

St Illtyd's Catholic High School

URN: 401887

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Cardiff-Menevia

02–03 July 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

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

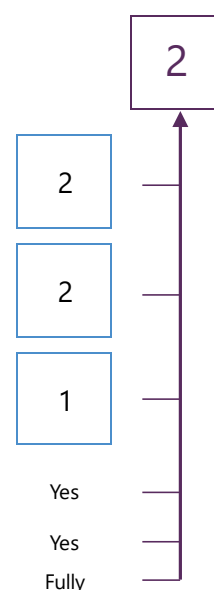
Collective worship (p.7)

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

The school is fully compliant with the 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



Compliance statement

- The school fully complies with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' conference.
- The school fully complies with the diocesan archbishop's additional requirements.
- The school is fully compliant concerning previous areas for improvement.

What the school does well

- St Illtyd's Catholic High School is a welcoming and inclusive community, where the dignity of all is promoted. Relationships between staff and students are strong and are a strength of the school.
- The school's leadership has a clear vision for Catholic life and mission, and leaders are exemplary role models for staff and students alike.
- The school's lay chaplain has a marked impact on the spiritual life of the school.
- The school chaplain is highly skilled and provides a wide range of engaging and creative experiences for staff and pupils.
- Outcomes in religious education (RE) at Key Stage 4 continue to improve, and curriculum planning at Key Stage 3 ensures appropriate challenge.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to develop pupil understanding of, and engagement with, the mission of the school and how that impacts action.
- Further embed the marking and feedback policy in RE, ensuring consistency and that feedback focuses on improving learning.
- Ensure leaders and governors formalise the systematic monitoring and evaluation of the school's collective worship.

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

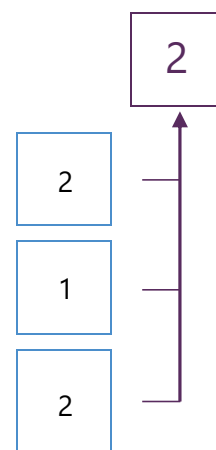
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



Students at St Illtyd's Catholic High School are proud to be part of the school community. They speak fondly of the school and can explain what makes the school Catholic. The school's inclusive nature ensures that the diverse student body feels valued and recognised. Students take on leadership roles through involvement with the Emerald Greens and chaplaincy team, for example, and speak proudly of the contribution that they make to the life of the school. Students are enthusiastic about the various charitable initiatives that the school engages in, such as Cafod and the Rumney Forum, acknowledging their impact. The school mission statement, 'Together in Christ we make a difference', is evident across the school, however, most students struggled to articulate this and its wider impact. Student behaviour is good, with students treating each other, staff, and visitors with respect. Care is taken when travelling around the school site. The Catholic Pupil Profile is displayed prominently, is viewed daily during form time collective worship, and is set as challenges during assemblies. The logo design competition has helped to raise the profile of the virtues, however, when asked, most students lacked confidence in being able to articulate the virtues and how to develop them personally. Planned retreats to St Cassian's Centre, together with internal retreat days, further enrich the collective worship opportunities provided. Students participate in pilgrimages that celebrate the patron saint and the Lasallian roots of the school.

Staff are fully committed to the mission of the school and act as role models and witnesses in their conduct, delivery of collective worship, and restorative justice behaviour management techniques. The staff survey was overwhelmingly positive, with 97% agreeing or strongly agreeing that the mission statement is 'known and witnessed through all aspects of the community'. Staff speak passionately about the school, stating that it 'is a truly Catholic school with Christ at its centre. Collective worship and Catholic life and mission has strengthened and flourished over the past three years.' There is clear recognition, since that last inspection, of the improvement journey the school has been on. Leaders

and staff are passionate in supporting the needs of all families, supplying food, uniform, and other resources where necessary, truly living out Christ's message of love of neighbour. Students state that there is 'at least one member of staff that they can turn to'. The additional learning needs hub is highlighted as a place that they can go to receive help. The school has dedicated curriculum time for personal and social education (PSE) and relationships and sexuality education (RSE) that supports its Catholic nature and is fully compliant with diocesan guidance.

Catholic life and mission is viewed by leaders and governors as the core of the school, which they see as a Catholic school for the entire community. The head teacher has a clear vision for Catholic education and serves as an inspirational role model for the community. The senior leadership team works cohesively to ensure that the mission and vision of the school is realised in every aspect. The deputy head teacher with responsibility for Catholic life and mission reports termly to the governing body, and this is a standing agenda item. The governors review the Catholic Self-Evaluation Document termly, and it is a key focus of the Ethos, Outreach and Wellbeing Committee. Staff have a comprehensive understanding of the school's mission and are provided with professional learning opportunities, which further develop this understanding, however, student involvement in understanding and evaluating the school's mission and its impact is limited. Newly qualified and new teachers to the school comment overwhelmingly positively on the induction package, which emphasises that faith is central to all within the school. Leaders facilitate collaboration with other Catholic schools and parishes to develop the Catholic life and mission.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

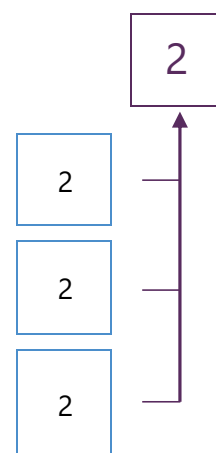
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Behaviour in religious education (RE) lessons is good, and students generally state that they enjoy their learning. As a result, most students are engaged throughout lessons. Relationships between students and teachers are positive, and most students feel comfortable participating in the learning and volunteering answers. Pupil outcomes at Key Stage 4 are below the national average, but are in line with other core curriculum subjects, and there is a three-year upward trend, with the most able students making the most significant gains. Adapted resources and revision materials have helped to engage all learners, especially those with additional learning needs, and revision sessions have helped consolidate knowledge prior to exams. The inclusion of and emphasis on theology and sources of wisdom within extended writing tasks was highlighted by Key Stage 4 students as a particular strength; it helps prepare them for exams and, when combined with clear success criteria, aids peer assessment, helping to develop independence in learning.

Significant progress has been made since the previous inspection, with the RE department now fully staffed by subject specialists, and the head of department is appropriately qualified. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and can confidently impart that to students. Religious literacy is central to teaching and learning, with most staff challenging students over their use of correct terminology and insisting on its use, both verbally and in written work. Literacy skills are used extensively within the department, with reading, writing, and oracy all embedded in lessons observed. Extended writing is a key feature and has been used as an example of good practice in faculty meetings. Where questioning was most effective it engaged all students through 'cold calling' techniques and was carefully planned and adapted to meet the needs of all learners. In a few cases, questioning was too closed, and opportunities were missed to develop understanding. Marking and feedback has been a focus for the department and, although strides have been made to address this, inconsistencies remain. In some classes insufficient time is given for students to

respond to feedback meaningfully. This remains an area of focus on the department improvement plan.

The subject leader for religious studies has a good vision for the subject and how it can be developed at St Illtyd's Catholic High School. He has worked hard with the department to secure progress, particularly over the last three years, and has a clear understanding of where the strengths and areas of development lie. He has been ably supported by the line manager, the 'raising standards lead' and the deputy head teacher, who use the school's monitoring and evaluation cycle effectively to identify strengths and address areas for development. The *Religious Education Directory* coordinator has been in place for 3 years and has developed a fully resourced scheme of work for Key Stage 3 that ensures compliance and consistency across the department and for all students. Work scrutiny takes place across the faculty, ensuring that standards in RE are comparable with other subjects. Leaders and governors have prioritised RE in the curriculum and now ensure that it is compliant, with 10% curriculum time in Key Stage 3 and 12% in Key Stage 4. RE is on the agenda for each Ethos, Outreach, and Wellbeing Committee meeting, which is then shared at full governing body meetings.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

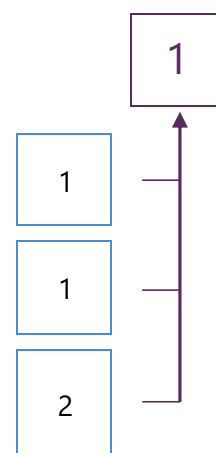
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

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 is central to the life of the school. Nearly all students engage reverently during prayer and Mass, entering the chapel with a respectful silence. A variety of ways of praying, including traditional Catholic prayers, are embraced by students and allow full, active participation. The chaplaincy team has developed over time, and students are eager to share their roles and how they have contributed to the prayer life of the school. The pupil chaplaincy team is ably supported by the lay chaplain and contributes highly effectively to the prayer life of the school in planning and leading collective worship, stating that when on pilgrimage 'with every step you remember God'. Students plan and deliver assemblies on a calendared basis using the theme or subject appropriate to the liturgical year, with nearly all of them being able to reflect on their own prayer life.

The lay chaplain has made a significant impact on the provision and quality of collective worship since being in post, with staff stating that 'she has revolutionised spirituality and chaplaincy at our school, breathing a breath of fresh air into Catholicity.' She is highly skilled, experienced, and confident in the planning and leading of collective worship. She supports students to do the same, describing her role as 'bridging the gap between the Gospel and the daily life of the students'. There is a clear and defined pattern to the daily acts of worship in form period, structured to allow for full participation by students, whilst supporting staff. This pattern of prayer allows for the use of music, quiet contemplation, and physical activities, which support and enhance the central themes. All RE lessons start with a prayer. There is a planned collective worship calendar that is linked to the liturgical year and the life of the Church. Form time collective worship is planned by the lay chaplain, resulting in consistency for all students, with 88% of staff agreeing that they are effectively supported to 'plan and lead experiences of prayer and liturgy.' The parish priest is supportive of the school and celebrates Mass at least monthly, as well as on key feast days and liturgical celebrations throughout the year. Throughout Advent and Lent, Confession is offered. The recent availability of a

purpose built chapel and additional rooms on site has revolutionised collective worship and provided a significant, dedicated space for the chaplain to be based, and for provision of a wide range of prayer and worship opportunities. The provision of a dedicated prayer room for Muslim students has further engaged the wider community and developed a sense of belonging.

The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is current and fit for purpose, setting out expectations for all. Leaders and governors emphasise the importance of prayer within school life, and their commitment to the lay chaplain role demonstrates this. The majority of staff state that they were provided with professional learning around collective worship; they are supported in planning their own collective worship as well as providing support to students in doing the same, with one stating that 'prayer is an important and useful tool in my personal and professional development.' Members of the governing body often participate in whole school liturgical events and Masses, and they comment on the exemplary behaviour and respect of students. They are also kept accurately informed of developments via the head teacher's report, minutes from the Ethos, Outreach and Wellbeing committee, and presentations by the deputy head teacher. However, planned, formal monitoring and quality assurance of collective worship is not embedded and does not lead to a secure evaluation of its impact across the school.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Illtyd's Catholic High School
School unique reference number (URN)	401887
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	6814600
Full postal address of the school	St Illtyd's Catholic High School, Newport Road, Rumney, Cardiff, CF3 1XQ
School phone number	02920778174
Headteacher	David Thomas
Chair of governors	John Grimes
School Website	www.stilltyds.org.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Secondary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	11-16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	21 st – 23 rd November 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	UU

The inspection team

Rebecca Moore
Brian Davies

Lead
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

