



St Mary of the Angels Catholic Primary School

URN: 104240

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Birmingham

26–27 February 2025

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

2

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

2

Collective worship (p.7)

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

2

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

- This school fully complies with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- This school is fully compliant with the additional requirements of His Grace.
- This school has fully addressed all previous areas for improvement.

What the school does well

- Christ is at the centre of St Mary of the Angel's Catholic Primary School, with pupils, staff, leaders, and governors actively participating in and contributing to its Catholic life and mission.
- Pupils, led by leaders and staff, demonstrate a strong commitment to following Jesus' teachings and Catholic social teaching principles. They embrace their responsibility to care for our Common Home and help those most in need.
- The religious education subject leader has a strong vision and the expertise to realise it, effectively supporting staff to enhance and improve teaching and learning.
- Leaders and governors thoughtfully structure the school calendar and timetable to highlight key liturgical events, fostering pupils' strong understanding of the Church's seasons.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure forensic monitoring and self-evaluation for collective worship lead to precisely targeted and consciously planned improvements.
- Develop more profound and challenging questioning in religious education lessons to identify precisely where pupils are in their understanding and extend their learning.
- Implement a structured approach to prayer preparation that develops pupils' skills, ensures they actively prepare well-structured experiences and builds confidence in undertaking liturgical ministries.

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

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



Pupils at St Mary of the Angel's fully embrace the school's distinctive Catholic identity, demonstrating a deep understanding of its mission statement, 'Recognising and celebrating the presence of Christ in one another.' They proactively live out this ethos, making meaningful contributions, with one pupil sharing, 'Our school is a home of faith, where we think of others, learn about Jesus and respect and welcome everyone.' Pupils clearly articulate their awareness that the school community is dedicated to following the teachings and example of Jesus and the Church's social teachings. This commitment enables them to thrive, seeking opportunities to develop virtues and moral character. Led by the eco-warriors team, they take ownership of their responsibility to care for God's creation and serve those in need. Pupils' dedication is evident through their active involvement in initiatives such as Cafod's 'big Lent walk', *LiveSimply* Award and family fast day, which reflect their commitment to local and global outreach. Pupils often talk about being 'Christ-like', valuing the school's chaplaincy provision, and enthusiastically participating in initiatives such as the Minnie Vinnies programme to support the school's thriving spiritual life.

The school's mission is firmly grounded in God's word, which shapes every aspect of school life. Staff fully embrace the mission statement, are fully committed to enacting it, and integrate it seamlessly across the curriculum and broader school community. With Christ at the school's heart, there is a strong, lived sense of unity, which is reflected in the warmth and quality of relationships; one staff member expressed, 'There is a wonderful sense of being part of a family here at St Mary of the Angel's where I have always felt respected, secure, and a valued member of staff.' The school is committed to fostering a joyful environment where all individuals are nurtured and supported without exception. They provide outstanding pastoral care,

demonstrating an unwavering dedication to those in need. Pupil, staff, and parent surveys indicate the school offers rich and innovative opportunities that positively impact their moral and spiritual formation. The physical environment is a clear witness to the school's Catholic identity, with meaningful religious imagery and well-maintained sacred spaces in corridors and classrooms, enhancing spiritual development. Creative and expressive opportunities encourage pupils to engage with their faith through art and personal reflection.

Leaders and governors ensure that Christ remains at the school's heart, prioritising its Catholic life and mission. Policies and procedures are rooted in Catholic principles, ensuring faith is central to all aspects of school life. Leaders and governors actively promote the bishop's vision for the diocese, demonstrating enthusiasm for implementing diocesan policies and initiatives. They are committed to the understanding that Catholic schools exist to serve the local Church and work diligently to strengthen the partnership between the school and its parish. Recognising that parents are the primary educators of their children, leaders and governors foster strong relationships with families, ensuring they fully understand and support the school's mission. This can be seen through parental invitations to parish and school Masses, sacramental workshops and prayer services. Their leadership is a powerful witness to Catholic social teaching, and they embody the Church's preferential option for the poor by effectively allocating resources to support those most in need, including externally by supporting Fr Hudson's Care and The Thomas Project through an annual harvest collection. The entire curriculum reflects a Catholic worldview, integrating the richness of Catholic culture across all subjects. The 'Building the Bigger Kingdom' programme is an example of this. Pupils are active in evaluating the Catholic life of the school and contribute to planning its continued development, such as making suggestions for house saint prayer stations and saint quotes for wall art.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

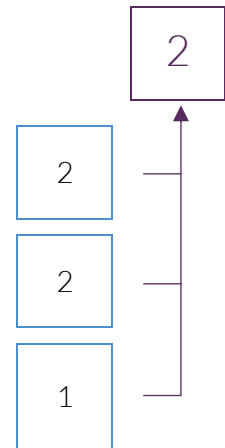
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 develop a secure knowledge, understanding, and skills foundation in religious education, demonstrating consistent progress aligned with the structured curriculum. Through the explicit teaching of key vocabulary, the use of age-related skills grids and reflection sheets at the end of each unit, pupils effectively consolidate their learning. As a result, all pupils, including those from differing groups, achieve well across all year groups. Prior learning is continuously reinforced and built upon, deepening pupils' knowledge and comprehension so that pupils make good progress. Pupils are religiously literate and demonstrate a deep understanding of their faith. They apply their knowledge and skills to reflect spiritually and consider the implications of religious commitment in daily life. This could be seen in a Year 6 lesson on poverty and its links to Catholic social teaching. Pupils' engagement in lessons is evident through their reflective approach and strong motivation to deepen their understanding. Confident and articulate, pupils use key concepts and subject-specific language to express their learning. However, more challenging and deeper questioning in lessons is needed to extend their knowledge and develop curiosity. Pupils produce good work, which shows a range of creative ways of recording. Leaders have recently undertaken action to address the variable presentation of pupils' work throughout the school, which has begun to improve standards. Behaviour in lessons is exemplary, and pupils remain focused during introductions and work effectively with partners and in small groups to improve their learning. Attainment in religious education is at least on par with other core subjects, a trend maintained over the past three years.

Teachers demonstrate solid subject knowledge and an understanding of pupils' learning appropriate to their teaching phase. Regular training and moderation help them stay well-prepared to support pupil progress. Pupil self-assessment is encouraged, and reflection opportunities are provided at the end of each unit to reinforce understanding. In books, teachers

use 'gap task' questions to extend and challenge pupils' thinking and comprehension. Lessons are planned to incorporate various expressive opportunities, allowing pupils to present their learning creatively through diaries, posters, feelings grids and artwork. These varied approaches cater to different learning styles and promote pupils' individual expression. Carefully planned and well-used knowledge organisers allow pupils to consolidate their learning effectively. Additional adults provide extra support to maximise learning outcomes for pupils. This strategy was seen to be more effective when additional adults were working one-on-one with a pupil. Teachers understand the role of religious education in pupils' moral and spiritual development, with one staff member expressing, 'Everything that happens in school is directly connected to religious education and Catholic life.'

Leaders and governors are highly committed to maintaining the subject's status as a core discipline, ensuring it receives parity with other core curriculum areas. The subject leader for religious education has a well-defined vision for teaching and learning and possesses strong expertise in achieving this vision. Their strategic leadership has effectively improved standards, with good teaching and learning observed across the school. Targeted support for staff, including tailored training and the sharing of best practices, has strengthened the delivery of religious education and enhanced pupil outcomes. The curriculum is thoughtfully planned, and adaptive teaching strategies allow pupils to express their understanding in diverse ways, including adult scribing, ensuring inclusivity and full curriculum access for all learners. Enrichment opportunities, carefully woven into the curriculum, further inspire and engage pupils, enhancing their spiritual and theological development. Additional opportunities, including trips to Harvington Hall, Alton Castle and St Chad's Cathedral, strengthen provision and develop a greater understanding of the religious education curriculum's topics.

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

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

Leadership

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

2

2

Pupils engage positively with the school's prayer and liturgy provision, demonstrating active and reverent participation. They contribute to communal prayer, join in reflective silence, and enthusiastically sing. Their understanding of various forms of worship within the Catholic tradition is well-developed, including using scripture, reflection, and liturgical music. Pupils can articulate the significance of different seasons in the Church's liturgical year and how these influence the rhythm of prayer within the school. They have a secure understanding of feast days and the lives of many well-known and modern-day saints, drawing inspiration from these in their spiritual journeys. Pupils demonstrate a reflective approach, collaborating with staff, peers, and initiatives to prepare meaningful experiences of prayer and liturgy. More opportunities for all pupils to participate in planned prayer and liturgy experiences are needed to instil greater confidence within them. Pupils can make explicit connections between their prayer experiences and recognise how these reflections inspire action in their daily lives and the broader community.

Prayer and liturgy are deeply embedded in the school's daily life, forming an integral part of gatherings for pupils and staff. These acts of worship are thoughtfully planned to reflect the rhythms of the Church's prayer life, ensuring that the school community's faith is continuously nurtured and strengthened. Seasonally relevant scripture passages are central to these moments of reflection, carefully selected to encourage active and meaningful participation. Traditional Catholic practices, such as the distribution of ashes, the Stations of the Cross, and the May procession, provide pupils with opportunities to experience the richness of the Church's liturgical traditions. Response activities, such as reflections on the Sunday Gospel recorded in tapestry books, further enhance engagement and understanding of relevant scripture. The school fosters strong links with the local parish, with regular Eucharistic celebrations and

opportunities for Key Stage 2 pupils to attend Mass in the parish church and all years in the school hall, ensuring pupils and their families can encounter God through worship. Parents value these opportunities, with one parent expressing, 'Families are regularly invited to join in prayer and reflection, such as the upcoming event where the school community will consider how to live as Pilgrims of Hope through positive actions.' Purposeful designated prayer spaces around the school significantly enhance the environment and contribute positively to pupil and staff spiritual formation.

Pupils in Year 6 assume responsibility for leading services dedicated to house saints, serving as role models for younger peers. However, a clearer understanding of the varying levels of participation appropriate to pupils' ages and abilities and a strategic approach to develop these skills progressively is yet to be in place. The school calendar and timetable are thoughtfully planned to prioritise opportunities for celebrating the Eucharist, particularly during significant moments in the liturgical year and key events in school life. Holy days of obligation and other important feast days are recognised and marked accordingly. Leaders, including governors, ensure that provision for prayer and liturgy is prioritised when setting budgets and allocating resources such as time and staffing. Leaders and governors review the quality and impact of prayer and liturgical experiences. However, forensic evaluation, which leads to precisely targeted improvement plans, is yet to be embedded. Pupils' perspectives are actively sought as a valued part of the school's evaluation of prayer and liturgy. Leaders, including governors, provide regular and effective opportunities for training and the liturgical formation of staff, which has positively impacted the provision of prayer and liturgy.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary of the Angels Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	104240
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	335 3323
Full postal address of the school	Weston Crescent, Aldridge, Walsall, WS9 0HA
School phone number	01922 743 411
Headteacher	Natalie Hill
Chair of governing board	Gerard Wintrip
School Website	www.st-maryangel.walsall.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	February 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Melanie Elliott
Tamsin Davis

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