



**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT**
(Under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005)

on

**THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

School: St. Paul's Catholic School

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School URN: 120307

Headteacher: Mr Neil Lockyer

Chair of Governors: Mrs Laura O'Brien

Inspectors: Mrs Brenda Carson
Mr Paul Martin

Date of Inspection: 14 March 2013

INTRODUCTION

The inspection of this school was carried out on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham under Canon 806 of Canon Law and Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in accordance with the Diocese of Nottingham Schedule for Section 48 Inspections. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. The process begins with the school's own self-evaluation and the inspection schedule is in line with the criteria set by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA).

During the inspection, the inspectors observed 5 Religious Education lessons and 7 Acts of Collective Worship.

Meetings were held with the headteacher, the head of the Religious Education department, the school chaplain and two governors one of whom is a parish priest. Discussions were also held with students, a member of the pastoral support team and a newly qualified teacher.

The inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including the school improvement plan, faculty improvement plan, attainment tracking information, teachers' planning, governors' reports, monitoring records and examined the work in students' Religious Education books.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Paul's Catholic School serves parishes across the East of Leicester and receives students from Market Harborough, to the south, and Oakham, in Rutland, to the east. It is a little larger than the average secondary school and teaches students from 11 to 18 years of age:

- 65% of students are from Catholic families, 17% from other Christian families and an additional 7% from other world faiths.
 - Approximately half the students in the school are from White British backgrounds and half are from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. Above average numbers of students speak English as an additional language and the school provides additional support for them.
 - The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for students entitled to free school meals, for children in local authority care and for students with a parent in the armed forces) is currently well below average but is rising quickly year-on-year.
 - The proportion of students joining the school other than at the usual time of admission is higher than that seen nationally.
 - The numbers of students supported by school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is lower than that found nationally but the number supported by school action is close to average.
 - Exclusions are below and attendance is above national averages.
 - The school currently meets the government's floor standards, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
 - Since the last inspection, the school has undergone a change of headship and has appointed a new head of the Religious Education department.
 - Work on the redevelopment of the site through the 'Building Schools for the Future' programme commenced in March 2013 and represents a £12 million investment into St. Paul's.
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INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

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CATHOLIC LIFE

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COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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KEY FINDINGS

- St. Paul's is an outstanding school where its Catholic mission and vision is shared, actively promoted and practised by governors, staff and students. The inspirational headteacher has a clear vision and ambition for the continued development of the school. The governors, through the Mission Committee, and the leadership team work with rigour to implement, monitor and adjust plans. There is outstanding provision for the development of students' academic, spiritual, moral, social and cultural knowledge, understanding and skills.
 - The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. It is monitored and evaluated to ensure that students are provided with high quality experiences, teaching and resources. The school prayer, from the words of the prophet Micah, is at the heart of the lived values of St. Paul's, 'This is what the Lord asks of you: to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God'. The student Parish Ambassadors form an effective link between the parishes and the school. Students are able to articulate the distinctive nature of the school and their commitment to improving the lives of others. Their relationships with one another and adults in the school community are testament to the positive effect the school has on their lives.
 - Collective Worship is outstanding. Students respond well to and participate positively in the school's Collective Worship. They draw on the rich diversity of cultures represented in the school. Provision is well planned and modelled, with daily worship that tracks the liturgical year. Students can articulate their experiences of developing ideas and taking active roles in planning and leading liturgy and worship.
 - Religious Education is outstanding. The Religious Education faculty contributes significantly to leading teaching and learning across the school. For students currently attending St. Paul's, the learning and progress of most groups is good with some groups making outstanding progress. This is as a result of generally good and sometimes, outstanding teaching. Outcomes at the higher GCSE grades are outstanding and the need to improve grades for sub-groups has been identified by leaders and managers. Current data indicates that measures implemented to address the progress of these underachievers are having the desired impact.
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WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Secure 10% Religious Education at Key Stage 3, as indicted in planning for 2013/2014.
- Ensure the consistency of the quality and student leadership of Acts of Worship during registration throughout the school.
- Continue with current actions to effect outstanding teaching and learning across the Religious Education department.
- Continue to employ the range of identified strategies to ensure the progress and achievement of recognised sub-groups in Religious Education.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF 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.
- The quality of provision for 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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Student involvement in shaping the school mission and ethos is outstanding. Rigour has been introduced into the evaluation of Acts of Worship and this has led to an increased student focus in planning and leading liturgies as witnessed in the Year 8 Act of Worship, the voluntary lunchtime Mass, and the Year 10 Lenten Service. Parish Ambassadors assist in communication between the school and parish communities and are active citizens in leading roles that benefit both school and parishes. Students have a well-developed sense of justice both within the school community and beyond as evidenced by the 'Team Ghana' project which, since 2008, has raised over £110,000 in support of the dioceses of Kumasi and Obuasi in Ghana. The school provides a wide range of activities and opportunities to support personal development and students at St. Paul's are happy, confident and secure in developing their spiritual and emotional growth. Celebration is a key element of reinforcing success and this was witnessed during the staff briefing and through the use of praise on the corridors and in classrooms. There is a real sense that students are proud to belong to this Catholic school and that they respect the beliefs and feelings of others. They participate enthusiastically in school, parish, diocesan and other celebrations.

The school prayer is taken from the words of the prophet Micah, 'This is what the Lord asks of you: to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God'. These words underpin the values of St. Paul's. Views gathered from a wide range of students, staff and governors on the day of the inspection support the judgement that this is a community committed to living out its ethos in an outstanding manner. The school environment is used to continuously reinforce this mission statement through displays, notices and art work. Pastoral care is a priority and interventions are used effectively to enable students to

achieve their potential. Interviews with a student previously excluded and with the newly appointed member of the pastoral support team confirmed the living out of the mission statement. Effective review of SRE (Sex and Relationships Education) delivery prompted the school to move this program into the Religious Education syllabus and extremely sensitive and well delivered content was observed during the inspection. Students and staff from a wide variety of backgrounds are well integrated and cared for. One Year 8 student who joined the school on the day of the inspection was being accompanied by buddies and was already showing a real commitment to his new school.

The inspirational vision of the headteacher ensures that leaders at every level are enthusiastic, committed, rigorous and successful in their efforts to communicate the mission, ethos and vision of Catholic education. The governing body’s Mission Committee, composed of governors, senior leaders and the head of the Religious Education department, is highly effective in ensuring that self-evaluation has had an impact on provision. This is a real strength of the school. Stakeholder involvement is effective and the school has developed the role of pastoral support staff to engage parents who are more difficult to reach. Leaders promote and provide opportunities for involvement with the diocesan youth service, the wider national and international community and local parishes through the Parish Ambassadors. Students, from each key stage articulated their appreciation of the range of enrichment activities which they recognised as developing their social, moral, spiritual and cultural responsibilities. Their views confirmed the evaluations conducted by the school. The Religious Education department’s excellent working relationship with the school chaplain facilitates opportunities for students to gain first hand and quality experiences of the liturgical life of the Catholic Church. Evaluations conducted by the lay chaplain demonstrate that students, staff and visitors value these liturgies and that students enjoy being actively involved.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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

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Acts of Worship observed during the inspection included Morning Prayer of the Church, Year 8 Collective Worship, Form Group Acts of Worship, lunchtime Mass and a Year 10 Lenten Service. In the vast majority of these, students took leadership roles delivering powerful messages that inspired deep thought and heartfelt response from others. Respect and reverence for prayer and liturgy was shown by all students. In the outstanding liturgies, the use of a range of media enhanced the experience and engagement of all. There is a need to develop the quality of some Form Group Acts of Worship further. Students from a range of year groups, spoken to during the day were enthusiastic when explaining their involvement in developing Acts of Worship. Art work is used effectively to inspire response, for example

Stations of the Cross produced by one year group were used to stimulate thoughts in a younger group of students. Students from all backgrounds feel accepted and valued. They are keen to be involved in leading prayer and shared experiences of this. One student explained, 'I am not a Catholic but my parents wanted me to come to St. Paul's and I feel happy and included.'

The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding overall and the provision begins with the excellent induction into the liturgical life of the school in Year 7 with the Communication Ministry explaining the Mass and in being involved in further liturgical services. The school day begins with the opportunity to join the Morning Prayer of the Church in the dedicated chapel and staff model good practice by leading prayer during the staff briefing and alongside students. Students were able to articulate the opportunities for prayer and worship during their school day and evidently place great value on the impact this has on them individually and as a community. Year 8 Form Groups have recently used the theme 'Inspirational People' to research and develop their Collective Worship. During the inspection, many Year 8 students were able to explain how they had chosen and developed their theme and could recall the themes of previous weeks as well as their own liturgy.

Staff confidence in supporting worship is high, with many specifying the training received and the invaluable support from the school chaplain and Damascus volunteer, so that liturgy is of a high quality and is increasingly student led. Development plans, INSET records, minutes of meetings, student and staff evaluations and examples of outstanding leadership of Collective Worship during the inspection affirm the centrality of the promotion of quality Collective Worship in this community. Leaders, under the direction of the dedicated lay chaplain and Damascus volunteer, plan effectively for celebrations which mark the liturgical year. Religious rites are known by all students and religious symbols are evident throughout the school. These lead effectively to a deep appreciation of religious traditions in a way that is relevant to students. This was particularly noticeable in a Year 10 Lenten Service where students explored the concept of happiness being found in giving. Students were engaged, responsive and expressed views such as, 'The drama really made me think about being generous'. Liturgical and spiritual development is seen as a priority in professional development and quality time is devoted to it with many staff commenting on opportunities to use the nearby Rosmini Centre for retreats and training. Governors and senior leaders are committed to monitoring and evaluating Acts of Worship and to implementing further improvements. They are aware of the need to ensure consistency in the quality of Form Acts of Worship.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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- 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 (including governors) monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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Students are religiously literate. Most students concentrate very well and engage in active learning. Behaviour for learning is outstanding and evidence on the inspection day, and from school observations, indicates that almost all lessons proceed without interruption. Progress data, student books and lesson observations demonstrate that students learn exceptionally well, develop and apply a wide range of skills to great effect within the Religious Education curriculum. There is an impact beyond Religious Education. One student shared his Design Technology project idea - to make a lamp for outside the chapel - inspired by his observation that liturgies were sometimes interrupted from outside because others were unaware that a liturgy was taking place. At Key Stage 4, the percentage of top grades and percentage achieving A* - C are outstanding. However, in 2012 there was a significant percentage (11%) at Grades G/U. The school has taken action to address this with good effect and has a focus on reducing the difference in attainment made by students based on gender. Current data and tracking indicates that, given their starting points, groups of students, including disabled students and those with special educational needs are making excellent progress when compared with similar groups of students within the diocese.

Quality Assurance, tested through a joint observation, is reliable and teaching is judged as good overall with some outstanding teaching. Where teaching was outstanding, teachers were passionate, enthusiastic, well prepared and focused, with very high expectations of themselves as well as students resulting in all students being on task in a delightful atmosphere where they were seen to be enjoying their learning. To secure outstanding teaching overall, there is a need to further develop task differentiation so that all parts of lessons are sufficiently challenging and accessible for every student. Strategies, including timed, individual, paired and group activities, are used to challenge students and extend their learning. Rich questioning techniques are used to develop thinking and teachers effectively check student understanding. Students express and justify their views confidently even with sensitive subject matter as observed in a Year 9 SRE lesson. Evidence from books demonstrates good learning across lessons. Good assessment procedures mean that teachers build upon students' prior learning. Marking and constructive feedback, both oral and written, are used well so that most students could explain how they were doing and what they need to do to improve their work in Religious Education further. Students use self and peer evaluation, resulting in improvements however, not all students have a thorough understanding of their grades and how they are progressing during Key Stage 4.

Governors, students and colleagues express confidence in the leadership of Religious Education and recognise it as a lead department with excellent practice being modelled across the school. Under the robust leadership of the head of department, and senior leader with responsibility for Religious Education, self-evaluation leading to improvement is outstanding. There is an air of 'infectious enthusiasm' as indicated by the head of department's vision, 'We are nothing without an inspiring, high performing and passionate staff team'. As a result of rigorous monitoring, searching analysis and the implementation of staffing changes; current data indicates that the department has successfully addressed the dip in outcomes for groups of students seen in 2012. A thorough curriculum review resulted in changes to schemes of work. The requirements of the Curriculum Directory published by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales are met in all key stages with an innovative approach in Key Stage 5. This is being implemented and monitored, with diocesan assistance, to ensure continuity and progression in student learning. Students are very positive and say they are enjoying the course. Religious Education is well resourced. Leaders are aware of the need to meet the 10% timetable requirement at Key Stage 3 and have plans to implement this next year. They explained how enrichment opportunities enhance the current 8% allocation.

WHAT INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS MEAN

Within the report, the following grades are used:

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

In the context of the whole school, the overall effectiveness grades have the following meaning:

Grade 1	Outstanding	The school is a highly effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are exceptionally well met.
Grade 2	Good	The school is an effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are met well.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The school is not yet a good Catholic school, it is not inadequate however, there are aspects that require improvement.
Grade 4	Inadequate	There are features in need of urgent and immediate attention. The school is not meeting the basic minimum requirement for adequacy. The school will receive a monitoring visit within twelve months.