

# St John's Catholic Primary School

URN: 151756

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Shrewsbury

11–12 June 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

2

#### Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

2

#### Collective worship (p.7)

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

2

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

2

## Compliance statement

- The school meets the requirement as laid down by the Bishops' Conference in that it devotes at least 10% of the taught timetable to the teaching of religious education
- The school is fully compliant with the additional requirements of the diocesan bishop in that its admissions policy is in line with the diocesan policy, its schemes for religious education and relationships and sex education (RSE) are the required schemes, and personal, social and health education (PSHE) is delivered through a Catholic lens
- The school has fully addressed all areas for improvement relating to offering more and regular opportunities for pupils to independently plan and lead prayer and liturgy and addressing the inconsistencies identified in teaching and assessment.

## What the school does well

- Pupils are confident, passionate and articulate ambassadors for the school and they obviously gain much from, and contribute much to, St John's Catholic Primary School
- Pupils fully understand the importance and significance of the school's mission statement, 'Let your light shine' and how it underpins their everyday life at school
- Leaders and governors have prioritised the implementation of the new religious education scheme ensuring appropriate continuing professional development is delivered to all staff. As a result the school is well advanced in its implementation
- Staff are excellent role models and are fully committed to supporting all aspects of their Catholic school. They are well supported by dedicated senior leaders
- Provision for prayer and liturgy is firmly embedded in the daily life of the school and enriches the spiritual and moral development of all

## What the school needs to improve

- Review the school's prayer and liturgy policy to ensure it reflects the expectations within the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory* with clear expectations for each year group, so that all staff understand how prayer develops
- Ensure that leaders' and governors' monitoring of Catholic life and mission, religious education, and prayer and liturgy is rigorous enough to result in strategic actions which improve outcomes and provision
- Improve marking and feedback to pupils to ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of their next steps in learning.

## 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

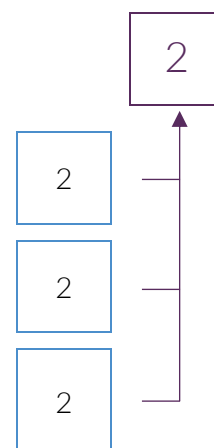
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### 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



St John's Catholic Primary School is a good school, valued and loved by its community where pupils are happy and secure and know that they are unique members of God's family. Pupils understand how distinctive their school is as a Catholic community and proudly talk about the beautiful displays and religious artefacts that enrich the school's environment and mean so much to them. Pupils know and love their school's recently reviewed mission statement, 'Let your light shine' and they are beginning to understand what the school's mission statement means to them. One pupil explained that it was important to change the mission statement to make it, 'more age appropriate'. The school's Catholic social teaching curriculum supports pupils in understanding their responsibilities to the world God has given them. They enthusiastically participate in fundraising activities, such as donating to Cafod, Mary's Meals, local foodbanks and a community outreach programme but do not yet take a leading role. They understand the meaning of the 'Common good' and say, 'We are all responsible' and 'We should share with others.' Older pupils enjoy taking responsibility in a range of groups, including the faith council, the school council and the eco-warriors group. Pupils' behaviour, supported by the school's values curriculum, is excellent and they respect and care for all within the school community.

The mission statement is now central to all within the community of St John's, and it is shaping relationships and provision at the school; one member of staff commented, there is, 'A clear focus on living out the mission not just in assemblies but across the school.' Staff are fully committed to the school's mission and value the growing links with the parish, including attendance at parish Masses and other liturgies. Staff say, 'These really help connect us with families and the parish'. Parents value the contribution staff make to the formation of their children, particularly their support of the parish based sacramental programme. They say, 'This

is only a small part of how wonderful St. John's school is. I couldn't have asked for a better Catholic school for all three of my daughters to have attended.' St John's ensures pupils develop a greater understanding of other faiths and they learn to value and respect differences. An 'Ears of tolerance' display demonstrates the priority given to such support. Pastoral care is good and well resourced, with specially trained staff, including a play therapist, emotional first aid trained staff and a mental health lead which ensures appropriate support is given to staff and pupils' emotional and well-being needs. The school's provision for relationships and sex education is excellent with a bespoke programme that fully meets diocesan and statutory requirements and is faithful to the teaching of the Church.

The recently established senior leadership team, supported by experienced governors, are committed to the development of the Catholic life of the school and they are very good role models, ensuring that Christ is always at the heart of school life. They have ensured that full parity is given to all aspects of religious education and are very supportive of all parish and diocesan initiatives. Governors support staff's professional development and their well-being, and they have had some involvement in the self-evaluation of the Catholic life and mission of the school. Partnership with the parish is becoming stronger and the school benefits from regular visits by the clergy to celebrate Mass in school. Monitoring and evaluation processes at all levels are not sufficiently strategic and so they have limited impact on outcomes.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

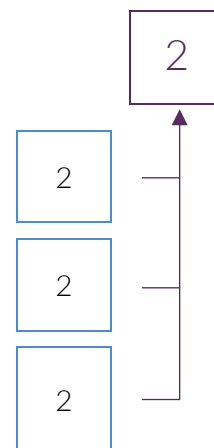
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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 are developing secure knowledge, understanding and skills as required by the *Religious Education Directory* (RED) and make good progress, irrespective of their starting points, because of focused teaching and a well-planned curriculum. In most lessons pupils are supported well and helped to make links to prior learning and remember what they have learnt. This is demonstrated when learning about other faiths as pupils can refer to prior learning on Vatican II and speak maturely about the need to respect people of other faiths. Through the use of strategies such as 'I wonder' questions, pupils are becoming more religiously literate, can reflect on their learning and respond with growing confidence to questions such as, 'If Jesus was Jewish, why aren't we?' Pupils enjoy challenge in their religious education lessons and demonstrate good understanding of key concepts, particularly pupils in upper Key Stage 2. In most lessons pupils are engaged and work independently across a variety of tasks. Behaviour in lessons is very good, and teachers use a range of strategies, including 'movement breaks', to manage behaviour and motivate pupils. The content of written work in books is usually of good quality but too often presentation is careless and untidy. Standards in religious education are comparable with other core subjects, but pupils are not always clear of their next steps because of inconsistent marking and feedback.

Through access to a wide range of training and the support of dedicated senior leaders, teachers are generally confident in their subject knowledge and effective in their delivery of religious education lessons. One teacher comments, 'Training and resources like *The Vine & the Branches* have helped build confidence with teaching religious education.' Teachers value the way religious education enriches other subjects and their relationships with their pupils. They are fully committed to ongoing professional development. Planning is thorough and consistent across all phases and teachers are becoming more confident in assessment practices and building on prior

learning to improve learning outcomes. Parents value the emphasis school puts on supporting pupils to reflect on their learning. One parent comments, 'My daughter enjoys the religious education provision and will come home to discuss the philosophical aspects of her learning and religion at home without prompting.' Teachers and support staff work together effectively and use interventions such as 'quiet' or 'safe spaces' to support more vulnerable pupils in accessing the curriculum. Teachers generally have high expectations of pupils who are keen to do well and the creativity within lessons is improving outcomes for all pupils. Behaviour for learning is good and all relationships between pupils and adults are warm and affirming. In the most effective lessons observed teachers demonstrate good questioning skills ensuring pupils can consolidate and extend their learning.

Leaders and governors ensure that provision for religious education fully reflects the requirements of the RED, and that religious education has full parity with other core subjects. They have prioritised the provision of good quality resources which has enhanced provision within *The Vine & the Branches* and demonstrates the high priority given to resourcing religious education by leaders and governors. Leaders and governors ensure appropriate provision is made within timetables for teaching religious education and they are committed to supporting all staff in their continuing professional development. The recently appointed subject leader, supported by the very knowledgeable headteacher, is becoming more accurate in her evaluation of the school's provision for religious education and in her understanding of how to develop the subject further and is making a positive impact. More rigour is required in all monitoring and evaluation processes to secure improved 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

2

#### Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

#### Leadership

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

2

2

Pupils at St John's enjoy the varied opportunities that school provides for them to pray together. They are reverent, respectful and participate well in times of prayer and reflection, showing ability to reflect thoughtfully on scripture. They sing with confidence and great joy. They enjoy the variety of resources used, such as music, to enrich prayer experiences. One pupil said, 'I enjoy listening to the music, it makes me relax.' Pupils, appropriate to their age, are familiar with a variety of praying such as meditative, spontaneous and traditional prayer and the school's prayer book makes clear what school's expectations are. Pupils can clearly articulate what prayer means to them as demonstrated when an early years' child made a sign of the cross when asked, 'What is prayer?' They have a growing understanding of Catholic tradition and practice and are enjoying learning more about their class saints, such as St Catherine of Siena, and St Vincent de Paul and reflecting on what they can learn from their lives. Pupils are becoming confident in planning and leading prayer, and teachers sensitively support them in evaluating experiences when praying and reflecting. They can relate their times of daily prayer to their growing knowledge and understanding of the Church's liturgical year.

Prayer and liturgy are central to school life. Senior leaders have worked very hard to raise its profile even further by ensuring there is a consistency of approach in planning such experiences and through the purchase of good quality resources to enhance provision. 'We ensure there is a multitude of opportunities for pupils to be reflective, grow in their faith journey and embrace the love of God.' Generally, there is a daily pattern of prayer, as written in the school's policy but it is not always consistently followed. Staff are good role models in many aspects of prayer and liturgy, and they say they are proud of the work they have been doing as, 'Children seem more involved in prayer and liturgy now, especially with things like pupil-led worship, Family Mass, and Stay and Pray sessions.' Staff use their various skills to enrich provision, and all experiences of

prayer and liturgy are carefully planned and seasonally appropriate. The use of scripture is prioritised within prayer and liturgy, but school should now ensure that scripture is always proclaimed from the Bible and that pupils learn the appropriate responses to greet the gospel. Prayer spaces within classrooms are carefully created, reflecting the significance of the liturgical calendar and celebrating pupils' work and school is beginning to develop prayer spaces beyond the classroom. The subject leader liaises with the parish priest to plan prayer and liturgy across the school year, and they are currently looking at more creative ways to further involve parents and carers in such experiences.

The school's recently adopted prayer and liturgy policy requires review to ensure there is a clarity of language and purpose within it and that it reflects the expectations in the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*. Leaders and governors, supported, by the parish priest, ensure that opportunities to celebrate Mass and other liturgies are prioritised in planning the school calendar and there are regular opportunities for all to celebrate together as a joyful faith community. Continuing professional development opportunities are provided for all staff and governors and such training is valued and well attended. Leaders and governors have a good understanding of our Catholic tradition and recognise the importance of prioritising resources for prayer and liturgy. The school's strategic planning has not focused sufficiently on the progression of skills in prayer and liturgy, and this has impacted on outcomes and provision.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St John's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	151756
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8933350
Full postal address of the school	St John's Catholic Primary School, Innage Gardens, BRIDGNORTH, WV16 4HW
School phone number	01746762061
Headteacher	Christina Derwas
Chair of governors	Edward Beards
School Website	<a href="http://www.sjrc.co.uk">www.sjrc.co.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	A Voluntary Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	20/03/2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

## The inspection team

Roisin Moores  
Michael Glynn

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