



St Mary's Catholic Primary School

URN: 147795

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Birmingham

22–23 October 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

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

2

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

- The school's vibrant and inclusive culture ensures that every member of the community is welcomed and supported, fostering a genuine sense of belonging for all, regardless of their background or circumstances.
- Family and community outreach is central to the school's mission and is firmly underpinned by leaders' commitment to Catholic social teaching.
- A consistent and well-structured approach to teaching religious education across all year groups enables pupils to learn more, retain more, and deepen their understanding of faith.
- Pupils demonstrate strong religious literacy and confidently articulate their learning using precise subject vocabulary, making thoughtful connections between key themes and prior knowledge.
- The Catholic ethos and mission of the school are strengthened by the well-designed areas created around the site for prayer and reflection.

What the school needs to improve

- Routinely provide opportunities for pupils to lead and influence Catholic life and mission.
- Support pupils to understand how to improve and deepen their knowledge in religious education.
- Ensure pupils can use and reflect upon appropriate scripture within their own acts of prayer, making meaningful connections to daily life and mission.

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

1

The school's mission, 'Our community, growing and learning together with Christ,' sits at the heart of all that takes place and is lived out daily by pupils and staff at St Mary's. Pupils articulate a clear understanding of this mission and recognise what it means in their lives. They speak with confidence about being part of a caring community where everyone is deeply valued and welcomed as an individual. For example, children in the Reception class reflected thoughtfully on using their individual, God-given talents. Catholic social teaching underpins the school's ethos and is clearly evident in the actions of its pupils. Pupils understand its various principles, particularly stewardship, and lead the way it is lived out through the proactive work of the 'stewardship squad', who take great pride in caring for God's world, including the local environment. Pupils show deep respect for everyone, including those of different faiths, who are warmly welcomed and valued. Their moral awareness to help others is very strong; as one pupil typically pondered, 'If we don't do it, who will?' Pupils are also inspired to make a difference beyond the school, supporting charities as an expression of their faith in action. However, they would like to take a greater leadership role in the decisions linked to the school's Catholic life.

Staff readily use the school's mission to guide their actions and decisions each day. It is clearly visible in relationships, teaching, and pastoral care, ensuring that the school radiates warmth, faith, and a sense of belonging. Staff actively contribute to all aspects of Catholic life and mission, creating a vibrant and joy-filled community where everyone is welcomed, supported, and encouraged to flourish as Christ-centred pilgrims of hope. They model the Gospel values they teach, providing pupils with excellent living examples of faith in action and a genuine sense of purpose. St Mary's school goes the extra mile to support its most vulnerable families, offering both strong academic provision and practical care such as food parcels and pastoral outreach

initiatives. This generosity and compassion are recognised and valued by all stakeholders, including those from other faiths. Inclusivity and family engagement are hallmarks of the school, ensuring pupils and parents feel part of the school family. Provision in 'the nest' ensures all pupils fully access school life in ways which meet their individual needs. The environment itself is a faithful witness to the school's Catholic character, with carefully developed areas such as the prayer garden and sanctuary room. Pupils take pride in these spaces and express enthusiasm for taking greater ownership in maintaining and developing them.

Leaders and governors are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education and ensure that it underpins every aspect of school life. They articulate this vision with confidence and authenticity, ensuring it shapes policy, practice, and relationships throughout the community. Senior leaders are strong in responding to their vocation in ways which are highly visible and act as inspirational witnesses to Catholic education. Their commitment to Catholic social teaching is evident in all their decision-making, resulting in excellent provision, particularly for those who are most in need. The well-being of pupils and staff is a visible priority, creating a culture of care, trust, and shared compassion across the school. Highly successful strategies are employed to engage parents, who possess a strong understanding of the school's mission and actively support it through their involvement in school life. Links with the parish are strong and continue to grow, with parishioners regularly sharing in school and church events that deepen unity in faith. Leaders are intentional in linking the curriculum to Catholic social teaching; for example, through work in science related to Creation and stewardship.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

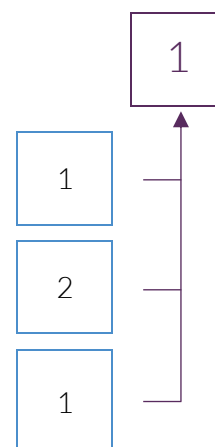
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 demonstrate excellent knowledge and understanding in religious education and are confident in articulating what they have learned. They are religiously literate and able to think deeply about questions of faith and moral choice, showing maturity and insight in their reflections, both verbal and written. Attainment and progress are good, with clear evidence that pupils demonstrate increased knowledge retention over time. Regular recall activities are embedded into every lesson, enabling pupils to make strong connections between current and previous learning. As a result, pupils can confidently recall key teachings and apply them in new contexts. Independence in learning is well promoted, and pupils take pride in their work, which is reflected in the high standard of presentation seen across the school. Engagement and enthusiasm are very high, especially when pupils are given the freedom to work independently and creatively. Pupils enjoy religious education and discuss how it helps them grow in faith and deepen their understanding of God's love. They understand the feedback policy and can subsequently identify when they have been successful, though many find it more challenging to articulate their next steps for improvement.

Teachers' subject knowledge in religious education is strong across the school, and staff are clearly committed to the subject and its purpose. Lessons are well structured, and questioning is generally used effectively to gauge pupils' understanding. However, whilst teaching is consistently well structured, assessment is not always used to provide sufficient stretch for pupils with higher prior attainment. On-going feedback during lessons is used positively to celebrate success and to identify and correct misconceptions. Provision for spiritual and moral development is a clear strength. All teachers ensure that time is given for purposeful reflection at the end of lessons, where pupils are encouraged to think deeply and make personal links with their faith. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively, supporting learning through

assessment, individual guidance, and recapping key ideas, thereby making a significant contribution to pupils' progress. Teachers' planning is often linked closely to assessment information and prior attainment, ensuring that different groups of pupils are well supported to make good progress. Staff working in 'the nest' effectively adapt the curriculum to meet the specific needs of pupils who access it, ensuring that all learners are fully included in knowledge development and can succeed.

Leadership of religious education is highly effective and inspirational. The subject leader has an inspirational, ambitious vision for the subject and is fully committed to realising it. Her enthusiasm, expertise, and deep faith are evident in all she does and have a significant impact on the quality of provision across the school. Through regular, high-quality training, staff are well-equipped to deliver engaging lessons, ensuring that teaching is good and sometimes even better. Religious education has a clear status equal to other core subjects, reflected in the time leaders allocate to it, the resources they provide, and the priority given to staff training and curriculum development. The curriculum is well-designed and consistently structured and sequential, enabling strong recall, vocabulary development, and a deepening of knowledge. The inclusion of 'Time with God' in every lesson reinforces the school's belief that religious education should be 'a lesson like no other.' Leaders gain a thorough understanding of the school through careful monitoring and analysis, enabling them to implement strategic, well-targeted improvement initiatives. Strengths and development areas are clearly identified and addressed with a measurable impact. The school makes sure that every pupil's needs are taken into account. Extra help, such as using symbols and pictures to support understanding, providing adult guidance, and breaking tasks into manageable steps, helps most pupils take part fully and achieve well. Despite this, some pupils are not sufficiently or consistently challenged in lessons.

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

1

2

Pupils are engaged and reverent during opportunities for prayer and liturgy, including daily prayers, Gospel assemblies led by senior leaders, and pupil-prepared prayer. They engage respectfully, singing with enthusiasm and responding with appropriate silence and reflection. Pupils have a good understanding of the liturgical year and are beginning to recognise how different forms of prayer link to the Church's traditions, such as the Rosary. They know and value some traditional prayers, explaining why they are important, especially those connected with the school's patron saint, Mary. Pupils undertake ministries willingly and are growing in confidence as they prepare and lead prayers for their peers. Pupils use Scripture appropriately in prayer and worship, but they are not yet secure in selecting passages independently or in consistently connecting them to the theme of the worship. They are beginning to make connections between their prayer life, the curriculum, and the choices they make each day. Pupils know when and where they can pray, with designated spaces such as class prayer areas and the school's prayer garden providing opportunities for quiet reflection.

Prayer is central to the life of the school and forms a regular and valued part of each day. It takes place routinely in classrooms, assemblies, and staff gatherings, creating a shared rhythm of worship that unites the whole community. Senior leaders model good practice in leading prayer and liturgy, setting clear expectations for reverence, engagement and participation. Staff are committed to and appreciative of the school's prayer life, with some confidently guiding pupils in creating their own acts of worship. Scripture is used appropriately, although pupils are not yet fully confident in applying passages to their daily life experience to enable their full, conscious participation. Prayer spaces are creative, purposeful, and well used. Classroom prayer focuses are conducive to reflection, and the prayer environment as a whole is cared for attentively, particularly the new prayer garden. Leaders have thoughtfully developed opportunities to

engage parents in the school's prayer life, providing prayer bags and resources that support pupils and families in living their faith. For example, prayer bags are refreshed regularly in line with the Church's liturgical calendar, and pupils have recently enjoyed making rosary beads at home.

Leadership and management of prayer and liturgy are highly effective. The school's clear and practical prayer policy ensures a committed and meaningful approach to worship throughout the school. Celebrations throughout the year are planned strategically to reflect the liturgical calendar and significant moments in the school's life, such as the recent 85th anniversary, demonstrating how faith permeates the school year. Leaders' annual plan of provision offers a strong, structured framework that ensures balance, variety, and progression in pupils' experience of prayer. Staff are well-trained to support and nurture pupils in preparing and leading worship, guided by a carefully sequenced progression model that maps how participation and engagement in prayer develop as pupils progress through the school. Leaders articulate a deep understanding of Catholic tradition and skilfully translate this into practice, ensuring prayer is both faithful to the Church and responsive to the local community, as required by the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory* of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. Parents value the inclusive and welcoming approach that draws them into the school's spiritual life. Evaluation of prayer and liturgy is robust and reflective. Leaders review each other's practice, and pupils evaluate both Mass and peer-led sessions. However, pupils' reflections, whilst thoughtful, are not yet consistently used to shape future acts of worship.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	147795
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	333 3305
Full postal address of the school	Manor House Road, Wednesbury, WS10 9PN
School phone number	0121 505 3595
Headteacher	Amy Pritchard
Chair of governing board	Julia Bridgewater
School Website	www.stmaryswednesbury.co.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Gabriel the Archangel Catholic Multi-Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	June 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Michelle Walsh
Gerry O'Hara

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