



# Diocese of Westminster

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## INSPECTION REPORT

### **Pope Paul Catholic Primary School**

Baker Street, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire EN6 2ES

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DCSF Number: 919 3975

URN Number: 117496

Headteacher: Mrs H. Lines

Chair of Governors: Mrs R. Cope

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Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster  
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Date of inspection: 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2010  
Date of previous inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> September 2007

Reporting Inspector: Miss C. Wells

## Description of School

Pope Paul School is a one form entry primary school for pupils aged 4 to 11 years. There are 210 pupils on roll. 86% of pupils are Catholic with the majority of the remainder from other Christian faiths. The school serves the parish of Our Lady and St. Vincent in Potters Bar but also takes children from a wider area including those from the parish of St. Martin de Porres in Cuffley. The great majority of pupils are White British and the remainder come from a range of other ethnic backgrounds including White Irish and Black African. All pupils speak English as their first language. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals and a below average proportion of pupils has special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are 11 teachers in the school of whom 82% are Catholics. Three teachers hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS) qualification or equivalent. The school's mission statement, 'Learning in the Light of Christ' informs the life of the school. It is known by the pupils and is prominently displayed around the school.

### Key for inspection grades

Grade 1: Outstanding; Grade 2 :Good; Grade 3: Satisfactory; Grade 4: Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

The overall effectiveness of Pope Paul School is good. It has a strong Catholic ethos with dedicated leadership from the headteacher and acting deputy who are instrumental in effectively maintaining and developing the school's Catholic identity. Relationships and respect between all staff and pupils are very good and demonstrate the school's very caring community. One pupil explained "All the teachers care about us and you always learn something". Worship and prayer are central in the school's life. Pupils' moral and social development is good and this is reflected in their behaviour and attitudes. Pupils are proud of their school and feel valued, respected and listened to. The school is committed to continuing to raise the profile of religious education. Pupils make good progress in religious education throughout their school life.

**Grade 2**

## Improvement since the last inspection

Good progress has been made in addressing issues from the last Section 48 inspection in 2007. Areas for development were related to devising assessment procedures so that pupils are aware of the success of their learning and implementing a more rigorous religious education monitoring system. Assessment procedures have been devised in the light of recent guidelines. Teachers use good day-to day assessment systems to plan lessons and they carefully check pupil's understanding. Most teachers provide guidance as to what pupils must do to improve. The religious education co-ordinator has begun to collect pupil performance data and the analysis of this is part of the school's development plan. Improvements have been made in the monitoring of plans, workbooks and lessons. There is evidence that the school strives for improvement in religious education and places a strong emphasis on staff development at all levels.

**Grade 2**

## The capacity of the school community to improve and develop

The school has a good capacity for improvement and development. Significant improvements have been made since the last inspection and there is evidence of shared good practice and

support for new teachers. This is essential as there have been a significant number of staff changes in recent years. All staff are committed to the success of the school and are willing to improve their skills through the training opportunities offered. There have been good improvements in the processes to monitor and evaluate the quality of the Catholic life of the school and religious education. The self-evaluation documentation is up to date and there are action plans to address areas for development.

**Grade 2**

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Continue the development of assessment of religious education using the national levels of attainment for setting pupil targets, planning lessons, and tracking pupils' progress.
- Improve the consistency of marking procedures throughout the school by ensuring this details improvement strategies and includes opportunities given to pupils to make these improvements.
- Review the school's self evaluation to ensure judgements are accurate and evidence based.

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## **The Catholic Life of the School**

### **Leadership and Management**

Leadership and management are focused on maintaining and developing the school's Catholic identity. The mission statement contains the words "Learning in the Light of Christ." Pupils understand its meaning and how it relates to the ethos of their school. Attractive displays and artefacts around the school reflect the school's Christian mission. This is particularly evident in the school entrance. The governors are supportive and understand the school's strengths and areas for development. They are kept well informed. The pupils value the caring attitude of the staff who listen to them, make their learning interesting, build pupils' confidence and encourage all to try their best. Pupils' views are taken into consideration through planned "conferencing" opportunities and their ideas are acted upon. Older children willingly undertake responsibilities and support younger ones. For example year 6 pupils have "reading buddies" in reception class. The leadership promotes well pupils' spiritual and moral development. Their achievements in work and behaviour are recognised, related to Christian values and celebrated. The school is developing a range of extra curricular activities and parents are positive about the Catholic ethos of the school. The parish and school work closely together and the parish priest visits the school regularly.

**Grade 2**

### **The Prayer Life of the School**

Pupils are provided with many opportunities to develop in the understanding and growth of their faith. Prayer and worship are integral to the life of the school and pupils are given time for meditation and reflection. Pupils are also given opportunities to write their own prayers and examples were seen during the inspection. Assemblies are of a good quality, enhanced by Gospel readings, singing, music and drama. During the inspection, Lent was introduced at a whole school assembly, led by the Year 6 Liturgy Group. All pupils were involved through readings, drama, singing and reflections. Each class has a prayer table with age appropriate bibles, artefacts and pictures. Good quality display boards using pupils' prayers and reflections

are prominent throughout the school. Classroom worship is monitored. There are regular meetings between the parish catechist and the religious education co-ordinator to organise liturgies and pupils contribute to parish Masses throughout the liturgical year including the monthly family Mass. All Year 6 pupils are involved in the planning of school liturgies and read at Sunday Mass. Worship contributes effectively to pupils spiritual and moral development. The prayer life of the school is a strength.

**Grade 2**

### **How effectively does the school /college promote community cohesion?**

The school is a welcoming, inclusive community where all members are valued. 'Respect for others' features in the mission prayer and diversity is effectively celebrated and valued. Pupils have opportunities to study other world faiths and effective links have been established with a Jewish primary school. Pupils also visit the temple in Neasden as part of their study of Hinduism. They show compassion for others by giving to local, national and international charities. A steering group of pupils, staff, parents and parishioners has been established to raise funds and promote Fairtrade concepts through the organisation of a variety of events, including a Fairtrade cake sale. The school is working towards fair trade accreditation. The developing range of extra-curricular activities recognises the variety of interests and abilities in the whole school family. Many staff members are also parishioners, and are actively involved in parish life and ensure that children's work is displayed in the parish church throughout the year. Religious education promotes community cohesion.

**Grade 2**

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## **Religious Education**

### **Achievement and Standards in Religious Education**

Pupils make good progress in the school in relation to their prior attainment. The majority of pupils achieve age appropriate levels of attainment and some exceed these. The school is developing its tracking of children's achievement and analysis of trends over time. Pupils are beginning to understand the life and teaching of the Catholic Church and are able to apply this to their own life experiences. The pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and this is reflected in their behaviour and attitudes. Books are generally well presented and the front covers are an attractive feature. Generally they evidence a good coverage of the curriculum. There is a good variety of written activities including Scripture work. Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons especially those linked to practical activities.

**Grade 2**

### **Teaching and learning in Religious Education**

The quality of religious education lessons overall is good and some outstanding aspects were observed. Teachers plan well with clear learning intentions made explicit to pupils. The provision for children with additional learning needs is good. The teaching styles are appropriate to the age of the pupils and encourage active pupil participation. Teachers use visual presentations and open questioning well to motivate pupils with their learning and develop confidence in their ideas. The activities planned were creatively devised to be practical and achievable. Differentiation for a range of abilities was seen to be given by either extra support

from adults or carefully matched activities. Tasks consolidate and develop the pupils' thinking. Assessments are made at the end of each topic and teachers have received training enabling them to link the pupils' achievement to national levels of attainment. Teachers use marking well to praise pupils' work and some suggest improvement points. Opportunities to make these improvements are not always given. Parents are informed of future religious education topics through a newsletter and support children with their homework assignments.

**Grade 2**

### **Quality of the Curriculum**

The quality of the curriculum is good, and suitable for the age and abilities of the learners. It meets the requirement of the diocese and the Bishops' Conference. 10% of curriculum time is used for religious education following the "The Way, the Truth and the Life" scheme. A range of faiths are studied. Religious education is linked to other curriculum areas such as drama, art and literacy. Links to information and communication technology (ICT) are developing. The school is also developing its provision for personal, social, health education and citizenship. The parish priest and the church are additional resources for learning. Links have been developed with local places of interest to support to other faith learning. The curriculum contributes well to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Attractive religious education displays throughout the school support learning in the subject.

**Grade 2**

### **Leadership and management of Religious Education**

The deputy headteacher as religious education co-ordinator has worked hard to raise the profile of this subject and develop its contribution to the educational mission of the Church. She is experienced, efficient and conscientious and has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development. She supports and guides teachers very well especially those with less experience of teaching in a Catholic school. The parish priest is also available to increase staff's religious education understanding. Staff training takes place regularly. Religious education is effectively managed and evaluated. Governors are regularly informed of religious education developments. Equality of opportunity is promoted well and the school is sensitive to anti-discriminatory practices. The budget for religious education and worship is above that allocated to other core subjects and religious education is well resourced.

**Grade 2**