

St Paul's Catholic Primary School

Park Lane, Cheshunt, Herts. EN7 6LR

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 18 November 2021



Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education requires improvement

- New staff are still building up their knowledge of teaching the Catholic religious education curriculum.
- Opportunities are missed during lessons for pupils to make as much progress as they could.
- Questioning needs to be used to challenge pupils and deepen their understanding.
- Tracking in RE shows that it does not currently consistently meet the attainment levels of other core subjects.
- Pupils need more varied tasks with different levels of support in order to maximise progress during learning.
- Pupils are not always able to identify their next steps in learning.
- Progression in teaching is not always clear across the year groups.

Classroom religious education has the following strengths

- The senior team has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and a clear vision for improvement.
- The curriculum is well planned and matched to the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*.
- Monitoring systems are in place and are already improving outcomes for pupils.
- Governors are very well informed and knowledgeable about the school.
- Pupils have a good attitude to their learning and show good behaviour during lessons.

B. The Catholic life of the school is good

- The leadership team and governors are committed to the development of religious education.
- Prayer and worship are central to the life of the school with lessons and staff sessions starting with prayer.
- Classrooms are well resourced with prayer areas which are interactive and interesting.
- The school environment reflects the centrality of RE to the life of the school, with bright displays reflecting the liturgical year and parables from the Gospels.
- Children work together across year groups and are supportive of each other, reflecting an understanding of the call to serve.
- Full consideration is given to funding RE and a generous budget has been given to support the continuing professional development of the staff.
- Parents are very supportive of the school.

The Catholic life of the school is not yet outstanding because

- The pupils are developing their experience of the full Catholic tradition following the recent school closures.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

Standards in Key Stage 1 are in line with the rest of the school. The homework policy was re-written in September 2020 and now gives opportunities for parents to work alongside their children and gain an understanding of what is being taught at school

The school has many fine displays of the pupils' artwork, some collaborative and some individual which help to show the importance of the place of RE in the school. Artwork based on class saints provides a fitting start to each year group investigating them, and displays about the parables mark the Year of the Word.

The content of classroom religious education is good

The school uses an approved scheme of work to deliver the curriculum and this has been clearly mapped to the Curriculum Directory. This is supplemented as needed with a wide range of other resources from the diocese or relevant charities. The leadership team have identified areas which were missed due to school closures and have planned how to make sure these are covered in the future.

Each class has a prayer area and RE display which are well set up and support the learning of the pupils. In one lesson, the pupils were reminded to use the keywords on the display to help them answer questions. Prayer tables contain class prayer books which the pupils contribute to. Whole school displays about parables mean that pupils could talk confidently about the parables and what they mean.

The curriculum ensures that other faiths are taught during the year, with the whole school working on these at the same time.

Pupil achievement in religious education requires improvement

Pupils are keen to contribute in lessons and the older ones show that they have a knowledge of religious literacy which they can draw on to answer questions, although this is not yet consistent throughout the school.

Attainment is not consistently in line with that in other core subjects. Tasks are not always adapted to the different needs of pupils in the class, which can restrict the learning that takes place. Lessons and books show that there is not enough challenge to extend pupils or give them the chance to expand their ideas. This means that progress is not as good as it could be.

Marking is evident in books, with the opportunity for pupils to respond, but this is not used consistently, meaning that pupils are not always aware of how to improve their work.

Pupils say that they enjoy their lessons, particularly when they take part in drama or drawing, although some suggested they would like to do more writing.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

A high turnover in staff means that many classes have staff who are new to teaching in a Catholic school.

In the better lessons, questioning was used to extend the understanding of pupils. In other lessons, opportunities were missed to engage in discussions with pupils which would have developed the learning for the whole class.

Links are made to previous learning and direct reference is made to the driver words needed to move learning forward. Matching tasks to learning objectives is not sustained across the school, but is good when it does take place. Staff subject knowledge is improving, but at present, some lessons are not as engaging as they could be because staff feel the need to keep to material they are more confident with. This prevents pupils getting as much as they can from each lesson.

Relationships are good across the school which means that pupils feel comfortable in a secure learning environment and are keen to discuss their views and opinions. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to lessons through the support they give to the pupils.

The effectiveness of leadership and management in promoting religious education is good

The senior leadership team has led the school through a difficult time with a high turnover of staff and planned absences, in addition to the recent lockdowns. The new staff team is already a cohesive group who work hard for the pupils in the school and engage in improving their practice. This means that pupils work in an environment where they feel safe and this is reflected in good behaviour in lessons.

Classroom RE is set firmly at the heart of all this school does because the senior team have a clear vision which is shared amongst all stakeholders. They have set up strong procedures and structures to support staff in the delivery of RE and these are already having an impact on the current quality of teaching. They have taken full advantage of the support offered from the diocesan advisor and diocesan training programme.

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

- Continue to develop staff subject knowledge so they are more confident in giving feedback and using questions to deepen pupils' learning.
- Ensure that tasks are suitably matched to provide support and challenge to all pupil groups.
- Develop partnerships across local schools in the deanery to observe good practice and develop subject knowledge.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

The pupils can talk about the local and overseas charities which they support and an emphasis on Catholic social teaching means that they have an understanding of how this supports the Common Good.

The pupils join in singing with enthusiasm in assembly, in class acts of worship and during lessons. One of the teachers used 'Stay awake; be ready' as a signal for the class to stop their partner-talk and the pupils were delighted to join in with her. Music is used throughout lessons.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is good

RE receives the full 10% of curriculum time laid down by the Bishop's Conference. It is well funded and has a budget higher than other core subjects. This is reflected in the high quality resources in each classroom as part of the RE displays and Bibles used in lessons. A significant amount has been budgeted for staff training.

The leadership team and governors make sure that RE is at the forefront of their work in monitoring and supporting staff in the school. The link governor for RE has regular meetings with the RE coordinator which means that the governing body is well informed about the Catholic life of the school.

One parent commented, 'The school has a strong Catholic ethos that is weaved into all aspects of the children's education' and another, 'The school does a great job of keeping the Catholic religion at the core of everything they do. Even non-Catholics enjoy the values the school brings to their children.'

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

is good

Pupils pray regularly during the school day in assemblies, in class acts of worship and in RE lessons. The chaplaincy team help to plan and lead whole school assemblies and take their role very seriously. One said, 'Our school is a strong Catholic community.'

Class acts of worship are led by teaching assistants at the lower end of the school, with the pupils taking responsibility for them as they get older and gain experience, some of which was lost during the lockdown. Meditation has also been introduced in order to help the pupils find quiet times during the day and they respond well to this.

Mass has begun to be celebrated again following the recent periods of lockdown. During this time, prayer was kept as a priority with services led by the parish priest being shared online with families at home. One parent said, 'My child's...life is enriched with the Catholic elements of his education and experiences.'

When possible, the Sacrament of Reconciliation is shared during Advent and Lent.

The school environment supports prayer through its displays and the outside areas which can be used by the pupils independently or with staff.

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

is good

The pupils have many opportunities to contribute to the Common Good. The school council could explain that they are called to help each other because of the teachings of Jesus. They have regular assemblies and lessons on Catholic social teaching which help them to understand this. The school council helps to organise events for local and international charities such as the Broxbourne

foodbank, Children in Need and CAFOD. The younger pupils were eager to explain how 'Operation Shoebox' gave new toys to children who didn't have any, while the older ones spoke about writing to older people in homes during the pandemic.

As well as elected members of the school council, all the pupils have the opportunity to work together. Older children read with the younger ones to develop relationships across the school and playground leaders help outside.

There are opportunities for pupils to discover their gifts through extra-curricular clubs, and achievements are celebrated at weekly assemblies.

The partnership with parents, school and parish, and collaboration as an integral part of the diocese through its relationship with the diocesan Bishop and those acting on his behalf

is good

The school is a welcoming environment and valued by parents. They receive regular updates about the Catholic life of the school through newsletters and updates on the website. When possible, they are invited to participate in school events.

The parish priest is a regular visitor to the school as well as welcoming the pupils to the parish church for class Masses. He also supports staff by attending their annual inset day at the beginning of the year. There are direct links between the parish website and the school website.

The school is an active member of the local deanery, meeting together to moderate work as well as supporting each other in other ways, such as mentoring staff.

Full use is made of the diocesan advisor and training laid on by the diocese. The school takes part in whole diocesan events such as conferences and Masses.

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

is good

The school's mission statement 'A Place of learning, a Place of Love' is displayed around the school and is shown in the relationships within it. Pupils learn to model their behaviour on that of the adults in the school and show respect for and understanding of each other.

Staff and pupils are given the opportunity to reflect on what it means to be part of a Catholic school and how they can live out its mission and the senior team, supported by the governors, make sure that policies and practices reflect this.

School leaders regularly review and re-assess the provision for the Catholic life of the school. Their vision is communicated clearly and ensures that everything done in the school reflects the centrality of Christ.

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

- Enable pupils to develop their skills in planning and leading acts of worship.
- Continue to raise the profile of the school within the parish.

Information about this school

- The school is a 1 form entry Catholic Primary school in the locality of Cheshunt.
- The school serves the parishes of St Paul's, Cheshunt, Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception & St Joseph, Waltham Cross and St Augustine's Hoddesdon.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 59%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 12% and from other faiths is 4%. The remaining pupils are from families who have not declared a faith.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 33%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is 0.
- There are 13% of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 9 have statements of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP).
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is average.
- The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is average.
- There is an average rate of families claiming free school meals.
- 44 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (21.5%).

Department for Education Number	9193423
Unique Reference Number	117492
Local Authority	Hertfordshire

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	4 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	204
The appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sharon Robson
Headteacher	Mrs Katie Worton-Geer
Telephone number	01992 635060
Website	www.stpauls.herts.dbprimary.com
Email address	admin@stpauls373.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 March 2015
Grades from previous inspection:	
Classroom religious education	Good
The Catholic life of the school	Good

Information about this inspection

This inspection was carried out (i) under the requirements of the Canon 806 and (ii) in accordance with the Framework for Diocesan Inspections 2015 approved by the Archbishop of Westminster and (iii) under section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

- The inspectors would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation over the conduct of the inspection.
- During the inspection 8 lessons or part lessons were observed.
- The inspectors attended 4 assemblies and a number of acts of worship.
- Meetings were held 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.

Inspection Team

The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop.

Mrs Catherine McMahon

Lead Inspector

Mrs Geraldine Pears

Associate Inspector

Ms Liz Doonan

Associate Inspector

Information about inspection

The purpose of Diocesan inspection is to report to and advise the Archbishop on the quality of classroom religious education and the Catholic life of the school. The inspection report is also used to inform parents and carers, and the wider Catholic community. Inspection provides an opportunity to support, challenge, evaluate and promote the work of Catholic schools. It also assists schools in the work of self-evaluation and improvement, and enables the Diocese to celebrate with schools their sense of identity and their strengths as Catholic schools.

Inspection Grades

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires improvement
- Causing concern

This report is published by the Diocese of Westminster and is available at:

<http://rcdow.org.uk/education/schools>

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