

St John Henry Newman Catholic VA Primary School

URN: 149159

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of East Anglia

12–13 November 2025

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

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

N/A

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.
- The school has not previously had an inspection under Section 48.

What the school does well

- In a short period of time, leaders have created a strong school community, centred around Gospel values.
- Leaders and staff provide strong pastoral care which is recognised and valued by pupils and parents.
- New members to the community, both children and adults, are welcomed and made to feel at home through strong induction processes.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good and shows strong relationships between each other and staff.
- The school environment reflects and supports the Catholic, life mission and values of the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Widen the opportunities for pupils to take on leadership roles to plan, deliver and evaluate the Catholic life and Mission of the school
- Within religious education, ensure teaching consistently meets the needs of all pupils, especially the more able
- Support the formation of all pupils so that they can plan, lead and deliver high quality 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

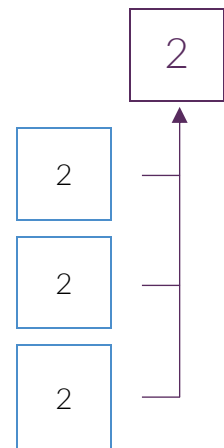
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



In a very short period of time, St John Henry Newman school has grown to become a strong community, underpinned by its commitment to Catholic life and mission. Pupils actively participate in what they recognise as an important part of school life. Pupils know that they are unique creations, but also recognise that they are part of a larger community where others are also unique. They show great respect for each other in their interactions. Pupils of all faiths and of no faith feel safe and secure. One pupil said, 'It doesn't matter what we believe in, we're just friends'. The school ensures there is provision for pupils of other faiths, for example providing a space for pupils to pray. Pupils are confident that, if bullying were to happen, they would be able to speak to any member of staff about it and that it would be dealt with effectively. Behaviour around the school, both in and out of lessons is of a high standard. Pupils enjoy contributing to the Catholic life of the school and the Minnie Vinnie group has helped to support charities such as Cafod, Unicef, and the local foodbank. They, along with other pupils, are eager to develop these leadership roles.

The school mission statement is visible around the school, and its impact is evident in all aspects of school life. Staff model respectful relationships and active participation to the pupils, who reflect the same values back to them. However, pupils are not so confident in talking about the mission statement, although it is expressed through their behaviour. Although still a new community, the culture of welcoming all in Christ is strong. A staff member said, 'when you walk into St John Henry Newman you are aware that it is special with Christ at the centre of every aspect of school life.' and a parent said, 'It's a lovely, warm, welcoming school ... I believe the Catholic ethos has hugely helped with this.' Pastoral care is a high priority, with measures like the pilot breakfast club provision ensuring that all pupils have a good start to the day. The

environment reflects the schools' identity through displays in classes, corridors and communal spaces. The teaching of relationship, sex and health education meets both statutory and diocesan requirements.

The strong vision of school leaders has developed the Catholic life and mission of the school in a short period of time and there are clear plans for taking it forward. The school has formed strong links with the local parish, despite it not being close by, and the two form a vibrant supportive partnership. School leaders work alongside parents in promoting the Catholic life of the school. Leaders model Gospel values and respect for all. This is demonstrated in the positive relationships within the community and with all stakeholders. Governors are keen to maintain staff well-being and are active in their support of the school. Professional development is in place for all staff, especially those who are new to Catholic education in order to help them support the schools' Catholic life. Leaders have ensured this continues even as staff numbers increase alongside the capacity of the school. Staff appreciate the support they are given by senior leaders and governors. The whole curriculum reflects the centrality of Christ. School leaders and governors have a good understanding of the next steps required to improve the Catholic life and mission of the school.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

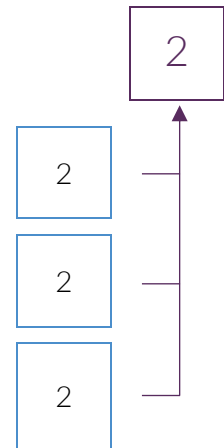
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



The *Religious Education Directory* is used well and is supporting the pupils as they progress through the school. Pupils’ religious literacy is developing at age-appropriate levels, this means that children in Early Years Foundation stage can talk about Christmas being Jesus’ birthday while pupils in Key Stage 1 recall that prophets are messengers of God’s word and Key Stage 2 pupils can correctly list the attributes of women from the Old Testament. All religious education lessons follow the same patterns and routines, and this helps pupils to be secure and confident of what is expected of them. Pupils can work independently, in ‘talk partners’ and in groups. Older pupils are particularly skilled in taking turns and listening to each other. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons which is shown in their good engagement with learning and behaviour during lessons; they want to do well. They say that religious education lessons help them, ‘...feel closer to God’. They take pride in their work and there are high levels of presentation. Attainment in religious education is in line with that of other core subjects.

Staff show good subject knowledge and are confident in how to use the Directory to support the needs of their pupils. It is clear that staff value the subject, one said, ‘we have very high expectations’. This helps pupils understand the importance of the subject as well. Questioning is robust and challenging, leading pupils to deepen their understanding. There are very positive relationships between staff and pupils, and this means that pupils feel supported in their learning and are happy to attempt answers, knowing that their contribution will be valued and celebrated. Lessons are adapted to support most pupils, through scaffolded tasks and good deployment of well-trained support staff and interventions are provided for those pupils who are not able to access a whole class session. However, more able pupils are not challenged enough for them to expand their knowledge and understanding. Pupils are presented with a variety of ways of learning including art, music, role play and drama; Godly play is used particularly well. Pupils are invited to make the link between their learning and their lives for example choosing one of David’s leadership qualities to put into practice. Lessons begin with

prayer and provide the opportunity for pupils to reflect quietly and to think about their own spiritual and moral development.

Leaders have ensured that the Directory has been implemented effectively and have provided staff with training to make sure that they are able to deliver it well. Staff appreciate this, especially newly qualified staff, and those new to Catholic education. Religious education is provided with adequate time on the curriculum and resources, funding and accommodation which reflect its place at the heart of the school. Subject leaders ensure that long term plans for religious education are sequenced well and meet the needs of the pupils. Alongside governors, they regularly monitor their implementation. Leaders have set out clear expectations for the teaching of religious education, and these help the pupils to make the most of their learning. These clear routines are particularly supportive for pupils who join the school outside of the normal admission times. Staff are given dedicated time to familiarise themselves with the delivery of the new curriculum. Governors regularly undertake a range of monitoring activities and have a good understanding of standards in religious education.

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 participate fully and reverently in many different prayer experiences offered to them. They spend time in silent reflection, join in traditional prayer and are particularly enthusiastic singers. These routines, alongside following the liturgical year, help to make all pupils feel part of a worshipping community, even if they are new to the school or from a different faith background. Pupils experience a variety of ways of praying from the Catholic tradition including a weekly Mass celebrated by the parish priest in the school, stations of the cross, advent liturgies and Mass in honour of their patron saint. Pupils take part fully in all the different forms of prayer and liturgy they are offered. They show reverence during school Masses which are enhanced by their service as readers and altar servers. They are eager to take on more leadership opportunities to plan and lead their peers. Pupils are able to articulate how prayer influences their lives and helps them to be calm and thankful for what they have. They recognise the value of regular daily prayer which is central to the life of the school.

The school has a coherent plan for a variety of prayer opportunities mapped out over the school year. Pupils are presented with many different experiences, from class prayers to whole school Masses and are given the opportunity to reflect silently and compose their own prayers from an early age. One parent commented, 'Prayer is central, thanking God for everything they do and everything they have.' Scripture is a central part of prayer and liturgy, and pupils are encouraged to read out loud and with confidence for class and whole school gatherings. Staff are good role models for pupils when they deliver prayer sessions, and the role of pupil chaplains is being developed to enable pupils to plan, organise, lead and evaluate their own prayer and liturgy across the school such as during advent led by the Minnie Vinnies. The school environment supports prayer. Prayer journals are used by staff and pupils and provide a focus during times of reflection and Parents are invited to join their children at liturgical events.

The school has a prayer and liturgy policy which supports staff in their planning and delivery of prayer and liturgy. Leaders have a clear strategy to develop the skills of pupils' participation as

they move through the school which will in turn develop pupils' skills as leaders of prayer and liturgy. Senior leaders have attended a range of professional development training relating to prayer and liturgy and disseminate this to the teaching staff. The formation of staff is a high priority of leaders and governors and senior leaders revisit this regularly with all staff, but especially those new to the school. Staff appreciate this, and the opportunities offered through weekly staff prayer sessions. One said, '...collective worship within the school gives staff and pupils time to reflect and engage with their faith at a much deeper level.' The Eucharist plays a central part in the life of the school and leaders have worked hard to ensure all pupils are able to access this, for example providing Mass cards. There is regular monitoring carried out by school leaders and governors, who often attend events in school, and they have a coherent strategic plan to further improve the provision for pupils such as plans for a prayer garden to be installed later this year and to increase opportunities for parental involvement.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St John Henry Newman Catholic VA Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	149159
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8742018
Full postal address of the school	Aqua Drive, Hampton Water, Peterborough, PE7 8QL
School phone number	01733304533
Executive headteacher	N/A
Headteacher	Mark Cooper
Chair of governors	Lucy White
School Website	https://www.st-johnhenrynewman.org.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	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	N/A
Previous denominational inspection grade	N/A

The inspection team

Catherine McMahan
Tom Reilly

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