



St Pius X Catholic Primary School

URN: 146249

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Middlesbrough

13–14 November 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

2

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

1

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

Compliance statement

- The school's religious education programme ensures that 10% or more of the timetable is dedicated to teaching and learning in the subject.
- The school follows the guidance of the diocesan bishop in its choice of religious education resource for teaching.
- School leaders have worked hard and effectively to have impact on those areas identified for improvement at the last inspection, including links with the Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust, pupils' knowledge of ways of praying, and the quality of teaching in religious education.

What the school does well

- The school mission statement – *Christ be our Light* – is known, understood, and lived by all. Therefore, it has immense impact on the Catholic life of the school.
- Passionate and insightful leadership provides inspiration to staff and pupils alike.
- The chaplaincy provision is valued by everyone and has significant impact on the quality of the prayer life of the school, and pupils' knowledge of scripture.
- Thoughtful and measured development of religious education is driving up standards of teaching and learning.
- Pupils' understanding of Catholic social teaching is a major influence on exemplary behaviour throughout the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Enable all pupils to show signs of emerging individuality and creativity through more opportunities to present their learning using a variety of forms of expression.
- Develop all pupils' ability to articulate their religious literacy through consistent effective questioning that challenges them to deepen their responses.
- Provide regular opportunities for older pupils to independently take responsibility for planning and leading prayer and liturgy.

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

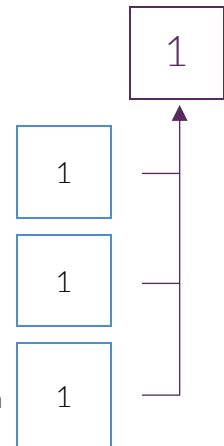
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 Pius X clearly know they are valued and cared for as unique persons, created by God. They exhibit highly positive attitudes to school life, having understood and embraced the values of aspiration, resilience, and collaboration. They understand the theology, in child-friendly terms, of the Catholic mission of the school, and how they can help to implement it. *Christ be our Light* is not only embroidered on the uniform worn by pupils, it is taken into each day as a duty, to shine the light of Christ on others. Their behaviour is exemplary, and they have deep respect for themselves and others. 'We see Jesus in everyone, and act like him,' was a pupil's comment that typifies the views of all. They relish the junior leadership opportunities the school provides. These are plentiful and varied, ensuring that all pupils experience an identified responsibility of being in a group that has clear purpose within the Catholic ethos. The school council, eco-warriors, sports leaders, mini-vinnies, prayer leaders, house captains, headstarters, digital leaders and peer mediators are all active in promoting the school's mission and attending to the needs of others, as part of their developed understanding of Catholic Social Teaching. They relish the opportunities for spiritual and moral development that the Chaplaincy provision offers, highly valuing its gift of regular prayer and reflection.

The school mission statement has a significant impact on the life of the school, helping to unite the community, and embed its particular charism, so that the school is a beacon of Catholic practice, rooted in the Word of God in scripture. All understand and embrace the mission statement, and it pervades the school's daily life. Staff are role models in embracing and promoting the mission, and their enthusiasm and active participation in implementing it is clearly in evidence. The school's sense of open welcome is shared with all, with particular concern for those most vulnerable. Pastoral care, in multiple layers, seeks to prioritise those with greatest

need, but also reaches out to all who have need, exemplified in the charitable works undertaken and the active role in the local community, the serving of refreshments after parish masses and the visits to a residential care home being typical examples. Chaplaincy provision is a central and celebrated aspect of the life and mission of the school. The chaplaincy programme is skilfully planned and implemented to nurture the spiritual and moral development of pupils and staff, providing a wide range of experiences that inspire.

Leaders are fastidious and energetic in promoting the Catholic mission and are a source of inspiration to staff. They are thoughtful and reflective, joyful, and determined, and have skilfully embedded an ethos that ensures that Christ is at the heart of the school. The development of the understanding of Catholic social teaching, including a special year's programme of introduction, is a prime example of how carefully leaders have gone about ensuring that staff and pupils can take ownership of its principles within the breadth of the school's curriculum and in its daily activities. School leaders are well supported by governors and the Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust, who are active in evaluating, challenging, and supporting all developments. They are highly ambitious in their desire for continuous improvement. Upholding the Church's preferential option for the poor can be seen in decisions to target resources, such as the Stepping Stones programme and the support for parents. Leaders and governors have overseen a flourishing partnership with the local community, particularly the parish. They ensure that excellent structures are in place to support the wellbeing of staff. Continuing professional development on the Catholic life is regular and very effective.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

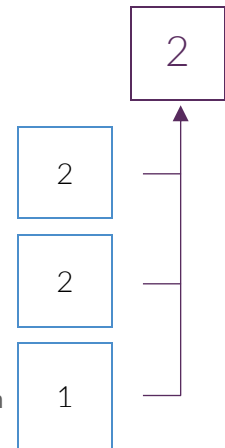
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 make good progress in religious education, and, in comparison with their starting points when they enter the school in the Early Years, consistently good progress across their school career. Thus, they are developing secure knowledge, understanding and skills, based on the expectations of the curriculum for each year group. Pupils' ability to speak with confidence about what they have learnt in religious education is good. They are developing a level of religious literacy, including some subject-specific vocabulary, and are using this to think ethically and reflect spiritually. Through their learning in religious education, and in the wider curriculum, they have come to be aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. Pupils enjoy their lessons, and approach them with interest and enthusiasm. They demonstrate exemplary behaviour in class, attentive when listening and responsive to teachers' questioning. In some instances, their responses are limited in depth and detail, but their willingness to learn is impressive. Pupils like to take care with their written work and present it well. They collaborate with their peers very easily and respectfully. Pupils understand how well they are doing, and what they need to do to improve, giving examples of how they assess their own work and their 'purple pen' use for making their work more accurate.

Overall, teacher subject knowledge is good: teachers teach with confidence, including those new to the religious education curriculum. Teachers understand the value of religious education and bring enthusiasm and commitment to their work. Planning is consistent and leads to well-structured lessons. The 'knowledge notes' used to summarise the learning for each lesson are used effectively as a focus. A school emphasis on developing good understanding of vocabulary has been particularly effective in raising standards. Teachers use questioning to identify where pupils are in their understanding, and to give positive feedback. Sometimes, this interaction needs to include more challenge of responses, as a development of deeper reflection and

articulation. Teaching assistants give discrete and helpful support for identified pupils. Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to present their learning using a variety of forms. This is not yet outstanding because the variety is limited in range: learning tasks that would give pupils more of a chance to show signs of individuality and creativity, including a choice of presentation style, are at an early stage of development.

The religious education curriculum is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory (2012)*, based on the 'Come and See' scheme of work. The religious education leadership team have an outstanding vision of teaching and learning in the subject, and high levels of expertise, which is resulting in rapid improvements. Leaders plan an appropriately sequential curriculum, introduced systematically, with much consideration and forward thinking, adapting the curriculum to the needs of the pupils. The introduction of 'knowledge notes' has brought a high level of consistency and quality to teaching. Resources have been allocated to prioritise religious education, through timetabling that includes regular 'Godly Play' sessions each week to extend the learning in classroom lessons. These enhance the curriculum significantly, and are instrumental in building knowledge of scripture, and opportunities for reflection. Other examples of the extension of the curriculum are seen in visits to places of worship, including those of other world faiths, and the 'mission weeks' at each end of the academic year. Adaptation for the pupils with the most complex needs can be seen in the Stepping Stones programme, enabling proper access to the curriculum. Leaders' and governors' self-evaluation, supported by the Trust, demonstrates forensic monitoring and searching analysis leading to well thought out strategic action.

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

1

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

1

Leadership

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

1

1

Pupils are deeply engaged in the experiences of prayer and liturgy. They demonstrate this on every occasion that they come together, whether in class, the prayer room, as a whole school in the hall, or in church. This is witnessed through their respectful silence on entering a sacred space, and in reflective moments; their confident responses to learned prayers and actions; and in the strength and joyful nature of their communal singing. They are attentive to the readings from scripture and willingly suggest ways in which they can lead to action beyond the celebration. Pupils have a detailed understanding of the wide variety of ways of praying in the Catholic tradition. Pupils work well with others, such as teachers, the lay chaplain, and other pupils, to prepare engaging experiences, usually guided by adults and often as a class grouping. The prayer leaders and house captains confidently take on ministries associated with larger gatherings in school, modelling practice that other pupils can take example from in class celebrations. Pupils' preparation, planning and leadership of prayer is well planned-for, sequentially according to age, but it is not yet enabling the confidence of pupils in older classes to take wider responsibility for planning and leading celebrations independently.

Prayer and liturgy are at the heart of the school, ever-present and central to gatherings of pupils and staff. There is an excellent breadth and richness of the Catholic tradition of ways of praying, and this range has been significantly enhanced recently to engage pupils more actively and deeply. Scripture is chosen well, informed by the liturgical year, with links developed between these passages, and the whole celebration, and actions to take into daily life. Scripture provides the basis for the creative setting of prayer opportunities. Creative and artistic skills of pupils and staff have been identified, nurtured, and practised to enable them to use their gifts to enhance prayer and liturgy. The modelling of different types of prayer by the lay chaplain has played a key role in enabling members of staff to demonstrate this to pupils and include them in their

gatherings in class. Four-part celebrations of the word, lectio divina, list prayers, breath prayers, centring prayers, and movement prayers sit alongside more traditional practices such as stations of the cross and the rosary. There is imaginative and creative use of spaces for prayer celebrations, with a strong desire to make each classroom a sacred space at appropriate times, in addition to the settings elsewhere. Families are welcomed into school liturgies, as well as the invitation to regular 'stay and pray' occasions in class.

The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is being formulated anew to ensure it is fit for purpose, with ease of use for staff and amendment suitable for the school's context being paramount. Leaders, including governors, have a clear understanding of how pupils' skills of participation should be built as they mature, and the quality of prayer and liturgy that should be provided. School leaders and governors have been effective guardians of the Catholic prayer and liturgy provision, striving consistently for the best possible experiences for pupils. Leaders are highly effective in facilitating others to plan and lead experiences of prayer. Staff and pupils readily acknowledge the sympathetic, spiritual influence of the lay chaplain in their knowledge of and engagement in prayer, and her impact can be seen throughout the school. There is the highest priority on the evaluation of the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy, leading to strategic improvements. This includes pupils' regular contributions to their views on a prayer gathering, monitoring by leaders and governors, and commissioned advice from the Trust adviser.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Pius X Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	146249
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8063390
Full postal address of the school	St Pius X Catholic Primary School, Amersham Road, Park End, Middlesbrough, TS3 7HD
School phone number	001642314453
Headteacher	Anna McClurey
Chair of local governing body	Audrey Kirby
School Website	https://stpiusx.npcat.org.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	February 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Alan Dewhurst (Hallam Diocese)

Lead

Alixena Lubomski (Leeds Diocese)

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