

St Paul's Catholic Primary School

URN: 105070

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Shrewsbury

25 March 2026 – 25 March 2026

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

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education RE

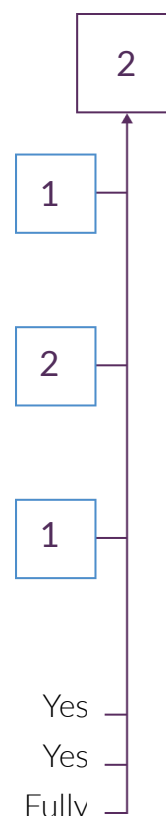
Collective worship (p.7)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

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 to the areas for improvement from the last inspection



What the school does well

- Leaders, staff, and governors are committed, they know their school and its pupils well, and they strive to live out the school mission every day.
- There is a strong and flourishing partnership with the parish and the local community.
- There is a deep commitment to providing pastoral support for the pupils and their families, recognising each person as unique and precious to God.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary; they show respect for themselves and others, and their engagement with their religious education lessons results in very good knowledge of scripture and the school mission.
- Prayer is central to the life of the school; staff and pupils value this and participate with reverence and respect in the experiences of prayer and liturgy offered to them.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that Catholic social teaching is identified and embedded across the religious education curriculum and the wider school curriculum.
- In religious education lessons ensure that consistent, skilful questioning enables pupils to show their deepening understanding, and that effective feedback in all classes enables pupils to know what to do in order to improve.
- Ensure that staff and pupils have frequent opportunities to engage and participate in the broad and rich prayer tradition of the Catholic faith outside of the celebration of the word.

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

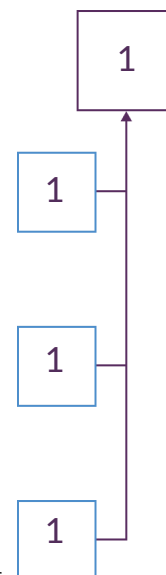
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



At St Paul's, pupils clearly understand and value the school's Catholic identity, expressed in the mission statement 'Together in faith, working as one'. They readily describe how the school community lives out this mission. Pupils say they take responsibility for their role in caring for the world and for others, as they 'are following Jesus's example'. Pupils actively support parish, local, national, and global charities through events such as the annual pilgrimage walk and the Rudolph run for St John's Hospice. Older pupils explain how Catholic social teaching features in some curriculum areas, although this is not yet consistently or explicitly identified across all subjects. This limits pupils' ability to make clear links between their learning and how people choose to live. Pupils feel safe, valued and well cared for. One said, 'I can go to any adult if I don't feel safe'. Pupils behave extremely well, are happy and show respect for one another. They contribute to thoughtful and striking displays in school and church as well as confidently undertaking leadership roles in the school faith council and Mini Vinnies.

The mission statement, rooted in the words of St Paul, clearly shapes school life. Regular reviews of the statement inspire reflection and creative responses. Staff demonstrate exceptional commitment to the service of the school, the parish, and the wider community, acting as exemplary role models. They bear witness to the school's mission through their relationships with pupils and one another. There is a strong culture of warmth and welcome for all, with high-quality pastoral care, particularly for those needing additional support. A strong partnership with the parish and local community groups demonstrates the school's commitment to the most vulnerable. The school environment celebrates and nurtures its

Catholic character and mission. Throughout the school, well-planned prayer spaces, a nurture room, and intervention spaces as well as striking displays provide creative and high-quality experiences to support the formation of staff and pupils. The school is committed to providing a wealth of additional experiences. For example, a visit to Shrewsbury Cathedral during the jubilee year of hope provided a meaningful and creative opportunity for pupils' spiritual and moral development. Relationships, sex, and health education is well-planned and meets diocesan requirements.

The Church's mission in education is clearly understood by leaders and governors who put Catholic life and mission at the heart of all decision-making. They actively engage with diocesan initiatives and training. Strong partnerships with the parish and other Catholic schools enrich pupils' spiritual life and their involvement in the community. The flourishing partnership between the school and the parish, with leaders regularly planning activities to involve parents and carers in school and parish life, supports pupils and their families in practical, educational, and spiritual ways. Dedicated resourcing, including staffing, for example the outstanding support for speech and language, is funded and sustained by the school. Staff say they feel valued and cared for. Strong professional development, induction of new staff, coaching and mentoring all support leaders' and governors' vision of building a strong and effective team. Within the taught curriculum, some opportunities to make connections with religious education and Catholic social teaching are identified. However, these are not yet planned systematically across all subjects. Leaders, subject leaders and governors now need to make more specific and intentional links, so that the richness of Catholic contributions to culture, justice and human dignity is consistently reflected within discrete subject areas. Governors are actively involved in monitoring and are rigorous in evaluating and developing the Catholic life and mission of the school. Leaders and governors regularly ask for and respond to pupils' suggestions on improvements.

Religious education

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

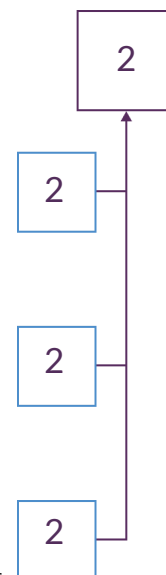
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 say they 'love religious education lessons' because 'they are interesting'. Their behaviour is consistently good and supports effective learning so that most pupils make good overall progress. However, progress is not consistently good for all pupils. Strong focus and engagement help pupils to develop the knowledge and understanding required by the *Religious Education Directory (RED)*. They describe how their learning in religious education influences their choices. One pupil says, 'when we remember what we have learnt, it helps me think about Jesus' sacrifices'. Pupils use subject-specific vocabulary accurately, contributing thoughtfully through discussion and role-play. A Key Stage 1 pupil asks a teacher in role as Peter, 'Why didn't you trust Jesus to rise again? He was your friend!' A Key Stage 2 pupil in role remarks, 'I would have followed him (Jesus) for a few more years'. Pupils demonstrate increasing independence, talking confidently about concepts such as disciples having 'no more faith' and being 'discouraged that the hope had gone'. Pupils enjoy the creative ways they can respond to their learning. However, work varies in quality and presentation. Although most pupils understand how well they are doing and how to improve their work, some need further support to deepen their understanding.

Teachers are confident in their delivery of religious education. This is underpinned by good subject knowledge and a strong awareness of pupils' needs. Teachers encourage pupils to make links to prior learning and allow time for reflection in lessons, which supports pupils' understanding of how religious education impacts on their spiritual and moral development. Assessment is used appropriately to support pupils and to inform teachers' planning, which

aligns well with the *RED*. Teachers and other adults assist pupils' understanding of their learning through effective questioning and adapting explanations, with some addressing misconceptions immediately. High quality resources and regular reference to scripture strengthen learning. However, reading directly from the Bible and having a Bible open with relevant scripture on the prayer table would emphasise the importance of the word of God. Excellent practice in offering pupils opportunities for more creative, individual responses is evident but is not yet embedded consistently across the school. Some inconsistency in marking and feedback means that, for some pupils, it is not always clear how to improve their work and understanding.

Leadership of religious education is a clear strength, with leaders and governors demonstrating deep commitment to ensuring religious education has high priority in the curriculum. Timetabling, staffing, professional development, and resources are at least comparable with other core subjects. The strong and inspiring headteacher and religious education lead impact positively on teaching and learning. The use of coaching and mentoring have improved the quality of teaching, evident in good and some outstanding teaching. This impact now needs to be consistent across the school. Leaders ensure planning is in line with the *RED*. However, further adaptation is needed to meet the needs of all groups of pupils and to strengthen links with Catholic social teaching. A variety of enrichment opportunities including drama and art effectively enhance pupils' understanding of religious education. For example, art workshops linked to themes such as God's gift of creation result in displays in school or in church. Leaders and governors have an established programme for self-evaluation but sharper analysis, and more decisive action through targeted support is needed to secure further improvement.

Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

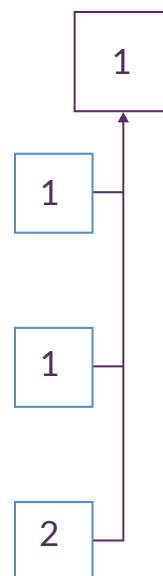
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship



Prayer and liturgy are central at St Paul's, enriched through a variety of approaches including art and music, and strengthened by close partnership with parish and families. Pupils engage attentively with prayer and reflection and by the end of Key Stage Two, demonstrate secure understanding of the liturgical year and of some of the different ways of praying, including meditation. Pupils value 'school traditions' such as the Easter play, and the annual pilgrimage walk, which take place during Lent. Faith council and Mini Vinnie members understand the importance of collaborating with their teachers and with each other. They are active in preparing creative and meaningful times of prayer and taking active roles in the weekly Mass as readers or servers. Pupils reflect on and evaluate what they have planned and delivered and these skills should now be developed further. They willingly share the importance of faith in their lives, most making connections with their learning. One comments, 'prayer makes my heart joyful'. They say that times of prayer inspire them to 'think about Judas' and 'make me want to be a good friend' and 'when people are mean, teachers talk to them, they are so kind and good'.

At St Paul's, prayer and liturgy are integral to school life, with frequent opportunities for pupils and families to participate in celebrations, liturgies, and weekly Mass in the adjacent parish church. During the school year, mission days, seasonal celebrations and parish-linked events allow staff, pupils and their families, and the parish community, to participate and engage in prayer and liturgy. Adult-led celebrations of the word, rooted in the Sunday gospel, help pupils connect scripture to their daily lives. Staff work hard to ensure they have the skills and confidence to provide age-appropriate and engaging times of prayer and reflection. For

example, from the Early Years, where children are encouraged to choose appropriate figures for retelling the Annunciation, to independently chosen scripture and prayers in upper Key Stage 2. Art, drama, and music are used appropriately to enhance prayer and parish celebrations. Staff are exploring a range of ways of praying and progression in prayer is building up through the school but this needs to be developed further and be fully embedded. Prayer spaces are well-resourced and reflect the liturgical season. However, consistent and regular use of the Bible in prayer would strengthen reverence for the word of God.

Leaders and governors place high emphasis on prayer and liturgy, ensuring it remains central to the life of the school. A clear policy and annual plan of provision support consistent practice in planning prayer and liturgical celebrations. Leaders, staff, pupils, parents and parishioners value the carefully planned weekly Mass, celebrations of the word, and opportunities to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Leaders should now fully implement the expectations of the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*, for example by inviting pupils and staff to engage and participate in the rich variety of ways of praying within the Catholic tradition outside of celebrations of the word. Staff feel well-supported by the deeply committed headteacher and deputy headteacher, who is the lead for prayer and liturgy, stating they 'have grown in confidence' through in-house formation and training. High priority is also given to resourcing the prayer life of the school, evident in the classroom prayer spaces, creative and informative displays, and in the time spent to ensure the professional development and formation of staff. Governors monitor the provision of prayer and liturgy through regular visits, pupil voice, and participation in school events. The school is supported by the strong commitment of the parish priest, who visits frequently and knows the school and pupils well, and the parish sister. Leaders recognise the need to evaluate provision more closely to ensure future plans successfully deepen family and community engagement.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Paul's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	105070
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3443324
Full postal address of the school	Farmfield Drive, Beechwood, Wirral, CH43 7TE
School phone number	0151 652 7828
Headteacher or Head of School	Mrs Chris Fenna
Chair of Governors	Mr Michael Brown
School Website	www.stpauls.wirral.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non Selective
Age-range of pupils	2 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	27 March 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The Inspection Team

Carol Morgan

Lead

Jean O'Keeffe

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