



DIOCESE OF
SHREWSBURY

DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT:

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

School: St Paul's Catholic Primary School
Address: Farmfield Drive
Beechwood
Prenton
CH43 7TE

Tel No: 0151 652 7828

URN: 105070

Headteacher: Mrs C Fenna

Chair of Governors: Mr B O'Connell

Date of Inspection: 27 March 2019

Inspectors: Mrs R Moores
Mr K Platt

MISSION STATEMENT

“Together in Faith Working as One”

The overall aim of the school in partnership with the parents is to create a caring, well-disciplined environment where children can learn academic skills, social graces and Christian values to enable them to cope successfully in the world in which they live. We also aim to work with the Parents and clergy to develop the spiritual life of the child and to encourage the children to live and work in a Christian manner in the community.

In the religious and social development of the children, the school seeks:

- To enable the children to acquire an understanding and involvement of prayer, worship and liturgy in the practices and beliefs of their Catholic faith.
- To help the children become aware of God’s presence in their lives.
- To respond to God’s invitation to enter into a personal relationship with him.
- To foster and deepen the children’s faith.
- To enable the children to reflect on their own experience and for them to explore the beliefs, values and way of life of the Catholic tradition

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS: how effective is the school in providing Catholic Education.

2

This is a good Catholic school

The above judgement on overall effectiveness is based on all the available evidence following the evaluation of:

CATHOLIC LIFE

1

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

2

Summary of key findings:

- St Paul's Catholic Primary is a good Catholic school where all leaders, staff governors and pupils strive to create and maintain a caring and supportive community built on Gospel values.
- All staff show commitment and dedication to providing the best possible Catholic education for pupils, and are supported and challenged effectively by governors.
- The Headteacher, ably supported by the Religious Education Coordinator and all governors, are united in providing the best for the pupils in their care and in ensuring that the school is 'an oasis where children are loved and cared for and leave the school as fully rounded individuals'.
- Governors speak highly of the Headteacher's vocation and her commitment to the pupils' happiness, health and well-being.
- St Paul's is committed to serving its community and it has invested in ensuring the provision for its youngest pupils is prioritised.
- Pupils willingly contribute to, and benefit from, the Catholic Life of the school and are increasingly being helped to put faith into action.
- Religious Education teaching is good overall and the creative approaches to teaching the Religious Education curriculum are becoming a strength of the school.
- The school is continuing to develop a range of Collective Worship opportunities, following the Church's liturgical year, celebrating its feasts and seasons.
- Very strong links with the local parish help to build on pupils' experiences and have a positive impact on their spiritual development.
- Effective and supportive partnerships have been developed by the school, particularly with the local Cluster of Catholic schools.
- The school has a strong relationship with the Diocese and both the Headteacher and the Religious Education Coordinator have been involved with the Religious Education Coordinator Hub.

- Actions required by the last S48 inspection have been addressed: Standards of attainment are continuing to rise. There is ongoing work regarding the development of pupils' skills in planning and leading Collective Worship.

What the school needs to do to improve further

Pupil leadership qualities should be further developed to allow them to take more responsibility for shaping and evaluating the Catholic Life of the school:

- Re-establish the Mini Vinnies group to ensure pupils actively promote the school's Catholic life and mission.
- Set up a Faith Council to ensure pupils take leadership roles in the school's chaplaincy provision.
- Create effective systems to involve pupils in evaluating the school's provision for Collective Worship.

Consider further strategies for engaging Parents/Carers to ensure they have a thorough understanding of the school's mission:

- Increase the frequency of communication with Parents/Carers and ensure the content of the Religious Education curriculum is more clearly communicated to them.
- Consider further ways of involving Parents/Carers in school liturgies and celebrations.

Ensure the good practice already in place for monitoring and evaluating is further developed:

- Increase the frequency and rigour of work scrutinies in Religious Education.
- Consider how best to share outstanding practice in Religious Education, both within school and in partner schools, with all staff.
- Consider effective ways of reviewing most pupil and adult led Collective Worship leading to more rigorous self-evaluation.

Continue to develop Collective Worship that is prepared and led by pupils so that skills are developed across the school:

- Ensure pupils are given greater support to enable them to become more confident and independent in preparing and leading Collective Worship.
- Ensure a greater variety of approaches to prayer, including traditional prayer is used in Collective Worship and that consideration is given to the use of liturgical music to enhance provision.

Information about the Inspection

The Inspection of St Paul's Catholic Primary School was carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Shrewsbury Diocesan Framework and Schedule for Denominational Inspections approved by the Bishop of Shrewsbury. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation and the inspection schedule follows the criteria set by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA 2017).

The inspector reviewed in detail the following aspects:

- 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 pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education
- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship
- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education, Collective Worship and the Catholic Life of the school

The inspection was carried out by two inspectors over one day:

- An example of Collective Worship was observed, led by a group of Year 5 and 6 pupils.
- Discussions were held with the Headteacher, the Religious Education Coordinator, the Parish Priest, three governors, pupils, and two members of staff.
- A sample of pupils' Religious Education workbooks and Collective Worship Big Books was scrutinised from every class, along with the Religious Education Coordinator's file and files for the Catholic Life of the school, Religious Education and Collective Worship.
- The school's website was checked for further evidence.
- A range of documents was made available and scrutinised including the Diocesan Self Evaluation Form (DSEF), the Religious Education Action Plan, the School Development Plan (SDP), attainment and progress data, school policies and Minutes of governing body meetings.
- Tracking data was scrutinised and discussed with the RE Coordinator.
- Displays around the school and in classrooms were also noted.

Information about this school

- St Paul's is a smaller than average Voluntary Aided Catholic primary, catering for 2-11 year olds. The school has an annual admission number of 23, and there are currently 99 pupils on roll, 66% of whom are baptised Catholics.
- The school serves the parish of St Paul's in Beechwood.
- There has been considerable change in staffing since the last inspection including the appointment of a new Deputy Headteacher in 2015 - the Senior Leadership Team has undergone further changes since then, with the role of the Deputy Headteacher now being a job share.
- Due to redundancies last year the school has lost the very experienced School Business Manager and the Caretaker has taken early retirement.
- Staffing includes a full time equivalent of 6 teachers and 6 support staff. 5 teachers and a number of the support staff are Catholic. 3 teachers hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS) and one is currently undertaking the qualification.
- The school is organised into four mixed age classes and the school is registered for 2 year old provision.

Full report – inspection judgments

CATHOLIC LIFE

The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding

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| The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school | 2 |
| The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school | 1 |
| How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school | 1 |

- Most pupils are appreciative of the Catholic Life of the school and the opportunities it offers them. They actively participate in striving to live out the recently reviewed school's mission statement: 'Together in Faith, Working as One'.
- The Headteacher, supported by senior leaders and governors are committed to their vision of '...bringing our children to faith'.
- Pupils show respect for themselves and others, and for the environment of the school - they are very proud of their school. They are supported to manage their behaviour through the outstanding Pastoral Care provision and so the behaviour of almost all pupils is excellent.
- Pupils understand what is right and wrong and any instances of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with in an ethos of love and forgiveness. Pupils fully demonstrate attitudes that reflect the Catholic character of the school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the school's Mission Statement – they understand the meaning of gospel values and are able to articulate their desire to 'follow in Jesus' footsteps'.
- Staff work creatively to promote good behaviour and celebrate the achievements of its pupils, evidenced in one classroom by the creation of a display called 'The Proud Cloud'.
- Pupils enjoy being part of the community of St Paul's and older pupils take on the responsibilities of being Buddies and Play Leaders, supporting younger pupils. The Mini Vinnies group has, in the past, led the school community in raising funds for CAFOD and for local charities such as the Foodbank, The Ark and Forum Housing. The Headteacher and Religious Education Coordinator recognise the need to develop pupil chaplaincy and plan to introduce a Pupil Faith Council.
- Pupils participate willingly in liturgical celebrations in school and in the parish, through frequent use of the adjoining parish Church and pupils are regularly responsible for reading at weekly Mass and participate in Lenten, Advent and other focused retreats.
- Pupils respond well to the school's support for their personal and emotional needs through the well embedded Pastoral Care curriculum, where pupils meet weekly in 'family' groups and are supported to develop a good understanding of personal and social relationships and their own development.
- Pupils value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its strong links with the parish community and other local Catholic schools.

- Pupils feel that their voice is heard – one pupil commented: ‘We get a chance to say our opinion’. However, pupils do not yet get formal opportunities to evaluate the Catholic Life of the school.
- The school’s Mission Statement has been revised since the previous Section 48 inspection and work is ongoing in ensuring that all involved in the school, including parents, have opportunities to have a voice. Staff and governors are fully committed to ensuring that the ‘Mission Statement encompasses everything we do in school and permeates all aspects of the curriculum’.
- Relationships are strong and effective within school, especially those with governors and the Parish Priest, and all work harmoniously as a team for the benefit of the whole community.
- Teachers and support staff model exemplary behaviour, resulting in a calm, caring and secure environment where pupils are nurtured and feel happy. They ensure the inclusion of all, regardless of faith, background or ethnicity. There is a strong commitment to the most vulnerable, for instance through the work of teaching assistants, the employment of a Speech and Language Specialist, the Child Care Workers in the Pre-School Twos and the Caritas Support Workers.
- Catholic social teaching underpins the work of the school, especially in the very effective Pastoral Care provision and evidence could be seen in the older pupils’ workbooks of their growing awareness of spiritual, moral and ethical issues.
- School’s provision for Relationship and Sex Education (R.S.E.) prepares pupils appropriately and is in line with diocesan recommendations.
- Almost all staff feel that the school supports them well and that their pastoral needs are met. Governors are very aware of their responsibility for staff well-being and they ensure high profile is given to supporting the continuing professional development needs of all staff at a time when resources are quite constrained.
- The school has very effective partnerships within the local Cluster of Catholic schools, leading to much sharing of expertise particularly relating to moderation activities.
- Self-evaluation of the Catholic Life is becoming more effective in identifying strengths and areas for development. However, monitoring is not yet systematic and would benefit from the inclusion of all members of the community, including pupils and parents, in its processes.
- Parents are supportive of the school and appreciate the care given to their children.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious Education is good

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| How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education | 2 |
| The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education | 2 |
| How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education | 2 |

- St Paul's Catholic Primary School serves an area of high need and most pupils' attainment on entry into school is well below the national average – pupil mobility is high.
- The school is now registered for 2 year old provision and this has helped significantly in supporting pupils' transition to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) – the Foundation 2 baseline completed in September 2018 showed good progress in all areas and 74% are currently on track to achieve a Good Level of Development (GLD).
- Most pupils make good progress in relation to their very low starting points and whilst attainment does not always match national averages, there is a rising trend in end of Key Stage attainment in Religious Education.
- The Senior Leadership Team plans to introduce a Religious Education baseline to more closely monitor progress in Religious Education.
- All lessons observed were at least good, with some lessons having outstanding elements and teachers plan good quality lessons linked to pupils' current assessment.
- All teachers are secure in their subject knowledge with some being highly confident.
- Teachers use a wide range of strategies to engage pupils including very effective questioning and classroom environments are affirming and promote purposeful learning.
- Good teaching means most pupils are developing a religious literacy appropriate to their age and capacity to learn. However, this could be developed further by ensuring key vocabulary is given higher profile within books and Religious Education displays.
- Teachers skilfully question pupils and support them in reflecting spiritually and theologically: for example an Upper Key Stage 2 pupil, during a discussion about the events of Good Friday, responded that Jesus said, 'I'll die for the people I love'.
- Pupils enjoy Religious Education lessons and the creativity of the tasks provided by staff and all adults, including Support Staff, work hard to ensure pupil behaviour is very good and that learning is not disrupted.

- Lessons are paced and staff use technology well to support learning: for example, in a lower Key Stage 2 class pupils worked very enthusiastically by responding on the 'Paul Pods' to questions posed by the teacher. This use of technology also supported the teacher in assessing the pupils' knowledge and understanding very effectively.
- Pupils commented that they enjoy class discussions in Religious Education lessons and that it gives them 'a chance to be heard'.
- Pupils actively engage in learning tasks – they are motivated and work purposefully. They are developing a good understanding of how well they are progressing and they are able to refer to the 'I can' statements in their workbooks and engage with feedback provided by teachers.
- Teaching assistants are deployed very effectively throughout classes during Religious Education lessons. They engage with particular groups or individual pupils with skill and sensitivity and use very good questioning skills to prompt and support pupils to engage with the lesson and make good progress.
- The standard of work in books is generally good with a range of activities in evidence and it is clear that progress is being made. However, standards are variable and in some instances there is insufficient coverage and limited differentiation.
- Leaders and governors fully comply with Bishops' Conference requirements and Religious Education is well resourced, is given parity with other subjects and 10% or more of the timetable is dedicated to the teaching of Religious Education across all year groups.
- Staff use the diocesan recommended scheme 'The Way the Truth and the Life' creatively and effectively in lessons.
- The school leadership and governing body have ensured that continuing professional development opportunities are used to further improve creativity and enjoyment within Religious Education teaching.
- Some consideration should be given to furthering opportunities for less experienced staff to become more confident in the teaching of Religious Education.
- The Religious Education Coordinator is a knowledgeable, confident and enthusiastic leader, with a passion for the subject. She leads the subject well and she provides high quality professional development opportunities that are valued by all the staff. Monitoring and evaluation processes are being developed so that the strengths and areas for improvement in Religious Education provision can be identified.
- Senior leaders have already identified an area of development regarding moderation of work and plan to collaborate with higher attaining schools in their drive to continue to raise standards.
- Religious Education assessment data is collected regularly and analysed to identify trends of performance and areas for improvement – given the high mobility of pupils, this is quite a challenge.
- Governors are involved in self-evaluation processes and challenge leaders accordingly – the good practice already in place should be further developed to ensure there is greater rigour.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Collective Worship is good

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| How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship | 2 |
| The quality of provision for Collective Worship | 2 |
| How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship | 2 |

- Pupils act reverently and respectfully in Collective Worship and engage willingly with the themes presented.
- Most pupils have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year and this is supported by staff's very effective promotion of the links between Mass and the sacraments within lessons.
- Pupils are acquiring skills and becoming more confident in planning, organising and leading Collective Worship. Pupils are taught about the structure of liturgy and, with support, can choose themes, passages from scripture and a 'Going Forth' activity but not always with sufficient independence and confidence.
- The act of Collective Worship led by a group of Year 5 and 6 pupils had a clear message for all pupils and followed the appropriate structure, including very meaningful Prayers of Intercession composed by the pupils. However, there were very limited other-prayer opportunities.
- Pupils enjoy singing but would benefit from experiencing a fuller range of liturgical music to promote more spiritual reflection.
- Pupils have a well-developed sense of respect for all faiths and are given appropriate opportunities to explore these.
- Pupils speak positively about times of prayer and reflection and they have opportunities to pray together and compose their own prayers – they gain much from praying together as a faith community. Prayer features a number of times every day, and it is central to the daily life of the school for all pupils and staff.
- Collective Worship is an integral part of school life and is used to engage the wider community and improve home/school/parish partnerships. School recognises the need to engage Parents/Carers more and is considering inviting the Parents/Carers of this year's First Communicants to support the Parents/Carers of those pupils making their First Sacraments next year.
- The Parish Priest is actively involved in the life of the school and is very proud of its work and achievements - he is a frequent visitor to school, and is knowledgeable about its Catholic Life, Religious Education and programme of Collective Worship.
- School staff liaise very effectively with the parish and regularly support the pupils in leading parish Masses - links between home, school and parish are good.
- Retreats are organised, supported by the parish during Lent, Advent and First Sacraments and these are much enjoyed by the pupils and are spoken of positively by the parents.

- Leaders and governors demonstrate a clear commitment to the provision for Collective Worship and fully support the school's continuing professional development provision in this area.
- Monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship provision is informal. Leaders and governors should consider more formal ways of reviewing both pupil and adult led acts of Collective Worship, which would lead to more rigorous self-evaluation of Collective Worship.
- Procedures should also be developed to allow pupils to evaluate and give feedback regarding Collective Worship.