



Guardian Angels Catholic Primary School

URN: 148081

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Birmingham

06–07 March 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

2

Collective worship (p.7)

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

1

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

- Leaders are deeply committed to Guardian Angels' Catholic life and mission, so the school is firmly at the centre of the local community.
- Inclusivity is exemplary, and everyone is welcomed, cherished, and inspired to see the face of Jesus Christ in others.
- Teachers have secure religious education subject knowledge and make effective links to Catholic social teaching principles within lessons so that pupils connect knowledge to action.
- Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons. They are engaged and enthusiastic about learning because teachers plan their lessons with a range of creativity.
- Prayer is at the heart of school life and is integral to everyone's spiritual formation.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure the entire curriculum is a faithful expression of Catholic values and traditions.
- Provide opportunities for higher-attaining pupils to be suitably challenged in religious education lessons.
- Create regular opportunities for families to be involved in the school's prayer life to enhance pupils' spiritual formation further.

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

Guardian Angels is a warm, welcoming, and fully inclusive community. Pupils flourish because they understand and embrace the school's mission statement after successfully being involved in its recent review and implementation. Recited at every liturgical gathering, pupils explain how they pray, work, celebrate, and care for each other in great detail. For example, pupils explained, 'We are God's hands and feet on earth. We spread God's message by caring for each other and always follow in his footsteps.' Pupils relish the opportunity to be part of various leadership groups, such as liturgy leaders, virtues ambassadors, Caritas ambassadors, and the school council. Consequently, pupils have a sharp understanding of the school's Catholic identity and can articulate how they are Christ-like in their actions. Pupils show deep respect for others; they are happy and secure due to consistently using three school behaviour expectations: ready, respectful, and safe. Pupils have secure knowledge of the principles of Catholic social teaching and the reasons why they are called to make a difference. Pupils greatly value the chance to vote for class-specific charities, showing a deep understanding of why they support those most in need and how to care for our common home.

The life and mission of Guardian Angels Catholic Primary School are deeply rooted in God's word and are inspiring examples of a Catholic school community. Staff are exemplary role models of how the mission is lived and witnessed; they work enthusiastically to achieve the best outcomes for the pupils in their care as a direct result of the modelled example of school leaders. There is a strong culture of welcome, and the school is at the heart of the local community, such as baking cakes for the parish, supporting the local care home, and providing a monthly meal for elderly parishioners. This embedded culture of welcome further enhances the school's exemplary ethos of inclusivity. Staff show unwavering commitment to providing the highest levels of pastoral care

through the carefully planned resource base for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Leaders and governors demonstrate an exceptional commitment to the Church's educational mission, ensuring Christ is at the heart of every decision. Monitoring and evaluation are rigorous, and regular visits by governors provide both challenge and quality assurance, showing that areas for improvement are accurate and strategic planning is robust. Leaders enthusiastically engage with the diocese and multi academy company (MAC) family and fully commit to the staff formation by nurturing their spiritual and moral development. This is further supported by fortnightly visits by the local parish priest, who provides highly valued catechesis. Support for staff new to the school is detailed and personalised, resulting in an effective induction programme that enables them to commit to the school's mission fully. Leaders ensure that the school is at full service to the parish, as demonstrated by the school's commitment to hosting Mass on weekends during the extended period of church closure. Leaders work tirelessly to form strong relationships with parents who support the school's Catholic identity. One parent commented, 'We appreciate the school's strong Catholic ethos, excellent religious education and meaningful prayer opportunities. Focusing on faith, kindness, and community helps nurture spiritual and moral growth.' Leaders are fully committed to Catholic social teaching, and through initiatives such as *Building the Kingdom*, staff are confident enough to ask questions to deepen pupils' understanding of it. Cross-curricular opportunities are in the early stages, showing that the broader curriculum is beginning to be taught through the Catholic lens.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

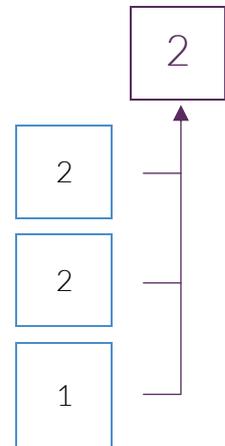
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 are developing secure knowledge and understanding of religious education. From very low starting points, most pupils make good progress. They know more and remember more because learning is planned sequentially, and pupils are given opportunities to recall prior knowledge at the beginning of lessons. As a result, most pupils can articulate what they have learnt and what they need to do to improve. Pupils' behaviour and engagement in most lessons is of a high standard. Because of their interest in learning about religious education, they concentrate well and enthusiastically respond to tasks. For example, pupils in one class were engrossed in role-play, where they had to discuss actions and consequences before linking their ideas to Catholic social teaching and thinking about what actions Jesus Christ would take. A shared understanding of the demands of religious education in everyday life means that pupils think ethically, spiritually, and theologically in lessons when given opportunities to answer questions of awe and wonder. They have good knowledge of Bible accounts and how they can interpret them to shape their daily lives. Pupils' presentation of work is of a very good standard, and they take pride in their books, reflecting the high status placed on religious education in the school. Pupils' attainment of religious education over the last three years is higher than other core subjects. However, data analysis shows that not all pupil groups achieve as well as others.

Teachers demonstrate a deep commitment to religious education and have secure subject knowledge. They adapt teaching styles for different groups of learners and skilfully use questioning to engage pupils, resulting in purposeful learning environments. For example, in one class, pupils of all abilities shared thoughtful answers to the question, 'How can Jesus, the Light of the World, help people?' However, limited opportunities to challenge high-attaining pupils result in missed opportunities to deepen pupils' thinking in some lessons. Provision for pupils with SEND is carefully planned so that individual learning styles are met, thus resulting in

consistent small steps of progress. Teachers use support staff effectively to optimise learning and contribute well to pupils' spiritual and moral development in lessons. Teachers' planning includes various tasks to maximise learning and enjoyment in creative ways so that any barriers to learning do not affect progress in religious education; this harnesses the aptitudes and enjoyment of individual pupils. Pupils' work is celebrated in their books in the form of open-ended questions, followed by personalised responses from teachers, leading to wider thinking of how knowledge can lead to action.

Leaders and governors ensure that religious education fully complies with the bishops' requirements and that the subject receives its full allocation of curriculum time. They greatly value the importance of religious education to the pupils at Guardian Angels. As a result, forensic monitoring and evaluation occur regularly to ensure that areas for development are implemented at the earliest opportunity. A specific religious education policy ensures a consistent approach to teaching and learning in religious education across the school. Leaders provide a wide range of opportunities in the curriculum to increase pupils' learning and engagement in religious education, for example, learning about saints and how pupils can learn from their lives. Leaders provide high-quality training through the MAC and the diocese to keep staff current in their knowledge and skills. The highly valued and effective subject leader has a strong vision for the subject and is passionate about her role. She fully supports all staff striving for higher standards, and they greatly value her advice and guidance.

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

1

Leadership

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

1

1

Pupils are respectful during prayer and liturgy, and most pupils respond well because it is engaging and relevant to them. They share thoughts and reflections when considering the 'go forth' message and can generally articulate how prayer shapes their lives. For example, one pupil said, 'We listen to the go forth message and from whatever we are told, our hearts are on fire, and our feet are on the move.' Prayer is made fully accessible to all pupils through various carefully considered adaptations, particularly for pupils with SEND, who are provided with pictures and creative ways to inspire heartfelt responses. Pupils and staff work well together to prepare engaging experiences of prayer and liturgy using the 'gather, listen, respond, go forth' model widely used across all levels of prayer and liturgy. According to age-appropriate expectations, pupils contribute and lead with confidence, understanding, skill and enjoyment because it is routinely established. They are confident enough to give ideas for improvement, and pupils are beginning to articulate how their evaluations lead to targeted improvements. The liturgical year is familiar to pupils, and they can describe why particular artefacts and colours are chosen as part of their collaborative planning and leadership of prayer and liturgy within their class. They enjoy celebrating a wide variety of liturgical seasons and talk with confidence about key themes and celebrations of the Church's year, including special feasts related to the school.

Prayer is central to the life of Guardian Angels. The school is a sanctuary of prayer, inclusion and devotion to the church. Prayers throughout the school day are seamlessly integrated into pupils' lives because of the staff's commitment, expertly modelled by leaders. The celebration of Mass is at the heart of the school calendar, with opportunities for pupils to plan and lead ministries within Mass fortnightly, thus contributing to the priority levels always given to God's word and its presence in the school. Pupils are provided with a wide range of ways to pray traditionally and spontaneously; for example, they pause to pray at Stations of the Cross around the school

grounds and have regular opportunities to pray. The school environment further enhances the prayer experience for pupils due to appropriate displays and themes that match the liturgical year in classrooms and communal areas. Staff are skilled in supporting pupils in planning and leading prayer and liturgy and are creative in using various resources.

Leaders and governors clearly understand how prayer and liturgy are the cornerstone of the school's mission and give it the highest priority. The school's policy for prayer and liturgy provides guidance and direction for all staff as it ensures a clear progression of expectations appropriate to the age of pupils, resulting in a consistent experience for all. School leaders provide regular high-quality training for all staff that includes age-appropriate ideas to use in classrooms; this is greatly valued by staff and is seen in the range of creativity included in classroom prayer and liturgy. Leaders are fully committed to planning a timetable of events that offers a rich experience for the school community, for example, stay and pray sessions for parents. However, parental attendance at such events is limited. Leaders fully understand parents' vital role in pupils' spiritual formation and consistently look for ways to improve. Leaders are forensic in their evaluations of prayer and liturgy, and governors provide rigorous monitoring through regular visits to the school and discussions with pupils and staff. This leads to well-targeted areas for improvement.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Guardian Angels Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	148081
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	330 3316
Full postal address of the school	Hurst Lane, Shard End, Birmingham, B34 7HN
School phone number	0121 747 2782
Headteacher	Helen Milligan
Chair of governing board	Paul Bentley
School Website	www.grdangel.bham.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Our Lady And All Saints Catholic Multi Academy Company
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	February 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Tara Davies
Robert Duigan

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