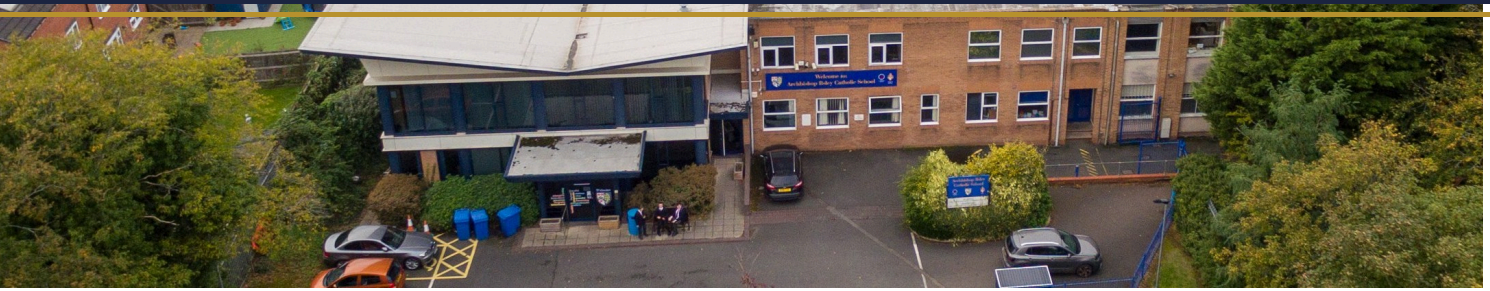


ARCHBISHOP ILSLEY

CATHOLIC SCHOOL

JUST AND FIRM OF PURPOSE

P R O S P E C T U S



W E L C O M E

Every child deserves the very best.

It is my great privilege to welcome you to Archbishop Ilsley Catholic School.

We believe that **every child deserves the very best**. Our purpose is simple: to provide an environment in which every young person can flourish, discover their God-given gifts and leave us with the knowledge, character, confidence and ambition to make a positive difference in the world.

We are **unapologetic about high standards**. We expect our students to work hard, behave well, show respect and take pride in themselves and their school. Our expectations are not barriers to inclusion; they are an expression of our belief in what every child is capable of achieving. We will not lower expectations because a child finds something difficult. Instead, we will provide the support, encouragement and challenge they need to meet them.

Our school rules — **Be Ready, Be Safe, Be Respectful and Kind** — provide a simple framework for how we live and learn together. These expectations are rooted in the four virtues at the heart of our Catholic identity: **Wisdom, Courage, Dignity and Integrity**. These are not simply words; they shape the character we seek to develop in every young person.

Alongside high expectations comes **high-quality teaching and learning**. Our students deserve classrooms where they are challenged to think deeply, encouraged to ask questions and supported to become increasingly independent learners. We want every lesson to open up opportunity and ensure that a child's background, circumstances or starting point never determine their future.

Inclusion is central to who we are. Every child matters. We recognise that children arrive at school with different experiences, strengths and needs, and we are committed to knowing our students well and ensuring that appropriate support is in place so that everyone can participate, achieve and belong.

We want Archbishop Ilsley to be a school where children feel **safe, valued, challenged and inspired**; a school where families have confidence in the education their children receive; and a school where staff are proud to work and to make a difference.

Ultimately, the question that guides us is a straightforward one:

Does this improve the life chances of our students?

If the answer is yes, then that is what we should pursue.

We look forward to working with our students, families, staff and wider community as we continue to build a school of which we can all be proud.

Just and firm of purpose.

Mr Dan Hearnden

Interim Principal

A church, then a school.

Edward Ilsley was born in 1838, became Bishop of Birmingham in 1888, and in 1911 the city's first Archbishop. He spent his working life on the education and welfare of children living in poverty in Acocks Green and east Birmingham.

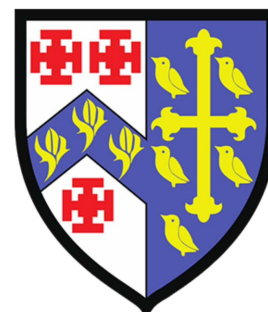
In 1907, as Bishop of Birmingham, he built the first Catholic church in the village of Acocks Green. The parish church that followed it, Sacred Heart and Holy Souls, was raised as a memorial to the dead of the First World War, its foundation stone carried back from the battlefields of Ypres. The school opened in 1957, thirty years after Ilsley's death, and was named in his honour.

THE CREST

The shield is impaled, which in heraldry means two coats of arms joined into one. Both halves are his: bishops are granted arms when they are ordained, and choose what goes on them.

The right half belongs to St Edward the Confessor: a golden floriated cross on blue, ringed by five martlets. Ilsley's own name was Edward, and Edward ruled in a time remembered for peace and religious tolerance. That was what Ilsley wanted for Birmingham.

The left half he chose for himself. Argent, for sincerity, cut by a blue chevron, with three red crosses of St Chad, patron of our diocese and principal patron of the cathedral.



THE MARTLET

A martlet is drawn without feet. Medieval heralds believed swallows and swifts had none, because they are so rarely seen on the ground, and so the bird was drawn with tufts of feathers where its legs should be.

A bird that cannot land must stay in flight. In heraldry it came to stand for tireless effort, and it was given as the mark of a fourth son, who would inherit no land and would have to make his way by his own work.

It is the right bird for this school. We are not here to give anyone a comfortable place to land. We want every child flying: in lessons, on the pitch, in the chapel, and in whatever they turn out to be good at. Still climbing when they leave us.

Rooted in Acocks Green. Open to the city.

We are a non-selective Catholic school of around 1,150 children aged eleven to eighteen, and we take the children of our parishes and our neighbourhood as they come.

Many families have been with us for two and three generations. Grandparents who arrived from Ireland in the fifties, parents who sat the same exams, children now walking the same corridors.

More than half of our families are eligible for free school meals. Ofsted's inspectors found that pupils here, including disadvantaged pupils, typically achieve in line with national averages across a range of subjects. We are quietly proud of that, and we are not finished.

Ofsted, May 2026

OUR PARISH

We belong to the parish of Sacred Heart and Holy Souls on Warwick Road, a few minutes from our gates, where Canon Jonathan Veasey is parish priest. The church was raised as a memorial to the dead of the First World War, its foundation stone carried back from the battlefields of Ypres. Our chaplaincy works alongside the parish through the year.

WHERE OUR FAMILIES COME FROM

Acocks Green is home, but our families travel in from across Birmingham, mostly from the east and the south of the city. Buses 1, 4, 4A, 11A and 11C serve the school, and there are trains to Spring Road and Acocks Green stations. The gate opens at 08:15 and everyone is lined up by 08:40.

OUR ACADEMY COMPANY

We are one of twelve schools in the St Teresa of Calcutta Catholic Multi Academy Company: ten primaries and two secondaries. A child can move from one of our primaries into Year 7 without leaving the same family of schools, taught by staff who plan together across the phases.



MORE ON OUR HISTORY AND ARCHBISHOP ILSLEY

The parish, the school, and the man it is named after. Scan, or go to ilsley.bham.sch.uk and choose Our School.



OUR FOUR VIRTUES

WISDOM

knowing what is right, and why

COURAGE

doing what is right when it costs you something

DIGNITY

every person is precious, without exception

INTEGRITY

being the same person when nobody is watching



In November 2025 the Catholic Schools Inspectorate, inspecting on behalf of the Archbishop of Birmingham, judged our Catholic life and mission outstanding, the highest grade available.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE · NOVEMBER 2025

Faith you can see.

Every child is loved, willed and necessary.

POPE BENEDICT XVI

There is a chapel in this school and it is used. Prayer runs through the ordinary day, in tutor time, in assemblies, in lessons. Whole-school Masses, Advent and Lent liturgies and Holy Week are planned across the year. Worship here is invitational: inspectors found that pupils of other faiths and of none take part, and feel fully valued.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

The Church's principles for how we live together: the dignity of every person, the common good, solidarity with those who have least, and care for creation. It runs through religious education, assemblies and the service we do, and it reaches every child in form time, where the week's Gospel is read and talked about.

SERVICE AND CHARITY

At Christmas every form builds a food hamper, and the whole school brings them to the Hamper Mass before they go out to local families and to food banks. Collections and fundraising run through the year. Our sixth formers have travelled to Peru, Nepal and Cambodia to live and work alongside communities there. Opportunities of this kind run through the school, and they change from year to year.

RETREATS AND CHAPLAINCY

Our chaplain, Fr Toby Duckworth, leads Mass and services, takes assemblies and works alongside pupils through the week. Retreats run through the year, and the chaplaincy team also trains staff to lead prayer.

Catholic Schools Inspectorate, November 2025

OUR SCHOOL PRAYER

May God grant me,
The wisdom to know what is right and good.
The integrity to do all the things that I should.
The courage to defend the dignity of all
The graces I need to answer your call.
Fill our school with hope, love, joy and peace.
So we can let your light shine for each person we meet.
May we be ready, safe, respectful and kind.
With those in most need in our hearts and our mind.
May we be 'just and firm of purpose' in all we think, do and say.
Use our gifts, skills and efforts; to make the most of every day.

Amen.





Pupils are known, valued and nurtured as individuals.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

November 2025

Known by name.

A school of around 1,150 is a big place, so we build it out of smaller ones. Every child has a named adult who sees them every morning.

THE FORM TUTOR

The first adult of the day. Form time runs from 08:45 to 09:05 every morning with the same tutor, who takes the register, notices what has changed, and is the first person you ring.

THE YEAR TEAM

Every year group has its own Head of Year and an Assistant Head of Year. A member of the senior leadership team oversees Years 7 to 9, and another Years 10 and 11.

THE POPE FRANCIS CENTRE

Behaviour and wellbeing. Named for Pope Francis, who taught that a little mercy makes the world less cold and more just. Some children come here because something has gone wrong. Others because they need somewhere quieter for a while.



BE READY

Arriving each day prepared to learn, to contribute, and to make the most of every opportunity.



BE SAFE

Every member of our community secure, valued and supported.



BE RESPECTFUL & KIND

Upholding the dignity of every person, and treating one another with compassion, courtesy and integrity.

WHAT WE EXPECT OF YOUR CHILD

- Through the gate from 08:15, lined up by 08:40
- In school every day
- Full uniform. Anything missing is a C1, and put right in school
- Pen, pencil, ruler, rubber, calculator, reading book, planner
- Phones away and unseen, anywhere on site
- Twenty minutes of real reading, every day
- A strong work ethic outside the classroom

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT OF US

- Your child known by name, not by number
- Your child held to account, fairly and consistently
- Contact when something goes wrong, and when something goes right
- A named adult you can speak to
- Care for how your child is, not only how they are doing

Supporting every learner to belong, achieve and flourish.

At Archbishop Ilesley Catholic School, we believe that every young person is created in the image and likeness of God and deserves to be known, valued and respected. Our Catholic mission calls us to ensure that every student is supported to flourish academically, spiritually, socially and personally.

“In the One, we are one.”

POPE LEO XIV · IN ILLO UNO UNUM

INCLUSION IS NOT A PLACE, IT IS A PRINCIPLE

Our approach to inclusion recognises and celebrates the diversity of our school community. We are committed to removing barriers to learning while maintaining high expectations for every student. Our aim is simple: every learner belongs, every learner participates, every learner achieves and every learner flourishes.

THE POPE LEO CENTRE

Our Pope Leo Centre is at the heart of our commitment to inclusion. It works alongside our mainstream classrooms rather than separately from them, providing specialist expertise, targeted support and individualised interventions that help students overcome barriers while developing confidence, independence and resilience.

- **DIGNITY** every young person is known, valued and respected
- **BELONGING** every student has a place within our school community
- **HOPE** we believe in the potential of every learner
- **SERVICE** we support one another as a compassionate community





LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

We celebrate the languages, cultures and experiences that our students bring to Archbishop Ilsley. Students who speak English as an Additional Language are supported to develop their academic English, confidence and independence, enabling them to fully participate in lessons and wider school life.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

We welcome students with SEND. These may include needs relating to communication and interaction, cognition and learning, social, emotional and mental health, and sensory or physical needs. We make reasonable adjustments to teaching and learning so that all students can access an ambitious curriculum and participate fully in school life. Teachers use inclusive classroom strategies such as explicit vocabulary teaching, visual support, modelling, scaffolding and opportunities for purposeful discussion to support all learners.

HIGH EXPECTATIONS

We believe that having SEND should never mean having lower aspirations. Our approach is to remove barriers, not expectations. Students are supported to develop the knowledge, skills, confidence and independence they need to succeed. We work closely with students, parents and carers, teachers and external professionals to understand individual strengths, needs and aspirations.

Our vision is that every student leaves Archbishop Ilsley with a strong sense of belonging, purpose, confidence and hope, ready to embrace their future.



SEND INFORMATION AND OUR LOCAL OFFER

Our SEND information report, policies and the support available. Scan, or go to ilsley.bham.sch.uk and choose Key Information.

Five lessons. Every day.

The day starts with form time at 08:45 and ends at 15:15. Five lessons of an hour, one break, one lunch. Over a year that is 950 lessons, which is why we care so much about the ones that get missed.

Our teachers are subject specialists, and many have taught here for years. A team of Lead Teachers works across departments, finding what works in one classroom and getting it into the next, so that a good idea never stays in one room.

The curriculum is broad and it is ambitious. Fifteen subjects are taught at Key Stage 3, from the sciences and modern foreign languages to music, art and technology. There are more choices at Key Stage 4, and more again in the sixth form, with every course planned to build from Year 7 upwards.

Inspectors found a well-sequenced, logically planned curriculum in place across all subjects and key stages, taught by teachers with the subject knowledge to deliver it. They also found that pupils typically enjoy learning here. Our own surveys tell us the same.

Ofsted, May 2026



What they study.

SUBJECTS AT KEY STAGE 3

Art	Food Technology	Music
Computing	Geography	PE
Design and Technology	History	Religious Studies
Drama	Mathematics	Sciences
English	Modern Foreign Languages	Vocational Studies

THE FIVE YEARS AHEAD

YEARS 7 – 8

Settle in, and study a broad range of subjects.

YEAR 9

Choose GCSE options, with guidance from tutors and staff.

YEARS 10 – 11

GCSEs, with a sixth period each day in Year 11.

SIXTH FORM

A levels and vocational courses, here, at Ilsley.

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Every minute matters. We expect your child on time to lessons, every time, and strong attendance across the year. The Department for Education's research suggests that in an exam year, pupils with near-perfect attendance have close to double the odds of a strong pass in English and maths compared with those attending ninety to ninety-five per cent of the time.

READING

Reading unlocks every other subject: a child who reads well can reach the whole curriculum. So reading is taught here, not assumed. Every child has dedicated reading lessons and guided reading in class. Our library is well stocked and runs clubs after school, celebrating the fulfilment and joy that reading brings to young people. Sixth form Reading Champions work alongside younger pupils in their reading sessions. Where a child needs more, our interventions give targeted support.





CLUBS, SPORT AND FACILITIES

Sports clubs before and after school on most days, alongside chess, music and more. On site: a swimming pool, an astroturf pitch, a multi-use games area and computer suites.

THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD

We are one of the biggest DofE centres in the West Midlands. Bronze in Year 9, Silver as students move up, and Gold in the sixth form. Volunteering, a physical activity, a new skill, and an expedition they plan and navigate themselves. Inspectors found that many pupils in Year 9 complete the bronze award.



VOCATION VISITS

Trips run through the year. Belgium in Key Stage 3, Berlin in Key Stage 4, Normandy across both. Closer to home; the Globe, film and television studios, theatre and galleries. Trip destinations vary from year to year.

HOW YOU WILL KNOW HOW THEY ARE DOING

Progress, praise and consequences are logged on Class Charts and reach you the same day. Reports come home throughout the year, and parents' evenings are booked through SchoolCloud.

NEXT STEPS

Careers guidance runs from Year 7, with adviser interviews and visits to colleges and universities. Inspectors found pupils are well informed about their next steps.

Ofsted, May 2026

Ask them yourself.

They care for your heart
as much as your grades.

A PUPIL, SPEAKING TO INSPECTORS · NOVEMBER 2025

CURRENT PUPILS

The teachers always remember to challenge us, but when we are confused they take time to explain carefully to every individual student. In lessons, children that misbehave are dealt with and classrooms stay calm.

Year 8 pupils

A PARENT

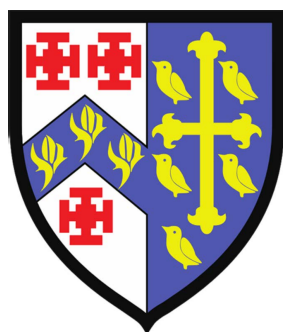
I am in a privileged position to have one child already gone through Ilsley and one just started. My son is now at York University studying Politics and International Relations. He went to Ilsley through the Covid years, which was a disruption to his education. Through the dedication, support and warmth of the teachers at Ilsley, he overcame these challenges and left with not only an excellent set of results, but fond memories and lifelong friends. I am forever grateful for the kindness and expertise of staff at Ilsley in forming him into the young man he is today. Now his sister joins the school at a time of growth and is very excited to follow in her brother's footsteps as she embarks on this new journey.

Parent of a Year 7 student, and of a former student, Years 7 to 13

A FORMER PUPIL

Ilsley taught me how to work, and gave me friends I still have. I'm at York studying Politics now. I didn't have a clue I'd end up here when I walked in at eleven. My teachers were always supportive, and that had a massive impact on what I have become.

Former student, now at York University



ARCHBISHOP ILSLEY CATHOLIC **SIXTH FORM**

EMBRACE YOUR FUTURE

We know that year 12 and 13 are critically important in our students' personal and educational development and so, our mission is very simple and so very important – we want our students to become successful citizens with excellent academic success and the ability to be kind yet influential citizens; our saints of the 21st century. Sixth Form is a time filled with great opportunities for our students to learn, achieve and participate in a range of exciting enrichment activities.

THEY ACHIEVE WELL FROM WHERE THEY START

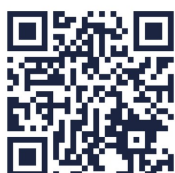
Ofsted judged our Sixth Form to be at the expected standard, with an ambitious, well-planned curriculum. Students, including those with special educational needs, progress well and achieve well from their starting points in public examinations.

WHAT THEY CAN STUDY

Students follow a diverse and well-structured curriculum, choosing to study three principal subjects and an Enrichment Option (either the Extended Project Qualification or Core Mathematics) from a choice of 17 A Level subjects and a range of Level 3 vocational subjects to include Health and Social Care, Criminology and Sport and Physical Activity.

JOINING OUR SIXTH FORM

Admission to Year 12 is subject to students achieving 5 Grade 5s including GCSE English Language and GCSE Mathematics, and meeting the specific entry requirements for each individual subject that a student opts for.



SEE MORE OF OUR **SIXTH FORM**

Course details, entry requirements and where our students go next. Scan, or go to ilsley.bham.sch.uk and choose Sixth Form.



THEY ARE KNOWN

We understand that the jump from GCSE to A Level qualifications can be challenging but we are here to guide students to success in their chosen pathway. There is always someone to support our students; they will be provided with quality first teaching in their subjects and the support to become independent, resilient learners. Personal tutors take primary responsibility for each student in their group. Tutor groups are named after the virtues of the Sixth Form Patron Saint, St Teresa of Calcutta: courage, faith, hope, humility, prudence and service.

THEY LEAD

Senior Student Leaders of wellbeing, sport and enrichment are role models to all; our students plan and deliver assemblies and raise money for charity. Inspectors found many are proud to take on these roles, and younger students look up to them.

THEY PARTICIPATE

In line with our whole school Mission Statement, our Sixth Form Enrichment Programme aims to develop the whole person both academically, spiritually and morally; our Enrichment Programme seeks to enrich and develop our students' faith, wider skills and responsibility to the community and comprises of both subject trips and visits, visiting speakers, pastoral opportunities, residential opportunities and the Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award to name but a few.

THEY ARE READY

We know each of our students well and have the facilities to address their individual needs. All students, regardless of their choice of course, college or university are given effective support from their personal tutors, learning leader and our independent careers advisor. Inspectors found students well prepared for life beyond school.

Ofsted, May 2026

WHERE THEY GO

We are proud that every year a significant number of our Year 13 students go on to further education joining a range of colleges and universities across the country to study an array of courses to include law, nursing, teaching, English, journalism and creative writing, business and sport.

Recent leavers have gone to the University of Birmingham, Aston University and Birmingham City, and further afield to Liverpool, Newcastle and Durham; a mix of Russell Group and other universities. Other students have taken higher-level apprenticeships, including with Jaguar Land Rover.

The shape of a day.

	MON TO THURS	FRIDAY
Tutor time	08:45 – 09:05	08:45 – 08:50
Period 1	09:10 – 10:10	08:55 – 09:50
Period 2	10:15 – 11:15	09:55 – 10:50
Break	11:15 – 11:35	10:50 – 11:10
Period 3	11:35 – 12:35	11:10 – 12:05
Period 4	12:40 – 13:40	12:10 – 13:05
Lunch	13:40 – 14:15	13:05 – 13:40
Period 5	14:15 – 15:15	13:40 – 14:35
End of day	15:15	14:35
Period 6, Year 11	until 16:10	—

The gate opens at 08:15 and everyone is lined up by 08:40. At the other end of the day, Year 11 carry a sixth period until 16:10, and students who need it can stay for an additional study session until 18:00. Fridays finish earlier, at 14:35, so that staff can train and plan together until 15:30. The people teaching your child keep learning too.

UNIFORM

Navy blazer, white shirt, year-group tie and plain black shoes. Grey trousers, or navy trousers or a navy pleated skirt. Only badged items come from our supplier, which keeps the cost down. For PE: the Ilsley navy and red polo, plain navy shorts or a navy skort, Ilsley socks and lace-up trainers.

GETTING IN TOUCH

Absence is reported through the MyChildAtSchool app or Studybugs. Progress, praise and consequences are logged on Class Charts and reach you the same day. Parents' evenings are booked through SchoolCloud.

GETTING HERE AND EATING WELL

Buses 1, 4, 4A, 11A and 11C serve the school, and there are trains to Spring Road and Acocks Green stations. The canteen opens at 08:15 with a range of breakfasts, and catering is cashless throughout the day. We promote healthy eating. Speak to our admin team about free school meal eligibility, and about any other financial help you may be entitled to.

Three steps.

1 APPLY THROUGH THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

Places at Archbishop Ilsley are part of Birmingham City Council's co-ordinated admissions scheme. Apply through the local authority where you live, and name Archbishop Ilsley Catholic School on the form.

2 SEND US THE SUPPLEMENTARY FORM

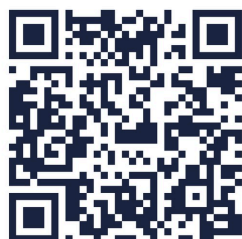
A Supplementary Information Form comes directly to school. It is how we apply the faith criteria in our admissions policy, so it matters that it arrives with the evidence it asks for.

3 COME AND LOOK

Open evening runs every autumn, and we show families round during the school day all year. Ring the office and ask.

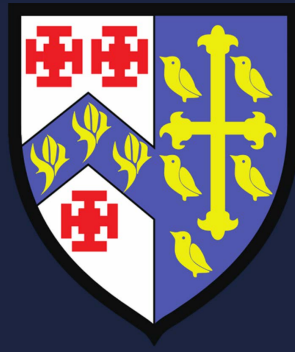
IF YOU NEED HELP

Admissions paperwork is not always straightforward, particularly the baptism evidence. Ring us before the deadline rather than after it. We would far rather help than see a form arrive incomplete.



DEADLINES, DATES AND THE FULL POLICY

These change every year, so we keep them on the website rather than in print. Scan, or go to ilsley.bham.sch.uk and choose Admissions.



ARCHBISHOP ILSLEY

CATHOLIC SCHOOL

JUST AND FIRM OF PURPOSE

Victoria Road, Acocks Green, Birmingham B27 7XY

0121 706 4200

enquiry@ilsley.bham.sch.uk

www.ilsley.bham.sch.uk

