

St John's Catholic Infant School

URN: 105082

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Shrewsbury

02 July 2026 – 03 July 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

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Yes

Yes

Fully

What the school does well

- Daily, through their 'loving actions, kind words and shining self-control', deeply committed leaders, staff, and pupils live out the gospel values and bear witness to their mission statement 'Love one another as I have loved you'.
- Pastoral care and inclusivity are strengths of this school. Pupils feel loved, safe, and nurtured; parents appreciate the support school leaders and staff provide for their children.
- The regular opportunities offered for praying and celebrating together is greatly valued by pupils, staff, and the wider school community.
- Through their strong support and commitment to ongoing professional development, the dedicated governors, headteacher, senior staff and the religious education subject lead drive improvements in religious education and prayer and liturgy.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of enrichment activities provided to practise and develop their faith. These activities also have a positive impact on their spiritual and moral development.

What the school needs to improve

- As part of the whole school curriculum review, ensure links to Catholic social teaching are identified and clearly mapped so that pupils can articulate the theology behind their actions.
- In religious education, ensure that pupils understand and respond to feedback so that they are clear on how to improve their work.
- In religious education, support pupils to deepen their learning and understanding through planned and consistent use of age-appropriate discern questions.

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

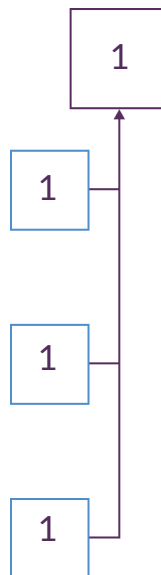
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 John's, pupils understand and live out their school mission statement, 'Love one another as I have loved you' through their chosen values of 'love, kindness and self-control'. Pupils know that they are loved by God and say that they are each 'unique'. They feel safe and cared for by their teachers. They are welcoming, polite, and deeply respectful towards others. Pupils talk confidently about Catholic social teaching and how they put it into practice. For example, this year, with the focus on solidarity, 'Mary's Meals' benefits from their inventive fundraising and they are now an 'Ambassador School' for the global charity. The Eco Council environmental work links to the principle of stewardship. As one pupil says, 'Jesus inspires me; He guides me to be the best I can be'. In lessons and around the school, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They proudly undertake leadership roles from the earliest years, including setting up a focus for class prayer, role-play illustrating scripture, and leading prayers, while the school council provides a strong pupil voice that supports school improvement.

The school's mission statement clearly reflects Jesus's instruction to his disciples. It is at the heart of this welcoming, inclusive, and supportive school. Relationships among staff, and between staff and pupils, are strong, respectful, and rooted in care. Staff demonstrate their deep commitment each day through their exemplary actions. They bear witness through high-quality pastoral support, especially for the most vulnerable pupils. The school provides many opportunities that support the spiritual and moral development of both staff and pupils. For example, a planned enrichment day brings together the school community, junior school, governors, parents, and parishioners, in a pilgrimage walk to St John Plessington High School. Across the school, the Catholic ethos is evident in striking displays including those

focused on Cafod, Mary's Meals, the liturgical year and seasons, and prayer spaces. Explicit links to Catholic social teaching, the fruits of the Holy Spirit from which the school values are drawn, and British values, are embedded in the age-appropriate personal, social, health and economic education, and relationships and sex education.

Leaders and governors have a strong understanding of their core duty to ensure that Christ is at the heart of this school, and they treat this as a clear priority. Their commitment to fulfilling the Church's mission in education inspires others. Staff report that the mission statement and values are central to every aspect of school life and they fully understand and support this mission. They feel well-supported by leaders. Leaders and governors fully embrace diocesan policies and strong partnerships with St John's junior school, and with the parish, demonstrate their commitment to working together for the common good. Parishioners are regularly invited to share in enrichment days and other school activities and engagement with parents is equally strong. Parents appreciate the way in which the school's mission is threaded through its activities saying, 'We truly appreciate how faith is woven into everyday school life and helps the children grow both spiritually and personally'. Leaders' and governors' witness to the school's mission and to Catholic social teaching is evident in their commitment to supporting and nurturing those in greatest need. For example, creating a calm room for pupils who need access to a quiet, peaceful space. Across the whole-school curriculum, subject leaders plan collaboratively to ensure that the word of God and the impact of Catholic beliefs are reflected in individual subject areas. Governors also take regular account of parents' and pupils' views to further develop the Catholic life and mission of the school.

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

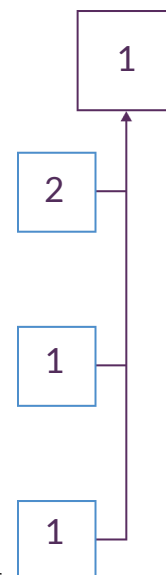
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 are developing a secure understanding of the learning required by the *Religious Education Directory*. From their starting points, pupils of all abilities make consistently good progress. Pupils are religiously literate and engaged explaining that they 'enjoy religious education because teachers make lessons interesting and fun'. Pupils demonstrate a growing awareness of the demands of religious commitment, reflecting confidently on their learning and explaining how it influences their daily lives. They recall prior learning well, making meaningful links with current learning. In some lessons, pupils ask thoughtful questions and use key vocabulary accurately to deepen their understanding; however, this needs further development. Pupils are attentive, collaborate effectively with their peers, and respond well to creative and challenging activities. For instance, a group organise themselves into a freeze frame to illustrate a church, showing not just the building but the crucifix, and the community praying. Pupils produce good and sometimes high-quality work, which shows emerging creativity. Although pupils receive oral and sometimes written feedback on their learning, they find it difficult to say what they need to do to improve. Nearly all pupils achieve above average attainment, with all pupils achieving at least expected outcomes.

Teachers are confident and have a high level of subject knowledge. All teachers have gained the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies or are studying for it. They have clear expectations for religious education and pupils know this. Teachers know their pupils well, adapting lesson planning so that all pupils' learning is extended. During lessons teachers ensure that pupils have space for time and reflection on their learning, which supports their spiritual and moral

development. In the best lessons, teachers' effective and skilful questioning identifies where pupils are in their understanding. They adapt their teaching so that pupils learn extremely well. However, this needs to be more consistent across the school. Teachers use a range of creative opportunities such as studying religious art and sculpture. These motivate pupils, allowing them to express their responses in a variety of forms, including written. High-quality resources, including other adults, effectively support pupils' learning. In lessons, oral feedback to pupils is relevant and specific. However, pupils find it hard to recall what they need to do to improve. Therefore, planned use of written feedback which requires a response from pupils would enable them to make more rapid progress and would inform assessment.

Leaders and governors ensure that the religious education curriculum at St John's is closely aligned to the *Religious Education Directory*. They are determined that religious education is resourced as the leading core subject. A strength of the school is leaders' and governors' commitment to professional development for all staff. Priority is given to ensuring staff attend diocesan training and formation, and that they receive support from cluster and in-school training. The very experienced religious education subject leader inspires others in pursuit of outstanding teaching and learning. The subject leader and senior colleagues support others through modelling, coaching, and sharing best practice. Across the school, therefore, teaching is at least consistently good, and some is outstanding. The spiral curriculum is planned so that pupils revisit previous topics in a more demanding way. The needs of different groups of learners are addressed through adaptive planning, which includes creative and practical activities as well as written responses. The school provides a wide range of enrichment activities to support and enhance pupils' learning in religious education. Monitoring and evaluation of religious education is informative and effective.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

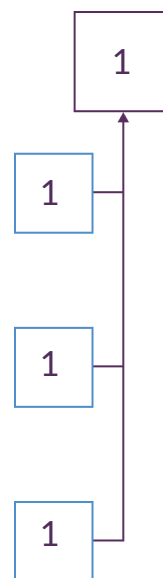
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

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 are deeply engaged in their experiences of prayer and speak confidently about its meaning. One pupil says, 'When I pray, I am talking to God'. They value times of 'sacred silence', join in traditional and daily prayers, and sing enthusiastically. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a good understanding of a range of prayers including traditional, follow the leader, and spontaneous prayers. They describe how prayer changes across the liturgical year, including stations of the cross during Lent, and the crowning of Mary in May. They explain how scripture, symbols, silence and time to reflect influence their thoughts and actions. For example, a pupil says, 'When I say sorry and ask God to forgive me, I know I need to forgive other people as well.' During celebrations of the word, from the early years onward, pupils show reverence to the Bible and acclaim the gospel. As they progress through the school, pupils are supported to plan prayer times and to choose appropriate scripture. For example, by Year 2, pupils can recall Jesus's miracle of feeding the five thousand and choose this gospel reading for an assembly about 'Mary's Meals'. They can reflect on what went well and identify how to improve their times of prayer.

Prayer and liturgy are at the heart of life at St John's. Meetings begin with appropriately planned prayer and reflection. They regularly build 'sacred silence' into classroom prayer and school celebrations of the word. The richness of the Catholic tradition is evident in the variety of prayers shared by staff and pupils throughout the school day. Across the year, pupils, and the wider school community benefit from a broad range of meaningful experiences, including a visit to Christ the King cathedral in Liverpool, a pilgrimage of Hope with the junior school, and the use of travelling cribs and crosses. These opportunities provide creative and engaging

ways for pupils to deepen their spiritual understanding. Carefully chosen scripture passages link to celebrations, enabling those present to participate more fully. Staff feel well-supported to lead celebrations of the word and prayer times with confidence and skill. In turn, staff guide pupils to plan and lead age-appropriate prayer. Despite limited space around the school, engaging displays, prayer areas, resources, and artefacts are well-cared for and provide opportunities for prayer and reflection. The school also works hard to engage families through a range of experiences including class Masses, enrichment days, and 'Stay and Pray' opportunities.

The school's clear and comprehensive policy effectively supports staff and pupils in planning prayer and liturgy. Leaders and governors fully understand that as they progress through the school, pupils' participation and skills increase. Therefore, they ensure that traditional prayers and different forms of prayer are taught appropriately for pupils' age and ability. A well-planned annual programme celebrates feast days, mission days, and other special occasions involving both the school and parish communities. Celebrations during Holy Week and Masses in school and in church are highly valued by pupils, staff, and parishioners. The Blessed Sacrament Day in school provides a wonderful opportunity for the wider school community to take part in worship. A member of staff says, 'the children thoroughly enjoy our Blessed Sacrament Day' and another says it is 'a blessed day'. Leaders and governors prioritise high-quality prayer and liturgy through diocesan and in-house training. Senior leaders are inspiring models of excellent practice in leading prayer and liturgy, and this enables teachers to plan and lead high-quality celebrations and prayer times. This is supported by regular monitoring and evaluation.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St John's Catholic Infant School
School unique reference number (URN)	105082
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3443362
Full postal address of the school	Old Chester Road, Wirral, CH63 7LH
School phone number	0151 645 5291
Headteacher or Head of School	Miss Catherine Sharkey
Chair of Governors	Rebekah Talbot, Niamh Larkin
School Website	www.stjohnsinfantschool.co.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
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	08 July 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The Inspection Team

Carol Morgan

Lead

Michael Glynn

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