CATHOLIC SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE INSPECTION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND ACADEMIES

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

URN: 147386

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

15 October 2026 – 16 October 2026

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

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 diocesan directives	Yes
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

This Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection was carried out under canons 804 & 806 of the code of canon law. For maintained schools and academies in England it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.48 of the Education Act 2005. For maintained schools and academies in Wales it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.50 of the Education Act 2005.

What the school does well

- A strong culture of welcome and inclusion ensures that pupils, staff and visitors feel valued as members of the school community.
- Pupils know that they are valued and cared for as unique individuals; they feel listened to, and their gifts and talents are recognised and celebrated.
- Pupils, staff and parents and carers have regular opportunities to celebrate Mass in the school's beautiful, well-cared-for chapel.
- The school's sensitive and concrete commitment to its most vulnerable pupils is reflected in pupils' values, attitudes and care for others.
- Leaders target resources and support effectively so that pupils who find learning difficult, including those with additional needs, can flourish.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop a systematic approach to peer observation in religious education that supports staff in sharing effective practice, refining their teaching and feedback, and improving outcomes for pupils.
- Provide bespoke professional development to strengthen staff knowledge and skills in planning and leading prayer and liturgy, thereby broadening pupils' experience of the richness of Catholic tradition.
- To establish clear monitoring routines for religious education and prayer and liturgy, where relevant leaders regularly review and evaluate the quality of provision and its impact, with governors supporting this through capturing the views of pupils and other relevant stakeholders.

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

1

Pupil outcomes

1

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

Provision

1

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

Leadership

1

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

Catholic life and mission are defining strengths of Sacred Heart School and are deeply embedded in every aspect of its work. The mission statement is not simply displayed but actively lived by pupils, staff, leaders and governors, who share a strong commitment to the Jesuit values and virtues that underpin the life of the school. Pupils understand and embrace the school's distinctive Catholic identity and speak about it with pride and confidence. They demonstrate a strong awareness of the needs of their brothers and sisters locally, nationally and internationally. Their age-appropriate understanding of Catholic social teaching is firmly rooted in scripture. As one pupil explained, 'Catholic social teaching is based on the teachings of Jesus and helps us understand our responsibility towards other people and the world.' Pupils articulate clearly how faith influences their attitudes, choices and relationships with others. They readily embrace opportunities to serve the school and wider community, demonstrating a well-developed understanding of social justice, equality and the preferential option for the poor. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and reflects the school's Catholic character. They readily recognise when they have made a mistake, understand the importance of saying sorry and willingly offer forgiveness to others.

The love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus places Christ firmly at the heart of Sacred Heart School. This is evident in the commitment of staff, who consistently go the extra mile to create an inclusive, supportive and joyful community where every person is welcomed and valued. Staff are exemplary role models who bear compelling witness to the school's Catholic life and mission through their relationships and the exceptional love and care they show for pupils. Their actions reflect a profound understanding of the dignity of every person. As one pupil

explained, 'Adults show compassion and try to understand why someone might be struggling. They encourage us to forgive rather than become angry.' Excellent pastoral care ensures that pupils and their families, particularly the most vulnerable, receive highly effective support that enables them to flourish. Relationships, sex and health education is thoughtfully planned and enriched by high-quality resources that engage pupils and deepen their understanding. The carefully maintained indoor and outdoor environments provide an explicit and inspiring expression of the school's Catholic identity. Pupils contribute enthusiastically to this environment by creating displays, caring for prayer spaces and through upkeep of the school prayer book, demonstrating that the school's mission is understood, shared and lived by all.

Through her authentic servant leadership, the headteacher is resolute in advancing the school's mission and inspires the whole community. Working collaboratively with senior leaders, governors and the St John the Baptist Catholic Multi-Academy Trust (CMAT), she ensures that Catholic life and mission shape the school's culture, policies, strategic decisions, relationships and daily practice. Leaders understand profoundly their responsibility as guardians of the mission and fulfil it with conviction. Staff and parents affirm that 'The Catholic ethos runs through everything that is done at Sacred Heart, giving it a warm, friendly atmosphere.' The strong school-parish partnership demonstrates a shared commitment to serving the local Church, with leaders and governors continually seeking meaningful ways to deepen this relationship. Their exceptional pastoral care ensures that staff feel highly valued and supported. The establishment of 'The Holy Family', a dedicated autism provision, is an innovative and significant response to community need. This distinctive model of inclusive provision is rooted in the dignity of every person and the Gospel call to welcome and serve others. One parent described how joining the school had transformed the lives of her children and family. Carefully planned induction and ongoing formation enable staff to embrace the mission wholeheartedly and contribute substantially to sustaining the school's distinctive Catholic character.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

2

Pupil outcomes

2

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

Provision

2

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

Leadership

2

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education

Pupils at Sacred Heart develop good knowledge, understanding and skills that reflect the expectations of the *Religious Education Directory*. Religious education is a valued core subject, contributing to pupils' understanding of faith and religious traditions. Pupils recognise its importance; one pupil explained, 'It helps us understand our faith better and learn how God wants us to live.' Across year groups, pupils engage positively in lessons, sustain concentration and work with age-appropriate independence. They respond thoughtfully to questions about scripture, belief and morality. In the strongest lessons, pupils welcome the challenge of deeper questioning and respond with a genuine sense of awe and wonder as they explore scripture, belief and morality. They listen attentively to one another, show respect for differing ideas and opinions, and are willing to reconsider their views in response to discussion. Pupils recall and build securely on prior learning, using subject-specific vocabulary with increasing confidence. A shared systematic approach supports their progress and enables different groups, including pupils with special educational needs and disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, to access the curriculum. Pupils have good knowledge of scripture and can explain how its messages relate to their daily lives.

The *Religious Education Directory* has been faithfully and effectively implemented. Teaching is consistently good, with some elements of excellent practice evident across the school. Teachers are committed to the value of religious education and communicate this effectively to pupils. They demonstrate secure subject knowledge, plan purposeful learning activities, and foster positive relationships that enable pupils to learn well. At its best, teaching is

underpinned by confident subject knowledge and a strong understanding of how pupils learn. However, there is not enough peer observation to enable teachers to share this effective practice and further refine their expertise. Inclusion is central to planning, with lessons carefully adapted and scaffolded to support the engagement and participation of all pupils. Support staff are deployed effectively and make a valuable contribution to learning. Teachers use questioning well to assess understanding, deepen thinking, and adapt learning. One pupil explained, 'RE makes you think really hard because there isn't always one simple answer.' A range of creative approaches and good-quality resources, including artwork, discussion, writing, partner work, and religious paintings, motivates pupils and enable them to express their learning in different ways. Pupils value this variety and speak enthusiastically about religious education. However, the use of targeted feedback is inconsistent so pupils do not always understand how well they are doing or what their next steps are.

Leaders and governors ensure that religious education fully complies with the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and receives its full allocation of curriculum time. They have successfully overseen the implementation of the *Religious Education Directory*, ensuring that planning and teaching are faithful to its aims and content. The religious education subject leader provides clear direction and demonstrates a strong commitment to developing the subject, supported by professional development. Staff benefit from diocesan and Trust training and speak confidently about how this has enhanced their subject knowledge and classroom practice. As a result, teachers feel well supported and religious education continues to develop within the school. Leaders and governors ensure that the subject has parity with other core curriculum areas through appropriate resourcing, staffing, timetabling and budget allocation. Self-evaluation is informed by regular monitoring and accurate analysis, enabling leaders to identify priorities and take appropriate action to secure ongoing improvement. While current strategies are having a positive impact, leaders recognise the need to strengthen evaluation processes further so that the impact of improvement actions on teaching and pupils' learning can be measured with greater precision. A range of enrichment opportunities, including participation in the national Adoremus art project and the diocesan fiftieth anniversary celebrations, enhances pupils' learning and reflects the school's commitment to maintaining a high profile for religious education.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

2

Pupil outcomes

2

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

Provision

2

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

Leadership

2

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

Prayer and liturgy occupy a central place in school life and make a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Daily opportunities are carefully planned, enabling pupils of all ages and learning needs to encounter God through scripture, symbol, music, reflection, and silence. Pupils respond well, joining community prayer confidently and sustaining an impressively prayerful stillness. They understand a selection of Catholic prayer traditions and can explain how the colours, symbols, and artefacts used in the school reflect the seasons of the Church's liturgical year. Experiences during Advent and Lent are valued, while provision is extending across other seasons through the Rosary and One Life retreats. Pupils work well with teachers to plan and lead engaging class-based prayer and liturgy, willingly selecting relevant scripture, music, symbols, and prayers of the faithful. During one celebration, pupils invited others to consider, 'What is the praise God deserves?' The GIFT team contributes particularly effectively, sharing evaluations and explaining how the Gospel guides daily discipleship. Weekly missions help pupils connect prayer with action, encouraging them to live out their learning and discuss it with their families. This demonstrates that prayer and liturgy influence the wider life of the school and lead pupils to thoughtful Christian action.

Prayer and liturgy are prominent in daily life at Sacred Heart, creating a clear rhythm of personal and communal prayer. Staff model reverence and active participation, helping pupils appreciate prayer within the Catholic tradition. Parents value this provision, one commenting, 'We are very pleased with how Sacred Heart has instilled in my daughter a love and respect for Jesus in the Eucharist.' The school environment expresses its Catholic identity and mission. Well-resourced, seasonally appropriate classroom prayer tables and communal corridor

prayer stations are maintained, regularly used and valued by pupils. These signs of faith support pupils' secure understanding of the Church's feasts, seasons and traditions. Scripture, selected appropriately for the liturgical year and pupils' ages and needs, provides a consistent foundation for prayer and liturgy, enabling pupils to recognise the Bible as sacred. Music, silence, reflection and symbolic action engage pupils effectively and nurture their spiritual development. Staff knowledge and skills in planning and leading a broader range of prayer experiences are at the early stages of development so pupils do not yet encounter the full breadth of experiences within the richness of Catholic tradition. Inclusive practice enables pupils with special educational needs and disabilities to participate meaningfully through adapted resources, personal prayer items and carefully framed questions.

At Sacred Heart, a comprehensive prayer and liturgy policy, supported by a bespoke progression document, provides a clear foundation for the school's prayer life. Leaders and governors understand that prayer and liturgy are central to the school's mission and allocate time, staffing and resources to support provision. Weekly Mass in the school chapel is a distinctive strength, enabling pupils to encounter Christ in the Eucharist and deepen their participation in the liturgical life of the Church. Sacraments, holy days of obligation and occasions significant to the community, including the feast of the Sacred Heart, are marked through Mass, appropriate liturgies and focused activities. The chapel is cherished as a place of prayer, comfort and support in times of joy and sorrow. Leaders are knowledgeable and skilled in the Catholic tradition, model good practice and assist staff and pupils in planning and leading accessible experiences of prayer and liturgy. Staff are receptive to formation and new ideas, while whole-school Celebrations of the Word increasingly provide a model for class-based provision. Leaders recognise that monitoring and evaluation are not yet sufficiently systematic. Clear routines are now being established so that leaders can assess the quality and impact of provision regularly, with governors contributing through the considered views of pupils and other stakeholders.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	147386
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8743379
Full postal address of the school	Tollgate, Bretton, Peterborough, PE3 9XD
School phone number	01733 262449
Headteacher or Head of School	Maureen Collier
Chair of Governors	Mrs Marian De-Cotis
School Website	www.sacredheartprimary.org.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St John The Baptist
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	09 December 2021
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The Inspection Team

Fiona McGonigle	Lead
Ursula Clark	

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