



St Pius X Catholic Primary School

URN: 147404

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Brentwood

23–24 January 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

- St Pius X Catholic Primary School is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' conference.
- St Pius X Catholic Primary School is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- St Pius X Catholic Primary School has fully completed all areas for improvement from the last inspection.

What the school does well

- Members of the school community actively live out the mission statement, with governors, senior leaders and staff acting as excellent role models in promoting the Catholic life and mission of the school.
- Pupils are very proud to be members of the St Pius X community, are very respectful, and appreciate all the school has to offer.
- The school promotes exemplary partnership with the parish, which makes a significant contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils.
- Relationships between the home and school are exceptionally strong and are thoughtfully nurtured, particularly for the most vulnerable pupils.
- Pupils enjoy learning in religious education and approach lessons with great interest and enthusiasm.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that pupils know and understand their role in responding to the demands of Catholic social teaching.
- Provide more challenging opportunities that deepen learning so that there is moral, spiritual and theological growth for all pupils.
- Provide ongoing professional development for all staff to deepen their knowledge and understanding of how to support pupils in class prayer and liturgy opportunities.

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 are wonderful role models who enjoy school life and fully understand what it means to be part of a Catholic community rich in its diversity. Pupils feel secure and valued at school, relishing the responsibilities the school offers them. They show a deep respect for each other and the adults of the school. They are kind to each other, helping one another both socially and academically, and because of this, behaviour is a strength of the school. They actively embrace their mission, particularly those who have a leadership role such as the chaplaincy team and Mini-Vinnies. Recent initiatives include pledges for the Jubilee Year of Hope as well as a recycling project. They are passionate about making a difference and take their roles of responsibility seriously. Pupils talk confidently about their charity work, raising funds for a number of charities including supporting local foodbanks, Children in Need and Cafod. They recognise the importance of this work and know it is their duty to look after those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils are becoming more confident when understanding the principles of Catholic social teaching; they now need to fully embrace the theology that underpins these principles and informs their own engagement in achieving social justice.

The St Pius X way, 'together in God's loving family, we believe, we learn, we grow' and the school values are firmly rooted in Gospel values and clearly drive the school's daily life. Pupils know and understand their mission statement and values and one pupil stated that 'it reminds them of what they need to do to help each other grow as people who give to each other.' Staff are fully committed to this mission and speak enthusiastically about the fact that 'Christ is at the absolute core of this school; our mission statement is lived out daily.' Staff are exemplary role models for the pupils in the way they treat everyone with kindness and respect. St Pius X is a welcoming and inclusive school that ensures all are valued without exception and there is a strong commitment

to the pastoral care of all, including the most vulnerable. Parents report that the school consistently 'goes the extra mile' to support pupils and families. The physical environment reflects the Catholic nature of the school promoting, the strong faith of pupils and staff. There is a clear programme of development for pupil chaplaincy and there are good opportunities for their spiritual and moral development. The provision for relationships, sex and health education meets both the statutory and diocesan requirements and the policy is available on the website.

Leaders and governors clearly articulate the Church's mission in education. They ensure that this mission is at the heart of all that they do. Governors are regular visitors to the school and they know their community well. Engagement with the diocese is effective and governors, senior leaders and staff regularly access training. There is a flourishing relationship between the school and the parish. The parish priest is a regular visitor to the school and pupils know him and greet him with great enthusiasm. The partnership with parents is incredibly effective and parents truly appreciate the work done by the school. They have a clear understanding of the school's mission, and one parent stated that 'the school guides and carries us along with them, every step of the way, so that the children learn from their school values and grow in their faith and relationship with Christ.' Leaders and governors deeply respect the dignity of workers and actively seek to support all staff. There is a well-planned approach to providing professional development for staff. The taught curriculum reflects the Catholic nature of the school and leaders are aware of the need to fully embed the principles of Catholic social teaching across all year groups. Governors are ambitious and through their monitoring visits, self-evaluation is accurate.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

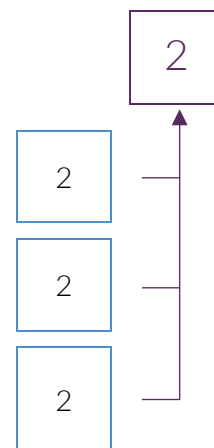
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 enjoy religious education lessons; they are enthusiastic and are eager to learn, and because of this, the behaviour is very good. They are developing a secure understanding of religious education content and generally produce work of a high standard. Pupils make a very positive start at the beginning of their school journey, which is then built upon and culminates in strong learning by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils revisit prior learning regularly and are becoming more able to use their learning to emphasise viewpoints and link it to scripture, particularly in upper Key Stage 2. For example, pupils were challenged to consider how the Prime Minister's decisions would be impacted by his faith and morals and whether this was right. This type of thought-provoking work needs to be evident throughout the school to continue to drive up standards. This will allow pupils to speak more confidently about their learning using subject specific vocabulary to articulate their thoughts. In the best lessons, work is modelled and scaffolded with pupils being given clear instructions and activities that are more challenging to deepen and embed learning. Pupils are given opportunities to reflect on their work and are able to articulate how they can improve on their learning.

Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and are encouraged by leaders to understand more fully how pupils learn well. All staff highly value the importance and impact religious education has on the pupils at this school. Consequently, planning is consistent and linked to assessment and increasingly to the Big Question in order to continue to drive up standards and outcomes. Questioning is used effectively to identify where pupils are in their understanding, and reflection time is given during lessons. Increasingly, teachers understand the importance of high expectations and use praise effectively to celebrate learning. Teachers feel well supported by leaders through ongoing planned and targeted curriculum training so that the quality of teaching becomes consistently good throughout the school. The positive family culture of this

school makes all staff feel able to ask questions or seek further clarification on any religious area of the curriculum. Teachers provide a range of activities including drama, art and a variety of written tasks and good quality resources are used to support learning. The extremely well-directed and effective support staff have a positive impact on the outcomes for the pupils they support, which allows these pupils to flourish and achieve. Opportunities to moderate and assess pupils' work with colleagues ensure that teacher assessment is accurate.

Leaders and governors ensure that the religious education curriculum meets the requirements of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* in Key Stage 1 and 2 and the *Religious Education Directory* in early years and that all classes cover the required content. Monitoring is undertaken regularly and recorded by leaders, including governors. It is evaluated so that provision for religious education is improved and impact felt. Religious education is given the same status as other core subjects. The senior leaders, who share the leadership of religious education, are passionate and committed to achieving high standards and outcomes for pupils. They strive to ensure staff receive appropriate high- quality professional development to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The introduction of coaching, to further support and enhance teaching, should continue to impact on standards and outcomes for pupils. Pupils' needs are well met in lessons and all pupils can access the curriculum. The well-maintained and thoughtfully placed quotations, religious art and well-considered books in the library all contribute to the respectful, caring and delightful experience it is to be a pupil here.

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 enjoy and, as a result, respond well to the experiences of prayer and liturgy offered by the school. Pupils could speak about the importance of prayer and the ways in which they pray, particularly when talking about traditional prayers linked to their Catholic heritage. Throughout the school, pupils show enjoyment in joining in prayer. They also show reverence and commitment to worship, actively join in community prayers and they sing with joy and enthusiasm. Pupils recognise and understand the Church's liturgical year and can explain important feasts and celebrations, including Advent, Lent and the school's Marian procession. Pupils are becoming more aware of how scripture shapes their lives and leads to action. The chaplaincy pupil leaders understand how prayer influences their daily lives. One commented on the fact that 'it helps them become closer to God, developing their faith and knowing that they can help themselves and others.' There are examples of pupils writing their own prayers thanking God and asking for help for those in need, which are linked to the principles of Catholic social teaching. Pupils are given opportunities to plan, lead and in some classes evaluate prayer and liturgy experiences, this needs to be further developed so that all pupils understand the impact of this type of ministry on their spiritual growth and relationship with God.

Appropriately planned prayer and liturgy opportunities are central to the life of the school. There is a daily pattern of prayer across the school, including traditional Catholic prayers, and pupils actively engage with this. Scripture suitable to the season or theme of liturgy is appropriately chosen which supports the spiritual experience of all pupils. The school is well supported and has grown a strong partnership with the devoted and popular parish priest. He ensures no opportunities are missed in the faith formation of the school community. Leaders carefully and thoughtfully plan how to include families in the prayer life of the school and parents are always welcomed to attend class and school Masses. Staff are models of good practice, but need further

professional development to increase their confidence in supporting pupils to effectively and independently plan, lead and evaluate well-constructed prayer and liturgy. Space is well used in classrooms, which all have a focal prayer table and area. The chaplaincy team take the responsibility in ensuring these are well maintained. The investment in the dedicated area for the prayer garden is a wonderful addition to the space available to pray in the school.

Governors are committed and enthusiastic about the development of prayer and liturgy and are aware of the opportunities afforded to the pupils by the school. The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is accessible to all and is reviewed regularly by senior leaders. Prayer and liturgy is well planned at St Pius X and reflects the liturgical year. The school leadership and governors ensure that opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist, holy days of obligation and other significant days, such as the feast day of St Pius X are prioritised. This results in a programme of worship that is matched to pupils' ages and experiences, enabling pupils to participate. There is a planned programme of professional development for staff; this now needs to focus on enhancing staff skills, enabling them to confidently lead liturgies and consistently support pupils to do the same. School leaders and governors place a high importance on prayer and liturgy when allocating resources. Self-evaluation and monitoring of prayer and liturgy is systematic in approach but pupils would like to be more involved in evaluating, as they are passionate about their faith formation.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Pius X Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	147404
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8813770
Full postal address of the school	St Pius X Catholic Primary School, Tennyson Road, Chelmsford, CM1 4HY
School phone number	001245354875
Headteacher	Sharon Derbyshire
Chair of local governing body	Mrs Clare Schorah
School Website	http://www.stpiusxchelmsford.co.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	The Rosary Trust - A Catholic Multi Academy
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	5-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	9 May 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Miss Isabel Quinn
Mrs Sheila Birtles

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