



Archdiocese of Birmingham

INSPECTION REPORT

ST PAUL'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL KINGS NORTON, BIRMINGHAM

Inspection dates 8th - 9th May 2012
Reporting Inspector Brenda Beale

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3-11 years
Number on roll	188
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Rev Stefan Laszczyk
School address	Sisefield Road Kings Norton Birmingham B38 9JB
Telephone number	0121 464 1546
E-mail address	m.daniels@stpaulrc.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	February 2007
DFE School number	330 3366
Unique Reference Number	103457

Headteacher Mrs Mary Daniels

DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



Evidence

The inspection was carried out by 1 Diocesan Inspector. The focus of the inspection was on the effectiveness and use of the school's self evaluation of religious education (RE) and Catholic life. To validate the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation of teaching and learning, the inspector observed 3 full RE lessons, 1 with the headteacher. In addition the inspector completed a work scrutiny and held a discussion with pupils to evaluate the impact of teaching on their learning over time. She held meetings with the chair of governors, staff, and parish priest. She observed a prayer service and undertook a learning walk to look at aspects of learning and teaching in RE, the presentation of the Catholic life of the school, and pupils' behaviour. She looked at a range of evidence related to the school's self evaluation such as RAISEonline, the development plan, teachers' planning, and learning walks. Alongside the validation of school self evaluation, the inspector gathered evidence about assessment, evidence which will be shared with other diocesan schools.

Information about the school

St Paul's is a one form entry Catholic primary school serving the parish of St Paul in Kings Norton. The school is in an area of high social deprivation. The number of Catholic pupils is currently 28%. The proportion of ethnic minority pupils is 25% but increasing, with 50% of pupils in reception coming from ethnic minority groups. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is high (70%). The proportion of pupils having special needs and/or disabilities is average but an above average number of pupils have emotional/behavioural needs. Attainment on entry is well below expected standards

Main Finding

In its self evaluation St Paul's judges itself to be a good school and highlights some outstanding practice. In its Catholic life, collective worship and progress in RE its judgements are fully justified. This is also true of the school's judgement that the spiritual and moral development of the pupils is good and at times outstanding. The school recognises that whilst progress is good, attainment is satisfactory. A real strength of the school is the ability of the headteacher and her senior leadership team to rigorously monitor, evaluate and plan for development. Underpinning all review and planning in the school is the headteacher's belief that 'It is not where the children come from, it's where we can get them to that matters'. The parish priest who is also the chair of governors is very committed to the school and takes an active role in the monitoring and evaluation of the Catholic life of the school. The children and their families hold the school, its Catholic life and RE in high regard.

School self evaluation

The strength of school evaluation rests in the senior leadership's intimate knowledge of the Catholic life and RE in the school. Review cycles are tight and thorough. The collection of evidence is extensive and ongoing and this is fed into an annual review which informs the following year's development plan. This is driven forward by the headteacher and a highly committed and enthusiastic RE subject leader. Evidence for evaluation is gathered through learning walks, pupil and parent/carer questionnaires about RE, sacramental programmes and the Catholic life of the school. Book trawls, well established assessment procedures, lesson observations focussing on pupil learning and regular visits to the classrooms by the headteacher all feed into the monitoring and evaluation process. Pupils, staff and the chair of

governors are also involved in this process. Evaluation is accurately summarised in an annual review document which informs highly focussed action plans.

The school judges that pupil attainment is satisfactory with some being good but that progress is good. It bases these judgements on baseline and thorough assessment procedures. To promote improvement the headteacher has identified the need for greater differentiation, particularly for the more able pupils. This has translated into a tendency to rely on extension activities rather than providing more challenging tasks from the start of the lesson. Lesson observations focus not only on teaching but also on outcomes for pupils and judgements about teaching are informed by pupil progress over time. Lesson feedback also involves developmental advice for improvement. Pupil questionnaires and discussion indicate that pupils not only have knowledge of the Faith but are also able to reflect on the meaning of the things that they learn in RE has on their own lives.

There is a thematic curriculum but RE is carefully evaluated and remains a discrete subject, given the correct allocation of time and coverage of all units in the scheme. Leadership correctly judges that the school's thematic curriculum is developing skills across all areas including RE. This was exemplified by a Year 3 pupil, when listening to the story of the calling of Samuel, commented that he could see a pattern. 'Samuel was called *three times* just as Peter said he did not know Christ *three times* and Jesus asked "Do you love me?" *three times* at the 'picnic'. The school self evaluation rightly judges that due to the very low attainment on entry the curriculum has needed to be adapted to meet the pupils' needs.

In view of the quality of school self evaluation and the effective measures which the leadership has put in place since the last inspection, the capacity for improvement in both Catholic life and religious education is good. The headteacher and her leadership team have the confidence of the staff that is committed to implementing measures that will ensure improving outcomes for all pupils. Governors monitor through presentations, first hand observation and the headteacher's reports to governors. Thus they are well informed and able to validate the judgements made by the senior leadership team and are both supportive and challenging in the school's determination to secure improvement.

Overall effectiveness of the school¹

There is very good work to be found in the books of all year groups. In a couple of classes the work has improved considerably in quality and quantity as the year has progressed. In Key Stage 1 progress is very good but, because on entry children's attainment is exceptionally low, at the end of that key stage their attainment is satisfactory. In Key Stage 2 pupil progress continues to be good and in some instances is outstanding thus attainment continues to be satisfactory with evidence of some very good attainment. Pupils demonstrate excellent bible skills. Pupils are fully engaged in their learning and enjoy RE lessons. Their behaviour in lessons is excellent.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and vocational development is very good. Pupils demonstrate good values and respect each other in school and they have a good understanding of forgiveness. A strong pastoral team provides support and guidance, based on Christian values, for pupils and their families. Pupils respond well to the support they receive. The pupils live out their vocational calling 'to be the best that God has called them to be' in school but because of hard pressed circumstances some find it

¹ As the quality of the school self evaluation has been affirmed, the judgements in this section of the report conform to those of the school.

difficult to carry this into their lives at home. The pupils' understanding of the importance of religion to other people is demonstrated by their reverence and respect during Mass, prayer services and their engagement with visits and visitors from other cultures. The children's response and participation in collective worship is very good. They help to lead collective worship but as yet are not fully involved in its planning. They pray well, are familiar with different types of prayer and have knowledge of a range of formal prayers which increases with their experience and age.

Provision is good with some aspects of teaching being outstanding which encourages effective learning and an enjoyment of the subject. New and none Catholic teachers are well supported by the subject leader and other members of staff. Planning is thorough and adjusted to meet the needs of those pupils with emotional or special educational needs or disabilities. Indeed it is some of the most vulnerable pupils who benefit most from RE and the Catholic life of the school. Provision of collective worship is very good and the children sing enthusiastically and joyfully but younger pupils would benefit by having better access to the words of the hymns. The older children use hymn books with skill and little fuss. The effective monitoring and evaluation of worship in the school has led to improvement with all members of staff delivering weekly prayer services.

St Paul's is a good Catholic school, in which all pupils benefit from the rich spiritual and moral values that permeate all aspects of school life. Religious education is good and pupils thrive in the secure happy environment of this school.

Recommendations

Improve provision of differentiated approaches in RE particularly to challenge more able pupils rather than relying on extension activities.

Develop the prayer life of the school by developing the ability and confidence of the children, in all year groups, to plan and lead collective worship.

Seek ways to promote the school's excellent spiritual and moral values into the home lives of those children, particularly those who come from hard pressed backgrounds.



Diocesan Education Service,
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14th May 2012

Dear Parents and Carers

**Section 48 (Diocesan) Inspection of St Paul's Catholic Primary School, Kings Norton
8th- 9th May 2012**

I am writing this letter to share with you the findings of the diocesan inspection of your children's school. Diocesan inspection now explores in detail the school's own view of itself as expressed in its self-evaluation. For this reason, much of the report is more technical than used to be the case. You are still entitled to have a copy of the full report should you want one and it will be available on the school website or by request from the school office.

The school judged itself to be good in its Catholic life and Religious Education (RE). The inspection found that this judgement is fully justified because:

- Your children thrive in the school's secure and happy Christian environment
- Children achieve satisfactorily but make good and, at times, outstanding progress in RE. This is because teaching is always at least good and sometimes outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour and care for each other are excellent and reflect Christian values and teaching.
- Children respond very well to the collective worship they help to provide.
- RE and the Catholic life are effectively led by the headteacher and RE subject leader
- Children do well because they enjoy their learning in RE.

We have recommended that the school should develop additional ways of providing challenge for the more able children in their RE tasks and activities. We would like the school to further enhance its prayer life by developing the ability and confidence of the children, in all year groups, to plan and lead collective worship.

Your children's contribution to the very good Catholic and prayer life of the school is excellent. Throughout the inspection they were welcoming, very well behaved and able to share their knowledge confidently. They quite rightly enjoy and are proud of their school. We thank you for the part you play in supporting your children on their journey of faith.

Yours sincerely

Brenda Beale
Diocesan Inspector