



St Mary's the Mount Catholic Primary School

URN: 104232

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Birmingham

12–13 June 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

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 headteacher and deputy headteacher are inspiring witnesses to the Catholic faith and model Gospel values in all they do. They have created a positive and welcoming culture that enables the entire school community to grow and thrive.
- Pupils are fully engaged during prayer and liturgy through prayerful silence, spontaneous prayer, and joyful singing.
- The school has established strong and purposeful relationships with both families and the parish, which significantly contribute to the Catholic life of the school.
- The subject leader of religious education has a clear vision for improving the quality of teaching across the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Increase pupils' confidence in applying a broad range of religious vocabulary to enable them to ask reflective questions in religious education that deepen their learning.
- Effectively use probing and challenging questioning strategies in religious education lessons to strengthen teachers' assessment of pupils' attainment.
- Ensure that Catholic social teaching is meaningfully and explicitly integrated throughout the entire curriculum, with religious education serving as the central driver.

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 Catholic life and mission of St Mary's the Mount are central strengths of the school. The mission statement, 'We aim to live, love and learn as Jesus taught us,' is deeply embedded in the daily experience of pupils and staff. It shapes the school's ethos and is clearly understood by the community as a shared commitment to living out Gospel values. This is evident in the welcome and respect pupils show to all, with exemplary behaviour towards one another and staff. Pupils are actively engaged in charitable outreach and demonstrate a strong understanding of the Church's call to support those most in need. The school's option for people experiencing poverty is lived out with love and compassion. During discussions about the vulnerable, one pupil remarked, 'All homeless people have rights too,' reflecting a mature and compassionate awareness of others' dignity. The school council has led initiatives in chaplaincy, including 'Hats for the homeless' and collecting treats for the food bank during Lent. Pupils participate in meaningful projects such as the 'LiveSimply' campaign, which has reached its first anniversary. They are proud of the actions they have taken to live more sustainably, including participating in the Big Lent Walk and the Eco-Committee taking a leading role in recycling at lunchtimes. One pupil explained, 'You don't have to have everything to live a good life,' a typical comment within St Mary's the Mount. The school's active response to current episcopal directives is evident through creative and inclusive initiatives. The Jubilee Year has been brought to life for pupils through a prayerful pilgrimage walk to the parish church, supporting pupils' spiritual formation. As one pupil expressed, 'Whatever you do, Jesus will do it with you.'

Pastoral care is of the highest quality at St Mary's the Mount. The well-being of pupils and families is a clear priority for all staff. The school's culture is one of compassion, dignity, and mutual respect. Staff go above and beyond to support the most vulnerable, offering practical assistance

such as food, uniforms, and ongoing emotional support. A parent described the school as 'a beacon of faith for our community.' The headteacher and deputy headteacher are visible and effective role models of Christian values. They lead with compassion and humility, demonstrating a deep commitment to the Church's mission in education, where every individual is known and celebrated. Staff feel this is a shared vocation, as reflected in one comment, 'It is our mission and our vocation to ensure that our families and children are nurtured in faith, and we do this by our example.'

Leaders at St Mary the Mount articulate and promote a clear, shared vision rooted in the mission of the Church. This vision is consistently lived out by staff, governors, and pupils, shaping a joyful, inclusive and faith-filled school community. Leaders and governors model servant leadership, creating a culture where Catholic life is prioritised and continually developed. Monitoring and evaluation of Catholic life are well-embedded. Leaders and governors employ a range of strategies to assess provision and drive improvement accurately. School leaders regularly update the governors and can consequently guide strategic developments within the school. Strong and sustained parish links are exemplary. Leaders and governors actively promote the principle that they are at the service of the local Church. Many staff undertake parish roles, including as catechists, musicians, and Cafod representatives, further enriching school-parish relationships. Although pupils demonstrate a growing understanding of Catholic social teaching, a coherent strategy to embed this throughout the entire school curriculum has yet to be established, meaning pupils' knowledge of it is not yet fully developed.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

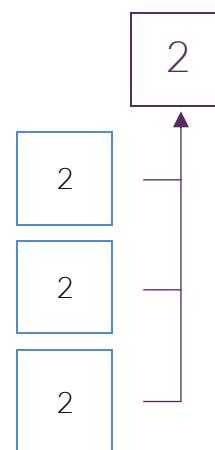
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Pupil outcomes in religious education at St Mary's the Mount are good. Pupils make secure and sustained progress from their starting points, developing a sound understanding of the key beliefs and teachings of the Catholic faith. Recent successful work to securely embed retrieval practice at the beginning of religious education lessons has had a clear and positive impact. Pupils consistently recall prior learning with confidence, enabling them to build effectively on previous knowledge. As a result, they demonstrate sustained progress over time. Pupils are increasingly independent and are beginning to have opportunities to reflect thoughtfully on the relevance of their faith. During the inspection, a video featuring Year 6 altar servers exemplified strong pupil leadership; these pupils clearly explained their role in the liturgy and inspired younger children to consider their contribution to the Church community. Data over the past three years indicates that achievement in religious education is consistently in line with, and often above, outcomes in other core subjects. Work in pupils' exercise books is generally of a high standard, with presentation reflecting the value placed on religious education. Increasingly, pupils are being given opportunities to record their learning in various creative and reflective ways. They take pride in their work, which demonstrates both care and growing engagement with their learning in religious education.

Teachers at St Mary's the Mount demonstrate secure subject knowledge in religious education and use this effectively to plan and deliver lessons that are engaging and firmly rooted in Catholic teaching. Lessons are structured to build on prior learning, and the recent embedding of retrieval practice at the start of lessons is helping pupils to know more and remember more. There are opportunities for reflection, discussion, and creative responses that deepen pupils' understanding. A range of teaching strategies is employed to meet the needs of all learners, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and pupils are well

supported in accessing the curriculum. Assessment is used effectively to monitor progress and inform planning and decision-making. Teachers generally provide clear and timely feedback, often through live marking, which helps pupils to improve their work. Questioning strategies are usually effective in promoting understanding; however, there are some missed opportunities to use probing questions to deepen theological thinking, particularly for pupils with higher prior attainment. Most pupils make good progress, but appropriate and prompt challenge is not always planned by teaching staff to maximise outcomes for all.

Leaders and governors at St Mary's the Mount demonstrate a strong commitment to ensuring that religious education is given parity with other core subjects. Governors provide both support and challenge to school leaders, fulfilling statutory obligations and championing the place of the subject within the curriculum. For example, they routinely scrutinise class timetables to ensure the required 10% teaching time is allocated. Monitoring and evaluation of religious education are robust. Leaders and governors draw upon a wide range of evidence—such as lesson observations, work scrutiny, assessment data, and moderation outcomes—to accurately evaluate the quality of teaching and pupil progress. Monitoring outcomes are regularly reported to the chair of governors, supporting strategic oversight and continuous improvement. Joint moderation with two other Catholic schools ensures consistency and shared expectations across the curriculum. Training is well-planned and responsive to needs. Staff at all career stages are well supported, with particular attention to planning and assessment. Leaders have rightly identified the need to develop pupils' higher-order theological thinking further. While strategies to address this are underway through curriculum refinement and targeted training, the full impact is still emerging. Leaders remain committed to embedding ambitious and enriching provision across the school.

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 participate in prayer with enthusiasm, and their responses, particularly through singing accompanied by Makaton, are a beautiful and inclusive expression of their faith. Sacred silence is used effectively, providing pupils with valuable opportunities for deep spiritual reflection. Pupils of all ages respond well to this, demonstrating respect and reverence. They show a clear understanding of the liturgical year and take part in a broad range of celebrations that mark key events across the Church's calendar. Pupils can select liturgical artefacts that complement the liturgical seasons, although their understanding of how to apply traditional prayer is still developing. Pupils are beginning to show increasing independence and collaboration in planning and evaluating worship. This is having a positive impact on the quality of worship across the school. For example, children in the Early Years demonstrate an awareness of the structure of a prayer session and can make appropriate choices to support the experience. There are numerous opportunities for pupils to lead prayer in various contexts, which they embrace with confidence and joy. Whilst pupils are highly engaged in prayer, they are not yet confident in articulating the personal and transformative impact of prayer in their daily lives or the lives of others.

Staff ensure prayer and liturgy opportunities are at the very heart of life at St Mary's the Mount. Whilst these are embedded in the school's routine, pupils do not take them for granted and treat them as special times. Spontaneous prayer is a regular feature, both within formal worship and through prayer stations around the school, where pupils can write intercessions and petitions. The use of scripture to support prayer is regular, and children treat the Bible and the word with respect. This is presented at an age-appropriate level so that it is accessible to all. Some older pupils are beginning to use scripture linked to the liturgical year, although this practice is not yet fully embedded throughout the school. There are some beautiful spaces at St Mary's the Mount,

within corridors and outside, where pupils can pray. These areas are well-resourced and maintained, making them inviting and demonstrating the importance of prayer life to the school. There are plans in place to develop more creative and cared-for prayer areas within the classrooms, which are yet to be fully realised. Prayers to be learned at different ages are shared with families as their children transition to the next class, and the school website is also a supportive tool. Parent prayer sessions provided by each class enable them to participate in prayer led by their children – a true example of evangelisation.

Leaders and governors establish their expectations of the prominence of prayer within policy and procedures. Staff are supported in leading prayer by witnessing the strong role models of leaders. The prayer and liturgy policy clearly expresses the progression of prayer skills required as pupils progress across the school. Staff are committed to supporting pupils in sacramental preparation, working in collaboration with catechists in the parish to ensure that pupils understand and experience the holy significance of this. All staff within the school benefit from regular training opportunities, which enable them to support pupils in their prayer life; they now need to broaden this spiritual formation so that they can model skills to their pupils and measure their impact. Leaders contribute collaboratively through their ministry to provide opportunities to celebrate the faith that meet the community's needs. To drive further improvement, the systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact of prayer and worship should be more sharply focused to ensure that necessary enhancements are identified and implemented more swiftly.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Mary's the Mount Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	104232
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	335 3302
Full postal address of the school	Jesson Road, Walsall, WS1 3AY
School phone number	01922 720711
Headteacher	Catherine Amos
Chair of governing board	Malcolm Rose
School Website	www.st-marymount.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 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Rebecca McKinney
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