



St Paul's RC Primary School

South Road, Alnwick, Northumberland, NE66 2NU

School Unique Reference Number: **122305**

Inspection dates: 18 – 19 June 2018
Lead inspector: Mr Martin Humble

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Catholic Life:		Outstanding	1
Collective Worship:		Good	2
Religious Education:		Good	2

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Paul's RC Primary School is a good Catholic school because:

- Catholic ethos and faith are central to the school with a shared commitment to celebrating the achievement of all. High expectations, dedicated staff, effective teamwork and a strong sense of community underpin all aspects of the school's work.
- Collective Worship is good and is centred on clear themes and messages. Pupils act with reverence and respect.
- The headteacher is highly motivated and aspirational for all of the pupils and staff. She has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and works tirelessly to improve provision at all levels.
- Religious Education is good. The pupils make good progress and make thoughtful contributions in lessons.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- In Collective Worship there are limited opportunities for pupils to plan and deliver worship independently.
- Some acts of worship lack creativity and pupils should experience acts of worship in a variety of forms and dimensions.
- Monitoring and evaluation procedures are relatively new to school policy and are not firmly embedded.
- There are inconsistencies in the level of challenge for more able pupils

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Paul's is a smaller than average primary school set in the historic market town of Alnwick.
- St Paul's is in its first year as a complete primary school (cohorts from reception to year six) having been through the challenges of transferring from a three-tier system to a two tier-system.
- The majority of pupils are white British with a few pupils from eastern european heritage.
- The percentage of pupils with special needs is below average.
- The percentage of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is below the national average.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Develop the provision of Collective Worship further by:
 - increasing the involvement of pupils in planning and leading Collective Worship throughout the school.
 - encouraging creativity and imagination in Collective Worship in all its forms.
- Continue to develop the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that teachers consistently plan tasks which are sufficiently challenging and engaging, especially for more able pupils.
- Continue to develop the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring a consistent approach to recording attainment and progress so pupils are clear on what they need to do to further improve their work.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

1

- 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 leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- The mission statement is central to the life of the school community, there is a deep sense of ownership and full commitment to the Catholic ethos and values intrinsic in their mission of 'Growing in God's Love to be the Best You Can Be'.
- All pupils have a deep sense of belonging and almost all enthusiastically embrace the demands that entails. They, together with staff, parents and governors, are very proud of their reputation in the local community. Pupils are very aware of the needs of others both locally and globally, responding passionately to issues of social injustice through prayer, fundraising activities and service to others.
- Pupils take advantage of the opportunities school provides for their personal and spiritual growth. They care for each other and willingly take on lead roles in the school community as trained buddies and school councillors. Older pupils provide very good role models and command the respect and admiration of younger pupils.
- Relationships with parents, parish and the wider community are excellent, resulting in a variety of activities which improve the school's provision. Pastoral care is outstanding. Parents commented that, 'it's like one big family – very welcoming towards new families'. They appreciate the way staff are, 'always available to help'. As a result, pupils are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of spiritual growth.
- All pupils demonstrate respect and show reverence to the rites and traditions of their faith. They are proud of their religious identity and there is enthusiastic and active involvement in parish and diocesan celebrations. Pupils understand the importance of respect for others, regardless of faith tradition.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- People are at the heart of this nurturing, family community. All are valued and welcomed. Faith is modelled and staff work tirelessly to put the school's inclusive mission into practice. The mission statement is reflected in every aspect of the school's work which has been shaped through the involvement and input of the whole school community.

- The school is a prayerful community and the learning environment reflects the school's mission and celebrates the school's Catholic character with vibrant displays, prayerful spaces and the 'Chapel in the Gym'.
- Policy and practice evidence an explicit commitment to all in society, particularly the most vulnerable and needy. Strong relationships and mutual respect between leadership, staff and parents are a feature of the school. As a result, pastoral care for pupils is outstanding. Parents, governors and staff affirmed this high level of pastoral care, they offered personal and emotional accounts of support they have received.
- Pastoral programmes alongside personal, social education (PSE) and relationships and sex education (RSE) refer to Catholic teachings and principles. These cater for the needs of all pupils with staff playing an active part in delivery to ensure the best possible outcomes for pupils.
- Senior leaders promote the highest standards of moral and ethical behaviour deeply rooted in Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic church. This permeates the school and as a result, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. The ClassDojo is very effective in ensuring good work and behaviour is recognised and rewarded.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- There is a sense of deep commitment of all leaders to the Church's mission. The headteacher and acting deputy headteacher lead by example and act as a source of inspiration to the whole community. They are active and visible in school, parish and community ensuring that pupils are given the best possible experience in order to grow in faith and spirituality.
- School self-evaluation is rigorous and leads to well-planned, targeted improvements. Leaders, including governors, know their school well and during recent challenging times, in relation to school reorganisation, they have continued to give a high priority to the development of Catholic Life. The Catholic ethos is palpable throughout the school and strong leadership together with shared purpose energises all to ensure the best possible outcomes for pupils.
- Staff, particularly those who are new to the school, are very well supported. They are very appreciative of the support given to them as they progress on their personal journey of faith.
- School, home and parish work very closely together. Key representatives are highly visible and well-respected in this inclusive community. The welcoming nature of the school, outstanding pastoral care and effective communication have led to increasing numbers of parents engaging with the school and valuing the Catholic ethos.
- Governors make a significant contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. They are passionate about the school's mission and their role. They are highly visible in school and actively involved in evaluating Catholic Life, ensuring pupils are always at the heart of what they do. They provide appropriate challenge and support to the leadership.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

2

- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.
- The quality of provision for Collective Worship.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

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How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship is good.

- All pupils at St Paul's respond respectfully when participating in Collective Worship in small and larger gatherings. Pupils act with reverence: they sing joyfully, reflect in silence and join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence. They are encouraged to create an atmosphere conducive to prayer, described by one pupil as, 'our time to talk to God and be with God'.
- Dependent upon their age, pupils take on responsibility to plan and prepare Collective Worship, supported by the class teacher. This is done with confidence, enthusiasm and a degree of independence.
- Pupils have a good understanding of religious seasons and feasts and the implication this has for Collective Worship. Starting with the two year old provision, children have the opportunity to pray together during age appropriate worship periods.
- Adults provide good role models for the pupils and contribute significantly to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils.
- Teachers and pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the purpose of worship however pupil involvement in planning and leading is not yet embedded across the school.
- Interest in, and respect for, other faiths was articulated by pupils who enjoy learning about other faiths.
- Pupils participate actively, and with enthusiasm, in the school's sacramental preparation programme following diocesan guidelines.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is good.

- Daily acts of Collective Worship as a school, key stage, or class, show the centrality of prayer to the school community. There are also key opportunities for staff and pupils to pray together in a variety of forms.
- There is a clear policy and planning document for Collective Worship which is centred on clear themes and messages. These are consistent with the season and Catholic character of the school.
- Pupils, staff, parents and governors speak positively about the opportunities to participate in Collective Worship. One parent had commented that it made them feel a part of the school community and provided a focal point for their family in relation to the travelling crib during advent.

- Staff are currently developing skills to help pupils plan and deliver Collective Worship independently, encouraging them to be creative and inspirational, but this is not yet embedded in practice.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- Leaders have a clear vision that Collective Worship is a priority for continued professional development. Staff have benefitted from recent training and are quick to embrace and deliver new initiatives, eager to move forward together.
- The headteacher is highly focused and is committed to promoting greater pupil independence in the planning and leading of Collective Worship. In a short time, pupils have made rapid progress and are assuming greater responsibility with enthusiasm and commitment. This model of good practice is having a very positive impact on all staff and pupils.
- Collective Worship is reviewed as part of the ongoing self-evaluation process. The school has an excellent understanding of its current position and there is a clear commitment to develop provision in this area.
- Leaders are keen to discuss the views of parents and pupils and respond to this in a systematic way. Parents talk appreciatively of the opportunities now available to the pupils believing that they find out about the Gospel values through singing, prayer, contemplation and sharing.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have excellent sacramental preparation, working closely with the parish priest and catechists.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2

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

2

2

2

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is good.

- The quality of learning and progress in Religious Education is good. Most pupils say that they enjoy their learning in Religious Education. They display positive attitudes, applying themselves to independent tasks and take pride in their work. Behaviour in lessons is good with pupils keen to contribute ideas, ask relevant questions and be active learners.
- Overall outcomes for pupils in Religious Education are good. Pupils enter school with knowledge and skills that are typically expected for their age. They make good progress through key stages one and two with attainment broadly in line, or above, diocesan averages. Individual work books indicate that pupils have access to a wide range of activities. Work in books is detailed and generally well presented.
- Pupils make good progress across a range of skills and are developing well in their knowledge and understanding. They are religiously literate and many are very articulate and thoughtful in their responses. They accurately apply their knowledge and relate learning to their own lives.
- Inspection findings and evidence presented by the school shows no notable differences between groups of learners. Pupils identified as having a special educational need make good progress because of differentiated work and targeted support.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is good.

- The majority of teaching is at least good with some outstanding. This was evident both in the lessons observed during inspection and in the scrutiny of pupils' books. Teachers have high expectations and demonstrate good subject knowledge.
- Almost all teaching ensures that pupils are engaged and interested in their learning. Planning is thoughtful and imaginative, producing learning experiences for the pupils which are varied and stimulating. In one lesson pupils were required to produce a role play covering the story of Zacchaeus.
- Where teaching is good, teachers differentiate well and use assessment to inform the planning of future learning but this is not consistent across school. Good use is made of the support given by other adults who are involved in the planning of Religious Education.
- At its best, marking and feedback refer to key Religious Education skills and allow pupils to respond to advice given in order to help them take the next steps in their learning. However, this good practice is not being consistently used to challenge more able pupils.

- The Come and See programme is used effectively but further training on assessment and tracking progress will ensure the programme and resources become fully embedded into the school's Religious Education curriculum provision.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is good.

- St Paul's is a well led school. The school is on a journey of self-evaluation and improvement. The vision of the headteacher is clearly communicated to the rest of the school and is embraced both by pupils and staff alike. The Catholic ethos of the school is the central focus of all school self-evaluation and this has led to well targeted planning for improvement.
- The commitment and leadership of the headteacher and acting deputy headteacher have had an impact on raising standards. Consequently, teaching and learning is improving across school.
- Key areas for improvement have been identified and actions taken to address these. However, because of the short time frame as a primary school, the impact of some of these actions is not yet apparent.
- The school works closely with the parish catechists to ensure that sacramental preparation is in accordance with diocesan policy.
- Provision for Religious Education is equitable with other core subjects in terms of staffing, curriculum resourcing, capitation and curriculum time. It meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.
- The governing body fulfils its role well with regard to Religious Education offering support, but also confident in their ability to challenge. They ensure that all statutory and canonical responsibilities are met.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION:**2****CATHOLIC LIFE:****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 managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

1

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:**2**

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

2

The quality of provision for Collective Worship.

2

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

1

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:**2**

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

2

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.

2

How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

2

SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St Paul's RC Primary School
Unique reference number	122305
Local authority	Northumberland
This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt. Reverend Séamus Cunningham the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle Diocese under canon 806 of Canon Law. For voluntary aided schools it also fulfils the responsibility the Governing Body has to inspect the school under s48 of the Education Act 2005.	
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Head teacher	Mrs Maria Wilson
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