

Westminster Diocese Inspection Report

St Paul's Catholic Primary School

Park Lane, Cheshunt, Hertfordshire EN7 6LR

Date of inspection: 6 March 2015



A. Classroom Religious Education

What is the overall effectiveness of classroom religious education in developing pupils' religious literacy?

Overall Grade 2

The overall effectiveness of classroom religious education (RE) in developing pupils' religious literacy is judged to be good. This is a good Catholic school that takes Catholic education very seriously. It is being very well led by the head, governors and especially by the deputy head who is also the religious education (RE) leader. She is a tireless and extremely hard working leader who is very committed to high standards within the school. The school is not yet outstanding because teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 requires improvement. The school is using the core scheme of Come and See and does enhance this further with other curriculum resources. Children get a good start in the Foundation Stage in a caring and nurturing environment. Standards of achievement and progress are also at least good in all Key Stage 2 (KS2) classes. The standard of teaching and learning in the Year 6 class is quite outstanding. Marking is developing well in the school and being taken seriously by all teachers. Assessment is also being well developed and pupils do know how to improve their work. Older pupils are highly religiously literate and have enquiring minds. Teachers in KS2 classes apply very good listening skills and ask challenging questions to stretch pupils even further. ICT is well used across the school.

Pupils written and art work is not on display in classrooms and this needs to be addressed.

Behaviour is outstanding across the school and even where teaching was not so strong the younger pupils still did their very best to complete tasks and behave well. All abilities are being well catered for and pupils with special needs are receiving a good education. Pupils are eager to share their work and have good opportunities to extend their knowledge. Other faiths such as Judaism are being comprehensively taught. Governors are well informed about RE within the school. Pupils overall are receiving a good Catholic education and an outstanding one in Year 6.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What is the overall effectiveness of the Catholic life of the school in developing pupils' experience of the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing?

Overall Grade 2

The school's overall effectiveness in this area is judged to be good. 10% of curriculum time is being devoted to the subject in all classes. Prayer and worship is a major strength of this school and is judged to be outstanding. Music and singing in RE need to be developed further. The Catholic life of the school is very strong in so many areas and parents will enjoy reading about all the ways their children's Catholic life is being developed in this school. The basis for the Catholic life of the school is firmly rooted within the Mission Statement. "Our school is a place of learning, a place of love". Pupils are learning about the Common Good and are given ample opportunities to serve within the school. The school currently has no overseas sustainable charities it supports and has recognised this itself as an area for development. Partnerships between the home, the school and parish are based on mutual respect and trust at all levels. This is a strong and vibrant Catholic community school.

Introduction

The inspectors would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation over the conduct of the inspection. The inspectors spent 1 day in school, visited 7 lessons and 1 assembly, and carried out 3 interviews with school staff, pupils and governors. Other evidence was gathered from contacts with parents through a questionnaire, scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work, observation of pupils in and out of lessons and examination of school documents.

The Inspection of St Paul's was carried out under the requirements of the Canon 806 and Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Framework for Section 48 Inspections approved by the Archbishop of Westminster. The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation.

Inspection Team

Mr Sean Flood	Lead Inspector
Mrs Niamh Brady	Associate Inspector

Description of School

The school is a one form entry Catholic primary school in the Local Authority of Hertfordshire and the locality of Cheshunt. The school serves the parishes of St Paul's, Cheshunt and St Martin de Porres, Cuffley. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 92%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 7% and from other Faiths 1%.

The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 57%.

There are 227 pupils on roll, with 1 pupil with a statements of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health & Care Plans (EHC). The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is well above average. The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is well below average. There is a below average rate of families claiming free school meals. 26 pupils receive the Pupil Premium. (11.5%).

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Headteacher:	Mrs Yvonne Devereux
Chair of Governors:	Mrs Wendy Franklin

Date of previous inspection:	30 th November 2009
Grade from previous inspection:	2

Key for inspection grades:	<i>Grade 1</i>	<i>Outstanding</i>
	<i>Grade 2</i>	<i>Good</i>
	<i>Grade 3</i>	<i>Requires improvement</i>
	<i>Grade 4</i>	<i>Causing Concern</i>

A. Classroom Religious Education

How religiously literate are pupils in the teachings and traditions of the Catholic faith and how well do they know, understand and appreciate the importance of religious faith and practice in everyday life?

What has improved in classroom religious education since the last inspection?

The main area of improvement since the last inspection has been in the quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 2.

There has also been a significant improvement in the quality of marking across the school.

How well does the content of classroom religious education meet the requirements of the Curriculum Directory?

Grade 2

The content of St Paul's School religious education curriculum fully meets the requirements of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*. The curriculum is well planned for by the subject leader of RE who is also the deputy head. The school uses as its core curriculum the *Come and See* scheme of work and supplements this with other resources such as the units of work provided by Margaret Carswell. The school is also extensively promoting Catholic Social Teaching and is introducing some exciting initiatives in this area. Teachers also try to use drama, poetry, music, art and ICT to further enhance learning. Pupils are taught about other faiths such as Judaism in a comprehensive way. The school has invested in a range of resources linked to the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* and the *Come and See* scheme. The structure, planning and content of this school's religious education curriculum is comprehensive and, in places, innovative.

Pupil achievement (as well as attainment and progress) in religious education

Grade 2

Pupil achievement overall is good. Children get a good start in the Foundation Stage where religious vocabulary is quickly introduced into pupil learning. They learn about special friends such as Jesus, about blessings and how God is present in their lives. Achievement in Key Stage 1 requires improvement because there are gaps in coverage of work and a lack of differentiation in both classes seen. Achievement is at least good in every class seen in Key Stage 2 and outstanding in the year 6 class. The standards of presentation, the comprehensive and varied range of topics covered in this class are of the highest order. Pupils are also able to highly articulate what they have learned and also how to further improve the quality of their work. Children enter the Nursery with standards comparable to the national average. Progress accelerates from Year 3 onwards and is very good in Years 5 and 6. Overall therefore, progress is judged to be Good. All RE lessons seen had success criteria so that pupils understood what is required in order to achieve higher levels. This was highly successful in Key Stage 2. Classroom displays all had a working wall for RE with instructions on how to improve their work. However, there were almost no examples of pupils own work on display and this is a missed opportunity within the school to celebrate pupil achievement.

The quality of teaching

Grade 2

The quality of teaching across the school is judged to be good. It is not yet outstanding because the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 (KS1) requires improvement. There is an RE action plan in place in the school to ensure that the standard of teaching and learning continues to improve. Teaching was judged to be good in both Nursery and Reception classes where children learn in a very caring and nurturing environment. In Key Stage 1 the teaching requires improvement especially in the Year 2 class. Pupils in KS1 were unsure of tasks given, some tasks also lacked purpose and challenge was insufficient. At times children themselves questioned the purpose of what they were supposed to be doing. Teaching assistants also require further guidance in Key Stage 1 in how to provide adequate behavioural support for pupils. In Key Stage 2 teaching was at least good in every class seen and for all abilities. It was outstanding in Year 6 in every aspect that one could wish to see. It was an exemplary lesson that stretched and challenged pupils' knowledge. Through a Unity Bowl all pupils were able to write out searching questions which would then be used in later lessons to extend their knowledge. This was seen in practice as the lesson was visited twice and progress was clearly evident. Good questioning was also evident in Year 5 where the teacher listened well to pupils' responses and was able to adjust her lesson accordingly. In Year 4 an experienced teacher also showed commendable resilience in eliciting pupils' response with a less able group. This resulted in good progress within a lesson and Year 3 was enthusiastic and engaged well with her pupils. A new Homework Policy has recently been introduced and this should now be implemented and monitored as to its effectiveness. Behaviour was an especially noteworthy feature of this school. Pupils were mostly engaged and on task during lessons and behaviour around the school and also in an assembly was of a very high standard.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education

Grade 2

The leadership and management of religious education is good. The head was unavailable during the course of this inspection because of a bereavement. The deputy head who is also the RE leader in the school led the school very effectively in her absence. She is very committed to RE and the success and development of the school. She has drawn up a useful RE action plan which is being used to drive up standards of teaching and learning within the school. She is well supported by an active governing body and an effective chair of governors. Lesson observations and monitoring of the teaching and learning in the school are mostly accurate. The school's own self evaluation is a well designed document and accurately reflects the strengths and weaknesses of the school. In-service and staff meetings are used to share good practice and for teachers to share best practice. This leadership initiative has worked well in improving teacher knowledge and expertise. Overall the leadership and management of religious education is judged to be good.

What should the school do to develop further in classroom religious education?

- Improve standards of teaching and learning at Key Stage 1
- Monitor the effectiveness of the new Homework Policy
- Allow space for pupils to display their own written and artistic work in RE to ensure pride and ownership of some of the very fine work being produced

B. The Catholic life of the school

How well do pupils experience the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing through all areas of school life?

What has improved since the last inspection?

There have been several key improvements since the last inspection. Pupils in Key Stage 2 now plan and lead classroom meditations and liturgies.

Targets to improve the Catholic life of the school have been given to all teaching and non-teaching staff and these are drawn from the Mission Statement.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum – time, staffing, accommodation, resources, budget

Grade 2

10% of curriculum time is devoted to the teaching of religious education across all key stages every week. The school views religious education as a core subject in the curriculum and as such, time, money and resources are given in accordance with this status. A good annual budget is allocated and extra resources, such as new Bibles, high quality posters and artefacts are provided as and when required. Teachers mostly have good subject knowledge of religious education and appropriate expectations of pupils in accordance with the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* for England and Wales. All teachers including those new to the school are being well supported in learning about the teaching of religious education and improving their practice. The accommodation is well maintained to a high standard with some lovely outside landscapes and a prayer garden. Displays and prayer focus areas and corners are of good quality around the school but lack examples of pupils' own work. The hall is very well laid out and allows pupils good opportunities for reflection and learning

The experience of Catholic worship – prayer and liturgy – for the whole school community

Grade 1

Prayer and worship is a major strength of this school. Prayer is integral to every aspect of school life and is clearly important to all staff and pupils. Prayer is a focus at the beginning, middle and end of every day and is both child led and is also an opportunity for more traditional prayer. Some other examples of good practice are how the Year 2 children support the reception children in the dining hall for grace after meals. From Monday to Thursday, there are whole school assemblies. On Tuesday the deputy head focuses on the Liturgy of the Word to develop children's understanding of Bible stories. On a Friday, there is class meditation. In KS2 this is planned and lead by the pupils. All staff meetings and in-service begin with prayer and reflection. This is lead by a different member of staff each week. A new parish priest has been appointed and celebrates Mass in school on a regular basis in accordance with the Church's year and is a frequent and welcome visitor.

In KS1 the planning and preparation of acts of worship is done by the teachers until the summer term. Year 5 children support the Year 2 children during the Easter term in planning and delivering class meditations in preparation for the Summer Term, when Year 2 will lead their own meditations. Two Reconciliation services were held during Advent for KS2 children and staff.

Parents, governors and members of the parish are always invited to Masses celebrated in the school. Pupils and staff are involved in preparing and taking part in the Mass. The school follows the liturgical year of celebration and key events are celebrated at assemblies. The Chaplaincy Team is a new initiative in 2015. The Chaplaincy Team will meet with children from St Joseph's Chaplaincy Team to

share ideas. The children take responsibility for delivering the Wednesday Word and proclaiming it to all classes.

The deputy headteacher currently runs a Rosary club to develop pupils' understanding of this important form of prayer during May and October. Following Diocesan in-service, a 'Spirituality Day' is planned for the Summer Term which will involve staff governors, children and parents in reflecting on their own faith journey and deepening their relationship with God.

Children sang with gusto and enthusiasm during an assembly but music is under developed in the school as a means to further enhance prayer and worship. This needs to be addressed.

This extensive, rich and varied development of Catholic worship merits the school being graded outstanding in this key area.

The commitment and contribution to the Common Good – service and social justice.

Grade 2

Last year the school introduced some exciting new work on the area of Catholic Social teaching. Links are made to the theology of the Common Good and the Gospel and this is being developed over the eight months of the year. It is too early to see the impact of this work and pupils are not yet quite able to discuss what they have learned, but this initiative will be very good for future development.

Pupils are provided with many opportunities to be of service both in the school and in the wider community. Within the school pupils can become Learning Ambassadors and House Captains and serve on the School Council. Both Years 5 and 6 were seen helping younger pupils around the school and this is clearly part of normal school life.

The pupils do collect for overseas charities and, at times of disaster, for agencies such as CAFOD and the Shoe Box Appeal but were unsure about any links with other countries or what happens with money donated. The school currently has no long-term overseas sustainable projects it supports and has recognised this as a key area for development.

Equal opportunities for all are evident within and around the school and the school is also clearly fully inclusive of the local diverse community it serves

Enabling the authentic partnership between parents, school and parish as an integral part of the Diocese, particularly through its relationship with the Diocesan Bishop and those acting on his behalf;

Grade 2

The parents expressed strong support for the work of the school in developing Catholic education through a questionnaire. They are proud of the Catholic life of the school and eager to see it flourish. Parents and carers are invited in to class assemblies and Masses held. Parents are encouraged to reflect on the Easter story with their children. The impact of this has been that children are more aware that this season is of significant importance to the school community. The RE curriculum is shared with parents termly through the curriculum newsletters. The school has good external community links with Longfields Children's Centre and uses this to signpost parents to where they can access parent courses, breakfast and after school clubs and other support in the community such as 'Stay and Play'.

Staff attend regular Diocesan moderation meetings, and RE as part of the Diocesan community of schools, has a high profile among staff in the school. The school has strong links with its Diocesan advisor who is a frequent and welcome visitor to the school as is the local parish priest. Training provided by the Diocese is regularly availed of and there are very good links with other Catholic

schools in the area. Everyone, governors, parents, staff and parish is fully committed to see this school prosper in the future.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management in promoting the Catholic life of the school

Grade 2

The leadership and management in promoting the Catholic life of the school are judged to be good. The senior leadership team and especially the deputy head work tirelessly to promote the development of the Catholic life of the school. The governors share in this commitment and provide a very good balance of challenge and support to the school. The chair is proactive in being present in the school and keeping fully informed of all developments.

The mission statement is central to the Catholic identity of St Paul's School. The school aims to prepare its pupils to be life members of the Catholic community and to become good citizens. Opportunities are taken at all in-service and staff meetings to pray and reflect together. The RE Leader works with children and the Parish Priest to prepare and plan Liturgical Celebrations and all staff and pupils take an active part in all masses and assemblies. Relationships are good at all levels and there is evidence of genuine respect and trust.

The leadership and management have also devised some good plans for even further development in the future and are very capable of delivering even higher standards in the future.

What should the school do to develop further the Catholic life of the school?

- Develop long term and sustainable charitable projects both at home and overseas to further enhance the work the school is doing for the Common Good
- Review the provision of music and singing in the school to make its prayer and worship even better