



## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **St. Paul's Catholic Primary School**

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DfES Number: 803 3438

URN: 109269

Headteacher: Mr Julian Clements  
Chair of Governors: Mrs Helene Bush

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Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Diocese of Clifton  
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Date of inspection: March 27-28<sup>th</sup> 2012

Date of previous inspection: July 2007

Reporting Inspector: Mr Joseph Skivington

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## Description of School

St. Paul's is an oversubscribed, smaller than average size primary school with 200 pupils on roll, 46% of whom are Catholic. The majority of children are drawn from the parish, as well as from further afield. There is a varied socio economic background in this mainly White British area, with a growing ethnic minority. Attainment on entry is broadly average. There is pre school provision on site.

### Key for inspection grades

Grade 1: Outstanding; Grade 2: Good; Grade 3: Satisfactory; Grade 4: Unsatisfactory

## Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

**Grade 2**

St. Paul's provides a good Catholic education for all its pupils. It is a fully inclusive community where all are welcome and accepted as individuals made in the image of God, and its ethos is characterised by openness to all, with strong and close links to the parents, the parish, and the wider community. Pupils participate enthusiastically in and respond well to the excellent faith enriching provision for prayer life and liturgy. The parish church close by provides many opportunities to be involved in parish life, and this demonstrates the sense of the mission of the school being part of the wider mission of the Church. Outcomes from the religious education programme are good, the result of good leadership and teaching. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as the others, because of very effective interventions, extra support in lessons, and tasks clearly suited to their learning needs. The religious education programme makes an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development.

## The capacity of the school community to improve and develop

**Grade 2**

The school's capacity to sustain the quality of care and education it provides is good. The pursuit of improvement has securely maintained and built on the previous good performance noted at the last inspection. Self evaluation at all levels is grounded in accurate analysis and rigorous review. The senior leadership team inspires the whole school community towards an ambitious vision. Morale is positive, coupled with a renewed belief in the school's success and potential to achieve even better outcomes. The processes for managing the performance of staff and for their professional development are used well. Staff who newly join the school feel welcome and immediately supported. The areas for improvement from the last inspection were to develop assessment and stretch the more able pupils, to improve standards and presentation, and to support staff further with more opportunities for Inset training. These have been addressed successfully.

## What the school should do to improve further

- To bring all teaching up to the level of the best by using assessment data to focus on the progress over time of individual pupils, and to match teaching strategies and lesson objectives more smartly to the learning needs of all the pupils.

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- To develop the effectiveness of the governing body as a challenging, knowledgeable partner in supporting the work of the school.

## **How good are outcomes for pupils, taking account of variations between different groups?**

### **Grade 2**

Pupils are fully involved in the Catholic life of the school and make a positive contribution to it, not least by their excellent behaviour, which contributes to their own learning and the ethos of the school. Although they have regular valuable opportunities to feedback to staff on their views and perceptions, they have yet to become involved formally in a revisit and reflection on what the school mission means and entails for them in their own lives at school. They feel their voice is heard through pupils' conferencing and they take responsibility for their own lives and the care of the younger children. They absorb easily the shared values lived out in the Catholic ethos of the school and have a sound awareness of spiritual and moral matters which they are able to articulate well. Given their age they show remarkable conviction in their Faith and speak easily of their spirituality through their own prayers and reflective writing. They respond generously to the needs of others beyond the school, and this makes a valuable contribution to the welcoming openness and inclusivity of the school. Many are involved in fundraising for a variety of charities both home and overseas, for instance, supporting Indian students, as well as outreach to the local community and local charities.

Their response to and participation in the prayer life of the school is outstanding. They are beginning to have the opportunity to learn the skills of planning and preparing assemblies and Masses in school, becoming more involved as they go through the school and moving beyond just being participants or onlookers. They play an active part in liturgies, sing joyously, and compose very beautiful and heartfelt prayers which are collected, kept in the reflective corner of the classroom, and are said daily. Their demeanour and reverence at prayer demonstrates a seriousness and growing faith, as well as a sense of the sacred and the special time for prayer. The new prayer room is popular and used continuously by pupils of their own accord.

Achievement and progress in religious education is good throughout the school. Prior attainment on entry is broadly average, but by the end of Key Stage 2 pupils attain above, and some well above, what is expected. Learning outcomes for all groups of pupils, especially those with special educational needs and those with EAL are good, particularly strong in learning from religion and relating what they are learning to their daily lives. They can discuss the topics they cover easily and relate them to their own lives. They have a sound grasp of the main tenets of the Faith, for instance, the significance of the Last Supper, or the divinity of Jesus, as well as understanding the message of Jesus through His miracles and parables. There are several examples of quite remarkably mature and thoughtful writing from the older pupils speaking directly from the heart. They are developing critical thinking skills well and this is evident in group and paired discussion in class, contributing to the independent quality of their learning. In lessons pupils work hard and enjoy the subject, although they are not always challenged and engaged by effective teaching strategies or precisely enough targetted lesson and learning objectives.

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## **How effective are leaders and managers in developing the Catholic Life of the school?**

**Grade 2**

Good inspiring leadership and management promote the Catholic life of the school very effectively, with frequent monitoring, reviews, appraisal, and focussed planning for future improvement. The Catholic ethos of the school colours all of its activities and in its thinking and planning the leadership has absorbed and has aligned its vision very closely with the diocesan document Called to be a People of Hope. Care is taken to keep alive and in the forefront of the staff, the mission of the school, but a further re-energising exercise which would involve also pupils and parents in interpreting the mission as it touches their lives, would be fruitful and valuable in promoting and nurturing further the Catholic ethos of the school. The school has ensured diocesan training for all staff at the start of the academic year, on spirituality and Catholic education. Teachers have also benefited from Inset Theology. Prayer life and liturgies are monitored and reviewed very effectively, with close liaison between governors and senior leadership. The head teacher reports to the governing body on the quality of Catholic life at every governors' meeting. The school development plan objectives are linked closely to performance management. The effectiveness of leadership and management is seen in the high morale of the staff, the pupil's good care for one another, and the very good relationships between staff and pupils.

The governing body is made up of supportive members who are committed to sustaining the school's ethos and standards, and are able to visit the school and some lessons when they possibly can. The People of Hope has also been made available to them. The RE leader liaises well with the link governor and reports formally to the governing body, but it is not apparent that there is any detailed feedback or challenge based on the report. The link governor for Religious education, who is also the parish priest, is a frequent and welcome visitor. The governing body, however, needs to make itself more closely aware of the work that the school is doing so that it can provide real challenge and critical support, developing as time allows a more hands on approach to their governing role. All statutory and canonical responsibilities are met.

There is a clear policy promoted by governors and senior staff to promote community cohesion with the result that the school has an openness to all, all are included in its life, and its generous outreach to the local and the global community is a real strength. The school collaborates well with other schools and participates in community undertakings, including local charities. The curriculum provides an exploration of other faiths, and good use is made of resources. Those of other denominations or faiths feel that they are able to express their own beliefs comfortably, and all feel included and welcomed into every aspect of school life. Acts of worship leave room for the other person's spiritual identity, their modes of expression and their values. Parents from all backgrounds, especially those from other cultures are welcomed and supported.

## **How effective is the provision for Catholic Education?**

**Grade 2**

Provision for prayer life is outstanding, a real strength of the school, because it meets very effectively the spiritual needs of the pupils, be it through assemblies and liturgies, or the opportunities for reflection, often in the new prayer space. Year 6 devised and presented their own reflection time, using power point and readings, which was an excellent opportunity to

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reflect together as a group. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is used well, and the school supports the parish- run preparation programme for First Holy Communion. There are many occasions during the day for spiritual nourishment through prayer and moments of reflection. The liturgical year is well marked, planned, and celebrated, particularly Advent, Lent and Holy Week. Then each event is evaluated and reviewed to determine how it could be bettered and made more relevant and engaging.

The curriculum successfully meets the needs of all groups of pupils, as well as meeting the Curriculum Directory for Religious Education requirements, such as the allocation of time. Relationship education is dealt with sensitively and clearly from a Catholic standpoint. The beliefs of other faiths are explored through topics in the schemes of work. Resources are well managed, and ICT, art and music particularly are used imaginatively to colour and enrich the learning experience. The colourful art work and displays around the school reinforce the RE topics or liturgical seasons the pupils are studying, they affirm the creators and educate others, and visibly declare the Catholic ethos of the school. Resources to support teaching, and to enliven and enrich the schemes of work, are good. The curriculum makes an excellent and invaluable contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils.

The quality of teaching and purposeful learning is good, with satisfactory, good and outstanding practice observed. Outstanding teaching enables the pupils to learn really well because it engages their interest and provides challenge, so that the pupils themselves do the work and make the intellectual effort. Group and paired work were especially effective strategies because they provided peer learning and assessment. Proactive teaching assistants provide invaluable support especially in allowing the teacher to split children into smaller groups with differentiated tasks tailored to their learning needs. Less effective teaching saw the teacher doing most of the talking and the activity often became the key element of the lesson. The scrutiny of written work shows that marking is generally helpful and making a difference over time to presentation, length and quality of work, although of a sometime inconsistent quality through the school. There is also a growing use of peer marking and assessment. Pupils' work and behaviour in lessons is good and they are enthusiastic about the subject. Their enjoyment is clearly evident.

Assessment procedures are in place although not as detailed as other subjects. Good use is being made of levels to begin to monitor individual progress and achievement. Tracking of individual progress is being developed steadily to provide teachers with a clearer picture of each pupil's strengths and where support and guidance are needed. This is essentially an information gathering exercise and what is needed now is the implementation of this data to inform teaching and learning objectives. The school is well aware that this data must now be translated into the lesson plans and lesson objectives in order to meet the specific learning needs of every pupil. The already effective and fruitful structure of lesson observations will enable the best practice in assessment for learning to be shared rapidly throughout the school.