives, including Ramadan gift packs and stewardship projects inspired by Catholic social teaching.

The daily 'prayer bell' brings the whole community together, creating a shared moment of reflection that sets a calm and purposeful tone for the day. This routine reinforces the centrality of prayer in the school's identity. Religious assemblies are planned and delivered by form groups, giving students the opportunity to collaborate, and model worship to their peers. Students undertake these ministries with confidence. Form-time prayer is planned and led by students using a variety of resources. While some staff are confident in facilitating and

supporting students to do this, others are less certain. Opportunities for communal worship and personal prayer are rooted in scripture and provide a theological richness. Prayer journals enable students to engage deeply; students articulate how they help their understanding of themselves and the world. Each form takes ownership of their own prayer board. These are particularly effective when used regularly and interactively, though this is not embedded. One student remarked, 'I use this every day, because I really need it'. A range of spaces across the school, including the chapel, library, auditorium, prayer garden and school field, are used to inspire and support prayer and whole-school worship. Staff describe the school as 'a lovely place to reflect' and 'a place where love is experienced'.

Leaders, including governors, ensure that ample time and resourcing are dedicated to prayer and liturgy. Leaders care deeply about the spiritual formation of all members of the community. Collective worship is strong, purposeful, and rooted in a clear strategic vision that places prayer and liturgy at the heart of school life. Leaders have developed a fully planned programme of worship that reflects the richness of the Church's tradition. The celebration of the Eucharist anchors key moments in both the school calendar and liturgical year. Weekly voluntary Mass is celebrated. Student attendance is exceptional. Students recognise the Eucharist as the 'source and summit' of the Catholic faith. Leaders have created a culture in which students take increasing responsibility for the prayer life of the school. This is reflected in the retreat programme which enables students to feel part of the community and exposes them to different forms of prayer. The lay chaplain and head of religious education offer significant expertise. The annual plan for worship reflects careful attention to feast days, sacraments, and the spiritual needs of students. Weekly acts of worship, alongside the resourcing of time and space, demonstrate leaders' conviction to where the heart of this school lies.

Information about the school

Full name of school	English Martyrs' Catholic School, A Voluntary Academy
School unique reference number (URN)	146196
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8564721
Full postal address of the school	Anstey Lane, LEICESTER, LE4 0FJ
School phone number	0116 2428880
Headteacher or Head of School	Mr Mathew Calen
Chair of Governors	Mr Paul Larazus
School Website	www.englishmartyrs.org
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Thomas Aquinas CMAT
Phase	Secondary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	
Age-range of pupils	11 - 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	21 November 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The Inspection Team

Marianne Wilkinson	Lead
Bernadette Grimley	Team
John Kemple	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