



St Adrian's Catholic Primary School

URN: 117470

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster

01–02 October 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

- The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' conference.
- The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- The school has responded fully to previous areas for improvement.

What the school does well

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary, reflecting respect, care and responsibility towards one another.
- The Catholic life of the school is expressed profoundly through its environment, with prayer and reflection spaces, including the beautiful new garden, displays and symbols that witness Catholic life and mission to all who enter.
- Relationships within the school community are warm and supportive - parents are deeply proud of the school, and there is a strong sense of mutual respect among pupils and staff.
- Pupils respond wholeheartedly to the rich experiences of prayer and liturgy provided by the school, participating with reverence, confidence and joy.
- Pupils show a deep understanding of their call to serve, living out the school's Mercy charism.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop teaching to ensure that pupils with additional needs are consistently supported through well-planned adaptations, enabling them to flourish and achieve their full potential.
- Strengthen the integration of Catholic social teaching across the curriculum so that it is clearly understood, expressed and witnessed by the whole school community.
- Enhance strategic planning and evaluation to ensure professional development results in demonstrable improvement.

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

Pupils in St Adrian's proudly embrace the school's Mercy charism, demonstrating compassion for those most in need. The Caritas Ambassadors actively engage with their community and enjoy holding bingo sessions for older people. They understand the impact of their actions and explain that they do not want anyone to feel lonely, relating this to scripture. Pupils enjoy singing and feel happy, safe, and valued as unique children of God. They flourish in living out Gospel values, demonstrating inclusivity, and exemplary respect and behaviour. They listen carefully to one another and value each other's opinions. Pupils are enthusiastic about fundraising for charities locally, nationally and globally. They enjoy holding bake sales, dressing up for charity days, and collecting for the local food bank. They can explain that they are following in Jesus' footsteps when they do this, referencing the Beatitudes and highlighting the virtue of mercy to explain why they engage in such work. Pupils value and respect everyone, whatever their faith, religion or belief. Their excellent and thoughtful behaviour helps to create a welcoming and harmonious school community. Pupils are proud to take on and enjoy the many leadership roles provided by the school.

St Adrian's school community lovingly upholds the Mercy charism, keeping it as strong, vibrant and relevant today as when the Sisters of Mercy first shared it. They live this out authentically, in ways that inspire both pupils and staff. Beautiful Mercy crosses grace every wall, and the legacy of the founding sisters is joyfully celebrated throughout the building. Staff embrace the charism wholeheartedly, bringing it to life through learning, relationships and service, fostering a community where Christ is at the centre. Diversity is celebrated; those from other faiths explain that their faith is respected. Staff of different faith backgrounds are supported in observing their own prayers and are invited to share their faith experiences with pupils during the study of other

world religions. Pastoral care is outstanding, and resources are in place to support vulnerable pupils, who are welcomed and valued. The involvement of the parish priests has a positive impact on the Catholic life of the school, which is central and dynamic, offering rich opportunities for spiritual growth. Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) provision follows diocesan guidelines, supporting pupils' personal development and wellbeing. This enables them to speak with confidence about their learning and to make informed, respectful choices in their daily lives.

Leaders and governors actively embrace the archbishop's vision for education, building a strong and dynamic partnership with the diocese, while nurturing flourishing links with the local parish. Leaders liaise frequently with the parish priest and recently ensured the whole community could celebrate the Eucharist together by rescheduling Mass times on holy days. Leaders provide many opportunities for parents to participate in the Catholic life and mission of St Adrian's. One parent commented: 'There are plenty of opportunities to give back to the community, such as reading to residents at the care home next door or bringing in a donation several times a year, reflecting on those in need'. Parents were overwhelmingly positive and value the school. Another remarked: 'We are so grateful for the way St Adrian's lives out its Catholic mission and how it has shaped our children. The school community provides such a strong sense of support and faith, which has given them a real foundation to build on'. Leaders and governors are inspirational witnesses to the Gospel and Catholic social teaching, prioritising the poor, the common good and care for our common home. Catholic social teaching across the curriculum has not yet been fully planned and mapped so that it is clearly understood, expressed and witnessed by the whole school community.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

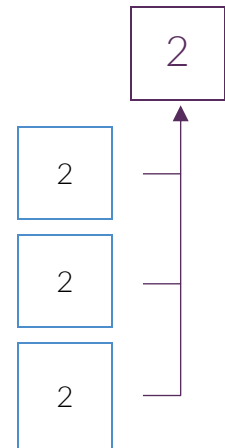
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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, understanding and skills in line with the *Religious Education Directory*. Pupils in upper Key Stage 2 ask insightful questions, demonstrate curiosity, and make links between prior and new learning. Pupils learning about the symbols of baptism took part in a thoughtful discussion about the Jewish cleansing ritual of the Mikveh, exploring and comparing the different meanings behind each practice. Additional adults in upper Key Stage 2 are used effectively to support pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), although this practice is not yet consistent across all phases. Some pupils with SEND would benefit from additional scaffolding during lessons to help them achieve their potential. By the time they leave upper Key Stage 2, pupils are religiously literate and engaged, able to reflect spiritually, think ethically and theologically, and apply their learning to everyday life. In the Early Years, pupils recall prior learning confidently and talk about the creation story. They enjoyed looking at photographs of their own baptism as the teacher introduced new learning. Pupils were curious and were confident to ask questions about the sacrament. Early Years pupils use key vocabulary well and most activities set up effectively consolidated learning. Lessons are approached with interest and enthusiasm, resulting in positive behaviour and strong engagement. Pupils know how well they are doing, what they need to do to improve, and can explain the progress they have made. Attainment in religious education is at least in line with other core subjects.

Staff have been provided with professional development to implement the new *Directory*, and many teachers demonstrate growing confidence in their subject knowledge. Leaders have supported those new to Catholic education, and this has had a positive impact on classroom practice. Teachers understand how pupils learn at each stage, enabling them to deliver engaging

and effective lessons. Books from last year showed good progression in Key Stage 1, reflecting the strong support provided by leaders, who work closely with teachers new to Catholic education to bring them to this standard. Books from lower Key Stage 2 also typically show good progress over time, demonstrating continuity in pupils' learning and development. Books show clear evidence of discernment, with pupils demonstrating thoughtful engagement and reflection on their learning. Staff are deeply committed to the value of the subject and communicate this with enthusiasm. Where practice is strongest, teachers inspire pupils to give their best, make explicit links to Scripture, and provide time and space for reflection. Pupils develop moral and spiritual awareness, engage in thoughtful debate, and ask questions that deepen their understanding.

Leaders and governors ensure that the religious education curriculum faithfully reflects the intent and principles of the *Directory*. They have carefully selected an appropriate programme and provided high-quality resources that support effective delivery. The subject is given equal priority alongside other core areas of the curriculum, with equitable policies for assessment, homework and reporting. Leaders have ensured that those teaching religious education are well supported. A strong commitment to professional development is evident, with staff engaging in high-quality training that has enhanced both subject knowledge and pedagogy. As a result, teachers are increasingly confident in their delivery. Leaders recognise the need to strengthen their strategic approach to monitoring and evaluation and are beginning to establish systematic processes to measure the impact of professional development and curriculum implementation. They work closely and collaboratively with other leaders, both within and beyond the school, to benchmark standards and share examples of effective practice. This spirit of partnership not only celebrates what is already strong but also nurtures a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

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 respond wholeheartedly to the rich experiences of prayer and liturgy provided by the school, participating with reverence, confidence and joy. Prayer leaders are enthusiastic about their roles and relish the opportunities provided, such as leading the Rosary with their peers during October. Pupils understand a variety of ways to pray within the Catholic tradition, including scripture, silence, meditation, reflection, and music. They can describe the liturgical year and how it shapes the prayer life of the school. Pupils work closely with staff and peers to prepare Celebrations of the Word, though they would benefit from more guidance when choosing scripture. Pupils willingly take on ministries during class and community celebrations of the Eucharist. They reflect on their prayer life, articulating how these moments inspire action in their daily lives. One pupil commented that they like to pray anywhere and everywhere; another remarked that prayer is also a way of giving thanks when they feel excited about something. Pupils explain how prayer helps them when they feel worried or sad and how they use it to express gratitude.

The school ensures that everyone in the community experiences a daily rhythm of prayer that reflects the life of the Church and offers rich experiences of the Catholic tradition through scripture, silence, music, and reflection. Staff, including senior leaders, model good practice by engaging with and leading prayer, inspiring both colleagues and pupils. A member of staff commented: 'We strive to create an environment where every child can encounter Christ's love through prayer and daily interactions.' Professional development has been offered to all staff on the new *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*. In the strongest Celebrations of the Word, pupils demonstrated careful preparation when proclaiming scripture and led others to participate thoughtfully and reverently in the presence of Jesus. This is not yet consistent practice across all

phases. Thoughtful use of spaces across the school provide inviting areas for prayer and reflection. The newly completed prayer garden and the vibrant, faith-filled environment offer many opportunities for pupils and staff to pause, reflect and pray. Strong partnerships with families and the parish help pupils to grow in their prayer life and participate more fully in the liturgy of the Church.

The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is clear, accessible, and well embedded in practice. Leaders and governors ensure that the liturgical life of the Church is central to the school's identity, with the celebration of the Eucharist, the marking of holy days of obligation, and opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation thoughtfully planned across the year. Leaders have successfully introduced the new *Prayer and Liturgy Directory* and taken a strategic approach to long-term planning, ensuring an annual plan of provision guides practice throughout the school. Professional development has been provided to support staff in implementing this effectively. Resources, time and staffing have been allocated generously, demonstrating the high priority given to this area. Building on this strong intent and commitment, leaders have ensured that the introduction and initial implementation stages are effective. At present, there is not yet a formal plan in place to monitor and evaluate the impact of professional development or to review the consistency and effectiveness of the annual plan of provision. Consequently, leaders are not yet able to demonstrate fully how the intended outcomes will be realised by the end of the academic year. While the groundwork has been carefully and thoughtfully established, developing systematic processes for ongoing review and evaluation are required to ensure sustained improvement.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Adrian's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	117470
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	9193389
Full postal address of the school	Watling View, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 2PB
School phone number	01727852687
Executive headteacher	
Headteacher	Aideen Porter
Chair of Governors	Martha Moroney
School Website	https://stadrians.herts.sch.uk/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Click or tap here to enter text.
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	5 June 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Evelyn Ward
Stephanie Gavin

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