

St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School

URN: 116382

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Portsmouth

21–22 May 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

- St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School is compliant with the general norms of the Bishops' Conference in relation to 10% curriculum time.
- Currently there are no additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School have fully responded to the areas for improvement from the previous inspection.

What the school does well

- Prayer is at the heart and soul of this school: because of this, pupils can easily make links between their prayer life and their actions.
- Carefully planned and reflective prayer experiences are in abundance and ensure spiritual nourishment for all members of the school community.
- Due to the inspirational leadership of the headteacher, the entire staff body are wholeheartedly committed to the mission of the school.
- The principles of Catholic social teaching are woven into every aspect of school life.
- Teachers provide high-quality feedback and regular opportunities for pupils to improve their learning in religious education.

What the school needs to improve

- Allow children more freedom to use their creativity and individuality to demonstrate their understanding in religious education.
- Identify the specific aspects of excellent practice in religious education in the school and share so that all pupils are given the opportunities to achieve their best outcomes.

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

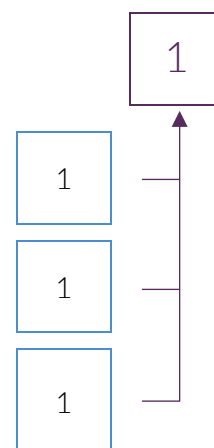
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 are exceptionally proud of their school and embrace its inclusive Catholic culture. They understand the school's mission, 'Together, through our words and actions, our work and play, we point towards Christ, each and every day,' and even the youngest pupils can confidently explain what it means to them in their daily lives, one pupil telling inspectors that it means 'looking after people who are sad.' They have a very developed understanding of the principles of Catholic social teaching and can easily make links between this theology and their actions, for example, knowing that the work of the eco-council is underpinned by stewardship. Pupils have many opportunities to take on responsibilities associated with the Catholic life of the school: they serve on the school council and eco-council, as mini-vinnies, house captains and as part of the various ministry teams. Their joyful eagerness to fulfil these roles is a major feature of the impact of the Catholic life and mission of this school. Pupils are in no doubt that they are loved and valued in all of their God-given uniqueness because the staff are so committed to caring for and nurturing every single child in their care. This is exemplified in the words of one pupil, 'the school makes us feel that we're important and special.' Consequently, pupils are happy and confident and their behaviour is exemplary at all times.

The whole community at St John the Baptist operates through its mission to point towards Christ. The stable staff team works conscientiously and explicitly to ensure that Christ is at the heart of everything the school does and are exemplary role models for pupils. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent, with the school community frequently being described as a family. One staff member expressed that 'the way we minister to the children is completely unique; I feel blessed to be here.' Pastoral care is a strength and staff always go the extra mile to support others, especially the most vulnerable, using their layered approach: firstly supporting everyone

through the Thrive model, then focusing on particular pupils and finally on parents and families. The school provides a beautiful, engaging Catholic environment in which to work, learn and play both indoors and outdoors with numerous religious displays showcasing pupils' work, religious artefacts, statues, and prayer stations and the common thread of Catholic social teaching made explicit everywhere.

Leaders and governors are deeply committed to ensuring the school's uniquely Catholic character is upheld and continually developed and keep the school's mission at the forefront of all their decision-making. The headteacher is inspirational in her role as a servant leader and is exceptionally well supported by the deputy headteacher. Together they provide a faith-filled example to the rest of the staff, who recognise this, saying 'the headteacher makes sure Christ is central to everything we do and never feels like an add on'. Leaders have developed a uniquely Catholic curriculum, ensuring that Catholic social teaching is woven through all subjects, for example, linking Science learning about habitats to the principle of stewardship. The school has worked hard to involve parents and carers in the life and mission of the school, with such events as regular open days, a parent support circle and a parent forum. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of this and every parent who responded to the survey agreed that their child was happy at the school. The governing body diligently serves the school and has high expectations and aspirations for its future development. They are extremely well organised and through regular monitoring and evaluation are able to appropriately challenge and support school leaders.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

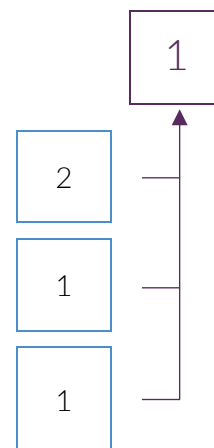
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 thoroughly enjoy their religious education lessons and approach them with great interest. They are keen to respond to challenging questioning, are curious, and motivated to do their best. They say lessons are fun because of the range of activities they do and consequently behaviour is excellent. Pupils are religiously literate and are confident to link their learning from religious education to their moral and religious commitment in everyday life, one pupil telling inspectors for example that religious education ‘helped him in his outside life’ and another pupil explaining that Pope Leo XIV promoted peace because his first words as Pope were ‘peace be with you’. Progress is good in most classes and leaders need to now ensure that all groups of pupils in all classes consistently achieve the best possible outcomes. Although work in books is generally well completed, there is room for improvement in both presentation and in allowing pupils to demonstrate creativity and individuality in their response to learning. Pupils know how well they are doing with their work and what they need to improve because teachers provide helpful feedback and importantly give them opportunities to act on it: this was evident in all books.

Teachers have very strong subject knowledge, well informed by their ongoing training and the support of the subject leader. They have high expectations in religious education and this is subsequently reflected well by pupils. They ensure that pupils are provided with a wide range of exciting opportunities to present their learning in religious education with drama, discussion, artwork and various written forms: this ensures a high level of engagement from all pupils. However, because tasks are often quite structured, teachers sometimes do not allow sufficient independence for pupils to creatively present their work. Teachers make skilful use of questioning to respond to each pupil’s level of understanding and lessons are adapted to meet pupils’ unique needs. In a highly engaging lesson in Year 4, for example, the teacher encouraged pupils to think about what it means to be a witness to Christ and directed children back to the

learning point as necessary. A highlight of the school's curriculum is the use of Big Question Reflections, such as 'Why is the resurrection such an important event for Christians?'. These successfully help pupils to consolidate and extend their learning. Teachers celebrate work and offer positive reinforcement to pupils in class as well as useful feedback and every opportunity is taken to integrate the principles of Catholic social teaching into lessons, for example, the use of Catholic social teaching booklets alongside Bibles in the classroom.

The subject leader for religious education has an inspiring vision for achieving excellence in religious education and has the knowledge and skills to help staff secure that vision. She is highly effective in improving the quality of teaching and learning, for example, skilfully identifying areas for improvement, such as deeper questioning and then coaching teachers to provide opportunities to enable this within lessons. Because of her drive and determination, teachers have strong subject knowledge, and there is a culture of staff working together with dedicated support from senior leaders to ensure teaching is constantly improving. Leaders ensure that religious education is imaginatively and thoughtfully planned to meet the needs of different groups of pupils by the use of, for example, visual prompts and scaffolding materials and by ensuring that teaching assistants are deployed effectively for religious education lessons. Leaders and governors have a well-established system of self-evaluation leading to improvement. These include lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work, seeking the views of pupils and staff and analysing pupil progress data. The school has invested in good quality resources, including Bibles, which are well used by staff to optimise learning.

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

Pupils are fully engaged in all forms of prayer and liturgy throughout the school day, be it class worship, whole school celebrations of the word, the daily Angelus in the playground during lunchtime led by Year 6 pupils, or more informal prayer opportunities. They act with deep reverence and have a wealth of knowledge about different forms of prayer. They regularly take advantage of the high-quality sacred spaces around the school, such as the Peace Garden and prayer tables which enable them to reflect on individual thoughts and prayer. Pupils are skilled when planning, organising, leading, and evaluating their own acts of prayer and liturgy, this was seen, for example, in a very high-quality act of meditation and prayer based on the Magnificat and led by Year 6 pupils. Even the youngest pupils are appropriately involved in preparing acts of worship by setting up the prayer focus or reading lines of scripture. Pupils are reflective and can explain how prayer and liturgy inspire them to take action, for example Year 4 pupils describing how the Gospel readings link to the charity work they are doing for the Yellow Brick Road Project for the homeless.

Prayer and liturgy are absolutely central to the life of St John the Baptist School. This rich provision encompasses a broad range of engaging and creative experiences within the Catholic tradition, including Mass, Stations of the Cross and a highly-regarded May pilgrimage which is led by pupils from across the school. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are strong role models in the school's prayer life, leading by example and offering support and guidance. As a result, teaching and support staff are also models of excellent practice and pupils have learnt to deliver their own prayer and liturgy by mirroring this. A wide range of high-quality music and other art forms are, when appropriate, integrated into prayer and liturgy in a way that significantly enhances these experiences for participants, for example, the use of Makaton, inspiring paintings, dance and music. Pupils sing exceptionally joyfully, with a clear

understanding of how music enhances their prayer experience and their rendition of traditional Latin hymns such as Salve Regina for rosary celebrations is particularly impressive. The parish priest and deacon are regular visitors and enhance the liturgical offering by leading Lectio Divina, celebrating Mass, Benediction and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. A strength of the school is the environment that has been created to imaginatively support prayer and liturgy including sacred spaces, displays, prayer areas in classrooms and the school's prayer garden.

Leaders and governors clearly understand high-quality prayer and liturgy and are fully committed to ensuring that prayer is at the heart of everything that happens at school. They also have a secure understanding of the liturgical year, seasons, and feasts and ensure that prayer and worship are relevant and have a clear purpose and message: the school's annual plan of provision is extremely well thought out to include not only key feasts such as Ash Wednesday, Exaltation of the Holy Cross and Corpus Christi but also links to the universal Church and the wider world such as the launch of Pilgrims of Hope and visit of the Apostolic Nuncio to the diocese. Leaders have creatively planned how to include families and parishes in the prayer life of the school and there are an impressive number of parents who attend the weekly mission celebrations of the word. One parent told inspectors that 'the school welcomes and encourages parental participation into the Catholic mission' while another was 'moved to tears during the Stations of the Cross - the children were so reverent and responsive'.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	116382
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8503418
Full postal address of the school	St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School, Floral Way, Salisbury Road, Andover, SP10 3PF
School phone number	01264 361806
Headteacher	Catherine Whatley
Chair of governors	Matthew Zarb-Piscopo
School Website	www.sjbschool.co.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	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	29 March 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Michael Lobo
Tara Sharp

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