

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

School: St Paul's RCVA First School

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School URN: 122305

Headteacher: Mrs M Wilson

Chair of Governors: Mrs P Slater

Lead Inspector: Miss Maria Elliott

Date of Inspection 4 - 5 December 2012

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Paul's is a smaller than average sized Roman Catholic First School serving a number of local parishes. It is federated with St Paul's Middle School. Both First and Middle School share one headteacher and governing body, but are two separate schools; they occupy a shared new school site forming the Alnwick Partnership of Catholic Schools. The majority of pupils are White British, with a few pupils from Eastern European heritage whose grasp of the English language is limited. The percentage of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is below the national average, however the number of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or a statement is above the national average.

Pupil Catchment

Number of pupils on roll:	134
Planned Admission Number of Pupils:	24
Percentage of pupils baptised RC:	58.2%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	27.6%
Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths:	0.7%
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	13.5%
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups:	11.2%
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	23.8%

Staffing

Full time teachers:	6
Part time teachers:	2
Percentage of Catholic teachers:	87.5%
Percentage of teachers with CCRS:	37.5%

Percentage of learning time given to Religious Education

FS	10%
Year 1	10%
Year 2	10%
Year 3	10%
Year 4	10%

Parishes served by the school

St Paul's Alnwick

St Mary's, Whittingham

St Aidan's, Seahouses

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

1

CATHOLIC LIFE

1

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

1

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2

KEY FINDINGS

- St Paul's is an outstanding Catholic school. It is a fully inclusive school where everyone is welcomed, valued and affirmed with prayer and worship at the heart of the life of the school. The school mission statement underpins and permeates all that the school does and is instrumental in ensuring that the mission and ethos of Catholic education is lived out daily by staff and pupils alike. The headteacher, supported by a very dedicated senior leadership team, staff and very committed governing body ensure that the pupils reach their full potential. The school is held in high regard by the pupils and parents. All areas from the last inspection have been addressed. There is a continuous drive for improvement for the good of the whole school community. The spiritual, moral, and social development of pupils is very good but their cultural development does not match that of the other three.
- The quality of the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. It has the highest possible priority. Pupils are very keen to participate in the varied opportunities provided to contribute to the Catholic Life of the school and benefit greatly from them. Effective monitoring and evaluation systems are in place and result in continuing improvement to outcomes for pupils.
- The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding. Pupils response to and participation in Collective Worship is outstanding. Given that this is a first school, pupils are highly sophisticated in their ability to plan and lead worship. Leaders and managers are continually seeking ways to further develop, promote, monitor and evaluate Collective Worship.
- The quality of Religious Education is good. Learning and progress are at least good in each key stage and outstanding in some parts of the school. Teaching and assessment are good. The quality of Religious Education is not yet outstanding as there are inconsistencies in practice across the school, and as yet the newly formed Religious Education coordination team has not had time to fully embed new

practice in order to evidence impact.

WHAT THE SCHOOL NEEDS TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

To improve further the school needs to:

- Improve the quality of Religious Education by:
 - ensuring there is a more consistent approach to teachers marking and feedback, differentiation, target setting and assessment for learning practice across the school.
- Further develop the pupils' knowledge, understanding and appreciation for all faiths to reflect the religious and cultural diversity of the school, the wider community and the world at large.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

1

- 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 leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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The quality of Catholic Life within St Paul’s is outstanding. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic Life of the school and benefit greatly from it. Through the Spiritual Council the pupils are at the centre of shaping the school’s mission and ethos, and willingly embrace the demands that membership of the community entails. As a result they take a leading role in activities which promote the school’s ethos within school, and speak with great enthusiasm about the areas in which they have been involved; for example, introducing prayer tables into the school playground to allow pupils the opportunity to read and reflect and deciding on how school should reflect the season of Advent. Pupils’ behaviour is very good and they treat others with a high level of respect. The oldest pupils are very clear in their responsibilities and see themselves as role models for the younger pupils –“showing them how to help others”. They are proud of their own religious identity and beliefs and have a strong sense of personal worth. They deeply respect the Catholic traditions of the school and its links with the parish community and diocese.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding and has the highest possible priority. The school’s mission statement is a clear and inspiring expression of the educational mission of the church. All staff and governors have high expectations and a shared vision with regard to the Catholic mission and ethos. They are all fully committed to their ultimate aim which is to “help the children to be good people, and good citizens and to follow in Christ’s footsteps”. All staff are fully involved in nurturing and living out the school’s mission statement and as a result this permeates through the whole curriculum. There is a real sense of community at all levels as evidenced by the excellent relationships that exist among and between staff, pupils, governors and parents. The school is a vibrant, cheerful and prayerful community and its Catholic character is effectively reflected through displays and artefacts in the learning environment and the creation of many sacred spaces around the school. Clear policies and procedures are in place which provide the highest levels of pastoral support to all pupils and staff. Catholic principles and values also underpin behaviour and relationship policies resulting in a strong shared vision for the Catholic Life of the school. The voluntary Lay Chaplain plays a pivotal role in fostering and developing the Catholic Life of the school.

Leaders and managers are outstanding in promoting provision for the Catholic Life and mission of the school. The school's leadership team and governors alike are deeply committed to the church's mission in education and highly ambitious for the Catholic Life of the school. The headteacher provides a very clear direction for the Catholic Life of the school and she is seen as a role model by all and a source of inspiration. There is unequivocal and explicit evidence that the Catholic mission of the school is the highest priority along with spiritual and moral development of pupils. This is reflected in the school's self-evaluation, which is a coherent reflection of monitoring and evaluation; clearly and explicitly focused on the Catholic Life of the school. This leads to well-targeted planned improvement. As a result staff and pupils' understanding of the school's mission is outstanding. They share its purpose and are keenly and actively involved in shaping and supporting it. Consequently, pupils are able to articulate the distinctive mission of the school very well. The school has successful strategies for engaging with parents and carers. Parents have a thorough understanding of the school's mission and are highly supportive of it. Governors make a highly significant contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. They are regular visitors to the school and are passionate about the school's mission. They are actively involved in its evaluation and are ready to challenge as well as support where necessary.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

1

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

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The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding. St Paul's is a deeply prayerful community where pupils response to and participation in Collective Worship is outstanding. Acts of worship engage all pupils' interest, offer them time for reflection and inspire in them deep thought and heartfelt response. From the youngest to the oldest pupils there is a palpable enthusiasm for Collective Worship, reflected in the quality of communal singing, the quality of prayerful silence and the depth of participation in community prayers. They understand that there are different forms of liturgies, such as Mass and sacramental liturgies as well as different types of prayer, both formal and informal. By year four pupils have been supported and encouraged in their ability to lead worship. They are creative and resourceful in their planning of liturgy and they are deeply concerned to ensure it is of a high quality. The worship opportunities pupils create are engaging and imaginative. Their involvement in the Collective Worship of the school has been a central part of their experience from their earliest years. They have a very good understanding of the Church's Liturgical celebrations. They have confidence and ease in their use of scripture, religious artefacts, liturgical music and other forms of prayer, in line with their age and ability. Pupils have participated actively and with enthusiasm in the school's sacramental preparation programme and this has had a profound effect on their continuing development, enabling them to take greater responsibility for their own spiritual development, often taking very active roles in the Spiritual Council.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is outstanding. It is central to the life of the school, given high priority and the dedicated time within the busy school day. Through the support and input from the Lay Chaplain and the drive of senior leaders, there are many opportunities for staff and pupils to pray together in a variety of forms of worship. Parents, parishioners and governors are also invited to share in various acts of Collective Worship, and they greatly appreciate the opportunity to attend and comment with enthusiasm. The pupils' liturgical formation is supported very effectively by the Lay Chaplain. Staff are very skilled in planning worship and pupils lead with increasing confidence, skill and enthusiasm. They have a thorough understanding of the purpose of Collective Worship and the wide variety of forms it can take. The themes chosen by pupils and staff reflect a deep understanding of the Church's mission and include the spiritual aspirations of all pupils. By year four pupils are sufficiently skilled in using class Collective Worship to address issues identified within the class. For example, when noticing there was some arguing and complaining taking place in prayer partners, pupils planned a Collective Worship to focus on this issue and used scriptures, reflection and prayer to try to resolve it.

Leaders and managers' promotion, monitoring and evaluation of the provision for Collective Worship is outstanding. Leaders have a very clear vision for its development, and have a thorough understanding of the Church's liturgical year; its seasons, rites and symbols, and use a range of artefacts, and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) very effectively to deepen pupils' appreciation, knowledge and understanding. They have expert knowledge of how to plan and deliver quality experiences of Collective Worship and, along with the lay chaplain, are highly visible in leading Collective Worship and are models of outstanding practice for staff and pupils. They provide opportunities for staff to worship together and ensure staff training in liturgical formation and spiritual development is a priority. Leaders and managers place the highest priority on the development of quality experiences of Collective Worship in their reviews of school performance. Opportunities to seek the views of pupils, staff and parents regarding the quality and significance of Collective Worship in school are built into the school action plan. Leaders are highly committed to ensuring that pupils have access to the best possible sacramental preparation in accordance with diocesan policy and are actively involved in the parish programme.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2

- 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 monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

2

2

2

The quality of Religious Education is good. Most pupils enjoy Religious Education and are becoming more confident in explaining its value. They are keen to do well, generally apply themselves diligently in lessons and work at a good pace. They generally seek to produce their best work and are often interested and enthusiastic about their learning. From below average starting points, pupils make rapid and sustained progress in the early years foundation stage. Good progress continues in key stage one (KS1), and at the end of year two most pupils achieve the expected standard of attainment. Steady progress continues across key stage two (KS2) and by the time pupils transfer to Middle School most year four pupils are attaining the expected standard of attainment. As a result of very effective support staff, pupils with special educational needs and disabilities are well supported and achieve well according to their age and capacity. Pupils acquire knowledge quickly and are secure in their understanding (AT1). They develop and apply a range of skills well, and are becoming more skilled in their ability to engage with religious ideas and integrate them into their lives (AT2).

As a result of teaching that is mainly good, with an example of outstanding teaching, most pupils are achieving well over time. Teachers have a clear understanding of the value of Religious Education which they are beginning to communicate effectively to pupils. Generally teachers have a sound subject knowledge, which they use in planning and teaching Religious Education. They use a wide range of resources, thought provoking questioning and teaching strategies; which are often very imaginative and engaging, to promote good learning. Generally teachers have high expectations of pupils and as a result of sharing targets and success criteria, pupils are beginning to understand how well they are doing, but are not always sufficiently guided to know what is expected of them in order to improve their work. Effective assessment procedures are beginning to be embedded into Religious Education. Marking and feedback are performed regularly and accurately by most teachers. Pupils are becoming more involved in evaluating how well they achieve which gives them greater confidence in making improvements. However, inconsistencies in practice across school, do not enable pupils to have a smooth learning journey as they progress through school.

The role of Religious Education coordinator is shared between two members of staff (one of whom is a senior staff member) and is new since September 2012. They are both very passionate about their role and have a very detailed planned approach to systematic monitoring activities relating to provision and outcomes but as the role is in its infancy this has yet to be embedded within whole school practice. They have a clear picture of the school's strengths and areas for development, founded on sound data and have drawn up a comprehensive action plan to ensure the school is continually improving. The coordinators are very well-informed by current developments in Religious Education and this is beginning to filter in to their practice to monitor, improve and support teaching, and encourage the enthusiasm of staff. There is a shared common purpose in the teaching of Religious Education. As a consequence it has a very prominent profile in the school and makes a positive contribution to the moral and spiritual development of pupils. The new programme for Religious Education – 'Come and See' has been successfully introduced into the Religious Education curriculum. Good links are forged with other agencies, the local and wider community and the local Christian parish to provide a range of enrichment activities to promote pupils' learning and engagement. The curriculum enables pupils to gain first hand experiences of the liturgical life of the Catholic Church and of other local religious and belief communities. It meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference well.

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

1

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.

1

The quality of provision for Collective Worship

1

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

1

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2

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

2

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education

2

How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

2

	Pupil Outcomes	Provision	Leadership and Management	
Catholic Life	1	1	1	1
Collective Worship	1	1	1	1
Religious Education	2	2	2	2
	1	1	1	1