



DIOCESE OF **Arundel and Brighton**

DENOMINATIONAL (S48) INSPECTION REPORT

School Name: St Pancras Catholic Primary School
Address: De Montford Road, Lewes, BN7 1SR
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School Unique Reference Number: 114568

Headteacher:	Mrs Michelle Lord
Chair of Governors:	Dr Barbara Scalvini / Mrs Brenda Robinson
Lead Inspector:	Mr Peter Ward
Associate Inspector:	Mr Richard McKenzie
Inspection date:	25 June 2019

	Previous Inspection: 1
Overall Effectiveness	This inspection: 1
Catholic Life:	1
Collective Worship:	1
Religious Education:	1

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Pancras Catholic Primary School is an Outstanding Catholic school because:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is an active Catholic education community that strives successfully to meet the needs of the Catholic and wider community that it serves.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupils display strong age-appropriate understanding of Catholic Christianity including a commitment to the welfare of one another, the local community, and the wider world together with a passion for protecting the environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is a friendly inclusive school community where all feel welcome and secure in the knowledge of the school's outstanding pastoral care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school has very close links with the parish of St Pancras Lewes that work for the mutual benefit of school and parish.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Pancras Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided 4-11 primary school in the East Sussex Education Authority. It serves the parish of St Pancras, Lewes and the surrounding area extending to Newhaven, Eastbourne and Brighton. The roll is 138. The attainment on entry of the majority of pupils is below the national average and the number of pupils with challenging backgrounds and/or special educational needs is increasing year on year.

The overall proportion of students who are baptised Catholic is 35%. A further 25% of pupils are from other Christian traditions. 25% of pupils are on the Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) register covering all categories of need. This is significantly above the national average including 2.1% who have an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP). The proportion of pupils eligible for support from Pupil Premium funding is significantly above the national average at 23%.

31% of pupils are regarded as vulnerable through a range of circumstances. Some St Pancras school families are using the school's on-site food bank.

76.5% of pupils identify themselves as white British, while 23.5% are from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who have English as an additional language is 13%. Pupil mobility is consistently well above the national average at 14% in 2017/18.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- To secure and embed the new Religious Education Interim Standards of Assessment criteria.

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.

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The quality of provision of the Catholic Life of the school.

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How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for 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 is Outstanding.

- Pupils enjoy being members of this happy friendly school and recognise that the mission statement and 'values tree' are central to the school community. The mission statement is supported by all because it is devised by pupils, parents, staff and governors and is reviewed annually. Pupils also appreciate the six value statements as good guides for their lives at school and identify with the school motto '*To Learn is to Live.*'
- Pupils highlighted to inspectors the significance of mixed-age classes as one feature of the school community where '*everyone is friends with each other.*' Pupils are quick to show concern for the wellbeing of one another. The sense of community is consciously supported by the school in very many ways including the role given to pupil voice and the opportunity to serve in one of three councils, each of which can have significant impact on school life.
- Pupils contribute through the fortnightly meetings of the student spiritual council to the school's Catholic life which can involve monitoring prayer areas and developing the school prayer book, by monitoring teaching alongside the religious education lead, supporting the religious education lead and Headteacher in the preparation of staff training and contributing to the setting of school improvement plan targets.
- Pupils take pride in their responsibilities and are keen to offer new ideas and continually want to become more involved. They support the Catholic life and mission of the school through various forms of service to the school and wider community, by fund raising for local and national charities and by their general behaviour and conduct. Inspectors observed a very high standard of behaviour and respect shown by all to all reflecting the mission statement and values statement. Mutual respect is modelled between adults and children.

- A significant strength of the school is the care and attention devoted to the welfare of pupils, including welcoming pupils into the school and subsequently to their transition to secondary school. This is particularly significant in view of the numbers of pupils who join the school outside the normal school start date. It includes explaining to those who are not Catholic the distinctive Catholic features of the school so that they may appreciate how they contribute to the overall education provided by the school while acknowledging their statutory rights. Pupils contribute to transition with Year 5 pupils applying to be ‘buddies’ to the upcoming new pupils in the Reception class who then send a postcard introducing themselves during the summer term. The staff Reception team work hard to integrate new pupils quickly and fully into the school which is marked by a Mass of welcome at the parish church that is well attended by parents and parishioners.
- Pupils value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the parish and at the same time are proud of and able to express their own religious identity, which may not be Catholic, confidently. One parent wrote to inspectors: *“we are not Roman Catholic. We are however delighted with our daughter’s experience of St Pancras at every level.”*

The quality of provision of the Catholic Life of the school is Outstanding

- St Pancras provides for the integral education of all pupils, irrespective of any particular characteristics or backgrounds, in line with Catholic Christian teaching that emphasises the full flourishing and dignity of the individual living in community and with respect for the environment. This holistic aim is captured in the school’s mission statement, complemented in the school’s ‘value tree’ and is confidently lived out by all members of the school community.
- The compact school site continues to be developed to support this mission. School space, within and outside the building, is well used and clearly proclaims and supports learning and personal development with prominent displays of Christian art and artefacts, some specifically developed at the suggestion of the spiritual council. The school environment is recognised as a significant feature in contributing to the nurturing social environment that supports pupils’ learning.
- The purposeful community character of the school is promoted by school staff’s support for the school’s mission and the evident quality of relationships among staff and pupils. Pupils have many opportunities to serve and support the school family including through the school council, the spiritual council and eco council, all of which provide real opportunities for pupils to contribute to school life. For example, the eco council was instrumental in the removal of single-use plastic in the dining hall and the promotion of re-usable items.
- Pastoral care of pupils and staff is one of many particular strengths of the school. A family support worker is always available to provide appropriate advice and assistance throughout a pupil’s school career. The material needs of families are also unobtrusively addressed in a variety of ways including an on-site food bank which is supplied from a range of sources including donations from the parish church community.

- Thoughtful preparation for secondary transfer includes a range of strategies to develop personal resilience and bespoke arrangements with local state schools as well as St Paul's Burgess Hill to minimise the stress of the move.
- Very close links with the parish provide mutual support. The school regularly attends celebrations of Mass in the parish church and the parish priest regularly supports the school in a wide range of capacities. Numbers of pupils in Years 4-6, irrespective of personal belief, become members of the Guild of St Pancras, with many continuing as members of St Pancras Youth in Years 7-10.
- The extensive programme of prayer and worship opportunities manifestly support the spiritual and moral development of pupils and contribute to their outstanding behaviour.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is Outstanding.

- Leaders and governors of the school have a clear appreciation of the educational mission of the Church and are strongly committed to the provision of Catholic education for the benefit of the Catholic and wider community of St Pancras. The school's self-evaluation and school improvement documents demonstrate a strong and secure knowledge of the school and realistic steps needed to further the development of this mission.
- The Headteacher, supported by her senior team, provides outstanding leadership and management of the school. She combines a clear understanding of Catholic education with a thorough knowledge of the community served by the school in order to lead and direct a team of staff committed to meeting the needs of all pupils. The annual review of the mission statement reflects a determination to ensure that it remains focused on the evolving needs of the pupils it serves.
- The school values the skill and expertise of its staff and supports them in various ways so that all not only understand and support the mission of the school but are able to prepare and lead school acts of collective worship and plan the teaching of religious education using the school's resources.
- The school has highly successful strategies for engaging with almost all parents/carers through a wide variety of channels to the obvious benefit of their children. The weekly newsletter celebrates pupils' success as well as containing news and information, together with a contribution from the parish priest, further reinforcing the links between school and parish.

- Governors bring a wide range of valued skills to promoting the distinctive Catholic character of the school for the benefit of its pupils and the wider community. They have a thorough knowledge of the school through rigorous analysis of data and structured meetings with staff in addition to regularly visiting the school to observe its routines, teaching and acts of collective worship. Thus they are well informed to provide appropriate challenge and support and to guide the school into the future.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP / PRAYER AND PRAYER LIFE

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

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How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life is Outstanding.

- Pupils respond positively and respectfully to the wide range and variety of opportunities for prayer and worship. Inspectors observed a high standard of prayerful engagement by pupils at the class Mass in the parish church, the community collective worship in the school hall and at the beginning of the religious education lessons that were observed. Particularly noteworthy were the high standard of unaccompanied singing including singing in the round that opened and closed the act collective worship and the prayerful silence and participation in community prayers at all events.
- Throughout their school lives pupils, irrespective of their faith or belief, develop their abilities to create a prayerful atmosphere for prayer and worship in the well-judged range of occasions that take account of the liturgical year.
- Younger children enjoy participating in collective worship by way of creating the prayer focus, writing the prayer, choosing the music and selecting special items such as pebbles to represent prayer intentions. Pupils in Years 3-6 plan and lead their weekly in-class celebrations, demonstrating issues and ideas that are important to them, as well participating in activities that help whole school collective worship address their contemporary experience. Fellow pupils are manifestly engaged and uplifted by these experiences. All have a secure understanding of the liturgical rhythm of the year.
- Pupils confirmed to inspectors that they respond positively to daily Christian meditation at the beginning of afternoon school and show great focus, stillness and reverence as they allow God to talk to them, using the mantra 'maranatha' (Come Lord).

- Reflecting the religious composition of the school and its inclusive character, pupils demonstrate a respect for those of different faiths or beliefs in the inclusive manner in which they prepare liturgies. Pupils have confidence to celebrate difference and be mindful of it when praying.
- The experience of living and working in this community with prayer at its heart has a significant positive effect on the development of all pupils, regardless of their social, material or spiritual background.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is Outstanding.

- Prayer is an integral and important part of the school day. All classes pray together at the beginning and at the end of each day, as well as before lunch, each using an attractively designed prayer table as a focus. Prayers are also shared during each religious education lesson. All classes practice Christian meditation after lunch. Each week one class attends morning Mass at the parish church situated nearby. In addition, there are major celebrations that reflect the liturgical year including the patronal feast of St Pancras and a May service to celebrate Our Lady and the Rosary.
- Every week begins with a Gospel act of collective worship that reflects on the previous Sunday's gospel and sets the theme for the week's prayer and worship. The start of a new topic in 'Come and See' is also marked collectively with the new themes and ideas being shared with the whole school.
- Planning and organisation of collective worship is of a very high order, reflecting the school's comprehensive 'spirituality, prayer and collective worship policy'. Well-chosen resources are held by each class including coloured fabric, pictures, artefacts, statues, candles and other suitable items that pupils may select from when assembling their prayer table. These may be supplemented with candles, books and music held centrally and with special items that pupils can bring from home, such as rosaries in May. Each celebration is recorded in the class 'spiritual journal' which provides an inspiring record and reference point of the range of prayer and worship shared by pupils in the class.
- Events are so planned that parents/carers may attend and indeed numbers do according to the parents/carers present at the act of collective worship attended by the inspector. The cohesive character of the school was reflected at this event with the Hail Mary led by pupils in Czech, French, Italian and Polish in addition to English.
- Excellent use is made of the thoughtfully designed and laid out prayer garden in a quiet area of the school which is maintained in excellent order by the grandparents of pupils.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is Outstanding

- Leaders and governors are committed to ensuring the centrality of prayer and worship in the life of the community and at the heart of every school celebration. All meetings open and close with appropriate prayer.
- School leaders have an expert knowledge of how to plan and lead engaging collective worship. They are planned in a manner that attracts and facilitates attendance by other adults associated with the pupils and school. One current project is to host with parishioners a mother and child prayer group.
- The Headteacher is spiritual leader of the school and has a thorough understanding of the Church's liturgical year and seasons and its rites and traditions. Together with other leaders she is able to lead the school in a deepening appreciation of these traditions set in a contemporary context that is relevant to all pupils and sensitive to the individual faith and beliefs of all members of the school.
- Collective worship is planned on a termly basis so that all staff are able to organise and prepare their contributions appropriately.
- Leaders and governors are committed to providing all staff with formation in the development of spiritual and liturgical understanding in order that they are able to support prayer and worship in all its forms throughout the school community.
- Regular and systematic reviews of prayer and worship, including contributions from pupils and parents/carers, governors and to staff inform future planning and provision so that it remains relevant to the community that is the school.
- The parish priest provides regular counsel and actively supports the liturgical and prayer life of the school. There is a strong multi-faceted partnership between school and parish which includes sacramental preparation for Holy Communion in the parish that is also celebrated in the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 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 promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is Outstanding.

- Pupils show an obvious engagement with religious education and can speak confidently about the significance of their learning. For example, some Key Stage 2 pupils spoke with enthusiasm with an inspector as they clearly explained what they had been doing and why in their study of reconciliation. They recognise that religious education is one of their most important lessons in the week.
- Pupils show a high level of attention and concentrate very well during the variety of activities that characterise each lesson because of the well-judged learning tasks that address the needs of pupils. Pupils in Key Stage 2 in particular are able to concentrate and work well independently for extended periods of time. Behaviour for learning is outstanding with lessons normally proceeding without any interruption.
- From their various starting points, pupils make significant and consistent progress in their knowledge and understanding of religious education, irrespective of their individual circumstances.
- School data shows that attainment in religious education is generally good and outstanding in three classes when compared with diocesan standards of assessment. Pupils know the standard at which they are working and the next steps for their learning and can articulate these clearly when asked.
- Pupils are making secure progress in becoming religiously literate. For example in a Lower Key Stage 2 lesson considering the parable of the Prodigal Son, when explaining why the son decided to return home, a pupil explained that he *had* “*let his conscience be his guide*” while an Upper Key Stage 2 pupil clearly explained the difference between religious education and religious studies to an inspector.
- Parents/carers told inspectors that their children regularly share their learning at home in such a way as to engage them in conversations that furthers their learning.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is Outstanding.

- Teaching is generally outstanding and never less than consistently good. It is very effective in engaging pupils and ensuring that they learn extremely well. As a result pupils generally make strong and sustained progress.
- Teachers share high expectations with their pupils and display enthusiasm for the subject which contributes significantly to pupils' commitment to learning. They generally display a high level of confidence and expertise in the scheme of work and how best to translate it into engaging and accessible teaching strategies. Teachers and teaching assistants are articulate, employing a wide range of vocabulary to reinforce literacy, and show manifest respect for pupils.
- Teachers consistently plan and structure lessons well using a wide range of appropriate and imaginative tasks and activities. They introduce activities in a clear and stimulating manner which engages pupils. They make good use of Powerpoint and video displays and employ a wide range of artefacts and activities. Inspectors observed a Key Stage 1 lesson in which negative words literally disappeared when the paper on which each was written was removed from a bowl of water.
- Learning is enhanced by highly effective questioning by both teachers and teacher assistants. This enables pupils to reflect upon and deepen their initial contributions and so prompt further learning. Individual, pair and group tasks, hot seating, role play and dramatisation are part of the wide repertoire of teaching experiences employed which can also extend to gardening and to cooking on Shrove Tuesday.
- Teachers are attentive to pupils' contributions in order to assess their learning and re-shape activities if necessary. Marking and constructive feedback are well judged and enable pupils to continue to make secure progress.
- Achievement and effort are praised in class as part of the school culture to celebrate achievement which includes celebration assemblies and sharing with pupils' families.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is Outstanding.

- Religious education is recognised as a key core curriculum subject by school leaders and managers. It is resourced at the same level as other core subjects and uniquely in this school with five mixed-age teaching groups, religious education is taught in seven distinct age group classes for 10% of curriculum time.
- Governors pay great care and attention to ensuring the centrality of religious education. It is a key integral feature of the school improvement plan with well-chosen targets that are being carefully monitored. The governing body benefits from the lead teacher for religious education being an elected teacher governor and bringing her professional expertise to the group. The denominational school evaluation document is an accurate reflection of religious education and enables governors to closely monitor and support the strategic action taken by school leaders to secure outstanding outcomes in religious education.
- The leaders of religious education have a clear vision for and understanding of the subject which is sensitive to the particular context of the school. They inspire confidence and whole-hearted commitment from pupils and staff so that the subject has a very high profile in the life of the school. They are committed to religious education supporting the wholistic aims of the school and supporting pupils growing as responsible young people with an ability to discern their own unique vocation and who are well prepared to transfer successfully to secondary school at the end of Year 6.
- The school has skilfully and imaginatively developed the 'Come and See' programme to meet the particular needs of its pupils while continuing to meet the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. It collaborates enthusiastically with the diocese, for example participating in the piloting of the new assessment framework. It also works with nearby Catholic primary and secondary schools notably in the moderation of assessed work.

Summary of Inspection Judgements

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.	1
Catholic Life	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.	1
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school	1
How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.	1
Collective Worship and Prayer Life	1
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life.	1
The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life.	1
How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life.	1
Religious Education	1
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	1
The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education	1
How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	1