



# St John Payne Catholic School

URN: 115238

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Brentwood

18–19 April 2024

## 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

1

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

Fully

2

## What the school does well

- The staff, leaders and governors work tirelessly with the common aim of creating a joyful, Christ-centred community where students flourish.
- Staff are exemplary role models for pupils, consistently bearing witness to the school's Catholic life and mission.
- The school excels in its pastoral provision for both staff and students.
- Teachers' specialist theological subject knowledge and dedication help to ensure students enjoy a positive experience of religious education.
- Prayer and worship, skilfully orchestrated by the leaders and the chaplain, are a fundamental part of daily life at the school.

## What the school needs to improve

- Develop planning in religious education to narrow the attainment gap for boys and disadvantaged students.
- Ensure consistency of pace, challenge and adaptive teaching across all key stages in religious education.
- Enhance the student experience of form time prayer by ensuring consistency of quality, variety and reverence.

## 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**

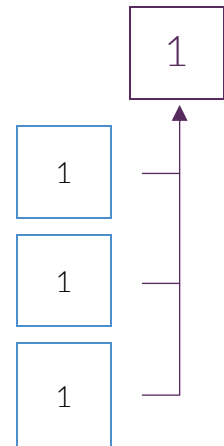
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

**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



Students at St John Payne are very proud to be members of this dynamic, joyful and bold Catholic school. The strong sense of community ensures that all students feel valued, supported and loved. The distinctive Catholic nature and mission of the school is fully understood and embraced, with students recognising the centrality of Christ. Gospel values are the foundation for the authentic and respectful relationships that exist between students, and between staff and students. There is a genuine respect for the dignity and worth of the individual, demonstrated best by the school's warm and fully inclusive culture. Students take every opportunity to serve their own and the wider community, flourishing as a result. The student response to the call to serve is best exemplified by the number of charitable projects the school is involved in but particularly the volunteering link established with Columbus School & College. The school's chaplaincy provision is highly prized by the whole school, with students taking an active part and seeking out leadership roles.

The school's focus on servant leadership ensures that all are received in a spirit of generous hospitality, especially those who are most vulnerable. This is well illustrated by the immediate welcome extended to refugee and displaced children and the acceptance of a greater number of managed moves than other local schools. The school celebrates the presence of those from various cultures and belief traditions, going to great lengths to understand their needs and enable them to live and pray in fidelity to their own commitments. The pastoral care systems in the school, underpinned by the principles of celebration, restoration and reconciliation, are highly effective and secure the academic, social and spiritual development of the students. The school not only has an effective cross-curricular approach to Catholic social teaching but also lives it, providing witness to Gospel values. There is a real sense of devotion to the school on the

part of the staff, their commitment to the mission and the love and care they show for students, making them exemplary role models. One parent remarked, 'St John Payne is a community that nurtures every aspect of the children in their care. They are loved and known by name!' The provision for R(S)HE is carefully planned to ensure that as well as meeting all statutory requirements, it fully meets diocesan requirements, is firmly rooted in the teaching of the Church and celebrates a holistic vision of the human person.

Leaders and governors are wholly committed to the Church's mission in education and are diligent in exercising their duty as guardians of the Catholic life and mission of St John Payne, and of Catholic education more generally. Christ is at the heart of their work and all tasks are approached with determination, innovation and openness. The dedication to forming lasting partnerships with the local parishes, schools and parents is a real strength of the school. The head teacher is an inspirational witness to the Gospel and, more specifically, Catholic social teaching and the principle of Dignity in Work. Policies and structures are in place which clearly provide the highest levels of pastoral care for staff, and there is an explicit and concrete commitment to both the physical and mental well-being of staff. A testament to this is the number of long-serving staff members and ex-students who have returned to work at the school. Staff told inspectors at length about the frequency and quality of the professional development they receive. Consequently, staff have a profound understanding of the school's mission and feel they play an active role in its continual development. Staff new to the school spoke very warmly about the support they had received through their induction process and beyond, with one staff member sharing, 'my faith in Christianity and humanity has been restored since joining the St John Payne team'.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

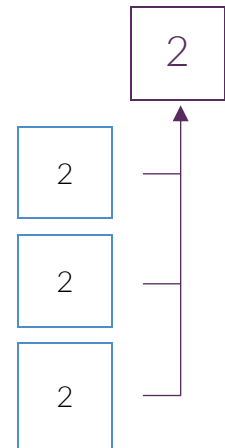
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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



In religious education, students enjoy a great deal of success. The students' books across all key stages demonstrate a secure level of knowledge, understanding and skills. Learning, especially in Year 7, has been carefully sequenced to ensure students are able to retain their knowledge and can make links with new learning. Consequently, most students achieve well in all age phases but not all groups make comparative progress. There is an intervention strategy in place, but initial planning needs to be developed to address the attainment gap at GCSE for disadvantaged students and boys. Students can explain the importance of their faith and the introduction of a cross-curricular approach to Catholic social teaching has helped to enhance and deepen their response to philosophical and theological issues. Most students report that they enjoy religious education, and they approach their lessons with interest and enthusiasm. Behaviour in lessons is good and pupils were welcoming and inviting to the inspectors as guests within the school. Nearly all students have a good understanding of how well they are doing, what they are working towards and how to get there.

Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and use this effectively to engage students, particularly in the delivery of A level. A variety of tasks and resources are used in lessons, but they are not always adapted to enable students to access the learning at an appropriate level. Planning is linked to students' current assessment so that they learn well in lessons but questioning and extension tasks do not always offer an appropriate level of challenge. Retrieval tasks at the beginning of lessons are effective in enabling students to remember more but often at the expense of the pace of learning in the remainder of the lesson. Teachers praise the work of individuals effectively and celebrate achievement and success through the school's 'CHRIST' reward system and the awarding of badges. The introduction of standardised assessments and feedback labels has had a significant impact on students' understanding of how well they are

doing and what they need to do to improve. The implementation of a discrete philosophy programme, targeted at Key Stages 4 and 5, is greatly enriching learning and raising the profile of A level religious studies. Learning is further enhanced by the impressive programme of speakers and conferences on offer.

Governors and leaders within the school have a strong understanding and clear vision for the development of religious education within the school. Extensive professional development is in place for all religious education staff to help develop their subject understanding and general teaching practice. Early Career Teachers are fully supported and feel valued. The head of department has successfully created a collaborative culture within the department which is working effectively to move the department forward. The department has forged links with local schools and parishes, thereby extending the RE curriculum. Leaders' and governors' self-evaluation of religious education is informed by thorough monitoring, analysis, and personal challenge. This results in strategic action taken by the school leading to good 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

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

At St John Payne, opportunities for prayer are carefully planned in accordance with the Church's liturgical calendar. Every week in form time, for example, students reflect on a piece of scripture related to the liturgical season with the Angelus being prayed at relevant points in the year. Appropriate to their key stage, they have a comprehensive understanding and experience of the variety of prayer from the Catholic tradition, in particular liturgical music. Students are proud ambassadors of their faith, with many serving and reading at Mass. Due to the school's provision of liturgical formation for its pupils, they can undertake liturgical ministries with confidence, understanding and skill. Students in the chaplaincy team play an important role in the planning and delivery of prayer and liturgy across the school. For example, members of the team talked about how they had recently planned an anniversary Mass to remember a peer. The chaplain, a dynamic and popular member of the school community, collaborates effectively with teachers in the creation of prayer opportunities which occur at the beginning of the school day. However, more attention needs to be given to this to ensure consistency of quality, variety and reverence across the school. Students are very clear that worship leads to action and were keen to cite examples, including the recent sleep out by students, staff and local clergy in aid of Caritas Anchor House. The programme of annual retreats for each year group is impactful and is something that is clearly valued and enjoyed.

Prayer and liturgy are fully embedded in the life of the school. Students in form groups assist in the creation and delivery of assemblies, and these are well linked to the liturgical year and themes in Catholic social teaching. In a well-planned Year 10 assembly, scripture, images, and modern cultural references were carefully chosen to engage pupils in reflecting on Christ's presence in our lives, resulting in a thoughtful and powerful experience for all. Prayer opportunities are also worked into religious education lessons and every staff meeting. Staff are

comfortable and confident in leading prayer and as a result are inspiring role models to students and each other. The Chapel is a well utilised and very much cherished space in the school. There is a wide variety of artwork and iconography around the buildings which helps to create a prayerful atmosphere and opportunities for reflection. The school has established extremely strong partnerships with all the local parishes and the local clergy are regular and very welcome visitors. On a weekly rotational basis, form group Mass is celebrated, and a weekly staff morning Mass is offered. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and the rosary are prayed weekly during a lunchtime with exceptionally large numbers of students and staff attending. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school's prayer life, with one commenting, 'St John Payne gives my child a true grounding in her faith and helps her on her spiritual journey'.

Leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the value of prayer and its central place in the life of the school. The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is carefully considered, regularly reviewed, and adhered to. Both the school calendar and timetable have been built around the celebration of the Eucharist. All holy days of obligation and other significant days, such as St John Payne's feast day, are prioritised in the school's calendar and timetable to ensure that all those who wish to are able to participate in Mass or other appropriate liturgies. Students in all phases are very comfortable with preparing and participating in liturgy. Leaders have worked hard to ensure penitential services and the Sacrament of Reconciliation are offered during both Advent and Lent. The chaplain is integral to the monitoring and evaluating of prayer and liturgy within the school which has led to clear improvements and appropriate professional development in liturgical formation. Just under 90% of respondents to the staff survey, cited prayer and liturgy as an area that has significantly improved since the last diocesan inspection. The voice of pupils and local clergy are a key and valued part of the school's evaluation of prayer and liturgy process.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St John Payne Catholic School
School unique reference number (URN)	115238
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8814701
Full postal address of the school	St John Payne Catholic School, Patching Hall Lane, Chelmsford, CM1 4BS
School phone number	01245256030
Headteacher	Thomas Coen
Chair of Governors	Richard Barber
School Website	www.sjp.essex.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Secondary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	23 November 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

## The inspection team

Mrs Nancy Conoboy	Lead
Mr Adam Hall	Team
Mr Dermot O'Neill	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