

Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Paul of the Cross Catholic Primary School

URN: 111367

Carried out on behalf of the Most Rev. Malcolm McMahon, Archbishop of Liverpool on:

Date: 9th - 10th March 2023

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....

1

Catholic life and mission (p.3)

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.....

1

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education.....

1

Collective worship (p.7)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.....

1

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

✓

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

✓

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- The whole school community lives out the Catholic life and mission of St Paul of the Cross. They praise God joyfully with, 'One heart, one voice'.
- Inspirational leaders and governors nurture relationships, so that all members of the school community are valued and enabled to contribute to the Catholic life of the school.
- Teachers and supporting adults have excellent subject knowledge, which enriches teaching and learning in religious education.
- The behaviour and attitudes of pupils are exemplary.
- The use of well-chosen scripture, to inspire prayer and faith into action, is of the highest quality.

What the school needs to improve:

- Further enhance learning in relationships, sex and health education, through the development of assessment procedures, so that pupils achieve the very best outcomes.
- As the revised *Religious Education Directory* is introduced, review and up-date curriculum plans for religious education, in line with recommendations.

Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Catholic life and mission key judgement grade:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

Pupils have a deep understanding of the Catholic mission of St Paul of the Cross. Throughout all age ranges, pupils clearly explain how their school family is, 'On a journey together, in faith, hope, love and learning'. Pupils are ambassadors for their school. They are confident and happy, unique individuals. With, 'One heart, one voice', they demonstrate their commitment to helping those who are vulnerable, for example through fundraising for the Poppy Appeal and donations to the Warrington food bank. Pupils understand Catholic Social Teaching and joyfully embrace their responsibility to care for our common home. They are enthusiastic about their work with CAFOD, and the 'Live Simply Award'. The school council is instrumental in the development of this sacred space, as they embrace their school mission and the Gospel values to inspire their work. Here, pupils witness the awe and wonder of creation and experience spiritual growth. They understand their responsibility for the world around them and to each other. Pupils show a deep respect for their own personal dignity and that of others. Their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils understand about other faiths, religions and the wider world community, explaining that all are welcome at St Paul's.

The mission statement of the school is clear and inspiring. It is known and embraced by the school community and lived out joyfully. All are involved in the regular review of the mission statement, for example, on the annual feast day review. These special times have inspired beautiful work, which is on display, in the entrance hall. All areas of the school environment witness that this is a proud Catholic school. Staff are exemplary role models for pupils. They provide the highest level of pastoral care. A member of staff stated, 'Quite simply, Christ is at the heart of all we do. We are a family. We celebrate our infinite uniqueness created by God

and strive always to be close to Him. It is something tangible and you feel it when you step inside'. Relationships are built on love and deep respect for the individual dignity of each person. The curriculum for relationships, sex and health education is carefully planned and is firmly rooted in the teaching of the Church. This area meets all statutory and Archdiocesan requirements and enables pupils to grow spiritually and morally. Learning in relationships, sex and health education could be enhanced further, through the development of assessment procedures.

Leaders and governors are inspirational witnesses to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Governors uphold their vision to support those that are most vulnerable and those that are hard to reach. Parents and carers feel very supported and empowered by the school. One parent stated, 'We find our children's faith to be strongly nurtured at this school. We are particularly impressed by the way the school's Christian beliefs are applied in action, particularly, for example, in the behaviour policy which values every child and offers a fresh start after any problems'. Governors are frequent visitors to the school. The ethos committee carries out learning walks, pupil discussions and observes learning. Together, with leaders they ensure that the whole curriculum is built on Catholic values. They support and challenge very well, because of their knowledge and deep commitment to Catholic education. They are deeply respectful of the staff and head teacher, whom according to one governor 'is a blessing ... she finds opportunity in adversity'. Governors and staff are deeply committed to professional development, focusing on Catholic life and mission. As a result, staff have a profound understanding of the school's mission because they are actively involved in shaping and supporting its content. The school website promotes this very well and is a rich source of information for the community. The partnership between the school and the parish is central to this Catholic school. Leaders respond actively to the synodal vision of the Archdiocese, responding to initiatives and serving wherever possible.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.....

1

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education.....

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for religious education.....

1

Pupils are developing excellent knowledge, skills and understanding in religious education. They make consistently good progress, when measured against the planned curriculum for each year group. Standards of attainment in religious education are consistently above those of the other core subjects. Vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and disabilities receive excellent support, which ensures they achieve the best outcomes. This is evident in their work in religious education, which is presented beautifully, with pride and great care. These actively engaged and curious learners are religiously literate. Pupils show enjoyment of religious education through excellent discussions and by sharing their deeply spiritual and personal experiences. Older pupils explore how loss and death can bring about change for people. reflecting that, 'We should always treasure memories... we must appreciate time spent with a special person'. Scripture is central to their learning, which inspires pupils to think theologically. Children in reception know about the symbolism of Lent and how Jesus spent time praying in the desert. One of the youngest children said 'Jesus, loves us all, we are part of his family'. Pupils' work independently, openly sharing ideas and listening sensitively to others. They also collaborate exceptionally well. Marking and verbal feedback further contributes to the outstanding standards of achievement in religious education. This is evidenced by pupils' clear and age-appropriate understanding of how they can make improvements to their work.

Teachers have a high level of confidence, shown through their subject knowledge, high expectations and deep commitment to the teaching of religious education. Planning is linked to the needs of individual pupils. Teaching assistants are used very effectively to optimise learning for all pupils, especially those with additional needs. Sensitive teachers, who know

their pupils extremely well, ask insightful questions, encourage reflection, and adapt approaches to maximise learning. Spiritual and moral development is given high priority because teachers understand the impact religious education has on the lives of their pupils. Pupils' efforts are celebrated. Feedback is provided through the school marking code and progression in *skill words*. As a result, lessons consolidate and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding, so that they all learn extremely well. Well-presented displays in classrooms and around the school, portfolios and books celebrate learning in religious education. They are attractive and creative, showing that pupils are enabled to present their work in a wide variety of ways to enhance learning.

The Liverpool Archdiocesan required programme for religious education, 'Come and See', is fully implemented, thoughtfully sequenced and well embedded. It adheres faithfully to the Religious Education Directory (2012) and is on course for becoming compliant with the revised directory. The programme is used creatively and supplemented with personal and imaginative resources. Governors ensure that religious education has full parity with other core curriculum areas. They invest in training, staffing and resources. Staff receive high quality professional development, often led by the religious education subject leader. She is highly knowledgeable and skilled. The subject leader is a licensed Catholic Schools Inspector. She has an inspiring vision and a high level of expertise, willingly shared with others. Teachers respect and value her advice. They welcome feedback about their practice and recognise her impact on the quality of teaching. As a result, teaching in religious education is at least consistently good with many outstanding features. There are excellent links with the wider community to provide enrichment activities. These activities included workshops about other faiths and religions. The parish priest supports learning about Baptism. There are CAFOD visitors who engage pupils in Catholic Social Teaching. Together with other leaders and governors, the religious education subject leader promotes deep analysis and self-challenge. This results in strategic action planning which leads to high standards of achievement in religious education.

Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

1

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

1



The experience of prayer and liturgy at St Paul of the Cross enables pupils to participate fully, with great joy and deep spirituality. Pupils pray in a variety of ways as they respond to the scripture, which is reverently shared and received. They pray in silence, through personal reflection and meditation, and they take part actively in class prayers. Mindful prayer sessions are very important to pupils, because as a year six pupil stated, 'I enjoy the mindful prayer, I feel closer to God'. Pupils immerse themselves in these opportunities. They are respectful and calm when gathering as a group. The school song, with actions, specially written for pupils to proclaim the joy of the Gospels, is sung enthusiastically with, 'One heart, one voice', in whole school assemblies. Pupils, including the very youngest, have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year. Pupils in Reception know that the colour purple is significant for this time of Lent. Older pupils confidently use scripture in planning their own worship. They enjoy leading prayer and liturgy and like to talk about how they will make improvements next time. They prepare focus tables, using artefacts, bibles, liturgical colours and candles. Themes are chosen from lessons, whole school assemblies and global news. Pupils can clearly explain the ways in which their prayer life and faith has inspired them to action.

Gatherings for collective worship and routines of prayer are central to daily life at the school. A wide variety of prayer styles are embedded. Significant moments of joy and sorrow are celebrated. Well-chosen passages from scripture, informed by the liturgical season or inspired by the school's mission are at the heart of collective worship. Scripture is skilfully communicated by knowledgeable staff, who sensitively guide and lead all present into prayer. Staff are inspiring role models for each other and for their pupils. They lead class and whole school worship, prepare beautiful class prayer spaces, and support young leaders to plan their

own prayer and liturgy. They make creative use of the different environments around the school for prayer. Parents, carers and the parish community are invited to 'Rejoice' celebrations. Parishioners provide prayer intentions, which are shared through assembly time and a symbolic ribbon prayer display in the hall. Parents are frequently invited to be part of the prayer life of St Paul's. One parent commented, 'The school has an assembly each Friday, which is open to parents and carers. It is always driven by prayer and the school's mission and shows the message of love and respect. Wonderful to see!'

The policy for prayer and liturgy is carefully formed and used as a valuable resource by staff. It includes clear progression in prayer, which enables pupils to develop a mature appreciation of prayer in their lives. Masses and services for holy days and for other special occasions, are included in a yearly planner. This planner is used by both school and parish, much to the appreciation of those who participate. Training opportunities, observation and feedback, led by the subject leader, ensures that the quality of collective worship is consistently high. Governors are knowledgeable about the provision and impact of prayer and liturgy. Together, leaders and governors carry out high quality monitoring and evaluation. This is embedded into the cycle of self-improvement, which informs financial decisions and allocation of resources. As a result, there is a real pride in the quality of provision, which enables all participants to become closer to God. During inspection governors referred to the adaptation of a travelling 'altar' designed to include a pupil with a disability. They know the enjoyment of pupils as they contribute to the prayer life of the school. They see the passion of pupils as they are inspired to put their faith into action. One Governor said, 'We are one heart, one voice ... and this makes us one family.'

Information about the school

Full name of school	St. Paul of the Cross Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	111367
Full postal address of the school	Milnthorpe Road, Chapel Lane, Burtonwood, Warrington, WA5 4PN
School phone number	01925 224686
Name of head teacher or principal	Mrs Clare Abram
Chair of governing board	Mrs Helen McNicholas
School Website	www.stpaulofthecross.org.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Not applicable
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Trustees	Archdiocese of Liverpool
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	10 th February 2015
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Mrs Christine Mason

Lead inspector

Mrs Rachael Tyler

Team inspector

Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement