



St Gerard's Catholic Primary School

URN: 103458

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

1

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

1

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

- It proudly proclaims its Catholic nature and ethos through outreach and partnership with the parish and wider community.
- There is a deeply felt and lived understanding by all pupils, staff, and governors of the obligations of Catholic social teaching and the theology behind it.
- It provides a welcoming, inclusive, safe, joyous, loving, and nurturing environment for pupils, staff, parents, and the wider community. The environment is inspirational and aspirational, ensuring that the well-being of all staff, pupils, and parents is always a priority.
- Rapid progress and impressive levels of attainment in religious education for all pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), is secured through consistently outstanding teaching, which both challenges and supports all pupils.
- The wide range of prayer in every aspect of school life and the modelling of excellent leadership by staff develop in all pupils the skills to plan, evaluate and review prayer and liturgy at a level which is well beyond that which might be expected at their age.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen its dynamic partnership with the diocese by actively sharing its exemplary practice in prayer and liturgy with other Catholic schools, supporting His Grace's vision of co-responsibility.

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 statement, 'With Christ at our side and St Gerard as our guide, we live, love, learn and pray together,' is known, understood and embraced by all. Pupils can explain how they learn in this way, following the resilience of St Gerard. They have a deeply felt and lived understanding of the obligations of Catholic social teaching and the theology behind it, choosing local charities to support and readily taking up leadership roles as part of the school's chaplaincy provision, feeling called to serve in this way. Parents typically comment, 'We truly appreciate the way the school nurtures a strong sense of Catholic identity and community and not only teaches the faith but lives it out in such a genuine and caring way.' All pupils show remarkable respect for others, explaining that they learn about other faiths and cultures so as not to cause offence and to make everyone welcome. As a result, the behaviour of all is exemplary.

The school is highly aspirational and inspirational for all pupils, staff, and parents; this can be seen, for example, in the prominent displays of quotations such as that of St Catherine of Sienna, 'Be who God meant you to be, and you will set the world on fire.' An appropriate programme of Catholic relationships and health education (RHE) is integrated into all aspects of school life. There is a generous feeling of welcome, safety, and respect for all and the pastoral well-being of all is priority, seen for example in the valued presence of Rocco, the school dog. Staff feel 'trusted as professionals.' Parents comment that all teachers are friendly, approachable, caring, kind and understanding. Staff confirm that Christ is at the centre of the school, and that leaders and governors demonstrate respect for the rights and dignity of employees. A member of staff proudly shares how she received the Sacrament of Baptism alongside pupils and has been received into the faith; another comments: 'Working here has strengthened my own faith life and I re-found my faith because of the strength of the mission and Catholic ethos.' The attractive,

well-maintained school environment proclaims its Catholic ethos and nature, providing a clear focus for the pupils, who explain, for instance, that the Catholic virtues are displayed on the stairs 'because we are walking through the virtues.' The mission statement is displayed and enacted prominently throughout the community and the school has a lively and current social media presence.

The headteacher is a source of inspiration for the whole community and works tirelessly to reach out to and draw the community into school, driving forward many initiatives, highly respected and valued for doing so. School leaders are valued by colleagues, who say 'They always roll up their sleeves and muck in', also showing genuine concern for the well-being of and gratitude to the staff. Governors are frequently in school and promote all aspects of the school's Catholic life and mission; with their wide range of prior knowledge and expertise, and profound knowledge of the school, they offer excellent challenge and support. There is exemplary support of the most vulnerable with the daily breakfast trolley, supported by the parish SVP, available to all pupils and parents, uniform for those in need, and topping up fees to provide fully funded nursery provision. The school's self-evaluation document is frequently revisited and shared with governors, and the training of all staff is a priority, including excellent induction of new staff, who feel 'empowered, comforted and confident.' The school also offers service to the diocese, such as the pupils' musical contribution to the diocesan leadership conference.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

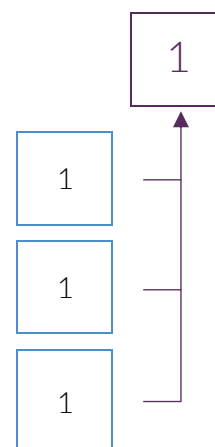
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 value religious education highly, as different from other subjects and a gift to God. All have excellent subject knowledge and demonstrate engagement in all lessons, with exemplary behaviour. Their religious literacy is excellent throughout, and the achievement of pupils with SEND is a particular strength. Opportunities for quiet reflection are a key aspect of lessons, as is choice of response, and 'I wonder' questions. Effort and achievement are celebrated frequently, with displays of pupil work throughout the school, including in the headteacher's office. Pupils respond to challenge questions very readily, both in class and in books, and engage in discussion with one another enthusiastically. Books are very well presented, with a real sense of engagement and enjoyment: completed books are included in the offertory in Mass. Pupils have a clear sense of progress through unit markers and feedback in class and in books and readily apply learning to their own experience. Because teaching is targeted towards the most challenging learning objectives, with appropriate support for everyone, the progress of all, particularly pupils with SEND, is rapid and sustained, consistently exceeding that in other core subjects.

There is consistency of approach from all staff in lessons and in feedback in books. All teachers have excellent subject knowledge, which they articulate very well to their pupils, delivering purposeful, well-structured, well-paced and engaging lessons with confidence, often reflecting upon their own faith and experience. Appropriate religious terminology is prominently displayed in all classrooms. Teachers have high expectations and make appropriate challenge of all pupils, particularly those with SEND, by excellent use of open questions in class, extended writing, and 'pink for think' tasks in books, to which all pupils respond readily. The school describes this work as 'a profound vocation of love, patience, and unwavering faith in the dignity of every human person.' Pupils are given opportunities to express their thoughts and opinions and are valued,

ensuring the religious education curriculum is significantly contributing to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Other adults enhance the learning of all pupils and are an integral and valuable part of the learning experience, for example using questioning very skilfully to optimise learning for all pupils. Collaboration is the natural mode of working for all staff. Staff typically comment, 'Everyone is always willing to help, no matter how busy they are.'

The subject leader has a powerful and inspiring vision for the subject and the department, with the intellectual, moral and spiritual development of the pupils at its heart. This is recognised and valued by parents, who say that they are very grateful for the foundation of faith their children receive at St Gerard's. The subject leader has high expectations of herself and the staff, and combines her vision with rigorous and forensic monitoring, evaluation, and review of assessment data, externally moderated and shared to great effect with the staff and governors, who themselves contribute to the monitoring, analysis, evaluation and review. She is quick to identify areas for development and seeks appropriate support. Staff value her support of them very highly. She works closely with the link governor for religious education, who provides expertise, challenge and support, evident in governors' reports. Leaders and governors ensure there is more than full parity with other core subjects and make regular training for all staff a priority. They have excellent knowledge of the school and there are clear links between the department action plan and school evaluation and development documents. The subject leader is generous in sharing her considerable expertise with colleagues in other schools, such as the Catholic Primary Partnership and the Sursum Corda group.

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

1

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

All pupils demonstrate reverence and engagement in all aspects of prayer and liturgy, showing that it is a lived experience for all. All concentrate well in prayerful reflection, and they have the skills and confidence to plan, deliver and evaluate prayer and liturgy. Each pupil has at least one opportunity each year to plan and lead prayer and liturgy. Staff comment: 'When planning Masses and Celebration of the Word, children show great compassion and empathy, linking our gospel virtues to the theme of the Mass or celebration,' adding that the Recorder Club love learning new hymns and even write their own music as they are so keen. While the pupils have excellent knowledge of the traditional prayers of the Church, they also understand and use a wide variety of ways of praying, with a clear sense of the different purposes of prayer. This can be seen in their personal and reflective prayer journals, the beautiful illustration of which shows their genuine pride in and valuing of personal, spontaneous prayer. Asked how God responded to their personal prayer, a pupil explains, 'through His actions.' Pupils believe that, as a result of praying together, they are all brothers and sisters in Christ. Prayer is part of all religious education lessons but is also frequently a feature of other lessons and other time in class.

Prayer is central to all aspects of school life, and the school provides many opportunities for prayer, with many prayer stations around school, including in the offices of senior leaders, places of quiet reflection with a Marian shrine, the Peace Garden, and Katie's Garden, created in memory of a Year 2 pupil who died. These spaces are beautifully maintained and treated with appropriate reverence, while also being meaningfully used—for example, by senior leaders supporting pupils in reflecting on their choices, during sensitive meetings with parents, and by pupils themselves through additional, pupil-led lunchtime prayer and liturgy held daily throughout the year. Prayer also uses innovative artefacts, such as wind-catchers made by Reception children to represent the presence of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Appropriate

scripture is at the heart of all prayer and liturgy and is therefore very familiar to and valued by pupils. There is exemplary modelling of the leading of prayer and liturgy by all staff and the use of music is a real strength. Innovative approaches include the contemplation of religious artwork, giving pupils choice in how to respond, and there are frequent invitations to parents to encourage their involvement in Masses and sacramental preparation, which the local priest makes thoroughly appropriate. Parents value the regular invitations to the school to attend special occasions and take part in prayer time and workshops.

With a clear, thorough, and current policy for prayer and liturgy, senior leaders provide exemplary models of leading prayer and liturgy, and a carefully planned calendar of events includes feasts of the Church, saints' days, and celebration by all pupils of the Sacraments of First Holy Communion and Confirmation, as well as that of Reconciliation and regular Masses. As well as many opportunities for a broad range of ways of praying, the liturgical formation of pupils and staff is carefully planned and sequenced, resulting in a progression of skills and great confidence. Thorough evaluations by pupils, staff, parents, and governors inform future planning, and pupil evaluation demonstrates great care and commitment through its beautiful presentation. Pupils routinely evaluate prayer and liturgy soon after its delivery, identifying strengths and areas for development, then choosing highly appropriate themes, scripture, music, activities and missions with which to go forth for future use.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Gerard's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	103458
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	330 3367
Full postal address of the school	Yatesbury Avenue, Castle Vale, Birmingham, B35 6LB
School phone number	0121 464 2613
Headteacher	Katrina Bannister
Chair of governing board	David Logue
School Website	www.stgerard.bham.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	March 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Andrew Maund
Stephanie Hewitt

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