



Padre Pio Catholic Primary School

URN: 402200

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Cardiff-Menevia

09–10 October 2025

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

3

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

Partially

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 any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- The school has only partially responded to previous areas of improvement. The recommendations to develop the planning of learning so that potentially high attaining pupils are challenged appropriately, and to raise the level of rigour in monitoring, evaluation, and review procedures so that they lead directly to the identification of priorities for improvement and therefore make a positive impact on standards, have not been addressed.

What the school does well

- Nearly all pupils demonstrate pride in their school through respectful behaviour and a strong sense of belonging, supported by an environment that nurtures their growth and commitment to the message of Jesus.
- There is a lived sense of community at Padre Pio Catholic Primary School, evident in the quality of relationships and strong culture of welcome for all. Pupils and staff are guided by their mission: 'A Catholic family where we pray and learn in peace with each other. Together we take the message of Jesus to the world.'
- Policies for religious education (RE), prayer and worship, and relationships and sex education (RSE) give clear guidance and support the school's Catholic life.
- Many pupils are making steady progress in developing their religious knowledge and understanding, in line with the *Religious Education Directory*.
- Pupils' achievements in RE are celebrated and recognised through certificates and class Dojo points.
- Prayer spaces, religious displays, and symbols throughout classrooms and the wider school environment encourage spiritual reflection and clearly express the school's Catholic ethos.
- Pupils confidently pray traditional prayers and are reverent, attentive, and enthusiastic as they participate in collective worship.

What the school needs to improve

- Provide training to ensure all staff can confidently and effectively implement the Directory, with a focus on planning for challenge, creativity, and independent learning with tasks that meet the needs of all pupils, including the more able.
- Raise the level of rigour in monitoring, evaluation and review procedures so that they lead directly to the identification of priorities for improvement and therefore make a positive impact on standards.
- Strengthen the rigour and impact of self-evaluation processes by ensuring governors act as critical friends through regular monitoring, analysis, and strategic planning. Leaders should ensure the Catholic self-evaluation document is evaluative, evidence based, and used effectively to inform action planning and drive improvement.

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

2

Provision

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

2

Leadership

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

2

2

Pupils at Padre Pio School make a meaningful contribution to the Catholic life and mission of the school, actively living out its guiding statement: 'A Catholic family where we pray and learn in peace with each other. Together we take the message of Jesus to the world.' Through involvement in Mini Vinnies and the Princess Trust, pupils engage in service and demonstrate growing social awareness. Their outreach includes donating food to the parish's St Vincent de Paul (SVP) branch, fundraising to repair the crucifix at St Alban's Church, and designing cards and making gifts for residents at the Regency House care home. These activities reflect a developing understanding of Catholic social teaching. Environmental responsibility is promoted through the Eco Committee, with pupils recycling batteries and plastics and celebrating Earth Day. Their efforts in this area have been recognised with the Eco Schools Platinum Award. Weekly opportunities for pupils to reflect on the meaning of the schools' virtues and values supports pupils' moral development, enabling them to live out the Gospel values in daily life. Confidence and leadership skills are developed through participation in pupil voice groups, e.g. The Rights Respecting Committee.

The Catholic identity of Padre Pio School is clearly visible in everyday school life. Staff show commitment to the Catholic mission by modelling Gospel values and joining key celebrations such as family Masses and parish-based activities. Regular visits from the parish priest strengthen pupils' understanding of Catholic traditions and build parish links. Charitable work, including fundraising for tents and clothing for the homeless, provides opportunities for pupils to support the local community and deepen their understanding of faith in action. Provision for inclusion is well established, resulting in a culture where children are treated with dignity and respect, which in turn contributes positively to pupils' sense of belonging. Transition arrangements are carefully planned; welcome packs support parents to ensure a smooth start for children entering school. Pupil groups such as the Rights Respecting Committee and diversity workshops all help pupils feel part of the school community, while activities like Anti-Bullying Week, playground buddies, and visits to places of worship encourage respect for others. Pastoral care is effective, with emotional literacy support

assistants (ELSA) and Rainbows bereavement support programmes supporting pupil wellbeing. The school environment reflects its Catholic character through attractive, well-resourced prayer spaces, religious displays, and symbols. The RSE curriculum is effectively implemented in line with diocesan guidance and parental involvement, ensuring consistency and shared understanding.

Leaders at Padre Pio School show a strong commitment to the Catholic life and mission, which is clearly reflected in policy, curriculum, and daily practice. They respond to diocesan guidance and through shared liturgical events and sacramental preparation are actively working to strengthen parish links. The partnership with St Alban's High School is well established, with transition programmes that support pupils' spiritual and academic development. RE is prioritised, receiving its full 10% entitlement. The school maintains a positive and proactive partnership with parents, supported by regular communication and shared understanding of the school's mission. Leaders and governors acknowledge the fundamental role of parents as first educators of their children and actively support them in fulfilling the responsibilities of this vocation. Staff wellbeing is supported through pastoral care and targeted professional development, including induction, enabling all staff to contribute confidently to the Catholic mission. Governors are supportive and contribute to strategic discussions and school events. Governors' involvement in monitoring and evaluation is developing, but there is a need for more active engagement in the school's self-evaluation cycle, including regular monitoring, analysis, and constructive challenge. Their contribution to improvement planning is emerging, though not yet fully embedded in a way that strengthens strategic direction.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

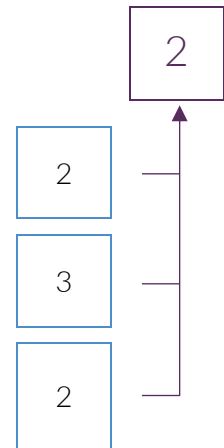
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 at Padre Pio School make steady progress developing their knowledge and understanding in line with the *Religious Education Directory*. Younger pupils engage with scripture through creative activities such as playdough modelling of the Creation story, role play, and sequencing picture cards to retell Bible stories. As they move through the school, pupils explore sacramental themes through church visits and art-based tasks, such as decorating the Paschal Candle. Older pupils investigate theological concepts including stewardship, the relationship between science and religion, and how Christians follow the greatest commandments. Pupils across the school show interest and enjoyment in RE. Parental feedback highlights the positive impact of RE beyond the classroom, with many noting their children’s enthusiasm and ability to share what they have learned, for example: “My son comes home and tells me about the wonderful things he has learnt about God and stories from the Bible”. While pupils generally enjoy RE and demonstrate progress, an over-reliance on worksheets restricts opportunities for extended responses and deeper reflection. As a result, although pupils are engaged, the current approach does not fully maximise their potential. Greater use of varied and inclusive teaching strategies would enhance both achievement and engagement across the curriculum.

Staff are in the early stages of implementing a new scheme of work aligned with the Directory. As a result, teachers demonstrate varying levels of confidence and knowledge. While planning frequently references differentiation and challenge, this is not consistently reflected in classroom practice. Tasks often lack sufficient adaptation to meet the needs of pupils requiring additional support or challenge. Opportunities for creativity and independent learning remain limited, with lessons frequently relying on teacher-led delivery and extended periods of teacher talk.

Questioning is used to check understanding, but closed questions are common, which restricts deeper discussion and pupil engagement. Pupils receive feedback through peer, self, and teacher assessment; however, feedback rarely focuses on religious understanding which limits its impact on progress. Pupils’ achievements are recognised through certificates and class Dojo points. Attractive

prayer and reflection areas, displays, and crucifixes are present in classrooms, supporting spiritual development. Presentation in pupils' books is generally good, but the overuse of worksheets and limited pupil autonomy reduces opportunities for extended responses and deeper learning. Staff recognise that internal training is needed to improve pedagogy linked to the Directory, effectively meeting the needs of all pupils.

Leaders and governors at Padre Pio School demonstrate a clear commitment to RE, ensuring it reflects the expectations of the Directory. They provide strategic oversight to ensure that RE is given appropriate status through dedicated time, staffing, and resources. Policies are in place for RE, prayer, worship, and RSE, offering clear guidance to inform practice. Monitoring and evaluation is in place as part of the school's review cycle, however, reports lack analytical depth and do not effectively highlight areas for improvement in the self-evaluation. The governors' annual general report ensures that parents are informed of updates in RE. School leaders are working collaboratively and are committed to developing further the quality and provision of RE, prayer, and worship. Their participation in wider cluster working provides opportunities for shared professional dialogue and resource development to support the continued development and implementation of the Directory.

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

Nearly all pupils respond well to the experiences of prayer and liturgy offered by the school. They are reverent, attentive, and prayerful. Some older pupils are involved in planning, preparing, and presenting acts of collective worship, however, during Inspection pupils expressed their ambition to become more actively engaged in planning, preparing, and delivering child-led worship. This is an area for further development. Younger children are developing their understanding of the importance of prayer and are learning the appropriate responses. Virtues from the Jesuit Pupil Profile are outlined and reinforced in worship sessions. Pupils showed a good understanding of them by giving examples of how they apply them in their daily lives. Pupils know that there are a variety of ways of praying that are part of the Catholic tradition. They can recite traditional prayers including the Hail Mary, Our Father, and Glory Be confidently and all classes pray the Sign of the Cross in Welsh. They are developing their understanding of scripture, symbols, silence, meditation, and reflection. Pupils' work and prayers are used to enhance class and school display boards. These include their work on Virtues and the current RE topic 'Creation and Covenant'. Older pupils have personal prayer books which they can use throughout the day. They demonstrate a good understanding of how to pray the Rosary and the Marian month of October.

The school day in Padre Pio begins and ends with prayer. Additionally, all pupils have opportunities to engage in quiet, prayerful moments throughout the day. Attractive display boards and prayer areas in classes and in communal areas enhance the prayer life of the school and reflect the current season of the Church's year. They are thoughtfully presented with a range of artefacts, statues, rosaries and resources. Pupils treat these areas reverently. The acting head teacher models good practice in acts of worship. A range of timetabled worship sessions take place each day, including whole school, phase and individual class sessions. These are built around appropriate scripture, which is linked to the current RE topic, the liturgical year, or Sunday Gospel reading. Staff use a range of resources to bring scripture to life, ensuring that it is engaging for the age and ability of

their pupils. All staff are developing their understanding of the new *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*, and leaders are committed to delivering good quality opportunities for prayer and worship. Music is used in acts of worship; however, more use could be made of the talents of staff and pupils to enhance these experiences further.

The newly appointed prayer and worship leader is able to confidently support all staff to ensure they have the necessary knowledge, skills, and experience to lead and manage prayer and worship within their classes. Collective worship is a priority on the school improvement plan. The chair of governors has a clear understanding of the development needs of the school; the Catholic Life Committee, alongside the newly appointed RE link governor, is involved in the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship. The school's prayer and liturgy policy has recently been reviewed. It is compliant with archdiocesan guidelines. There is also a detailed action plan in place that sets out clear actions, success criteria, timescales, and arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the provision and outcomes in prayer and liturgy. When fully implemented, these will further support staff in ensuring that collective worship becomes a key part of the school's ethos.

The school has a good relationship with the parish priest and is developing effective links with the parish. School staff support parish sacramental preparation programmes. Families and parishioners attend school and family Masses regularly throughout the year in the school and parish church.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Padre Pio Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	402200
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	6783331
Full postal address of the school	Padre Pio Catholic Primary School, Conway Road, Pontypool, NP4 6HL
School phone number	01633762730
Headteacher	Nicola McGinty (acting)
Chair of governors	Ceri Thomas
School Website	www.padrepioprimary.co.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	3 – 4 July 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	GG

The inspection team

Catherine Power
Karen Lewis

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