



St Pius X Catholic Primary School

URN: 149498

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Lancaster

05 February 2026 – 06 February 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

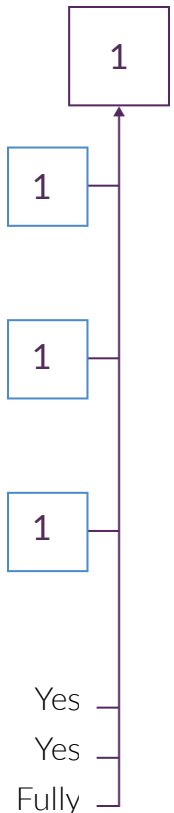
Collective worship (p.7)

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

- A joyful, welcoming and fully inclusive school that permeates Catholic values in all areas
- A safe and nurturing school family, at the heart of the community with strong links with parishioners and families.
- A strong, driven and inspirational headteacher with a dedicated and hard-working leadership team who inspire staff and pupils.
- A strong subject leader who is knowledgeable and passionate about Catholic education, ensuring that the school is continuing to embed the requirements of the Religious Education Directory.
- A committed and dedicated governing body that has a clear understanding of how St Pius X School can provide the best for their pupils.

What the school needs to improve

- Be proactive in sharing excellent practice with other schools across the Diocese, specifically in Catholic Life and Mission and Faith in Action.
- Ensure feedback in pupils' religious education books is consistent across all year groups.
- Provide opportunities for those who lead prayer and liturgy to develop skills of questioning so that they can encourage pupils to consider scriptural meaning

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

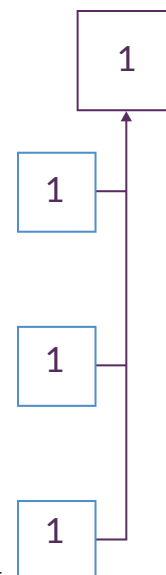
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 can talk confidently about the distinctive Catholic nature of St Pius X School and have a clear understanding about how the school mission statement helps them with their life choices stating 'gospel values come from the bible and show us how to live like Jesus'. Pupils feel valued, safe and cared about by adults in school. Pupils spoke passionately about their responsibilities to help those in need, stating that 'Jesus wants us to help those in need, because that is what He did'. The Laudato Si group have a good understanding of Pope Francis' document and understand their responsibility and duty to care for God's creation. They shared examples of initiatives they had led in school to raise awareness and model to others.

Pupils are respectful to each other and spoke of how they are guided by biblical teaching, following Jesus' example. Pupils can speak of how clergy, prayer and liturgy leader and staff help them with their faith. They enjoy celebrating church and school services to learn more about God.

Pupils are extremely proud of their school and their faith with one saying that 'knowing God makes me feel protected and not alone.' Another stated that 'God helps me get through the storms of life.'

The mission statement is lived out by all in school and is directly at its heart, being intrinsically woven into all aspects of school life. Beautiful displays remind everyone how the statement underpins everything that takes place in school.

Staff are committed to the school and their dedication to helping the children is very clear to see as they strive to provide the very best for the pupils and families.

St Pius X is a welcoming, caring school that embraces all pupils as unique children of God. The Pastoral Pod, The Nurture Nest, The Prayer Room, and St Joseph's Cabin are all examples of how school ensures best possible provision for every child.

Staff are excellent role models and the respect, support and trust they have for each other is evident. They provide the highest levels of pastoral care for pupils and their families, including the most vulnerable, with highly skilled staff in each provision to ensure the best possible outcomes for all pupils. The environment is outstanding, beautifully cared for and depicts the distinct nature of a Catholic school. Pupils are given the opportunity to attend Mass regularly at St Mary's or in school and the collaborative work with other local schools provides further opportunities.

The curriculum for relationships, sex and health education is carefully planned and sequenced from Early Years to Year 6. It meets statutory and diocesan requirements and is firmly rooted in the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Governors are committed and passionate about St Pius X School. They are regular visitors and proactive in contributing and promoting the Catholic life and mission of the school. Annual governor days demonstrate excellent practice and are well documented. Governors recognise their responsibilities as guardians of the school. They ensure that Christ remains at the centre of their school. They are knowledgeable about the school and value their inspirational headteacher. Governors work effectively with the senior leadership team, and they monitor and challenge standards regularly. They are involved in Catholic life, helping reach out to the poor and vulnerable. Leaders and governors are committed to Catholic Social Teaching and actively involved in the many examples to illustrate this. The governors prioritise the headteacher's wellbeing and the staff feel looked after by senior leaders. The governors are kept well informed by the school with regards to the Catholic curriculum and the school improvement plan has a clear focus on the embedding of the Religious Education Directory and prayer and liturgy requirements. The governors have secure knowledge of the self-evaluation process and have all had an input into it, with reviews taking place each term. Professional development is identified and staff have received appropriate career training and support. Induction processes are secure and effective, with new staff feeling very supported and valued

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

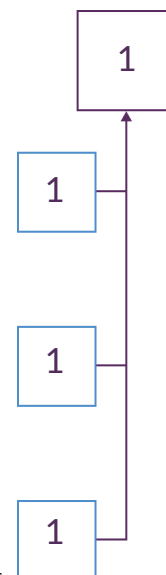
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 at St. Pius X demonstrate excellent knowledge, understanding and skills across the religious education curriculum. Teachers across the school have high expectations of pupils and routines are embedded from a very early age.

Behaviour in lessons is outstanding. Pupils concentrate exceptionally well and are interested learners who are committed to improving their knowledge and understanding. Pupils show engagement and enthusiasm for their learning and are confidently able to articulate their understanding and knowledge using a wide range of religious vocabulary. In one lesson looking at the Parable of the Treasure and the Pearl, one child shared "I think that every coin in the treasure chest is like a Gospel Value."

Pupils and staff take incredible pride in their work. Consequently, pupil workbooks are of a consistently high standard in content and presentation. The school makes excellent use of 'Book Creator' to record pupils' work, which older pupils use independently. Work in books and lessons demonstrates that pupils of all abilities are making progress from their starting points by knowing more, remembering more, and achieving more. Assessment is thorough and achievement is broadly in line with other core subjects. Data is collected half termly and the school are tracking pupil attainment and progress effectively.

Teachers' subject knowledge across the school is strong. Staff have a deep commitment to religious education. Teachers have the highest of expectations and value religious education as 'the core of the core.' Learning is progressive and sequential, with lessons that build over

time. In the strongest lessons, teachers made explicit links to previous learning and could link lessons to the pupils' understanding of living out their faith. In teaching about the Transfiguration, one teacher made links to previous learning about Moses and Elijah resulting in pupils being able to draw comparisons between these biblical figures and Jesus.

Teachers use questioning skilfully in lessons to promote thoughtful discussion and reflection. They provide pupils with feedback both verbally and in written form. Teachers plan carefully and provide a wide variety of learning opportunities to present their learning. Other adults are deployed effectively in the classroom to support pupils and learning. Resources are used thoughtfully and creatively to enhance delivery, which leads to enjoyable and engaging lessons. Where reflection was used in lessons, this was done skilfully and purposefully. For example, in one lesson *Visio Divina* was used to evoke thoughts and feelings from a religious piece of artwork. The half termly assessment sheets provide pupils with a clear understanding of what they have done well. There is some evidence in pupil books of the use of challenge questions to develop and deepen thinking. Leaders recognise that the development of consistency in this will enable pupils to recognise what they need to do to make further improvements.

Leaders are fastidious in ensuring that the curriculum for religious education is a faithful expression of the Directory. They have a clear vision for excellence, rooted in the mission of the Church. Both the headteacher and subject leader demonstrate leadership abilities within the Trust. Monitoring and evaluation are systematic, robust and focused on improving outcomes for pupils. Leaders give religious education the highest priority and are committed to providing good support and development opportunities for staff, thus ensuring confident and expert teaching.

The governors take an active role in monitoring the curriculum. They attend an annual 'Deep Dive Day' which includes scrutinising the action plan, pupils' books, pupil voice and data analysis. The governor for religious education meets regularly with the subject lead and has an up-to-date knowledge of religious education across the school. As a result, governors have a thorough understanding of the standards and requirements in religious education.

Leaders' and governors' self-evaluation of religious education is thorough and rigorous, and this has led to outstanding outcomes.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

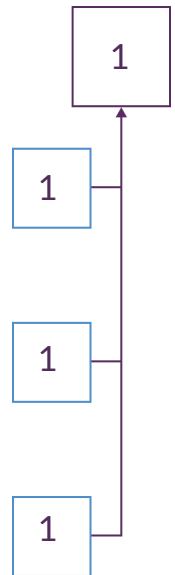
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

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



Pupils respond respectfully and reverently to prayer and liturgy experiences and fully participate attentively to prayerful silence, joyful singing and clear responses. The themed overview guides the older pupils who lead with pride and skill in class and to younger pupils in the prayer room weekly. A clear skills progression has been agreed across school and, observation of worship reflected this agreed format. Pupils demonstrate an excellent knowledge and understanding of the Church's liturgical year and how this is expressed in the prayer life of the school. Pupils and staff are supported by the prayer and liturgy leader who is skilled and zealous in supporting all with their faith and also in developing skills in leading worship. Pupils enjoy praying and spoke of how it has helped them out of school, turning to God at home in difficult situations. Their belief in God was articulated in discussions around their prayer life and faith. Discussions with pupils demonstrated an understanding about the importance of having faith in their lives. Pupils described how Bible stories have led them to action outside of school and with their daily choices. Pupils are keen to take part and described how they have liturgical ministries in Mass, both in school and in church and some pupils shared with pride their responsibilities as altar servers in church.

Prayer is central to life at St Pius X and there is a daily pattern of prayer. Prayer and liturgy sessions observed demonstrated a variety of ways of praying, including scripture reading, singing, traditional prayer, prayerful silence, spontaneous prayer and reflection time. Staff model prayer and liturgy sessions skilfully and calm and purposeful experiences were observed. Older year groups have the opportunity to lead prayer in class, and they do this with confidence and reverence. Scripture is at the heart of everything at St Pius X and intrinsic

links are made between the Bible passages and the prayer and liturgy themes. All the classrooms have dedicated prayer spaces with seasonally appropriate content and themes. An outdoor 'Peace Pole' has been placed in the school playground depicting different languages to consolidate the unity of all cultures and faiths within school. This has been shared nationally. Families are invited to the weekly celebration assembly which begins with an opportunity for the whole community to celebrate the Word of God. This is well attended and the parental questionnaires demonstrated how much this is appreciated. The beautiful prayer room is modelled on the layout of a church and provides a further space for silent prayer, shared prayer and liturgy and quiet contemplation for all.

The school has an up-to-date prayer and liturgy policy, and staff are aware of how this is used across school. A whole school calendar is in place for opportunities for Mass, holy days of obligation and important saint days. Leaders offer regular opportunities for staff's professional development, and the subject leader attends diocesan training. The subject leader has a secure knowledge of Catholic traditions and supports all staff to help develop Catholic knowledge. She has been instrumental in introducing the Religious Education Directory and The Prayer and Liturgy Directory and staff feel supported by her approachable and encouraging manner. Prayer and liturgy is monitored by the prayer and liturgy leader, and constructive feedback is given to teachers to aid understanding of directives in the guidance document. All staff understand the centrality of prayer and liturgy, and it underpins life at the school. Information about the quality of prayer and liturgy is shared with governors at meetings and there is evidence of deep challenge and scrutiny. Governors are committed to ensuring that pupils experience Mass in church and have apportioned funds to transport pupils every year for a whole school Mass. They are committed to funding transport to take classes every month to the neighbouring St Mary's Church.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Pius X Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	149498
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	9093606
Full postal address of the school	Schneider Road, BARROW IN FURNESS, LA14 4AA
School phone number	01229 828406
Headteacher or Head of School	Mr Kevin McGoldrick
Chair of Governors	Mrs Maureen Casey
School Website	www.st-piusx.cumbria.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Mater Christi Multi-Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	
Age-range of pupils	2 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	08 November 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The Inspection Team

Michelle Teresa Holden Lead

Nicola Sayers

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