



DIOCESE OF PLYMOUTH

INSPECTION REPORT

St Paul's Catholic Primary School

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URN: 140676

Headteacher: D Potterton
Acting Chair of Governors: K Turvey

This report to the Bishop of the Diocese under Canon 806 of the Code of Canon Law is also the report to the governors of the school on religious education. For Catholic maintained schools, the report also fulfils the requirements of Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

Date of inspection: 23 June 2022
Date of previous inspection: June 2015

Reporting Inspector: D Summers-Breeze
Additional Inspector: P Cotter

Description of school

St Paul's is a smaller than average primary school situated in St Budeaux in Plymouth. There are 158 pupils on roll with a high proportion of Pupil Premium pupils at 51%. There are currently 31% Catholic attending the school and 27% are pupils with SEND.

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school (summary statement)

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This is an outstanding school because:

- The whole school community demonstrates a commitment to the Mission Statement where all that is done is done in love. There is an intense sense of family community that cares for each other, seeking the best for all, at all times. There is a clear emphasis on Catholic Social Teaching which provides a focus for the curriculum as well as enriching spiritual and moral development through charity support and care for the environment. The Headteacher provides strong leadership with a clear vision which is shared in a sensitive and timely manner, to ensure that all are taken along on the school's journey. Pupils are happy, confident, and polite. They appreciate the opportunities offered to them and understand their duty to help others. RE is well led and managed with RE teaching being good to outstanding in all lessons which leads to pupils making good progress in RE. The parents speak highly of the school and there are many links with the parish, with the parish priest being involved in supporting staff and dropping in to see the pupils. Staff say they feel 'blessed' to be part of the St Paul's community.

The capacity of the school community to improve and develop is?

- With strong leadership in place the school has the capacity to improve and develop further. The Headteacher and the RE Lead (who also leads on the Catholic life of the school and collective worship) are aware of where they would like to take the school further on their journey of improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide opportunities for all pupils to plan and deliver Collective Worship by:

Giving the Chaplaincy Team even more opportunities to present their liturgies to the whole school to provide role models for others. Likewise giving other students the opportunity to plan and lead class liturgies will strengthen the collective worship even further.

- Identifying and providing an RE curriculum that will support more Greater Depth achievement by;

Continuing training staff in RE assessment that will support them in providing more challenge for Greater Depth pupils.

- Ensuring consistent teaching across all classes in RE by:

Continuing to share the good practice that already exists in the school; planning jointly for each unit; team teaching

a) The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school

This is an inclusive community and pupils feel a strong sense of belonging. They understand and fully participate in their Mission Statement and their commitment to Catholic Social Teaching. Pupils are enthusiastic to show their care and concern for others and the environment through their fundraising for different charities including Jeremiah's journey, the Poppy Appeal and the CAFOD Ukraine appeal. The School Council have voted to prioritise the litter picking that began with the 'Clean our Patch' project.

The Chaplaincy Team plan and lead liturgies in classes and, participating in charity work, they see the link of walking in Jesus' footsteps and the school's Mission Statement. They enjoy leading prayer in front of classes and the whole school. They are able to name Catholic values and can give examples of how they can live them out each day for example, thinking about and helping other.

Pupils are aware that others have different needs and that 'some people need more attention', they embrace this and understand a need to walk alongside to support them, whether that is writing letters, raising money or praying for them.

B) The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school

The school's mission statement was revisited earlier in the year and pupils were able to engage with artwork bring it to life for them, so that it was clearly understood. The mission statement is visible around the school, and it is evident that it drives the school with the whole school community buying into it. The steer and direction of the Headteacher and RE Lead have been key to this.

Relationships between pupils is exemplary, showing respect and kindness to all, and support for each other in the classroom.

Pupil's behaviour around the school and in class is outstanding. They are polite and respectful. They show reverence when going into and during collective worship, including the most vulnerable who are supported to access all forms of worship.

Expectations are high and clear. Staff provide excellent role models in the way they treat each other and visitors to the school.

The school provides a learning environment with a sense of purpose. The displays are high quality reminding the pupils of the mission statement and the many ways that they act this out daily.

The school has taken time to identify those with additional needs and to ensure that they provide for them. This has led to the appointments of specific members of staff such as a Learning Mentor and a PSA to ensure that all needs are met. Wellbeing is an agenda item for Key Stage meetings and a priority for the SLT. Staff feel well supported by leaders. There is a culture of looking after each other. Sensitive conversations ensure the dignity of all is valued.

The school has fully committed to Catholic Social Teaching (CST) and is working on embedding it throughout the curriculum. Training has been given to subject leads so that they can identify where CST fits into their subject, for example, in geography a class has been working on plastic pollution and in PE they have been working on sportsmanship values.

The school follows the 'Life to the full' programme for Relationships and Sex Education which has been directed by the Bishop, and therefore reflects Catholic principles. Details of the scheme has been shared with parents. The school follows their MAT policy for RSHE.

b) How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school

The Headteacher, RE Lead and link Governor for RE and Catholic life provide strong, effective leadership ensuring that the Catholic Life of the school is monitored and evaluated throughout the year. They see promoting the Catholic life of the school as a core leadership responsibility and all 3 are involved in reviewing the DSEF. The Headteacher has a clear vision and is dedicated and resilient in making sure the culture and vision are shared with all. Through her detailed approach, the headteacher ensures that the whole school community are clear on expectations, that they are all on board and that they are followed determinedly. Governors offer appropriate support and challenge.

All teaching staff are expected to plan and lead the assembly on the Gospel each week and this has been modelled and demonstrated by the Headteacher and the RE

Lead who have provided good role models. The staff provide good role models for the pupils by fundraising for a charity of their own choice. Staff appreciate the support they receive from each other, and from the RE Lead who is highly supportive in RE, Catholic life and collective worship.

The RE and PSHE curriculum has been amended to fit the context of the school but ensuring equality with pupils from other areas, to provide a level of spiritual and moral development for the pupils that is appropriate for them. Trauma informed practice training for staff has helped to build relationships with pupils in a sensitive manner. Pupils commented that 'when people are angry, we are helped to calm down'. The pupils Code of Conduct is driven by 'show love for one another'. This is visible throughout the school.

The Headteacher values her own formation and has ensured that this has continued to be developed through the Aspiring Leaders programme led by CAST and the National School of Formation (funded by the diocese). She is an excellent role model for the whole school community.

The school is clear on how it would like to improve the Catholic life of the school and it is evident that actions are taking place towards their goals, for example, the school has recently been successful in gaining funding to build a school chapel.

The school follows diocesan directives and frameworks, and diocesan training is attended by leaders, Governors, and staff.

a) How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

The percentage of pupils making expected progress in RE is in line with writing across the school. Groups of pupils with additional needs are well-supported to access the RE curriculum using a variety of strategies including visual aids and scribes. This ensures that, from their varying starting points, all pupils are able to achieve in RE.

Pupils' attitudes to their learning in RE are consistently positive and have a good impact on the progress they make. They enjoy their lessons and participate with enthusiasm and can link their learning to their daily life. Pupils are confident and articulate in expressing their knowledge of Bible stories and their meaning. They listen well in lesson to the teacher and to each other and can make comment on others' contributions in an appropriate and sensitive manner. Oracy skills are good.

Teachers are not afraid to promote challenging vocabulary from an early age, such as forgiveness, anxious, jealous in the early years when looking at the Prodigal Son story, contrition and conscience in Y4, and naming and explaining the sacraments in Y6, and expressions such as 'anointing'.

b) The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education

Where teaching is strongest pupils were highly engaged, curious and eager to learn, subject knowledge is excellent and use of additional staff was appropriate, questioning was of a high-quality giving pupils' opportunities to show their knowledge and understanding of scripture and its links to daily life today. However, there are classes where additional staff were not well used, questioning not probing enough and expectations not high enough to enable pupils to move on in their learning appropriate to their year group.

Most lessons are well-planned with high quality resources being used. Questioning in most classes is of an extremely high quality with probing follow-ups to ensure pupils can articulate their learning and think more deeply, however this is not the case in all classes. Engagement of pupils is high and they feel secure in their environment to speak out and not worry about making mistakes ('we love our mistakes'). There is an increased confidence in teaching RE due to the support of the RE Lead.

Feedback to pupils in books is consistent across the school and expectations are clear. When questions were used to move the children on in their learning this was strong, however this was not seen across the school. RE is assessed 3 times a year, and progression is evident in the books.

Teachers are aware of the impact RE has on the spiritual and moral development of pupils and this is reflected in the AT 2 elements of the RE curriculum.

c) How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

Following a scheme directed by the Bishop ensures that the RE curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. The required amount of curriculum time is given to RE, and it has parity with other subjects.

Leaders ensure that staff receive training that is appropriate to their needs and role in the school. The RE Lead's vision for RE is clear and inspiring, she has created highly effective support structures and models best practice. To ensure progression for all pupils and quality of teaching, RE is monitored and evaluated throughout the year by the RE Lead, through lesson observations, pupil conferencing and book looks. The RE link Governor also monitors RE within the school. An annual RE report is presented to the Governors. The RE Lead holds staff to account and will follow up issues in an appropriate timeframe and in a supportive manner. The RE Lead has received a prominent level of training and development and provides training for others. She is highly respected by the staff and they appreciate the high level of support and challenge she provides.

There is an RE Action Plan in place which drives improvements across the school. Actions towards these goals are evident across the school, such as work towards the CAFOD Live Simply Award, and embedding Gospel values throughout the school.

a) How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship

All pupils fully engage in collective worship. They show reverence and their behaviour as they enter the hall and throughout is exemplary. They enjoy the opportunity to come together, sing and pray together. The Chaplaincy Team love planning and delivering collective worship in classes. KS2 attend Mass in the Church regularly and enjoy taking part in the parish Mass. KS1 pupils will visit the Church where the Parish Priest will light a candle and talk to them about their prayer intentions before praying with them.

The Chaplaincy Team has been given training to plan and deliver class liturgies, which they really enjoy and feel that they are contributing to the development of others' relationship with God and knowledge of Bible stories. Others have the opportunity to deliver and lead the liturgy and prayer that are planned by staff, there are no opportunities for them to plan these for themselves.

Prayer journals give pupils the opportunity to reflect on their spiritual journey. Classes use the Examen to reflect on how the day went, Pupils enjoy having time for themselves and find it calming.

b) The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

Collective worship is well planned over the year to reflect the liturgical season, for example the month of May was celebrated with a Crowning of Mary service, and pupils had the opportunity to pray using the Rosary in October. Pupils pray throughout the day in class. Each classroom has a prayer/reflection table which supports the prayer life of the class and reflects the liturgical season.

High quality collective worship is planned, following the example set by the headteacher and the RE Lead to ensure that it is relevant and accessible for pupils, for example, promoting Greta Thunberg as an excellent role model for the pupils to show that people of all ages can make a difference.

There are displays around the school to support the prayer life and pupils are able to say why artefacts such as a candle, the Bible, a cross are important to have on a focal area.

Pupils show good knowledge and understanding of the importance of Mass by their reverent behaviour and the contributions they make. This has been taught by the RE Lead.

c) How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the prayer life of the school.

For the Headteacher and the RE Lead ensuring that quality collective worship was driven by the Gospel being embedded within the school, was a priority that they identified early on. Leaders, governors, and staff have a clear understanding of quality collective worship. They have spent time modelling and training staff so that there is a consistent approach. The expectation that all staff attend Monday assemblies provides an opportunity for all to share good practice and learn from each other leading to a high standard. From this the prayer life and the Catholic life of the school have flourished, leading to it permeating all aspects of school life.

There is an effective staff induction into the prayer life of the school in place and the modelling and support available is valued. As a result, staff understand and embrace the centrality of prayer in the life of the school.

The RE/Catholic life link governor regularly attends assemblies on a Monday and Mass on a Tuesday and other liturgies across the year showing an active commitment to supporting the prayer life of the school.

Summary of Parental Questionnaires

There were 42 parental questionnaires received. 41 were extremely positive about the school. There were a number (13) that expressed that they were unaware of what is taught in RSE, and just a few (6) that felt they weren't informed about their child's progress in RE.

Comments made by parents:

Strong RE leadership

Good sense of community

Parents very welcome

The genuine faith shown and taught to the children, it is not just lip service, it is very authentic. Children are exceptionally well behaved.

The school puts God in the centre of daily school activities and teaches the children values/morals for life.
