



Diocese of Arundel and Brighton

INSPECTION REPORT

St Paul's Catholic Primary School

Hampton Court Way, Thames Ditton, Surrey, KT7 0LP
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DfE Number: 9363446

Headteacher: Mrs F Johnson
Chair of Governors: Mrs C Ellis

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Bishop of Arundel & Brighton
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Date of inspection: 21 October 2013
Date of previous inspection: 18 March 2008

Lead Inspector: Mr P Ward
Associate Inspector: Mr P Fisher

Description of School

The school is voluntary aided. It is situated in the Weybridge Deanery of the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. It is maintained by Surrey Local Authority. The principal parishes which the school serves are Our Lady of Lourdes, Thames Ditton, The Sacred Heart, Cobham, and The Holy Name, Esher. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 97%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to religious education is 7% in Key Stage 1 and 7% in Key Stage 2.

The school takes pupils from 4 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 406. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is broadly above average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free schools meals is below average. The majority of pupils are from a White British background. Around 10% of the pupils receive extra support in class. The proportion of pupils from homes where English is an additional language is average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

St Paul's is a good Catholic school with an outstanding Catholic ethos. The committed leadership of the headteacher, supported by the governing body and senior leadership team, ensures that a very strong Catholic identity pervades the whole life of the school. Prayer and worship have a very strong role at the heart of the life of the school. Relationships within the school are very good. Staff provide a stimulating environment which supports pupils, enabling them to thrive and succeed. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are excellent, reflecting their outstanding spiritual and moral development. The school has good links with parents and with the three parishes that it serves. Religious education is good. The introduction of the new diocesan religious education programme provides a valuable opportunity to review the subject's contribution to the curriculum and how it may be best managed in order to provide the highest standard of religious education for each pupil.

Grade 2

Improvement since the last inspection

The headteacher has ensured that St Paul's has an established record of successful school improvement which is continuing. Recent senior staff development focused on Catholic school leadership so the governing body and senior leadership team have this specialist expertise on which to draw. Thus there is excellent capacity for continuing improvement.

Grade 1

What the school should do to improve further

- Governing Body develops further its strategic role, particularly in respect of religious education
- Curriculum time dedicated to religious education be increased to 10%
- Develop a portfolio of levelled and moderated work samples to support reliable assessment judgements.

The Catholic Life of the School

Leadership and Management

The governing body, headteacher and leaders at all levels are strongly committed to enabling all pupils to achieve the highest spiritual, moral, social and academic standards. The headteacher's strong and purposeful leadership ensures that the whole life of the school is clearly and effectively focused on the school's mission which is "to sustain through example the moral and religious beliefs of the Catholic faith in a secure, caring and happy environment thus fostering the distinctive nature of our Catholic school" and "to ensure that each child has the opportunity and assistance required to achieve their full potential academically, physically and spiritually." The school is very efficiently managed so as to optimise the use of resources to support the education of each pupil. Monitoring and quality assurance programmes effectively support both staff and pupils in striving for the highest standards.

Pastoral care is a particular strength with good relationships among and between pupils and staff a particular feature. Pupils' views are taken into account through the school council. The inclusion of all in the school community is a key aim that is constantly pursued. A significant range of extra-curricular activities is available to all pupils. Very good engagement with parents and local parishes contributes to pupils' education and achievement. The local parish priest, who is both school chaplain and governor, is well known to the school community and visits classrooms regularly. Thus pupils are able to grow in confidence and flourish.

Grade 1

The Prayer Life of the School

The celebration of Mass and an extensive programme of prayer and worship at assemblies and in classrooms are at the heart of the life of the school community. The wide range of liturgies involves pupils and staff, prompting prayerful reflection and engagement. All are carefully prepared, providing good opportunities for those pupils involved to deepen their knowledge and understanding. The importance of including still more pupils more fully in both planning and participation is recognized. For example, an assembly liturgy on the theme of 'Promises' linking to the focus in Come and See, was led by staff but included Year 6 pupils reading their personal prayers and all joining in a hymn and the school prayer. Prayer in various forms punctuates the school day, engaging and enriching the experience of pupils. This may be reinforced at home as a result of the prayer booklet distributed to parents. The 'prayer box' and prayers prompted by 'big questions' were highlighted by one pupil to an inspector. Prayer and reflection are a particular feature of religious education lessons which begin with the prayerful composition of a prayer focus. Services of Reconciliation for older pupils and a programme supporting parish

preparation for first Holy Communion are further examples of the thoughtful and extensive provision, supported and encouraged by the local parish priest, which ensures that prayer and worship makes an outstanding contribution to the spiritual and moral development of pupils.

Grade 1

How effectively does the school /college promote community cohesion?

St Paul's is a thriving Catholic school community where all are valued and enabled to grow in the knowledge and love of God through the taught and wider curriculum. Prayer and worship are central to school life so the school is alert to the sensitivities of the very small number of pupils and their families who are from other Christian or faith backgrounds. Pastoral care is a strength of the school. In seeking to further the already high standards of pupils, the school recently introduced its Expectations and Continuity grid. This addresses such items as independence and attitudes to learning, behaviour and relationships with others and was widely welcomed by parents. Pupils respond positively to the many opportunities to exercise responsibility in the school, including serving on the school council. They are encouraged to have regard to other people and are active in supporting charities and events in the local community.

There are very close links with the adjacent parish of Our Lady of Lourdes, Thames Ditton, including support for the parish-based preparations for sacramental initiation. Ensuring good links with the other two parishes served by the school, Holy Name Esher and Sacred Heart Cobham because of their distance from the school, is recognised by the school as a priority. The school is strongly supported by parents, with high levels of attendance at all events although some parents regret being unable to attend daytime events that are consistently held on the same day of the week.

Grade 1

Religious Education

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education

School data indicates that pupil attainment in religious education is very high and approaching that achieved in English. Almost all pupils, irrespective of their ability, make at least good if not very good progress throughout their school career. Pupils become progressively more religiously literate and display age-appropriate understanding. For example during the inspection pupils in Reception were being introduced to anointing as part of the Sacrament of Baptism while the most able pupils in Year 5 were seeking to explore the link between finding a meaning in life and becoming a follower of Jesus and those in Year 6 were considering how history and culture might prompt someone to apply for ordination to the priesthood. Pupils in a Year 3 lesson clearly appreciated the importance of religious education to them and of its significance to their daily lives. Behaviour in all lessons observed was very good.

Grade 1

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

Pupils generally make good progress because lessons are well planned with different tasks to engage pupils of all abilities. Good lessons have clear learning objectives linked to prior learning, identify key vocabulary and have a clear structure and a variety of learning strategies.

All teachers have high expectations and seek to challenge pupils to reflect critically on their work but subject knowledge sometimes limits opportunities to extend the learning of the most able.

There is some variety in the practice and value of marking and assessment which at its best includes reference to the learning objective and pupil target, identifies 'next steps' and involves teachers' verifying students own self-assessment. Failure to review the work of independent learners leaves these pupils unaware of the standard of their work and if repeated, can result in a lack of application in future. Teaching assistants collaborate well with the class teacher and working with individual pupils and small groups contribute significantly to the learning of individual pupils and small groups. The practice of beginning each lesson reflectively, linked to the prayer focus, contributes to the spiritual development of pupils but is not always linked to the theme of the lesson and can lead into teaching that lacks pace and hence engagement for pupils.

Grade 2

Quality of the Curriculum

'Come and See, the new diocesan religious education programme, constitutes the curriculum in religious education. The programme reflects the requirements of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools in England and Wales 2012* published by the Catholic Bishops' Conference Department of Catholic Education and Formation. Currently the school devotes less than 10% of curriculum time to religious education as required by the *Curriculum Directory* and necessary in order to teach 'Come and See'. This is the first year of the new programme and schemes of work are being progressively developed.

Teaching supports all pupils irrespective of ability to become religiously literate and to make progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding and to learn to reflect spiritually and think ethically and theologically and to become aware of the demands of religious commitment in daily life. Wider subject skills including literacy and ICT are also developed. The religious education curriculum makes a significant contribution to the spiritual and moral development of pupils and they are taught to respect other faiths and cultures.

Grade 2

Leadership and management of Religious Education

The established management structure of the subject is supporting the introduction of the new diocesan religious education programme 'Come and See' effectively throughout the school. Its implementation is being thoughtfully linked to staff development and the transition of subject management responsibility. Established assessment strategies are being reviewed as new schemes of work are introduced in order to further add to the reliability of assessment.

Quality assurance procedures ensure a well informed understanding of the standard and provision which is organised so as to enable all pupils to be appropriately engaged in learning. Resources to support the subject are adequate and well used. Good links with parents, local parishes and the diocese support learning. Subject leadership is secure but more rigorous self-evaluation and a clearer vision for the subject as 'the core of the core curriculum' would lead to pupils truly flourishing as a result of their religious education.

Grade 2