

St John's Catholic Junior School

URN: 105080

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Shrewsbury

01–02 October 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

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

- Ten percent of teaching time is dedicated to religious education. *The Vine and the Branches* is implemented across years 1 to 6 and the Early Years, delivering the requirements of the *Religious Education Directory*.
- The school fulfils its statutory duty to teach relationships, sex and health education, and uses the *Life to the Full Plus* scheme. The personal, social, health and economic education is delivered through a Catholic lens.
- The school has responded fully to areas for improvement from the previous inspection and is developing these to meet the demands of the *Religious Education Directory* and *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*.

What the school does well

- The committed and passionate leaders and governors, supported by the clergy and parish, ensure that the school mission 'Love one another as I have loved you' is lived out by all.
- Engagement with pupils, families, and the parish, is strong; they feel part of this flourishing Catholic community.
- St John's is a warm, welcoming and inclusive school which nurtures pupils' spiritual, emotional and physical development so that they develop a sense of worth and respect for others.
- High-quality professional development and formation, both external and internal, supports effective teaching and learning in religious education.
- Prayer and liturgy are central to the life of this school, with many opportunities for the school community to celebrate together.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that Catholic social teaching that is deeply rooted in scripture is integrated in curriculum planning across all subjects.
- Provide extensive opportunities for pupils to use a wide variety of creative approaches in their learning in religious education.
- Ensure there is a clear and comprehensive strategy for pupils to build up an age-appropriate progression of skills enabling them to plan and lead diverse ways of praying.

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

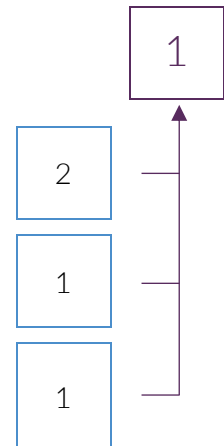
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 at St John's Catholic Primary School demonstrate a strong sense of Catholic identity, self-worth, and belonging. They recognise their school as a special place and actively participate in parish and local fundraising events. Their support for global organisations such as Cafod, reflects their commitment to the school's mission to 'Love one another as I have loved you.' Their respectful behaviour in lessons and around the school reflects their commitment to treating everyone with dignity and kindness. Pupils say staff help and support them. Pupils speak confidently about their faith, recalling celebrations throughout the liturgical year, including the Passover meal during Holy Week. They describe how their faith inspires them to love God, care for the world, and support one another. This demonstrates a clear understanding of Catholic values and beliefs. The Mini Vinnies meet with other Mini Vinnies and enjoy activities together and sharing ideas. Parents affirm this, saying, 'Our Catholic values are a part of everything done by the children at St John's every day.' To further enrich pupils' understanding, clear mapping of Catholic social teaching in the wider curriculum, for instance on rights and responsibilities, would help them make deeper connections between faith and everyday life.

All staff, including those new to the school, are deeply committed to living out the school's mission, which is rooted in the word of God. The parish priest says, 'St John's school is not only Catholic by name; it lives the faith'. The school community fosters a safe, calm, joyful and inclusive environment for all with strong pastoral support appreciated by families. A pastoral pop-in for pupils at lunchtime is run by experienced staff. For instance, one parent is grateful for staff supporting her child through a recent family bereavement. Staff are excellent role models, working as a team to support pupils, families, and each other. Newer staff appreciate the support they receive from all colleagues. The commitment of staff permeates the everyday life of the

school, demonstrating a strong community approach to their mission, embracing the mission statement and being inspirational witnesses to it. Staff willingly contribute to and participate in parish activities and those of the wider community. Some of the artwork based on 'Pilgrims of Hope' is presented to the parish. The behaviour policy encompasses explicit links to Gospel values. This supports staff in developing pupils' understanding of how their Catholic faith influences their daily lives.

Leaders' and governors' demonstrate a deep and inspirational commitment to the Catholic life and mission of the school. Their decisions consistently prioritise those in greatest need. Flourishing links with the parish enrich the school community, with parishioners and clergy actively involved in events and celebrations. Parishioners are invited to celebrations of Mass in school and in church. Recent staff changes are seen as an opportunity to renew and strengthen the school's commitment to its mission. Parental and staff responses are overwhelmingly positive. They say that 'wonderful leadership', both present and past, 'really ensures that the Catholic ethos of our school is lived by all'. The school has successful strategies for engaging with parents, for example, parents collaborating with pupils to create stained glass windows, with artwork reflecting themes from the jubilee year of hope. Staff appreciate the exemplary pastoral care they experience. Leaders are excellent role models, nurturing and developing staff. They commit enthusiastically to a working partnership with the diocese and local schools, and governor and staff training and development is of a high quality. Parent, pupil, and staff views are sought to help governors evaluate the effectiveness of the Catholic life and mission of the school.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

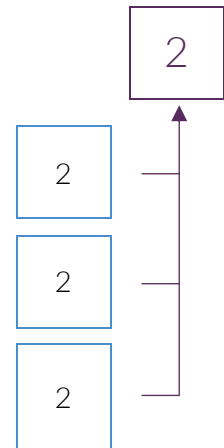
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



As required by the *Religious Education Directory*, pupils at St John's develop secure knowledge, understanding, and skills in religious education. They articulate how their learning impacts their behaviour and choices, showing a growing ability to understand how faith influences their daily lives. Engagement and behaviour in lessons are good across the school. Most pupils concentrate well and, according to their age and stage of development, can work independently for longer periods. They confidently ask thoughtful questions, trusting that adults will support them in understanding what they are learning. Pupils are compassionate and supportive of each other, for example, helping peers who find tasks challenging. Pupils deepen their understanding and retain key concepts because they are given regular opportunities to revisit prior learning. They say they enjoy their learning in religious education, know what to do to improve, and particularly enjoy being given opportunities for creative responses to their learning. Their work is well-presented and reflects the high standards expected in core subjects. Pupils take pride in their achievements, which contributes to a sense of ownership and motivation in their learning. Parents are invited to visit school to see pupils' work at the end of each topic.

Religious education is a high priority across the school, and this is reflected in the confidence and commitment of all staff. Teachers new to the school demonstrate growing subject knowledge and a clear understanding of how religious education shapes pupils' views of their world. This commitment is effectively communicated to pupils through teachers' high expectations for the quality of pupils' work and the relevance of their learning to everyday life. Adult support in all lessons is calm, responsive, effective, and enhances learning in both group and individual activities. Adaptive teaching is embedded across the school, and a range of strategies motivate and support pupils of all abilities. As a result, most pupils with additional needs make good progress. Effective questioning by teachers supports pupils in deepening their

understanding of what they are studying. Feedback is provided during lessons, helping pupils to recognise their strengths and areas for improvement. Pupils are regularly given time in lessons to reflect on how their learning influences their behaviour, and this supports their moral and spiritual development. Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to present their work in diverse ways. However, this could be developed further by providing additional creative ways for recording and expressing pupils' learning.

Leaders and governors are committed to ensuring that the school is fully compliant with national and diocesan directives. The religious education curriculum meets the requirements of the *Religious Education Directory*. Both the inspirational headteacher and acting deputy headteacher who also leads religious education, regularly report pupil progress and development to link governors and the governing board. Religious education is well-resourced and in line with other core subjects and policies. Professional development and formation are a strength. Staff benefit from diocesan, internal, external, and cluster-based training. New staff feel well-supported in developing both subject knowledge and pedagogy. Governors and leaders prioritise well-planned opportunities to support progress for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. A range of enrichment opportunities enhances pupils' learning. Monitoring of religious education has taken place but it now needs a sharper focus to identify strategies that encourage deeper level questioning by pupils. This would support pupils' understanding in religious education and its implications for their spiritual and moral development. Leaders regularly share action plans and evaluations with governors. However, a more strategic approach to monitoring would strengthen their commitment to achieving 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

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 actively participate in celebrations of the word, both adult and pupil-led, which are planned in line with the liturgical year. Pupils appreciate the opportunities they are given to reflect during lessons. Pupil prayer leaders confidently articulate their roles in planning and supporting prayer. Across all classes, pupils engage well in daily prayer times, such as the Angelus, which is led by pupils. Throughout the school, Mark 10 Mission engages pupils in: listening respectfully to the gospel; singing hymns and songs of praise with enthusiasm; traditional prayers; and prayers relevant to the feast or scripture. Pupils understand the elements of meaningful prayer spaces and liturgical colours. They enjoy weekly activities which ask them to live out their mission and they explain how this supports them in putting their faith into action. They identify October as 'the month of the Rosary.' Pupils recall key school and parish liturgical events such as the Passover meal held during Holy Week. As pupils progress through the school, further support in exploring a wider range of ways of praying would enhance their ability to plan and lead diverse ways of praying for others and would deepen their own prayer life.

Prayer and liturgy are at the heart of life at St John's school. Each year, the school and parish plan together meaningful and engaging prayer and liturgy from the Catholic tradition. There is a growing use of wider forms of prayer, which now needs to be implemented across the school. Scripture, relevant to the liturgical season, is an intrinsic part of the prayer and liturgical celebrations throughout the year. Senior leaders are inspiring role models who demonstrate exemplary practice and support staff in planning and leading prayer. This means that staff are able to provide support for pupils. Creative and visually engaging displays around the school reflect themes from the liturgical calendar and Catholic social teaching, enriching the spiritual environment. The school actively seeks ways to involve parents in its faith life. A recent example includes an art project on stained glass windows, linked to the jubilee year of hope. School and parish prepare pupils for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. Parents are invited to

'Stay and Pray' sessions and to celebrate the sacraments during Mass with classes or the parish. Well maintained prayer tables in classrooms offer spaces for personal or group prayer, fostering a reflective and prayerful environment.

Leaders provide a clear and effective prayer and liturgy policy that supports staff preparation and age-appropriate pupil participation. The policy outlines annual provision, including the sacramental programme. However, it would benefit from a clearer strategy for developing pupils' skills and understanding over time, for instance, in planning and leading age-appropriate contemplative prayer on passages of scripture. With the clergy, the school plans key liturgical events, such as the washing of the feet during Lent. This provides powerful moments of reflection for the whole school community. Staff, including those new to the school, engage positively with the school's professional development and formation opportunities, which are a leadership priority. Experienced leaders are confident in their understanding of participation and ministry. They support colleagues in planning prayer and liturgy. For instance, introducing new planning sheets and modelling exemplary practice. Leaders and governors provide good quality resources to support the delivery of high-quality prayer. Governors regularly receive reports from leaders and link governors about the quality and provision of prayer and liturgy in the school. They seek the views of pupils and frequently participate in school celebrations and Masses. A clearer strategy aligned with the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*, would further broaden pupils' development of forms of prayer such as silence and meditation.

Information about the school

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| Full name of school | St John's Catholic Junior School |
| School unique reference number (URN) | 105080 |
| School DfE Number (LAESTAB) | 3443360 |
| Full postal address of the school | Old Chester Road, Bebington, Wirral, Merseyside, CH63 7LH |
| School phone number | 01516459615 |
| Executive headteacher | N/A |
| Headteacher | Mrs Elaine Mullins |
| Chair of Governors | Mrs Gillian Dyche and Mr Anthony Rutherford |
| School Website | https://www.stjohns-junior.wirral.sch.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 | 7-11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Date of last denominational inspection | 10 July 2018 |
| Previous denominational inspection grade | 2 |

The inspection team

Carol Morgan
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 |

