



# The Annunciation Catholic Infant School

URN: 101330

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster

26–27 February 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

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

## 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 the additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- All areas for improvement outlined in the previous diocesan inspection have been addressed in full.

## What the school does well

- School leaders and governors work together as a team to clearly articulate the Church's mission and ensure that Christ is at the heart of the school.
- The vibrant prayer life of the school recognises and celebrates the uniqueness of every member of the school community.
- The school mission statement, 'Be who God meant you to be, and you will set the world on fire' is lived out by the pupils who show their expression of it by embracing opportunities to lead and serve.
- The school is a welcoming community of faith, celebrated through flourishing partnerships with its parents and the local parish.
- Teachers ensure that pupils are fully engaged in learning in religious education, offering many opportunities to work creatively using a variety of forms of expression.

## What the school needs to improve

- Develop the chaplaincy provision in the school so that pupils are given more opportunities to actively participate in leading roles in the Catholic life of the school.
- Develop a strategic plan for the phased introduction and full implementation of the revised *Religious Education Directory*.
- Develop further the whole of the taught curriculum, with religious education as its centre, making connections with discrete subject areas to support a Catholic understanding of life.

## 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**

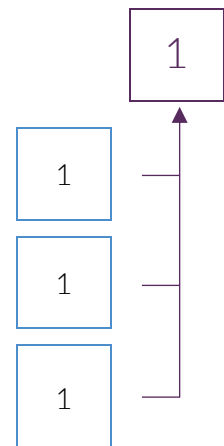
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

**Provision**

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

**Leadership**

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school



Pupils at The Annunciation Infant School know, understand and live their mission: 'Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire,' based on the words of St Catherine of Siena. Pupils avidly seek opportunities to grow in virtue, pursue the common good and serve those in need by participating in the leadership roles offered to them as house captains and members of the school parliament and gardening club, and taking part in various service projects (Lenteprise) and social justice initiatives (Cafod World Gifts), reinforcing their commitment to the school's mission. Pupils talk positively about the difference they make to their local, national and global communities, and they have a good understanding of the theology underpinning their actions. One pupil described the reasons for fundraising during Advent: 'We were learning about how we can make a good option for the poor. We give it with love and that's what matters'. Another pupil explained that the poor are 'God's people' and that everyone is 'God's family'. Developing roles in chaplaincy provision would enable pupils to contribute even more to the Catholic life of the school. Pupils can clearly express the understanding that they are made in the image and likeness of God. As a result of this understanding, pupils' behaviour is exemplary, demonstrating a deep respect for others, which is strengthened by a programme of learning about other faiths.

The school excels at being a Christ-centred school community. Parents speak warmly of the welcome provided to all families. One parent expressed, 'This school has been amazing for my sons and their love of loving and talking about God is lovely to hear. I can't put into words how much this school has had a positive impact on our family.' A member of staff declared, 'We do inspire the children to grow in faith, love and learning. We nurture each child's unique gifts, encouraging them to develop into the person God created them to be.' Staff are exemplary role models. They embrace the mission of the school, which is encapsulated not only in their relationships with each other, but also in the highest levels of care and nurture they provide for all pupils, particularly the most vulnerable. The school environment bears exceptional witness

to its Catholic identity through religious imagery and vibrant displays, reflecting the presence of Christ throughout. The proximity of the parish church enables it to be visited regularly as a centre of worship, faith, and learning for pupils. The provision for relationships, sex and health education is carefully planned and meets all diocesan requirements. The programme is well-resourced and promotes a holistic vision of the human person.

Leaders and governors rightly see the school as a source of inspiration for the whole community and are highly ambitious about its contribution to the lives of those it serves. Governors are committed and conscientious. They ensure that all policies reflect the Catholic mission of the school and resources are targeted to support those in greatest need. An example of this is the 'Give, Help, Share' food parcel programme which operates weekly. One governor expressed the leaders' vision for pupils to 'go and set the world on fire', echoing the school's understanding of its mission. The leadership team show their commitment to the principles of Catholic social teaching which, along with Catholic values, are threaded through the religious education and relationships, sex and health education curriculums. Leaders and governors work closely with the diocese, attending training and working in partnership to enthusiastically respond to diocesan policies and initiatives. They are highly committed to the further development of all staff. Leaders and governors recognise the parish as being central to the Catholic life of the school, which is demonstrated through a flourishing partnership with the local parish. The school builds on this partnership by providing a vibrant parent engagement strategy, ensuring that parents are kept well-informed about key events in the Catholic life of the school. As a result, one parent commented, 'The attachment to the Church means my son has a relationship with the priests and attending Mass every Sunday cements this understanding of our faith.'

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

**Pupil outcomes**

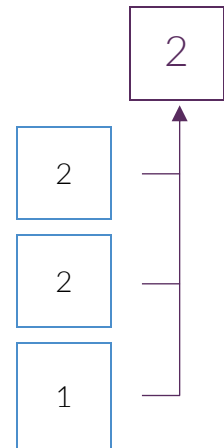
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

**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 good knowledge, understanding and skills in religious education which exemplifies the learning required by the *Directory*. At the beginning of lessons, pupils are invited to recall prior learning through ‘flashback’ sessions, reviewing their knowledge and linking what they already know to new learning. There is a consistent structure and good pace to lessons throughout the school so that pupils can progress through their learning, fully engaged and using their knowledge, understanding and skills effectively to explore key concepts. Pupils are religiously literate and use subject-specific vocabulary during class discussions. They can work both collaboratively and independently on tasks, and their focus and enthusiasm result in good progress. Pupils in Year 1 were able to observe that Jesus in the desert was ‘praying to God and was with God’. In Year 2, in answer to the question, ‘What can we give during Lent to help others?’ pupils responded, ‘We can give our time’ and ‘We can give respect.’ Effective adult support and visual resources are used so that all groups are given the help they need to achieve success. Achievement in religious education is on a par with other core subjects. Creative learning methods enhance pupils’ engagement and allow them to explore their learning through a wide variety of media. Presentation of pupils’ work is good. To secure the best outcomes, pupils would benefit from greater opportunities for challenge and independence in learning.

Teachers demonstrate a deep commitment and bear powerful witness to their belief in the impact religious education has on the spiritual development of pupils. As a result of regular professional development, through diocesan courses and support from the religious education subject leader and senior leaders, planning is thorough. Well-designed lessons extend pupils’ knowledge and understanding so that pupils learn well. Scripture is used as an integral part of lessons which has given pupils the opportunity to become skilled at linking messages in scripture

to their daily lives. Teachers' questioning encourages pupils to delve deeper into their theological understanding to maximise learning. One parent observed, 'My child confidently talks about his religious experiences at school and happily discusses what he has learnt. I am very thankful to the teachers for making the curriculum interesting and engaging so that my child understands and enjoys learning about his faith.' Pupils' achievements are celebrated in whole-school assemblies, and their work is proudly displayed in classrooms and corridors. A Nursery child, learning how to pray the Our Father, and reflecting on God's presence in everyday life, observed, 'I see God in raindrops, the sea, grass and rainbows'.

Leaders and governors have ensured that the religious education programme faithfully delivers a sequential, imaginative and creative curriculum. They have ensured that religious education enjoys a parity with the other core subjects in terms of staff training, resources, and accommodation. The experienced religious education team ably supports staff in planning and delivering the scheme of work so that creative teaching methods are used to promote active learning and engage pupils. Staff speak appreciatively of the generous support and the 'open-door' policy provided by the religious education team. One staff member remarked, 'I am provided with a lot of support and opportunities to strengthen my subject knowledge'. Thorough, collaborative planning sessions secure coherence across the ages and phases of learning. Through carefully planned lessons, and high-quality resources, additional adults in class are effective in supporting vulnerable pupils to achieve. Action plans are shared with governors so that priorities are implemented, and their impact analysed. Governors visit the school regularly, providing a clear and strategic vision for development. Regular, forensic monitoring by senior leaders and governors results in accurate self-evaluation which leads to improving outcomes for all pupils.

## 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 engage reverently in a joyful prayer life. A range of ways of praying are offered to pupils, including traditional prayer and reflection. Children in the early years energetically expressed their faith in God's love by singing and dancing joyfully. Year 1 pupils, in a liturgy focused on God's everlasting love, were able to confidently declare, 'God loves me. I am safe. I am loved.' A parent remarked, 'I love how integrated prayer is at the school. This is the foundation of all Catholic teachings. My son recalls Bible readings and stories.' Pupils readily take on the responsibility to lead worship with the support and guidance of class teachers. Further opportunities to lead liturgies and, experience awe and wonder in prayer through silence, meditation and spontaneous prayer would enhance the pupils' experience further. Scripture is central to prayer and is used meaningfully to deepen pupils' experience in full, active and conscious participation. Appropriate liturgical music is chosen during liturgies to provide a calm, prayerful atmosphere. Pupils' singing is of the highest standard; they readily and enthusiastically sing hymns which complement liturgies. High-quality prayer spaces are provided throughout the school, in the classrooms, and in the prayer garden. The prayer life of the school is a full expression of the Church's liturgical year. Mass is celebrated on feast days and holy days.

Prayer supports and nourishes the school community, and pupils draw inspiration from the lives of the saints. Designated prayer areas in classrooms and corridors provide a focus for prayer, and pupils can say their daily prayers with confidence and reverence. Teachers designate moments of silence during prayer to facilitate deeper reflection and contemplation. Prayer times are a cherished part of the school's daily life. The school community works hard to recognise the wider Church family and, through its prayer life, helps pupils to develop a deeper understanding of the Gospel message and the call to serve. The school's flourishing

partnership with the local parish priest ensures that pupils participate in the breadth and richness of Catholic tradition. Staff are excellent role-models for pupils, participating fully, with reverence and commitment in the prayer life of the school. Pupils are given regular opportunities to plan, lead and evaluate liturgies, as recorded in class 'Collective Worship' books.

Leaders and governors ensure that pupils in the school are offered a wide range of high-quality, meaningful experiences of prayer and worship. They support staff to lead appropriate prayer and liturgy through a clear, effective policy and regular professional development opportunities. Leaders and governors ensure that the school calendar reflects significant dates in the liturgical calendar, resulting in a wealth of opportunities for pupils to celebrate the Eucharist. Parents are invited to attend assemblies, liturgies and Masses through newsletters, social media and the school website. Praying at home is encouraged using prayer bags which are sent home with artefacts (candle, cross, rosary beads) at key times during the liturgical year. Governors prioritise a generous budget for resources, for developing prayer areas and for providing professional development for all staff. Staff are given ample opportunities to attend relevant diocesan courses, deanery meetings and moderation days. As part of the school's self-evaluation, staff, parent and pupil voice questionnaires are regularly used by leaders to review and improve the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy. A staff member observed, 'Prayer and liturgy is at the heart of our school'. Following discussions with leaders, governors, parents, staff, and the parish priest, it is evident that all members of the community are very proud to be part of this joyful, committed, worshipping community.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	The Annunciation Catholic Infant School
School unique reference number (URN)	101330
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3023500
Full postal address of the school	The Annunciation Catholic Infant School, Thirleby Road, Edgware, HA8 0HQ
School phone number	02089592325
Headteacher	Jennifer O'Prey
Chair of governors	Michelle Mwangi
School Website	<a href="http://www.theannunciationschools.co.uk/">http://www.theannunciationschools.co.uk/</a>
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	3-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	November 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

## The inspection team

Norah Flatley	Lead
Daniel Keane	Team
Sue Cunningham	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