



DIOCESE OF **Arundel and Brighton**

DENOMINATIONAL (S48) INSPECTION REPORT

School: St Polycarp's Catholic Primary School

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School Unique Reference Number: 125206

Head of School:	Mrs Paula Best
Executive Headteacher:	Mrs Ann Gunn
Chair of Governors:	Mr Martin Parr
Lead Inspector:	Mr Peter Ward
Associate Inspector:	Mrs Liz Hargreaves
Inspection date:	9 July 2019

Overall Effectiveness	Previous Inspection: 1
	This Inspection: 1
Catholic Life:	1
Collective Worship:	1
Religious Education:	1

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Polycarp's school is an Outstanding Catholic school because:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Pupils and staff enjoy attending the school and deepening their knowledge of Catholic Christianity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Pastoral care of staff and pupils is strongly committed to ensuring that all are able to grow and flourish.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Prayer and worship are at the heart of school life celebrated with delight and respect.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Excellent relations with the local parish support all pupils to make strong progress in their religious education.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Religious education is very well led so that pupils are able to make excellent progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school is excellent because leaders and governors know their school and develop opportunities very well.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Polycarp's Catholic Primary School is a larger than average Voluntary Aided school situated in the Guildford Deanery and is maintained by Surrey Local Authority. It is situated adjacent to the parish church of St Joan of Arc where most families of its pupils' worship. It also serves a further six parishes, three in the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton and three in the Diocese of Portsmouth.

The percentage of pupils who come from minority ethnic backgrounds is 32% which is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is growing and at 41% is above the national average. The proportions of disabled pupils and of those who have special educational needs at 10%, is slightly below the national average. The proportions of pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) at 2.14% is slightly below the national average. The proportion of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium at 3.5% is significantly below the national average of 13.6%.

On leaving St Polycarp's, the majority of pupils attend All Hallows Catholic School in the Diocese of Portsmouth.

In September 2016 the school founded the Catholic Teaching Schools Alliance and remains one of two primary teaching schools in the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. It has eight strategic partners including Catholic primary, secondary and special schools and St Mary's University with a further fifteen Catholic, Anglican and community alliance schools.

Since the last inspection the school has successfully progressed the points for action and has adopted the new diocesan framework for assessment that is in line with the new national Interim Standards of Assessment.

The weekly proportion of curriculum time given to religious education is 10% in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Embed the new diocesan assessment framework in order to promote and celebrate pupil progress.
- Develop enhanced opportunities to promote pupil progress in religious education as pupils transition to secondary school.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- The quality of provision of the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is Outstanding.

- Pupils identify strongly with their purposeful and joyful Catholic school community. They embrace wholeheartedly the demands that membership of the community entails. They volunteer to assume leading roles in four whole-school committees and in other positions that promote the Catholic character of the school within and beyond the school community.
- Pupils from all Catholic parishes along with those of other religious traditions and beliefs are proud of their individual religious identity and have a strong sense of their personal worth. They appreciate the outward signs of the school's Catholic identity and readily celebrate it through collective worship. Many manifestly engaged in it voluntarily during the time of the inspection.
- Pupils from the Reception class onwards know the mission statement of the school and demonstrate a good age-appropriate understanding of its meaning and purpose. Inspectors saw the statement *"Follow in the footsteps of Jesus through playing, praying, loving and learning together"* lived out during the inspection in pupils' courteous behaviour towards one another, in their care and respect for their environment and in the positive engaged way in which they take part in the routines of school life.
- Pupils' excellent behaviour is further supported by the new concise, yet understandable behaviour policy, recently developed collaboratively by the school which states *'Be Ready, Be Respectful, Be safe'*.
- Pupils know one another because of the buddy system in place whereby older pupils support those new to the school and also because of the friendly character of the school. Parents told inspectors how their children would sometimes greet pupils from other year groups when they meet away from school.

- Pupils benefit from the well-judged school systems and structures that encourage and support their spiritual and moral development. The School Council, Eco Council and One World Council each comprise a representative elected from each class. The One World Council seeks to support those less fortunate in the world and maintains a display board publicising the work they have organised as well as reporting back to their class following each meeting. Recently the Eco Council worked together to gain a grant to fund new equipment for the nature garden as well as cleaning and tidying the area and building a small pond. The School Council members appreciate being able to contribute to the Catholic life and development of the school.
- Pupils willingly support the wide range of charitable giving encouraged by the school and help select the charities supported by each year group. One of the many good causes is the Little Princess Trust which gives real hair wigs to children who have lost their hair due to cancer treatment and other illnesses. In addition to regular financial donations to the charity, two pupils have donated some of their own hair. Another practical contribution is the donation of harvest thanksgiving gifts to the local foodbank. Lent is marked by a school-wide collection for Mission Together while pupils from Key Stage 2 helped serve the Cafod soup lunch.

The quality of provision of the Catholic Life of the school is Outstanding

- St Polycarp's is a flourishing Catholic school community committed to the nurturing and development of the particular gifts and talents of all. The school mission statement, a clear succinct expression of the educational mission of the school, animates the Catholic life of the school because it is accessible and inspiring to pupils while also reflecting principles that direct the leadership and management of the school.
- The school provides or hosts a wide range of clubs and extra-curricular activities before and after school led by school staff and external organisations as well as outings and excursions that together provide an extensive range of opportunities for pupils. School leaders are mindful when communicating with parents that some may find financing these activities challenging and signpost ways to access financial support. The provision of enrichment activities as a whole is effectively overseen by the school.
- Staff fully support the mission of the school and appreciate the induction and professional development opportunities provided that enable them to fully engage with the school's Catholic life. Adult volunteers and others who work on the school site also benefit from the induction so that pupils benefit from a consistent and informed understanding of the school's mission.
- The school proclaims its Catholic character on its website and throughout the school estate by signs and symbols, by the centrality of prayer and worship and by the strong sense of community. The main entrance area display reflects the appropriate liturgical season and feasts and is regularly refreshed, as is the prayer focus in the hall. Inspectors observed pupils taking advantage of the two prayer stations in public areas during morning and lunch breaks. Classrooms have attractive focal prayer areas. The well-kept Spiritual Area within the school grounds plays a regular and significant part in the life of the school.

- The school works closely with the Catholic parish of Farnham to the mutual benefit of the parish and all school pupils irrespective of their parish. The parish priest actively supports the school, regularly visits classes and celebrates Mass in the church for the school community. A weekday afternoon Mass is celebrated at a time convenient for parents collecting their children from school. The governing body has a link governor with responsibility for facilitating links with all seven parishes that serve pupils who attend the school.
- Pastoral life is one of the strengths of the school. It is thoughtfully directed to support the full flourishing of all members of the school community. The school is sensitive to the spiritual, emotional and material poverty of some pupils and their families and works with specialist staff, the local parish priest and specialist agencies to seek to address it. The Rainbows group helps pupils at times of bereavement and separation and the Young Carers support group is there for those with additional caring responsibilities at home.
- Pastoral programmes including relationships education are thoughtfully delivered to support pupils through their school career. The school recognises that parents and carers are the principal educators of their children and seeks to work with them in this as in all areas of education. Parents told inspectors how they appreciated the consultative approach of the school in terms of relationships education and the constructive response of the school to their comments.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is Outstanding.

- The Head of School, supported by the Executive Headteacher and senior team, provides excellent leadership and direction of the school. She knows the school very well, has a thorough knowledge of the community that the school serves and is sensitive to its needs and aspirations.
- Leaders and governors of St Polycarp's have a strong commitment to the provision of Catholic education for the benefit of the local Catholic and wider community. They rigorously review data and other sources of information to ensure an accurate knowledge of the school. This contributes to the Catholic self-evaluation document which they review regularly, along with the annual religious education and collective worship and Catholic life action plans, to design and monitor developments. When reviewing the Catholic life of the school, they attend to the views of staff and of pupils through the Spiritual Council as well as parental consultations. They are also attentive to the daily life of the school community in order to make informed improvements.
- Governors have an accurate knowledge of the school from their regular planned visits to the school by link governors who undertake learning walks and meet with subject leads in addition to receiving and critically reviewing reports from school leaders. They are actively engaged in charting the future of the school, supporting the appointment of the Head of School alongside the Executive Headteacher and by exploring the potential benefits and possible challenges of joining the Xavier Catholic Educational Trust.

- Leaders and governors recognise the benefits of working collaboratively with parishes for the benefit of pupils and have a dedicated link governor with this responsibility. Links are necessarily closest with the local parish, St Joan of Arc, Farnham and include the use of the parish car park for parents to use for the morning drop off system. Frequent use of the church by the school enables pupils to gain a depth of understanding of the place of a church in Catholic life.
- The school has successful strategies for engaging with parents using a variety of digital channels to the benefit of pupils. There is also a regular newsletter that combines celebrating the success of pupils with news of future events. In addition, regular opportunities for families to meet teachers are well supported as are briefing events for parents. The school also surveys parents for their views, most recently focusing on religious education, and in preparing the school development plan. Opportunities to engage further with those whose first language is not English and by developing prayer groups are currently being explored.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP / PRAYER AND PRAYER LIFE

- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life
- The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life

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How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life is Outstanding.

- Prayer and worship engage pupils' interest and inspires them to reflect and celebrate. This is evidenced by the delight and respect that they display, the quality of communal singing and prayerful silence. Pupils are alert to the special character of such times and open to the variety of activities that can contribute to their participation and openness to the transcendent.
- Pupils readily respond to the opportunity to prepare the prayer table in their classrooms. They use the resources to construct a prayer focus that reflects the liturgical season and is in harmony with the Come and See programme. They respond well to the carefully planned programme of increasing opportunities to contribute to planning and leading prayer and worship beginning in the Early Years Foundation Stage and steadily increasing to Year 6. Pupils in the Reception class can select hymns for their collective worship. In Key Stage 1 pupils can lead worship with confidence and a degree of independence while all can act with reverence and confidently join in community prayers. In Key Stage 2 as part of religious education and using Cafod resources, pupils regularly devise themed liturgies that show imagination and sensitivity. This enables them to devise and lead group prayer and worship with their teacher that is appropriate to the feast or season and to the age and capacity of the pupils.
- Pupils participate in a wide range of forms of prayer and worship through their school career. They learn and use a wide range of formal prayers and can sit silently to listen to and reflect upon the word of God. They gain an age-appropriate understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons and feasts from the acts of collective worship that they attend.
- Pupils attend Mass regularly during the year with dignity and respect. Pupils in Years 3-6 take an active part in the preparation of the liturgy using a standard planning sheet, selecting music and hymns to complement the readings of the day, and in serving the Mass. The school comes together to celebrate with those who make their first Holy Communion and provides opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation in Advent and Lent.

- There is a sense of respect for those of different faiths and pupils are confident enough to recognise that difference and act with integrity when praying with others who may not share their beliefs. The experience of living and working in a praying community exercises a visible effect on the development of all pupils, irrespective of their own faith and belief.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is Outstanding.

- Prayer and worship are an integral part of school life and central to its Catholic tradition. They are at the heart of the daily and weekly life of the school with prayers at the beginning and end of the day and also at lunchtime. Whole school worship on Monday and Friday is complemented by two further opportunities for each of Years 1-2, 3-4 and 5-6. Reception pupils attend alongside Years 1-2. Mass for the school community is celebrated in the adjacent parish church at the beginning and end of the school year, at Christmas and Easter and on feast days. In addition, Mass has been celebrated weekly for year groups in Key Stage 2 until Easter when it has been replaced with a Franciscan spirituality reflection led by the parish priest.
- Collective worship and the liturgical year are an integral part of planning the school year. The theme for Monday school worship is based on the previous Sunday Gospel and that of Friday on the liturgical year or school events and celebrations. Collective worship in tutor time in Years 1-2 is based on the previous Sunday's Gospel while that in Years 3-6 is based on the Gospel for the day appropriately linked to the spiritual aspirations of pupils.
- Staff are supported in leading prayer and worship by means of induction and on-going training to enable new teachers to lead prayer and worship with confidence. They are also helped by the modelling of leadership provided by the Head of School and other leaders when leading collective worship and opening staff meetings. Staff liturgies are an integral part of school life and another opportunity from which staff can draw upon.
- Staff become skilled in leading prayer and worship and in helping pupils to plan and deliver pupil-led occasions. They enable pupils to experience a variety of liturgies with formal and spontaneous prayer combined with music and song, or perhaps silence for reflection or art or drama. They are supported by planning resources that ensure that there are consistent common features that enable pupils to recognise a broad consistent pattern of celebration.
- A recent innovation since Easter has been the parish priest's introduction of 'Franciscan spirituality' in place of the weekly Key Stage 2 Mass. This entails the meeting with pupils either in or near the parish church and exploring different aspects of faith and belief through dialogue and discussion with pupils in an age-appropriate manner. Indications are that this is welcomed by pupils.
- Parents respond to invitations to attend all celebrations of Mass as well as some other liturgies. Some also respond to invitations to attend 'Parent Prayers' each month and recitation of the Rosary with staff and pupils during May and October.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is Outstanding.

- Leaders and governors recognise the centrality of prayer and worship in school life and are committed to ensuring that it is at the heart of every school celebration. All meetings open and close with appropriate prayer.
- Prayer and worship are very well supported on account of the expert knowledge of leaders and managers in planning and leading engaging Catholic worship. They have developed a comprehensive and informative policy document that provides excellent guidance tailored to the requirements of the school. This provides clear advice and guidance on how to devise and lead prayer and worship, the resources available and criteria to be followed in order to support pupils as they gradually develop their own skills in this regard.
- The Head of School is recognised as the spiritual leader of the school community and generally leads the Monday and Friday collective worship for the whole school. The religious education co-ordinator supports the regular celebrations of prayer and worship and with the Head of School, regularly monitors it so that leaders and governors may be well informed. The annual cycle of celebrations is an integral part of the school calendar.
- Governors are well informed about prayer and worship because some regularly attend a wide range of school liturgies, complementing the role of the link governor. The school policy is regularly reviewed in light of on-going monitoring and review.
- The parish priest actively supports the liturgical life of the school, celebrating Mass regularly for pupils and contributing his wisdom and guidance for the benefit of the whole school community.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is Outstanding.

- Pupils clearly enjoy and are engaged with religious education. They welcome the wide range of often interactive activities that lead to a strong level of attention and concentration throughout a lesson. For example, in one lesson, pupils were completely engaged in a group activity that involved biblical references and the geography of Israel in order to appreciate when and where events in the life of Jesus took place. During their school career pupils become skilled in their knowledge of the Bible and the ability to find well-known passages.
- Throughout the school pupils display positive age-appropriate attitudes to learning. The youngest were excited and stimulated as they worked in groups in a focused way to appreciate the creative work of God. Older pupils display an increasing ability to work independently or collaboratively as appropriate and regularly complete a self-assessment of their degree of progress by the end of tasks. Behaviour for learning is outstanding with lessons normally proceeding without any interruption.
- School data shows that attainment and progress in religious education is generally sound with some making excellent progress when compared with diocesan standards. From their various starting points, pupils generally make significant and consistent progress in their knowledge and understanding of religious education, irrespective of their individual circumstances.
- Pupils are making strong progress in becoming religiously literate throughout their school career. In a Lower Key Stage Two lesson, considering the life of Oscar Romero, for example, pupils showed an excellent ability to understand the Christian principles that motivated him while in another lesson the implications of 'love thy neighbour' were readily and broadly understood by pupils.
- Parents told inspectors that their children really enjoy the subject and display pride in their learning; *'teachers make lessons fun'*.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is Outstanding.

- Teaching is outstanding in the early years foundation stage and generally outstanding and never less than consistently good, throughout the school. It is very effective in stimulating and motivating pupils and often prompts reflection leading to thoughtful observations or questions. Hence pupils learn extremely well.
- Teachers display a high level of confidence and expertise in their knowledge of the religious education programme and how best to present it in order to enthuse pupils. They work closely together to plan, assess and moderate work. There is a culture of collaboration which enables teachers to seek support and share ideas.
- Teachers deploy a wide range of attractive and informative resources, including well-designed PowerPoints and resource sheets and use varied teaching strategies that capture the interest and imagination of pupils. For example a lesson exploring King David commenced outside where all pupils were encouraged to read Psalm 18 to set the context and then moved into the classroom where a mirror was used to emphasise the statement 'God loves me'.
- Additional staff members present in lessons are briefed clearly on the lesson plan and are well deployed to strengthen the learning of pupils in the class. Lessons progress at a good pace so that pupils are able to make consistently strong progress in their learning.
- Teachers are attentive to the learning of pupils. They skilfully involve individuals or groups of pupils in comment or questions in order to consolidate or clarify their learning, adjusting tasks as necessary to maximise pupil learning.
- Teachers have a sound knowledge of their pupils and support their different learning styles very effectively in a variety of ways. For example, a task may be re-worded or another pupil who has mastered the item may be invited to help support a pupil who appears to be challenged. Marking and assessment effectively supports pupil learning which often includes pupil self-assessment and the opportunity for supplementary peer and teacher assessment. Achievements are celebrated at the school Friday gathering complementing the house point system to reward pupils' efforts.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is Outstanding.

- Leaders and governors have a very strong commitment to the centrality of curriculum religious education in the life of the school. It is resourced and funded in line with its central position in the school. The 2018/19 Religious Education Development Plan is a well informed and realistic plan, fully costed, to ensure that pupils can make excellent progress. It is based on and assures rigorous on-going assessment of teaching and learning and of pupils' outcomes and provides realistic and achievable targeted planning and strategic action.

- Leadership of religious education has been strengthened in the past year to guarantee sufficient time to concentrate on the leadership and management of classroom religious education. It is well-informed and knowledgeable and strongly committed to ensuring the highest standards of pupil learning through excellent teaching. It has fostered a culture of collaboration among teachers that supports their teachers and hence supports pupils' learning.
- Leaders undertake regular monitoring of teaching and of pupils' achievement to support teachers' professional development and inform future school planning. The link governor regularly visits the school to meet the religious education co-ordinator and undertake joint learning walks. As a result, leaders and governors are well informed of the strengths and development opportunities.
- One initiative is the recent purchase of Catholic Edition Bibles for Years 5 and 6. This enhances the established use of biblical texts, as opposed to narrative accounts of the Bible, from about Year 3 and will further support pupils' familiarity with the biblical text and contribute in some way to their transition to a Catholic secondary school.
- The school follows the diocesan mandated Come and See programme and devotes 10% of curriculum time to religious education in line with the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. It has successfully piloted the introduction of the new diocesan assessment framework, working in collaboration with the diocese and other pilot schools, and integrated it into the established marking and assessment structure of the school.

Summary of Inspection Judgements

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.

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Catholic Life

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The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.

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The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school

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How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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Collective Worship and Prayer Life

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How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life.

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The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life.

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How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life.

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Religious Education

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

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The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education

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How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

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