

St John's Cathedral Catholic Primary School

URN: 116385

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Portsmouth

20–21 November 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

1

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

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 the areas for improvement from the last inspection.

What the school does well

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher bear outstanding witness to the Catholic life and mission of the school. They are energised and determined in the pursuit of this mission.

- The quality of relationships between all members of the school community is exceptional. Staff commitment to the service of all members of the community, especially the most vulnerable, is commendable.
- Pupils participate fully in collective worship, through prayerful silence, attentiveness and their engagement in communal singing.
- Leaders work hard to ensure a flourishing partnership between the school and parish.
- Pupils make good progress in religious education. They are actively engaged in lessons and committed to developing their knowledge, understanding and skills.

What the school needs to improve

- Seek opportunities to ensure the prominence of scripture is central to the school's mission, vision and prayer and liturgy.
- Develop the use of the vocabulary of Catholic social teaching, which is used in religious education, across the rest of the curriculum.

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

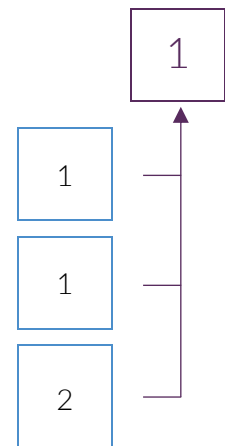
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 this school feel loved, valued and part of a family. One pupil told us, 'It is a caring, loving place and no one gets left out.' They embrace with joy the responsibility of being part of a community of faith, with one pupil explaining, 'We are all made in the image of God, this means everyone is special, and we should treat one another fairly.' Every pupil that we encountered expressed pride in their school. They understand the mission of the school, and some pupils were able to talk about the school's charism through the identity of St John. The pupils gladly welcome the opportunities to serve within their school, parish and wider communities. They show genuine kindness and care, talking enthusiastically about a recent 'Porridge Day' of fundraising for Mary's Meals. In upper Key Stage 2, pupils are able to articulate the theology underpinning Catholic social teaching. In other classes, pupils were able to demonstrate an understanding of Catholic social teaching, and the responsibilities that this affords, but they do not yet have the appropriate vocabulary to describe this fully. The pupils show a deep respect for their own personal dignity and that of others. They are respectful of those of other faiths and religions and spoke enthusiastically about recent trips to the synagogue and the mosque. Pupils value the school's chaplaincy provision and where leadership roles are available to them, they willingly take these on, both within the school and in the Cathedral.

Staff show an outstanding commitment to the shared vision of service to the whole community, and regularly go the extra mile to support families. There is an explicit and concrete commitment to the most vulnerable in the community, which is expressed in practical support, care and universal kindness. Everyone is welcomed in a spirit of generous hospitality – this warm sense of belonging is articulated by pupils, parents, staff and governors. All members of the community are valued without exception. Parents speak highly of the exceptional care for their children.

One parent told the inspectors, 'They always do more than their best for my child.' Staff are exemplary role models through their relationships with each other, and the care and love they show for pupils. The school environment is well cared for and carefully curated to bear witness to the school's Catholic character. The chaplaincy provision is strong in its support to the life and mission of the school. For the older pupils this is well planned and effective, and this could now be developed with younger pupils.

Leaders and governors are thorough in exercising their duty as guardians of Catholic life of the school. They have a shared vision and commitment to the Catholic life of the school - this would be further enhanced by ensuring scripture is central to the school's mission and vision. The school has an exemplary, active relationship with the diocese and has participated in a variety of diocesan events, including monthly Masses at the Cathedral. The parents' survey demonstrates the exceptionally high regard they have for the school. Leaders and governors have an inspirational commitment to Catholic social teaching in action. The taught curriculum has religious education at its core. Catholic social teaching is well understood by the older pupils who can make connections across the curriculum. This could be enhanced by embedding explicit links across the curriculum throughout the school. Governors high ambition for the Catholic life of the school should be demonstrated through higher priority in governor agendas and headteacher reports. All staff, including those new to the school, speak highly of the support they have received. They feel that the leaders are easy to approach and are always willing to help. As a result, they are committed to the Catholic life and mission of the school.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

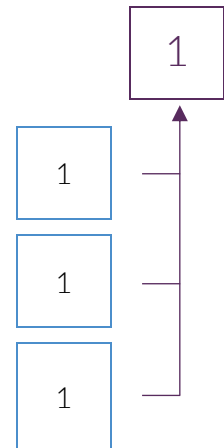
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 develop a secure knowledge, understanding and skills in religious education. This is evident in lessons, books and conversations with pupils about their learning. As a result of this, pupils make good progress which is evident in the books. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs or disabilities are very well catered for and high expectations are in place for them. Pupils, relative to their age, can reflect spiritually and think ethically and theologically; this reflects their spirituality and ensures a strong moral compass. Pupils can speak fluently and confidently about what they have learned and use subject specific vocabulary, including scripture to deepen their explanations. They are inquisitive learners which helps deepen their faith. Pupils show a great maturity in lessons, they concentrate well, enjoy challenge and are curious, interested learners. As a result, pupils show good presentation and creativity as well as producing high quality, creative work. Due to a wide range of well-planned lessons, all pupils are actively engaged in lessons. Some pupils have an understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve, however, this needs further unpicking to ensure all pupils have a deeper understanding of evaluation of their work.

Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge across the school, this is particularly strong in upper Key Stage 2. Lessons are well planned with high expectations and teachers use a range of effective questions to unpick pupils' knowledge. Pupils display high levels of motivation in lessons and receive good feedback to improve their learning further. In a lower Key Stage 2 lesson, the pupils were very excited about the religious education task where they had to be investigators. The pupils often say that religious education is their favourite subject. The pupils have a strong moral compass and are given time to reflect upon this in their own lives and the world around us. The pupils' books demonstrate the wide forms of expressions used to meet the needs of the different groups including pupils with special educational needs.

The diocesan scheme, *God Matters*, is used imaginatively to engage all pupils. The school is getting ready for the new *Religious Education Directory* and is in a position to implement this successfully. 10% of the curriculum is attributed to religious education and the pupils' books showcase the parity religious education has with the other core subjects. Staff training opportunities are very well planned and staff access the diocesan courses, as well as in-house training. The subject leader for religious education understands the gaps in pedagogical knowledge and acts upon this effectively to improve teaching and learning. Due to the well planned, sequential curriculum which builds on prior learning, the pupils' needs are well met. This is true for different groups of pupils including those with who speak English as an additional language, disadvantaged pupils as well as pupils with special educational needs or disabilities. Leaders and governors' self-evaluation of religious education is informed by some joint monitoring, as well as the school working with other local schools to moderate outcomes. Strong strategic action could be enhanced further with a more forensic monitoring, analysis and self-challenge cycle.

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

2

1

Pupils engage deeply and participate fully in prayer and liturgy. There is a high-quality prayerful silence at the start of worship which sets them up well for prayer. The engagement in communal singing is a strength of the school and the children recognise its value as a form of worship. The pupils have a strong understanding of the Catholic tradition of prayer including symbols, silence, meditation and reflection. For example, they participate enthusiastically in the prayer club. One pupil said, 'It is fun to pray in different ways, sing, learn about traditional prayers and pray spontaneously.' The liturgical year is central to the prayer life of the school. In Year 6, pupils work collaboratively with others to prepare creative experiences of prayer and liturgy. For example, Year 6 pupils had prepared a buddy worship for Year R pupils. The pupils would benefit from being given the opportunity and structure to reflect and evaluate on the quality of their prayer and liturgy. Pupils were able to talk with confidence about celebrations of the word based on the curriculum and world events such as the hurricane in America. As a result, the pupils are able to make connections between their prayer and liturgy and their lived experience.

Prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school. A wide range of significant moments of joy and sorrow are identified and celebrated in prayer. Prayer is offered in a variety of forms with Catholic tradition at the heart. Scripture is included in every celebration of the word; however, it would benefit from being embedded as the central focus and by developing intrinsic links between these passages and the whole of the celebration. Staff bear witness to Christ through their participation in prayer and liturgy, providing an excellent model to all. Staff have used skills to support pupils in Year 6 to plan and lead well-constructed celebrations of the word, this now needs to be extended to afford the same support to pupils in younger classes. The highly skilled deputy headteacher uses her talents for music to enhance participation for pupils and staff in prayer and liturgy. The choir shares their talents in singing assemblies. The school makes

imaginative and creative use of prayer spaces which enhances the prayer life of the school. The pupils are appreciative of these spaces and they are conducive to a more fulfilled prayer life. The school works well to include families in the prayer life of the school – one parent offered ‘It is inspiring to see the children take part in altar service, offertory, readings and choir’.

The school policy for prayer and liturgy is well designed and written in a way that make it accessible and useful to staff who use it consistently when preparing prayer and liturgy. Effective support in Year 6 shows leaders have an understanding of the levels and skills of participation that enable pupils to plan and deliver quality celebrations of the word; this could be enhanced further by filtering down to other year groups. The school calendar has been planned to ensure that regular opportunities for Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation are offered at key times in the liturgical year. Leader and governors are committed to providing staff training around planning prayer and liturgy. As a result, all staff understand its importance. Leaders have a thorough understanding of a broad range of ways of praying that are part of the Catholic tradition. Staff feel confident to provide prayer and liturgy opportunities that are engaging and accessible and relevant to pupils. The next step would be to ensure a more cohesive approach. The school cycle of self-evaluation includes opportunities to review the quality of prayer and liturgy and it forms part of the school improvement plan, this will be further enhanced by a more forensic approach and the upskilling of pupils in the evaluation of prayer and liturgy.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St John's Cathedral Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	116385
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8513422
Full postal address of the school	St John's Cathedral Catholic Primary School, Cottage View, Landport, Portsmouth, PO1 1PX
School phone number	02392 821055
Headteacher	Laura Park
Chair of governors	Vivienne McCabe
School Website	www.stjohnscathedralschool.org.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	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	March 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Veronica Woodward
Roxy Ashworth

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