



Pope Paul Catholic Primary School

URN: 151984

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster

17–18 June 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

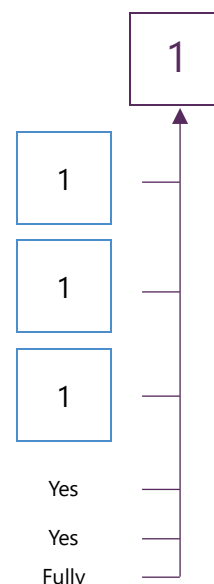
Collective worship (p.7)

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



Compliance statement

- The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- The school is fully compliant with the additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- All areas for improvement outlined in the previous diocesan inspection report have been addressed in full.

What the school does well

- Relationships throughout the school are nurtured through a firm commitment to the school's Catholic mission which 'strives to respect and care for each other...to build a better world'.
- Christ is at the heart of Pope Paul: there is a lived sense of community witnessed through an authentic commitment to Catholic social teaching.
- Prayer and liturgy is an engaging and joyous experience for all, with clear progression from the youngest to the oldest of pupils.
- Pupils are engaged and enthusiastic about religious education and display excellent learning behaviours.
- The school's partnership with the local parish is exemplary and the positive impact on the whole community is clearly visible.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure there is a consistent planning approach to adapting tasks in lessons to inspire, challenge and meet the needs of all learners.
- Give pupils more ownership of their learning, enabling them to increase independence and take initiative in lessons.

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

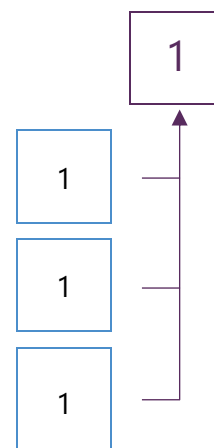
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 Pope Paul Catholic Primary School fully embrace the school's mission and actively live out their faith through service, leadership and a commitment to the common good. Pupils eagerly embrace opportunities to grow in virtue and serve others through leadership roles, including liturgy leaders, Laudato Si' and Fairtrade leaders, school parliament representatives and sports captains. Catholic social teaching is embedded throughout the curriculum and school life. Recent Key Stage 2 projects celebrating the 100th birthday of David Attenborough enabled pupils to make meaningful links between the account of creation in Genesis and their responsibility as stewards of the earth. Pupils demonstrate a strong understanding of how faith inspires action through their support of charities including Cafod, the local Food Bank, Westminster Passage Homeless Shelter, Isabel Hospice and Fairtrade initiatives. They speak confidently about the positive impact they have on local, national and global communities recognising it is their responsibility to 'follow in Jesus' footsteps'. Behaviour across the school is exemplary. Pupils clearly understand the message of Pope Paul VI, 'If you want peace, work for justice' and know that it is their responsibility too; recognising the importance of treating each other with dignity and compassion. The commitment of parents, parish and school to its mission is abundantly clear, with a parent commenting, 'My children are developing a strong sense of social justice and an understanding of the role that they can play in looking after the planet and making the world fairer for all'.

The mission of Pope Paul is deeply embedded in the life of the school community. This is evident in the school website, family newsletters, the learning environment both inside and outside the school, and displays in the parish church, all of which promote and celebrate the school's Catholic identity. Catholic social teaching is celebrated and authentically lived and witnessed by pupils, staff and governors. This has a profound impact on school life, shaping relationships, decision-making and the shared commitment to the common good. Christ is unmistakably at the heart of the school, creating

a welcoming, joyful and inclusive community where every person is recognised as being made in the image and likeness of God. Staff consistently model Gospel values through their compassionate relationships with one another and the love, dignity and care they show to pupils. Families are overwhelmingly positive with one parent saying, 'The sense of community, inclusion and pastoral care is exceptional, and it is clear that the Catholic values of the school are at the heart of everything you do. I am extremely thankful that my child is part of such a loving, supportive and faith-filled school community.'

Catholic life and mission at Pope Paul is outstanding. The headteacher and senior leaders share a commitment to ensuring that the Catholic faith is central to this community. They are exemplary role models whose leadership is characterised by inspirational witness to the Gospel. Their strategic commitment to the oracy project has strengthened opportunities for pupils and staff to engage more deeply with scripture, fostering thoughtful dialogue, reflection and a shared understanding of faith across the school community. Leaders are very well supported by the governing body, many of whom take an active part in the weekly life of the school and parish. Leaders, governors and the parish priest strive to provide the highest levels of pastoral care for staff and to serve with sensitivity those in greatest need in their community. The parish priest works closely with the school, leading Masses and liturgies throughout the year and the school is also supported by visiting seminarians. Governors rightly see the school as a source of inspiration to the whole community and are highly ambitious about its contribution to the lives of the people it serves.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

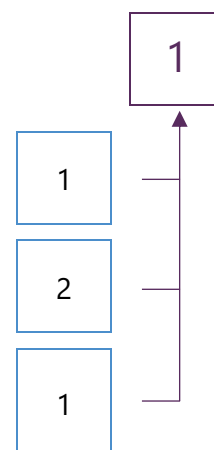
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 have excellent religious vocabulary and are fully supported by their participation in a whole school oracy project. They are articulate, and display confidence when talking about prior learning. They think deeply and offer reflective responses in class. Pupils have responded well to the introduction of the new curriculum. The use of scripture across the whole school is strong and used effectively and Bibles are treated with the utmost reverence, in lessons, during class worship and in the celebration of the word. Pupils are familiar with and can make links between events and characters in the Bible and how this influences how we live today. In a Key Stage 2 lesson, pupils explored God's covenant with the people in Exodus. As 'Bible detectives', they confidently identified links between the Old Testament, Jesus' teachings in the New Testament and how Christians are called to live today. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, highly creative indoor and outdoor activities, including role-playing Jesus walking on water, provided engaging and challenging opportunities for children to explore Jesus' friendship with Peter and how they can be good friends to others. Pupils produce high quality work in books. They are highly motivated to produce excellent artwork and enjoy displaying this throughout the school. Behaviour in all lessons is outstanding, and pupils remain fully engaged even in extended periods without direction from an adult. Outcomes for pupils are excellent and in line with other core subjects.

Teachers are committed to and value religious education lessons; they create a positive climate for learning which leads to excellent behaviour from pupils. The most effective teaching included questioning that encouraged pupils to extend their thinking and reflect or challenge other points of view. In a Key Stage 1 class, pupils were asked to consider scenarios and decide if they promoted Catholic social teaching principles, and in a Key Stage 2 class, pupils were asked to discuss, rank and debate the virtues of faith, hope and love. With confidence and skilful questioning, these pupils were able to justify their responses using strong religious literacy and linking their views to scripture.

Teachers now need to include more opportunities to enable pupils to learn independently in a variety of creative ways. Fewer scaffolded lessons will encourage pupils to be more independent and original in reaching their outcomes and a consistent planning approach to adapting tasks in lessons would further inspire, challenge and meet the needs of all learners. Catholic social teaching principles are woven into the existing topics. All staff at Pope Paul have a good understanding of, and a sense of responsibility for, the impact religious education has on the moral and spiritual development of their pupils and their ability to make sense of their experience of the world. One staff member shared that, 'Religious education is treated as an important part of our curriculum and encourages children to think deeply about their faith and care for others'. Ensure there is a consistent planning approach to adapting tasks in lessons to inspire, challenge and meet the needs of all learners.

The headteacher, governors and leaders have high expectations and ensure that staff are very well supported in implementing the new religious education curriculum. Religious education is very well-resourced with many opportunities for professional development provided within the school but also through the All Saints' Catholic Academy Trust and with the diocese. This training enables all staff to thrive as role models within an authentic faith-filled community. Staff speak of the excellent support they are given from senior leaders in the school to improve standards and expressed how valued they feel in their roles. The religious education curriculum is carefully designed to help pupils understand the impact of their actions on the world. Themes such as *Laudato Si* enrich the wider curriculum, enabling pupils to recognise their responsibility as stewards of creation. The headteacher's inspiring vision, shared by her leadership team, drives outstanding outcomes and a strong commitment to religious education. Her leadership of religious education and Catholic Life is highly regarded within the academy trust and beyond. Leaders and governors' self-evaluation is informed by monitoring, analysis and self-challenge which results in strategic actions leading to continuous improvement.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

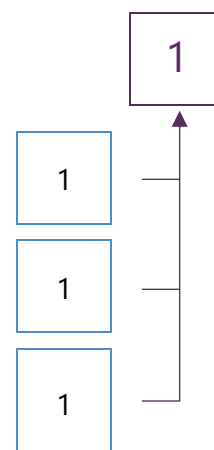
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

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 at Pope Paul school engage reverently in a rich, active and joyful prayer life that is central to the school's Catholic identity. They experience a wide range of prayer opportunities reflecting the liturgical year including lectio and visio divina, examen, meditation, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, the rosary and stations of the cross. The development of silence and the use of inspirational indoor and outdoor prayer spaces further enhance pupils' experiences of prayer and reflection. Pupils are encouraged to pray spontaneously for themselves, their families, the wider community and the world, demonstrating their understanding of God's loving presence in daily life. Scripture is at the heart of prayer and worship, deepening pupils' faith and relationship with God. Older pupils confidently plan, lead and evaluate acts of worship, while all pupils participate enthusiastically in prayer and liturgy. Singing is an integral part of the school's identity and the joy and participation of all pupils in singing is evident. Thoughtfully chosen liturgical music creates a prayerful atmosphere, and pupils' singing is of a very high standard. During a 'prayer through song' Celebration of the Word, pupils harmonised confidently. Hymns linked to the weekly Gospel deepen pupils' understanding of scripture. The inclusive choir enriches liturgies, celebrates pupils' gifts and talents and serves the wider community through events such as the parish Masses and inter-school celebrations at St Albans Cathedral.

The school is unwavering in its commitment to fostering a flourishing and mutually enriching partnership with the parish, enabling pupils to participate fully in the liturgical life of the Church. Pupils make a significant contribution to parish worship through the creation of artwork displayed in the parish, leading rosary devotions for parishioners, and inviting the parish community to participate in the Marian procession and Blessed Sacrament procession. The annual themed spirituality week, based on saints this year, is planned and led by Year 6 pupils who offer a range of prayerful encounters at prayer stations for the rest of the school. The centrality of prayer and liturgy is deeply embedded in

every aspect of school life and evident to all. Music is used creatively and prayerfully to enrich acts of worship, enabling pupils and adults to participate with reverence, confidence and genuine spiritual engagement. As a result, prayer and liturgy are transformative experiences that inspire the whole community and contribute significantly to the spiritual flourishing of all.

Prayer and liturgy are an outstanding feature of Pope Paul because of the vision and commitment of its leaders. They have developed a strong culture, which promotes the importance of spiritual development. The school plans for progression with a clear policy that spans all year groups. One parent commented, 'Assemblies and liturgical events throughout the school year provide new experiences to deepen our faith and we very much feel part of this wonderful and welcoming community'. School leaders, including the parish priest, are themselves exemplary models of practice in developing the centrality and quality of prayer in the life of the school. Consequently, staff say they are well supported to lead prayer and value the support given. One staff member shared that 'I wasn't living my faith fully until I came to Pope Paul'. The incredibly strong and vibrant partnership between the school and parish is highly valued by staff, pupils, parents and the parish itself, with each working in service of the other. In addition to the liturgical formation provided, the parish has been greatly supportive of the school's work in organising and funding visits to enhance the prayer and liturgy experiences of the children outside their school environment.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Pope Paul Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	151984
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	9193975
Full postal address of the school	Baker Street, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire, EN6 2ES
School phone number	01707659755
Headteacher	Elizabeth Heymoz
Chair of governors	Clive Mathew
School Website	http://www.popepaul.herts.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	All Saints Catholic Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	11 December 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Maureen O'Donoghue
Jennifer O'Prey

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