



Diocese of Westminster

INSPECTION REPORT

ST PAUL'S CATHOLIC COLLEGE

The Ridings, Sunbury-on-Thames, TW16 6NX

Telephone: 01932 783811

e-mail address: info@st-pauls.surrey.sch.uk

DfE Number: 936/5411

URN Number: 125311

Headteacher: Mr S Uttley

Chair of Governors: Mrs P Noons

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Date of inspection: 13th September 2010
Date of previous inspection: 15th & 16th March 2006

Reporting Inspector: Mr D Scott

Description of School

St Paul's Catholic College is an 11-18 mixed comprehensive school in the Archdiocese of Westminster situated in the borough of Spelthorne. The majority of pupils live locally and are drawn from a number of parishes: St Lawrence (Feltham); St Ignatius (Sunbury); St Michael's (Ashford); Ss Michael & Martin (Hounslow) and St David's (Stanwell). Of the 1080 pupils on roll, 68% of pupils are baptised Catholics; the remainder being from other Christian and non-Christian faiths. There are 60 teachers in the school of whom 45% are Catholic. Five hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS) qualification. The school is a specialist Technology College and holds the Gold Award for the Cultural Diversity Quality Standard. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average at 6.6% (71 pupils) and 36.2% (391 pupils) of the pupils are from ethnic minority groups, which is almost twice the national average. Almost a quarter of all pupils speak English as an additional language which is twice that found nationally. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities including those with statements is 22.4% (242 pupils), which is average, the largest group being those with moderate learning needs. There are more boys than girls in each year group and attainment on entry to Year 7 is average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1: Outstanding; Grade 2: Good; Grade 3: Satisfactory; Grade 4: Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

St Paul's is a good school with a distinctive Catholic ethos. As part of its programme of improvement, it has invested a great deal of time and thought to the review of its Catholic mission. Through its involvement with representatives of all groups within its community, the school has highlighted its central drive to 'Learn to Serve' in order to provide exciting and purposeful learning that enables all pupils to succeed within a living and inclusive Christian community. The excellent team work and determination of senior leaders to bring about improvement, very well supported by all staff, is at the heart of the many recent improvements in the school. Standards are just above average by the end of Year 11, the overwhelming majority of pupils achieve well as do the small number of post-16 students. Teaching is consistently good. Checks on pupils' performance and progress are rigorous so that pupils, parents and carers are accurately and regularly informed on how well they are doing. Religious education is very well planned within the effective curriculum. Prayer and worship underpin the Catholic life of the school so that pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. Not only do pupils behave well but they demonstrate a genuine sense of belonging to, and responsibility for, their own and the wider community. Excellent links with local parishes and other nearby Catholic schools help families to feel that they are part of St Paul's. Pupils are helped to understand the Church's global mission through their support for a number of charities such as CAFOD, Help for Heroes and a school in Tanzania. The school is very well led by the headteacher and governors who work relentlessly to develop this increasingly effective Catholic community.

Grade 2

Improvement since the last inspection

Progress since the last inspection has been good. The school has appointed a Chaplain and has re-organised and strengthened the leadership of the religious education department. Lesson planning has been strengthened by the production of differentiated learning activities designed to meet the needs of all pupils in religious education. Nevertheless, the school does not yet meet the Bishops' Conference recommended curriculum time allocation for religious education.

Grade 2

The capacity of the school community to improve and develop

The School has excellent capacity to continue to improve and develop. There is a clear vision and direction from the headteacher, leadership team and governors to secure the very best education whilst maintaining the highest level of care and support for its pupils. With a more stable religious education department together with the recently appointed Chaplain, the school is well placed to meet the exciting developments that lie ahead.

Grade 1

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of learning and the progress pupils make, so that they are consistently good or better by:
 - asking more probing questions in lessons which give pupils opportunities to develop and explain their ideas fully, especially for more able pupils
 - ensuring teachers more effectively use day-to-day assessments and review targets more systematically in their marking so that pupils clearly understand how to improve
 - ensuring that lessons are active with an emphasis on pupils' learning in order to increase the pace and accelerate progress
- Continue to raise standards in religious education by:
 - ensuring that effective strategies for raising boys' achievement are fully embedded
 - increasing the curriculum time for religious education to meet diocesan requirements

The Catholic Life of the School

Leadership and Management

St Paul's is outstandingly well led and managed. The headteacher's excellent leadership of this Catholic community is ably supported by governors and the senior leadership team. They have a real understanding of their community and have generated a common sense of purpose in promoting the Catholic identity of the school. Governors take their responsibilities seriously and play a full part in the school's development. They provide the school with creatively critical support that supplements its smooth day-to-day running. They are committed to the values and aspirations of the school and use their considerable professional skills and talents to ensure that

the school continues to flourish. The inspirational and energetic leadership of the headteacher, is lived out by his own personal faith which serves to inspire others. Through his collaborative leadership style, personal warmth and enthusiasm he has the respect of staff and pupils alike. As a result, staff provide good role models for pupils and there is a tangible spiritual atmosphere and a purposeful learning environment around the school. The Chaplain, supported by local clergy, regularly celebrates Mass for staff, pupils and parents. High expectations are at the heart of the school's improvement since the last inspection. As a result, the school provides very high quality care and education for all groups of children. The full-time counsellor works with pupils and families to provide excellent levels of support which complements the work of other staff and outside professionals. The excellent links with parents, the parishes and other external support agencies help the school not only to sustain outstanding pastoral care but also to keep in touch with hard-to-reach groups within the community.

Grade 1

The Prayer Life of the School

A real strength of the school is the provision for prayer and collective worship which is outstanding. Prayer and the sacrifice of the Mass are at the heart of the Catholic life of the school. There is a full programme of liturgies throughout the Church calendar. The Sacrament of Reconciliation, for all year groups, is celebrated during Advent and Lent. The whole school community benefits from the excellent work of the Chaplain who brings many gifts to the role and is a real asset to the religious life of the school. He works well with senior staff and the head of department for religious education and is readily available to all staff and pupils and takes an active lead in prayer and worship as well as providing invaluable counsel and reconciliation where it is needed. The retreat programme is well established and pupils spoke very enthusiastically of their experiences and particularly how it helped them gain a greater understanding of their peers. Pupils respond well to prayer and appreciate time for quiet reflection as observed in the assembly during the inspection. The school has its own chapel which is regularly used for services and prayer. It is a resource that is appreciated and respected by pupils. The use of music supports liturgy and provides greater opportunities for spiritual nourishment, for example by the gospel choir.

Grade 1

How effectively does the college promote community cohesion?

The school is outstanding in its promotion of community cohesion. It works hard to ensure that there is a welcoming community atmosphere, where pupils' respect for those less privileged than themselves is clearly evident in the high levels of personal commitment to working together for the common good. Amongst numerous examples include the hosting and entertaining local senior citizens for their Christmas party each December. Fund-raising activities supports a number of pupil nominated charities including Age Concern and CAFOD where pupils raise money through their Advent and Lenten alms-giving. In the last year over £17,000 was raised for charities including a significant amount for Help the Heroes. Pupils from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds, difficulties and challenges are able to integrate successfully which fully supports the school's philosophy on inclusion. The school's work in this area was recognised nationally, when it gained the prestigious Specialist Schools and Academies Trust Gold Standard Award for Cultural Diversity. The specialist Technology College outreach programme has cultivated highly successful partnerships with 15 primary and 28 secondary schools in the county. The school's main hall and sporting facilities are used extensively by the local community. Pupils are encouraged to gain a global perspective as part of their spiritual

journey. For example, the school hosted a 'Symposium on Faith and Young People' which enabled pupils from local schools and St Paul's, to reflect on the challenges facing young people concerning complex social and moral issues in order to gain a greater understanding and tolerance of cultural differences. The school has developed a number of successful overseas partnerships with schools in Italy, Spain and Tanzania.

Grade 1

Religious Education

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education

The achievement and standards in religious education are good. Most learners make good progress given their prior attainment. There is a generally improving trend at Key Stage 3 and 4 with results exceeding those in English. The achievement of more able pupils is beginning to accelerate and other groups of pupils, including those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities achieve similarly to their peers. The dip in the 2009 results was due mainly to significant cohort and staffing challenges. Nevertheless, in 2010 the department was successful in ensuring that just over two thirds of all pupils achieved a grade C or better in Religious Studies at GCSE, which is just below the national average. The school's information on pupils' current attainment and progress indicates that three quarters of Year 11 are already on target to gain grade C or better in their GCSE examinations, of whom just over one in five pupils are predicted to achieve A*/A grades. In the Sixth Form the uptake for AS and A2 courses is beginning to rise. In 2010 there was some impressive individual student performance at A2, but results at AS were more variable. All Post 16 students follow the NOCN General Religious Education course and last year achieved an overall pass rate of 100%. Religious Education is an increasingly popular choice at post 16 with many students being very enthusiastic about the new accredited course open to them with many working towards post-16 Levels 1 or 2 qualifications.

Grade 2

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

The quality of teaching and learning in religious education is good. Teachers display a strong commitment to teaching Catholic belief and religious literacy. They use praise well to motivate and stimulate pupils and this leads to a lively response and positive attitudes to learning. The skilful use of topical religious issues encourages pupils to think for themselves and to develop their own ideas. Where teaching is good, the pace is fast, activities are varied, relationships are excellent and pupils' enjoyment is evident. Nevertheless, although there are pockets of good practice, marking and target setting do not always 'sign-post' clearly or in sufficient detail, how pupils can improve their work. Also, occasionally teachers' explanations are too long which reduces the opportunity for pupils to think for themselves and explain their ideas and progress slows and questions are not always sufficiently probing, particularly for the more able. New technology is used well to make the lessons stimulating to illustrate challenging concepts and ideas which appeal to pupils' interests and enthusiasms. Pupils with diverse learning needs are well supported.

Grade 2

Quality of the Curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good. Nevertheless, the Religious Education curriculum does not at present meet the Diocesan requirements of 10% of the curriculum time at Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form. A Curriculum Review is currently underway to seek ways to address this issue. Schemes of work for all Key Stages follow the Curriculum Directory and meet the needs and aspirations of pupils. The innovative general Religious Education course for sixth formers has been a real success and provides a valuable opportunity for students to reflect on contemporary moral and ethical issues. The department has harnessed the potential of ICT by providing on-line support to enable pupils, parents and carers to access learning resources during out-of-school hours. All pupils are taught to respect other faiths and cultures and study the teachings of Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. This has made a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development and has enabled them to respect other faiths and cultures in order that all members of the school can live side-by-side in a harmonious community. The innovative curriculum project on 'Make Poverty History' with the Loyola High School in Tanzania has made a significant contribution to the pupils' understanding of the global dimension.

Grade 2

Leadership and management of Religious Education

The leadership and management of the subject are good, and are improving under the positive leadership of the head of department. Following a period of considerable staffing instability the department is now fully staffed with experienced religious education teachers. The head of department has developed a good team ethos amongst the departmental staff. She cares deeply about her pupils and colleagues are supportive of one another and create and share resources freely. At the heart of the subject leader's vision for religious education is the establishment and maintenance of positive working relationships which permeates the department at all levels. Staff and pupils alike are very appreciative of this. As a group of pupils commented, 'Teachers in religious education really enjoy their jobs; they are open and always go out of their way to help you when you don't understand something'. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly and there are clear priorities for development. The department acknowledges that although they are beginning to narrow the gap between boys and girls achievement this remains an area for improvement.

Grade 2