



DIOCESE OF
SHREWSBURY

DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT:

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

School: St Paul's Catholic Primary School
Address: Marley Road
Poynton
Stockport
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Headteacher: Mrs N Armstrong-Boyle

Chair of Governors: Mr S Robinson

Date of Inspection: 17 November 2021

Inspectors: Mrs J Johnson
Mrs L Kelly

OUR SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

'Aspire not to have more but to be more.'
(St Oscar Romero)

SCHOOL: St Paul's Catholic Primary School, Poynton

DATE OF LAST INSPECTION: 14th July 2015

JUDGEMENT FROM PREVIOUS INSPECTION: Outstanding

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT FROM PREVIOUS INSPECTION

No areas for development were identified in the previous inspection.

Although there were no areas identified for improvement at the last inspection, the school leadership team has continued to identify in the Religious Education Action Plan and the School Development Plan (SDP) areas they wish to address each year including these for 21-22:

- Child-led Prayer, including Liturgical Prayer - particularly post Covid lockdown
- Assessment - the transition away from Levels to Age Related Expectations in Religious Education
- Cross-curricular links - developing Catholic Social Teaching through other curriculum areas

PROGRESS MADE WITH AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT FROM THE PREVIOUS INSPECTION

- During the school closures due to the pandemic, the school worked extremely hard to model Collective Worship for pupils and their families, by filming senior leaders delivering high quality Collective Worship at home, and publishing these on the school's website. Pupils, at an age-appropriate level, are able to contribute to the planning of Liturgical Prayer, and deliver it with pride and reverence.
- School is currently using the 'I can' statements with consistency throughout the school, and is aware of the expectation to transition to Age Related Expectations in due course.
- School is enriching the curriculum with a wide range of opportunities which take into account the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, including caring for our common home and the dignity of every human being.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS: how effective is the school in providing Catholic Education.

1

This is an outstanding Catholic school

The above judgement on overall effectiveness is based on all the available evidence following the evaluation of:

CATHOLIC LIFE

1

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

1

Summary of key findings:

- St Paul's is an outstanding Catholic School where pupils fully appreciate, value and actively participate in the Catholic life and mission of the school.
- St Paul's is a small school, with a large heart - this phrase was first said by a pupil, but it is undoubtedly true. All members of the school community recognise and acknowledge the love and care shown for and by each other.
- The school's Mission Statement of 'Aspire not to have more, but to be more' is fully understood by everyone associated with the school, and it is at the heart of every decision the school makes.
- Pupils are ambassadors of their mission 'Aspire not to have more, but to be more'. On the day of inspection, children knew their mission and fully understood how their actions are to be like Jesus and follow in his footsteps.
- The sense of family and community in the school is tangible.
- Relationships, at all levels, are a strength of the school.
- The Head Teacher, supported by the two Deputy Headteachers who are also the Religious Education Coordinators, through witness to their personal faith, provide outstanding leadership.
- The school's leaders and governors are deeply committed to, and passionate about, the Church's mission in education.
- The school works in close partnership with the Parish of St Paul's and is very well supported by the Parish Priest.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, and as one parent put it, the family feel 'truly blessed to be a part of this truly special school'. Another wrote, 'St Paul's is more than a school - it is a Christ-centred faith community in action'.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- To ensure that rigorous monitoring and evaluation systems are in place so that leaders, at all levels, can bring about well-targeted improvements to further enhance the Catholic Life of the school, its Religious Education and its Collective Worship.
- To undertake and disseminate further Professional Development to engage with the new Prayer and Liturgy Directory, and the new Religious Education Curriculum Directory.

Information about the Inspection

The Inspection of St Paul's Catholic Primary School was carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Shrewsbury Diocesan Framework and Schedule for Denominational Inspections approved by the Bishop of Shrewsbury. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation and the inspection schedule follows the criteria set by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA 2017).

The inspector reviewed in detail the following aspects:

- 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 pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education
- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship
- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education, Collective Worship and the Catholic Life of the school

The inspection was carried out by two inspectors over one day:

- The Inspectors observed teaching and learning in the four classes.
- Two Acts of Collective Worship were observed: 'Wednesday Word' Collective Worship in the hall, led by the Headteacher, and Collective Worship planned and delivered by Y3 pupils, in the hall.
- Discussions were held with the Headteacher, the two Religious Education Coordinators, who are also the Deputy Headteachers, the Parish Priest, the CEO of the Multi-Academy Trust, the Chair of Governors, the RE link governor, two other governors, a group of pupils, and 8 members of staff (support staff, teaching support staff, teachers and senior leaders).
- A sample of pupils' Religious Education workbooks was scrutinised from every class from the current school year, and the previous school year, along with the folders evidencing the school's Catholic Life, Collective Worship, and pupils' individual prayer books.
- RE Coordinators' files, the Headteacher's reports to governors and minutes of governing body meetings were also scrutinized.
- Pupil, parent and staff questionnaires were reviewed, as well as ten letters from parents.
- A range of documents was made available and scrutinised including the Diocesan Self Evaluation Form (DSEF), the Religious Education Action Plan which is within the School Improvement Plan and a range of school policies.
- The school's website was checked for further evidence.
- Displays around the school and in classrooms were also noted.

Information about this school

- St Paul's Catholic Primary School is a smaller than average primary school, which is made up of 4 mixed-age classes. It joined the Holy Family of Nazareth Catholic Academy Trust in 2015. There are currently 113 pupils on roll, 50% of whom are baptised Catholics.
- The school serves the parish of St Paul's, Poynton.
- The leadership team is established and stable, and two teachers share the role of Deputy Headteacher.
- The headteacher has a 0.3 teaching commitment, and whilst staffing is extremely stable, there is only one full time teacher. This means that three of the four classes are job shares. There are the equivalent of 4.9 full time teachers in the school.
- Out of the seven teachers in the school, five of them are Catholic.
- Three teachers hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS) qualification, and two are currently undertaking it.
- Cohort stability is low, in that there are a high number of in-year admissions to the school.
- The percentage of pupils with SEND is high and is above the national average.

Full report – inspection judgments

CATHOLIC LIFE

The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding

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 governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school	1

- The school's Mission Statement of 'Aspire not to have more, but to be more' is at the heart of every decision made by the school and is a clear and inspiring expression of the educational mission of the Church. It is regularly reviewed, and all involved renew their commitment to the school's vision and values of Respect, Honourable Purpose, Stewardship, Compassion and Cooperation.
- Pupils are able to articulate the Mission Statement and have a deep understanding of what it means. When asked, one Y6 pupil said that it means that 'you don't need to be rich in things, but rich in love'.
- The dedicated Headteacher and Religious Education Coordinators, the Parish Priest and governors are all deeply committed to the Catholic Life of the school and give daily witness through their welcome, care, concern and support for all involved with the school.
- Parents fully appreciate the impact the school's Catholic Life has on their children. This is reflected in the high number of responses received from the parental questionnaire, and also the detailed letters from parents received by the Inspection team (40 responses to the questionnaire were made, as well as 10 letters, out of 83 families in the school). As one parent wrote, 'Our son shares the school Mission Statement with us often, and he is continuing to aspire to 'be more' and to be the best version of himself he can be'. Another wrote, 'The values and beliefs that the school instils in the children will carry them far in life and supports them to be community spirited with care for themselves and others'.
- The behaviour of pupils is exemplary, and pupils show deep respect and care for each other, reflecting the school's commitment to its Catholic ethos in proportion to their years, they show an ability to listen, to give thanks, to forgive and be forgiven.
- The school environment is rich in its mission and identity through the many concrete and effective signs of the school's distinctive Catholic character.
- Pupils take full advantage of the many opportunities the school provides for their personal support and development. As a result, they are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of physical, emotional and spiritual growth.
- Several times during the Inspection, Inspectors were told by pupils new to the school that they had been welcomed by staff and pupils, and that they feel very happy in the school. This was validated in the letters from parents, particularly from parents of pupils who have additional needs, who say that their children have been nurtured by the school and are now thriving in it. One new pupil stated, 'I have never felt so confident. You can connect with the teachers and tell them anything. They welcome you. It feels like home'.
- During the recent pandemic school staff were at great pains to continue to interact with pupils and their families through their use of online assemblies, Religious Education lessons, and social media, including updating the school website, to share prayers,

reflections and ideas for activities such as prayer spaces at home. The parental questionnaire responses are evidence that this was greatly valued by families.

- The school has strong links with the parish of St Paul's, and the Parish Priest being a frequent visitor to school, knows the school very well. School staff play a major part in supporting the work of the parish, including one of the Religious Education Coordinators being a member of the Parish Liturgy Team, supporting the Sacramental Programme and these are much appreciated by parishioners.
- School staff are rightly proud to work at St Paul's, and they are united in their view that St Paul's is a special place, where relationships flourish, and where pupils are given the best pastoral care possible - as one staff member said, 'It's who we are'.
- Pupils appreciate and embrace membership of the school community. They recognise that they are part of the school's family, and they understand and celebrate the differences between each other. They know to follow Jesus and to treat each other how they would want to be treated.
- Pupils readily take on a wide range of roles and responsibilities in the school, such as the GIFT (Growing in Faith Together) Team, Mini Vinnies, Buddies, Eco Warriors, SAS Team (Safe at School), and they relish the chance to make a difference in their school and beyond.
- Pupils have a strong sense of justice, and a social conscience, and they are developing their understanding of Catholic Social Teaching. They are proud of their work for CAFOD and the Wellspring Charity, amongst others.
- School leaders and governors ensure that Diocesan policies and initiatives are implemented fully, and they attend relevant Diocesan events and CPD as well as engage with the Holy Family of Nazareth MAT, and the All Hallows Learning Community.
- Following consultations with parents, and CPD for all staff, leaders and governors have implemented the scheme 'Life to the Full' for teaching Relationships and Sex Education. This is supplemented by the Jigsaw scheme, which the school has adapted to reflect its Catholic ethos.
- Pupils have responded well to the RSE curriculum provided by the school and, appropriate to their age and ability, have a good understanding of loving relationships within a Christian context.
- School leaders, governors and staff all contributed to the completion of the self-evaluation form in preparation for the Inspection, which reflects the collaborative approach taken by the school.
- School leaders keep governors well informed about the Catholic Life of the school, but as yet, there is not a robust system in place to monitor and evaluate the school's Catholic Life.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious Education is outstanding

1

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	1
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	1

- The school's website clearly celebrates the school's work in delivering high quality Religious Education throughout the school, including during the recent school closures due to the pandemic.
- Outcomes in Religious Education are high at the end of the three Key Stages in the school.
- Almost all pupils are actively engaged in their Religious Education lessons and all pupils who were asked, said that they enjoy their learning in the subject. In the Parental questionnaire, and in the letters received, a number of parents commented on the fact that their children were enthusiastic about their lessons, and readily talked with them about their learning in Religious Education.
- Almost all pupils make good or better progress in Religious Education, and this is reflected in the high standards they display in discussions and in their books. Pupils with additional needs are fully included and actively involved in Religious Education lessons, thanks to the adaptations made by teachers and the skillful support from teaching assistants. They are given appropriate support and challenge to help them develop and achieve well.
- Teaching is effective and in all the lessons observed, teaching was at least good, and some were outstanding. Because of the size of the school, all classes were observed. In the best lessons, teachers had high expectations, and pupils were actively engaged in a variety of activities that supported them and encouraged them in developing their thinking and extending their learning.
- In outstanding lessons observed on the day of inspection, every opportunity was provided to ensure children understood, explored and acquired new learning. For instance, in the Reception class, this was achieved through guided role-play, independent gross, fine motor skills and creative activities. Key workers effectively questioned children throughout their activities.
- The behaviour of pupils throughout the Inspection was outstanding and this means that lessons were never interrupted and could move at a fast pace.
- Pupils are rarely off task in Religious Education lessons, and they are able to work extremely well independently, as well as collaboratively. This means that teachers can be ambitious in their planning, and in the best lessons seen, teachers are able to take risks and be creative and innovative in their approach. Teachers are also confident in their subject knowledge in Religious Education, and are able to adapt lessons when necessary.
- Pupils are articulate and show an impressive commitment to seeing their faith as a living and prayerful reality. They welcome the wide range of opportunities offered by the school to take on leadership roles, and they actively seek to support those in need.

- Pupils are able to make links from what they learn in their lessons to what they hear and experience in the school's provision for Collective Worship and the Catholic Life of the school.
- Pupils are well aware of the school's marking policy, and older pupils are able to explain how they know when they have done well in their Religious Education lessons, and what they need to do to improve.
- Although approximately only half of the pupils in the school are Baptised Catholics, all pupils approach their Religious Education lessons with interest and enthusiasm.
- The Religious Education Link Governor is a frequent visitor to the school, and she gives regular updates to the Governing Body about what she has observed or experienced in the school.
- The school has a consistent approach to the teaching of RSE and, after consultation, is using 'Life to the Full' as their scheme. This has been very well received by staff, parents and pupils alike. The RSE Coordinator is fully committed to ensuring that RSE is taught in line with the Catholic faith.
- Although there has been a Religious Education monitoring and evaluation programme in place prior to and during the pandemic, it is not rigorous or frequent enough for leaders and governors to be able to carry searching analyses which would result in outcomes being even higher.
- Leaders and governors fully comply with the Bishops' Conference Requirements and Religious Education is well resourced to support the high priority given to it. At least 10% is clearly identified in the timetable dedicated to specific Religious Education teaching in the three key stages in the school.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Collective Worship is outstanding.

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 governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	1

- The quality of Collective Worship in the school is outstanding, and is central to the life and work of the school, for pupils, staff, parents and the wider community.
- During the recent school closures due to the pandemic, the school went to great lengths to provide online Collective Worship for pupils and their families, both 'live' and recorded, by the Headteacher and the two Religious Education Coordinators. One of the Religious Education Coordinators, along with her family, provided a number of recordings of hymns, which she and her husband played instruments for, and her two children sang along, and signed the words, which also appeared on the screen. These were much appreciated by families.
- School celebrates 'The Wednesday Word' each week, and makes this a family celebration which is cherished by the pupils and their families, as well as by the staff. As one grandparent said, 'Wednesday Word is a profound experience, which explores faith, spirituality and gently shows the children and parents/grandparents, how to treat each other with kindness, thoughtfulness, friendship and respect'. Due to the pandemic, it has not been celebrated in the usual way, and this has been a great source of disappointment to all.
- Parental responses show great appreciation for the opportunities offered by the school for parents' involvement in Collective Worship, particularly during the pandemic, and a number commented that they were looking forward to a time when the school community can come together to worship again.
- Inclusion is at the heart of St Paul's School, and this is indeed true of Collective Worship. As one parent said, the Wednesday Word is 'a glorious, inclusive celebration', and families who are not practising Catholics recognise the significant impact of the school's provision. One parent said that her children have asked to start praying as a family, and her son wants 'to be closer to the God he believes in'.
- The deeply committed Headteacher and two Religious Education Coordinators are visible as leaders of Collective Worship in the school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the Church's Liturgical Year, seasons and feast days and this was evident in many high-quality displays in the classrooms, in communal areas, and on the school's website.
- Pupils, in line with their age and ability, have a good understanding of prayer and worship, and are proud to take on responsibilities for planning and leading Collective Worship in their classes.
- Even in the Reception class, pupils are involved in preparing for Collective Worship. They are encouraged to choose appropriate religious artefacts for their prayer focus and as they progress through the school, to choose readings, symbolic actions and the Mission. By the time the pupils are at the end of Key Stage 2, they are planning and leading Collective

Worship with confidence. Older pupils also have opportunities to write their own prayers and keep these in a special book.

- The GIFT team also plans and leads voluntary prayer sessions for the pupils, although this has been curtailed somewhat due to the pandemic.
- School has built up a range of quality resources to enhance Collective Worship in the classes, and these are used effectively throughout the school.
- Pupils in the school love to sing in praise of God, and joyfully join in communal hymn singing, including signing. This is a strength of the school.
- During the two Acts of Collective Worship observed, behaviour of pupils was excellent, and pupils were fully engaged. Pupils were reverent and respectful, and they made thoughtful and prayerful responses.
- Pupils have a deep respect for those of other faiths, and older pupils have a profound regard for and understanding of difference.
- Leaders and governors give a high priority to the professional development of staff in relation to Collective Worship, and the school engages extremely well with the opportunities provided by the Diocese and through the Holy Family of Nazareth MAT.
- Although the Collective Worship provision at the school is outstanding, there is not yet a robust system for monitoring and evaluating Collective Worship in the school. This means that Leaders and Governors do not make regular reviews of the school's performance in relation to Collective Worship.