



St Paul's Academy

URN: 105135

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of The Most Rev. John Wilson the Archbishop of Southwark

08–09 February 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

Catholic life and mission (p.3)

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

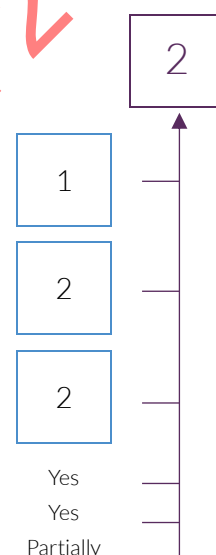
Collective worship (p.7)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection



What the school does well

- Provides deep pastoral care which supports the learning of all.
- Integrates fully in the wider community through faith in action and service.
- Provides a wide range of opportunities for formal and informal prayer and liturgy for those of all faiths and those without a faith.

What the school needs to improve

- Formalise consistent processes of assessment in religious education which enable students to take ownership of next steps and progress.
- Ensure full compliance for timetable religious education in Year 11 by the next academic year.
- Create professional development opportunities which enable governors to develop the skills necessary to hold the school to account in their guardianship role.

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Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Catholic life and mission key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

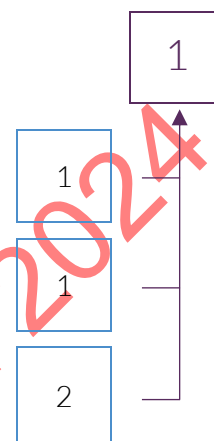
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school



The school provides an environment which nurtures every individual in the school community. There are many opportunities to lead faith in action which are embraced by students. The chaplain said, 'We walk with them to get them to a place where they can succeed.' Students know they are children of God, with a student stating, 'Since I joined St Paul's I have come into the zone of prayer: every religion is so beautiful and you can learn a lot from religion.' Students take a leading role in all aspects of service to the local and wider community, such as in giving their time weekly after school to support local care home residents through the St Vincent De Paul society (SVP). When speaking about opportunities to give to others, a student said, 'Being part of the SVP gives young people the chance to live out God's word'. Students readily take on leadership opportunities to put their faith into action, speaking openly about how, when working in their respective roles, they live out Catholic social teachings.

The chaplaincy provision is valued highly by both students and staff within the school. Students have a voice as demonstrated by the student-led cultural day which is a product of the student leadership group, who formulated the idea and led the day from start to finish in a celebration of their school's diversity. There is a clear focus on creating leadership opportunities for students through chaplaincy, a justice and peace group, the SVP and the student leadership team. A refocus on the school's mission statement has enabled students, staff and whole school ownership of their purpose and role as 'God's work of art'. The mission is well understood, is fully embedded and underpins the life and work of all aspects of the school. Staff embrace the mission in their work. One member of staff stated how she uses the mission in her classes to motivate and encourage students, 'I am a work of art, I am the masterpiece, you are all God's masterpieces, this is just the beginning of your journey.' Staff express that the mission supports inclusivity and describe an embedded culture of welcome. A member of staff said 'This is a family community; it feels like a home where anyone can find support. Everyone looks after everyone.' The school goes above and beyond helping homeless families with a school food bank, supporting students and their families over the holiday periods and ensuring no child goes hungry. The school uses grants to provide life opportunities to support students' personal development. There is a deep respect of, and for, the school's leaders, who model expectations across the school. This leads to a whole staff presence around the building at all times, which supports learning through setting high expectations. Chaplaincy provision is rooted in the vision and mission

of the school, supported by a programme of formal and informal development opportunities to understand Catholic formation.

Provision for relationships and sex education meets the requirements of the Bishops conference and follows a planned, timetabled programme. Leaders, supported by governors, have reviewed and relaunched the mission statement to have outcomes which have directly impacted on whole school life. This rebranding, places God and Catholic social teaching principles at its core. Leaders have a deep commitment to ensuring pastoral care is a focus which enables all to learn. Strategic decisions to support this include a proactive, dedicated team who work in partnership with classroom practitioners. Leaders support the dignity of all members of the school community, who describe the school as a caring family. There is an authentic shared vision which is driving the school forward at pace without compromising on quality.

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Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

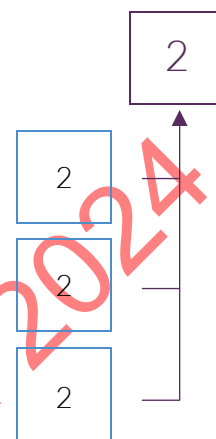
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education



Students engage in question and answer to articulate a knowledge and understanding of prior and current learning. When students are asked to respond they use religious literacy well. Most students enjoy their learning with all students responding positively in class when questioned. Students are able to work independently and show a respect of each others' learning. Students with special educational needs make the progress in line with other students. Additionally, the school ensures all students are able to access necessary resources ensuring no child is disadvantaged. Outcomes show progress in line with other similar subjects and there is an upwards trend in progress. Whilst school outcomes sit slightly below the national and local averages for attainment, progress is above national and local averages and students are able to access post-16 education following these positive outcomes. Students respond to both verbal and written feedback. This is seen in class responses and in books which are generally well presented. Celebration of effort, participation and outcomes is evident. Teachers use praise well to support learning, building space for reflection of students' work.

Teachers use behaviour for learning techniques effectively to ensure most students engage with lesson content. Assessment is consistent with policy, and leaders are evolving the process further. All teachers use a range of formative assessment techniques to engage and encourage students. In the best teaching, assessment for learning is used well to deepen learning and explore concepts. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and where there are gaps in depth of knowledge, for example with trainees, support is in place through the school's bespoke professional development offer and through departmental and whole school planned training. Teachers benefit from whole school and departmental training where sharing of good practice is encouraged. Resources are scaffolded to assist students in building their skills towards the GCSE style questions from as early as Year 7. There is a common focus on building levels of literacy and religious education technical language in all year groups. Consistency of delivery, resourcing and expectation enables students to feel confident and clear about what they need to do. Greater guidance however is needed on how to move to next steps.

Subject content is further enhanced through invitations of visitors to the school. For example, enhancing the Year 10 module on Judaism where a synagogue experience was created to help students deepen understanding of their studies.

Strategic senior leadership decisions have had a positive impact on the leadership of, and teaching within, the department. The religious education leader has a clear vision, and knows her team's strengths and professional development needs well. Leaders have supported the religious education leader to take advantage of outreach and training and she has recently attended the 'RE Today' weekend. Leaders and governors ensure that religious education is comparable with other core areas in the school. Years 7-10 receive above the 10% requirement allowing for prayer and liturgy formation activities to be additionally aligned to the religious education schemes. The school is well on its way to planning and embedding the new religious education curriculum directory. In preparation for this the religious education lead has worked collaboratively with local schools and outcomes have been shared more widely for others to benefit from the resources produced. Leaders are aware of their conscious decision in Year 11 to manage a legacy timetabling of 6.9% of taught religious education. Strategies are in place for full compliance by June 2024. Leaders have a program of monitoring including learning walks which provide feedback for the development of both individuals and the department as a whole. Governors' visits include learning walks of the department with reporting back to the full governing body.

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Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

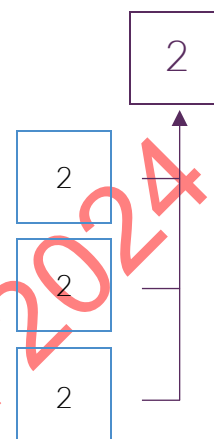
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship



There is a genuine appreciation of God's world and the chance to be part of its beauty. Students are actively involved in the preparation, leadership and delivery of collective worship. This includes workshops for planning weekly prayer and special liturgies led by the chaplain. Staff and students spoke about Christmas liturgy which also involved drama, dance and music, extending opportunities to worship in a variety of ways. A student commented that he feels welcomed by the school and values being able to celebrate his own faith background including using the chapel to pray. A parent commented, 'They help my child to always be close to God; he knows how to communicate to God. I really appreciate the opportunities the school gives him.' Students behave respectfully in prayer, liturgy and worship valuing each other's right to an appropriate environment to pray. A member of staff commented that, children coming from diverse backgrounds are very respectful of the Catholic life and some participate willingly and respectfully. Students in Years 7 to 10 have the opportunity to experience a retreat provision every year. This includes a Year 7 retreat to Aylesford Priory as well as retreat opportunities provided in conjunction with a local priest and parishes. These form part of a strategic plan for chaplaincy formation. Additional opportunities include attendance at Flame, with all opportunities being funded to ensure anyone who chooses to, can take part.

The chaplain monitors students' experience of daily prayer through feedback from them, which leads to opportunities to review and develop prayer and other forms of worship. Students were integral in the refurbishment of the school chapel which is a peaceful place to be. The whole community benefits from the newly refurbished chapel which is available throughout the day for prayer and reflection for all faiths. A member of staff stated, 'I love the chapel and resources available to support my spiritual life.' The centrality of prayer and liturgy in the life of the school is valued by staff, parents and students. A parent commented, 'My son prays in the Catholic way at home and I love it'. Structures are in place for supported provision of daily prayer. Extended monitoring and bespoke support is now needed to ensure consistency of prayer and liturgy provision. The chaplain is available for any member of the community requiring pastoral advice – she is passionate and has a strong vision. This is further support by the regular presence of a parish priest who is also a school governor. A member of staff commented that the family atmosphere is created through the prayers to support the students and 'says this is what we stand for'. 'That is that we are justice makers.' Another member of staff commented, 'The St Paul's prayer is a prayer for life: you can't forget it. The message resonates for everyone because everyone is recognised.'

There is an annual calendar for key liturgical events. This includes Masses, carol services Advent and Lenten liturgies. Governors attend events wherever possible. The chaplain is highly knowledgeable in her field, enabling her to work collaboratively with both students and leaders to enable them to fully engage with, and embrace, prayer and liturgy opportunities. A recently reviewed prayer and liturgy policy is in place and Catholic life, prayer and formation form part of staff induction and whole school training. Governors support funding of chaplaincy which has most recently included the refurbishment of the chapel. The school will benefit further from leadership at governance level in all aspects of planning and implementation, monitoring and assessment of collective worship, as well as attendance at events. The planning for support and strategic development in this area is ready to be implemented.

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Information about the school

Full name of school	St Paul's Academy
School unique reference number (URN)	105135
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	2036905
Full postal address of the school	St Paul's Academy, Finchale Road, Abbey Wood, London, SE2 9PX
School phone number	02083113868
Headteacher	Sheila Ward
Chair of Trustees	Sarah Griffin
School Website	http://www.stpaulsacademy.org.uk/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Paul's Academy
Phase	Secondary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	11-16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	25-26 March 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Catherine Burnett

David Hennessey

Patrick Shields

Lead

Team

Team

Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement