



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection

St PAUL'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Part of the Lumen Christi Catholic Multi Academy Company

Sisefield Road, Kings Norton, Birmingham B38 9JB

Inspection date
Reporting Inspector

3rd & 4th July 2017
Mr Dominic Collins

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Academy
Age range of pupils	3-11 years
Number on roll	197
Appropriate authority	Board of Directors
Chair of Governors	Mr John Carr
Telephone number	0121 464 1546
E-mail address	m.daniels@stpaulrc.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	May 2012
DFE School Number	330 3366
Unique Reference Number	141830

Headteacher

Mrs Mary Daniels

Previous inspection:

Good

This inspection:

Good

DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



Evidence

- The inspection was carried out by one Diocesan Inspector.
- The focus of the inspection was on the quality, leadership, and impact of the school's provision of Catholic life, collective worship, and religious education (RE).
- The inspector observed teaching across 4 RE lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All of these lesson observations were conducted jointly with the principal.
- The inspector completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic life, worship, and the impact of teaching on their learning over time.
- Meetings were held with the chair of governors, RE link governor, principal, RE subject leader, parish priest and parents.
- The inspector attended a whole school Mass, a school assembly and undertook a learning walk to look at aspects of learning and teaching in RE, the presentation of the Catholic life of the school and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' attainment and progress, RAISEonline, the school development plan, teachers' planning and learning journals.

Information about the school

- St Paul's is a one form entry Catholic primary school serving the parish of St Paul's in Kings Norton. The school is situated in an area of high social disadvantage.
- The number of Catholic pupils is currently 29%.
- The number of pupils from a minority ethnic heritage group is currently above the national average.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through the Pupil Premium funding is significantly above the national average.
- The number of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is above the national average.
- Pupil mobility is high throughout the school and particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Attainment of entry is significantly below age related expectations.
- St Paul's School has undergone a significant number of changes since the last diocesan inspection. Four members of teaching staff, including a new RE subject leader, joined the school in September 2016.
- St Paul's School became part of the Lumen Christi Catholic Academy, a Multi Academy Company (MAC) in March 2015.
- In recent years the parish has expanded and amalgamated with St Joseph's and St Helen, Kings Norton. As a consequence, St Paul's Catholic School is also part of the redefined parish.

Main Findings

- St Paul's is a welcoming and inclusive school with a strong Catholic identity and an outstanding Catholic ethos.
- Catholic life and religious education is firmly centred on the school mission in action that strives to provide the very best outcomes for its pupils.
- This vision is shared by the school leadership, governors, chaplaincy and a dedicated staff team, who place the spiritual and moral development of pupils as their highest priority.
- The principal provides strong leadership and clear directional guidance in RE and sets the high standards and expectations for all members of the school community.

- Pupils are able to thrive in this harmonious environment and as a consequence enjoy their RE lessons and make good progress in their learning.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

Catholic life, collective worship and spiritual, moral and vocational development: provision and outcomes

- The Catholic life of St Paul's School is good with several outstanding features.
- St Paul's is a welcoming and inclusive school and its outstanding Catholic ethos permeates the school community in every way. The principal successfully communicates a clear vision to promote and enrich it, a vision shared by caring, committed staff and an effective, supportive governing body.
- This unity forms a powerful combination, thus providing a clear sense of purpose and spiritual direction with a common aim to enable all pupils to grow and learn in their faith.
- The immediate impact of the strong Catholic character of St Paul's is evident on entering the school. The Catholic virtues are prominently displayed together with a 'virtues tree', an image of St Paul and a beautifully presented mural of his 'footsteps'.
- Pupils' understand and live the mission of the school and are guided by a cheerful and highly effective staff team, who know them well and are dedicated to providing the very best Catholic education.
- The staff are excellent role models, promoting the gospel values by their example and fostering a caring, secure environment in which all children and adults can learn and pray together.
- The high level of pastoral care is a major strength of this happy school. The behaviour policy is effective, understood by all pupils and followed by all members of staff, including lunchtime supervisory staff who are also effective in supporting this policy.
- Pupils respond positively to the school ethos that is centred on the principles of the school mission, *'Alive in Jesus ... each one of us is special.'*
- They know how much they are valued as individuals and recognise the responsibility they have towards each other. They realise the importance of their contribution towards creating a harmonious environment.
- A culture of mutual respect underpins the excellent relationships that are evident throughout the school at every level.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are very positive because the school places a high priority on reconciliation and forgiveness when appraising pupil responses to Catholic life.
- Pupils conduct themselves around the school in an orderly and relaxed manner. The pupils are excellent ambassadors for the school. They are friendly, cheerful, courteous and welcoming. Learning is enhanced by consistently good behaviour during lessons.
- On the playground pupils interact well together and show kindness and genuine friendship towards one another. At all times they are guided by vigilant and caring staff as they enjoy a range of games and activities to share together.
- Through the inspirational direction of the principal, a secure foundation of Catholic community has been developed over time and is now firmly embedded in the school culture. This is an outstanding strength.
- In accordance with its mission, the school gives close attention to the development of the 'whole' child. As a consequence, the extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school, is excellent. Outcomes for pupils are very positive.
- Pupils are immensely proud of their school and readily declare how much they enjoy coming to school. *'...we like our teachers ... we make lots of friends ...there*

is lots to do here.' Pupil questionnaires reflect the high regard pupils have for their school.

- Although there is a high level of pupil mobility, pupils who are new to the school are supported well and quickly settle, within an atmosphere of friendship and trust.
- Pupils are eager to engage in a variety of responsibilities to support the Catholic life at the school. These include roles as house captain, play leaders and peer mediators.
- Recently, a pupil liturgy group has been formed to help in the leadership and development of collective worship. This group is led by the RE subject leader and a teacher assistant, both of whom are very involved in the parish life of St Paul's Church. The school should now provide opportunities to develop and broaden the skills of the liturgy group to plan and lead collective worship throughout the school.
- A very effective school pupil council has been established. They meet regularly with staff and project the views of others. Suggestions made, sometimes through 'persuasive' letters, are carefully considered and actioned where appropriate.
- Pupils respond enthusiastically to these challenges and perform their duties with pride. The contribution they make to the evaluation of Catholic life through questionnaires, discussions and suggestions are valued.
- It is evident that, providing opportunities to encourage pupil empowerment does much to promote their personal, moral and spiritual development and self-esteem.
- The school has adopted the Catholic School's Pupil Profile (CSPP) and there is a focus on promoting two virtues each half term. The names of pupils who demonstrate these virtues are displayed on the 'virtues tree' and pupils are extremely proud of this. Pupils have responded positively to the CSPP and actively living out the virtues and gospel values in their daily lives through the way they interact with each other and staff.
- Awareness of the needs of others in school and the wider community has a high priority in the life of the school. Pupils understand that offering support through fundraising and prayer is living out the Gospel values through the teachings of Jesus. Pupils are enthusiastic and generous in their fundraising initiatives for Lenten charities such as CAFOD.
- The school is very successful in being an active Catholic community of love and service, where all are encouraged to recognise and practise the special gifts of God within us.
- Pupils' understanding of vocation is promoted through learning about the lives of the saints and visitors to school who give service to others.
- A recent school retreat on the theme of discipleship entitled 'We will go out' was very successful, giving the whole school community the opportunity to reflect upon the meaning of vocation in their daily lives.
- Reviews given from a school mission week included: *'I enjoyed the quiet time in church because it helped me to reflect.'* (pupil). *'I found the Mission a wonderful and enlightening experience.'* (parent). Catholic life is enriched by these opportunities for pupils and their families to benefit from these high quality religious experiences.
- Strong links are established with the parish community. The school works in close partnership with parents who speak warmly about how they feel welcomed in school and about the quality of education their children receive.
- Chaplaincy support for the school is excellent. The parish priest and deacon visit frequently. They have established a very effective partnership with the staff and pupils and provide valuable support and guidance in developing the Catholic life of the school.

- Sacramental preparation is coordinated by the school in liaison with the parish priest. In order to engage parents, meetings are organised after school throughout the programme. A crèche is provided to accommodate parents with small children.
- Staff are sensitive to the wide variation of pupils' religious understanding and experiences. The school works effectively to nurture a developing insight into other faiths in school and the wider community. As a result, pupils from different backgrounds are fully integrated into all aspects of school life.
- The high quality of Catholic life at St Paul's provides an excellent foundation for the continuing spiritual and moral development of its pupils within the wider community.
- Provision for collective worship is very good.
- Prayer and worship is an integral part of the school day and there are many opportunities for staff and pupils to pray and reflect together.
- Pupils are confident to share their own prayers and intercessions with others and participate in all aspects of collective worship with sincerity and reverence. They are encouraged by caring staff who ensure that times of prayer are conducted in a calm, reflective atmosphere.
- They provide opportunities to develop and broaden skills of the recently formed liturgy group, for planning and leading collective worship throughout the school.
- In addition to their sound knowledge of traditional prayers, pupils understand that prayer has a variety of purposes and can take different forms.
- Testimony to pupils' enjoyment of prayer and worship, is their voluntary participation in the rosary group, led by the chair of governors.
- Pupils' response to collective worship is excellent. They are attentive and reverent in prayer because they understand the importance it has in their daily lives. As a result, pupils new to the school adapt very quickly to the positive influences of pupils and staff.
- Celebration of the Eucharist is given the highest priority. Mass is celebrated in school each week. A monthly class Mass is celebrated in church, enabling children of all ages to take an active role, through reading the liturgy of the word and saying bidding prayers, being part of the offertory procession and singing hymns. Pupils are encouraged to prepare the Mass guided by staff and the liturgy group.
- Mass celebrated in school during the inspection was a joyful experience. The children were attentive to the parish priest, who engaged them fully by his interactive, child centred homily. The inspirational singing was uplifting and the pupil led post communion reflection gave a poignant and peaceful message.
- Each classroom has a prominent high quality prayer focus and is regularly changed to reflect the liturgical calendar. They also include pupils' reflections from the school 'focus' virtues, and a copy of the school prayer book that is presented to all Year 6 pupils when they leave St Paul's.
- In addition to high quality religious displays around school, written and pictorial evidence relating to all aspects of Catholic life are also prominently featured on each class prayer area. These beautifully presented volumes depict the joyful faith journey pupils receive and are proud to share.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership of Catholic life and Collective Worship

- The leadership of Catholic life and collective worship is outstanding.
- There is clear evidence that leaders and governors share a strong commitment to the Church's mission in Catholic education and are very successful in developing the Catholic life of the school.

- The principal provides inspirational leadership and sets high standards for all members of the school community.
- All staff, governors and chaplaincy, work together as an effective team. They share a common purpose, to ensure the best possible outcomes for all the pupils and are constantly seeking ways to improve provision. This is an outstanding feature of the school.
- All newly appointed staff are very well supported and fully inducted into their roles and responsibilities in the Catholic life of the school. Provision is made for them to attend appropriate, continuing professional development.
- Governors know the school well and they perceive monitoring its Catholicity and spiritual direction as their key priority. They have a thorough understanding of how the school witnesses to Christ, consequently they are able to fulfil their responsibilities and provide knowledgeable support and professional challenge to its leadership.
- Governors monitor all school policies annually to ensure the Catholicity of the school is implicit in its documentation.
- Central to all areas of Catholic life at St Paul's School is the guidance given through its mission. This acts as constant reference for all school self-evaluation and quality assurance.
- Recommendations made in the previous diocesan inspection have been addressed and it is evident that planning for continuing development is effective. The recently appointed RE coordinator, is committed to developing all aspects of RE and in liaison with the school leadership, there is strong evidence that refinements have been made and systems put in place that are having a positive impact.
- New and established governors receive ongoing professional development to keep up to date and enhance their skills and knowledge. They are kept fully informed of the school's strengths and areas for development through their monitoring visits and related reports from the principal and committee link representatives. Governors are involved in all aspects of self-evaluation. As a result, governance is knowledgeable and effective.
- The evaluation of all monitoring outcomes are shared with staff and governors and form the basis of a comprehensive Catholic life action plan. This is a very useful working document that is broken down into specific areas that are regularly reviewed and updated.
- As part of a newly formed MAC the role of governors is evolving. The school should continue to seek ways to develop the benefits of working within a MAC structure to enhance the Catholic life and collective worship of all schools within the MAC.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Leadership, outcomes from and provision for religious education

- Religious education at St Paul's School is good.
- Systems used by the school's leadership for monitoring and evaluating RE are effective and give a clear and reliable insight into the quality of RE provision and the impact of teaching on pupils' learning.
- Although, the school is successful in the practice of self-evaluation, it can occasionally be too critical in its judgements.
- Using diocesan guidance, the school has personalised and embedded a practical and informative assessment system to ensure that pupil progress and attainment is monitored accurately. Monitoring of teaching, the quality of pupils' work in RE and assessment data provides senior leaders with a consistent and accurate evaluation of standards in RE.
- Pupils' progress in RE, relative to their starting point is very good.

- Pupils are given a very positive start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Evidence of pupil tracking and data shows a consistent momentum of improvement that continues across each Key Stage.
- Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils' knowledge and understanding develops well for the majority of pupils. They are encouraged to reflect on their own spiritual development and readily discuss 'big questions' relating to their faith.
- RE is well led by the subject leader. As a relatively new subject leader she would benefit from continued professional development provided by both the MAC and by the diocese.
- Pupil assessment data is efficiently collated, analysed and shared, in order to determine the next steps in learning. An extensive range of high quality resources have been purchased to support the RE curriculum delivery.
- Monitoring outcomes show that the quality of teaching in RE is at least good with some outstanding teaching.
- As a result of the high quality support they receive, all members of staff are confident of their subject expertise and they are able to plan and deliver interesting and well balanced lessons to fully engage the pupils.
- Accurate self-evaluation of RE teaching and learning outcomes has influenced the deployment of effective classroom support staff. This has had a significant impact on the quality of learning for individuals and groups of pupils who now benefit from a programme of more targeted support.
- The pupils enjoy their RE lessons and have developed a good attitude to learning. They respond enthusiastically to opportunities for collaboration and class discussions.
- Pupils respond positively to the guidance teachers give on how to improve their work in RE. As a result, the progress pupils make in relation to expected levels of attainment is rapidly narrowing.
- The quality of pupils' work in their books is of a high standard. Careful attention is given to presentation and the content reflects the varied learning routes to which they are exposed. The pupils are justifiably proud of their achievements.
- The RE curriculum follows the Diocesan Strategy and the school leadership gives close attention to monitoring and evaluating the quality of planning and strategies used to deliver the key elements.
- The school has a well-developed relationships and sex programme, taught in accordance with the school policy and diocesan guidelines.

Recommendations

In order to improve the school should:

- Provide opportunities to develop and broaden skills of the recently formed liturgy group, for planning and leading collective worship throughout the school.
- Continue to support the role of the new RE subject leader, through access to ongoing professional development within the MAC and the diocese.
- In view of the new formation of governors within the early stages of the MAC, engage with ongoing diocesan support in order to enhance strategic planning at all levels across the MAC.