



DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT

incorporating Section 48 and Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on
behalf of the Archbishop of Southwark

URN 105135

St Paul's Academy

51 Finchale Road

London SE2 9PX

Inspection date: 21st & 22nd March 2018

Chair of Governors: Mr B Borland CBE

Executive Principal: Mr P Winston

Head of School: Miss S Malone

**Inspectors: Damian G Fox
Judy Strong**

EDUCATION COMMISSION

St Edward's House, St Paul's Wood Hill, Orpington, Kent BR5 2SR
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Interim Director of Education: Mr Stephen Bryan



Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding	Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 2	Good	Grade 4	Inadequate

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Paul's Academy is an oversubscribed mixed Catholic Academy located in the London Borough of Greenwich. It is situated in the Greenwich Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. The principal parishes which the school serves are St David's, Abbey Wood, and St Paul's, Thamesmead. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is approximately 35%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to Religious Education is 8.3% in each of the key stages.

The school takes pupils from 11 to 16 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 1200. The attainment of most pupils on entering the school is below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) is significantly above average. The Academy is in the top quintile for deprivation. Around 6% of the pupils receive extra support in class. The number of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) is above national average. The percentage of pupils whose first language is not English is above national average. The largest ethnic minority group at the school are pupils from black or black British heritage.



SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Paul's Academy is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- The Executive Principal is an inspirational presence in the Academy. He is strongly supported by the Head of School, who has been appointed as the future Principal, and senior leaders who work as a highly effective team in the context of the Catholic life of the school and Religious Education. Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and demonstrate excellent leadership in all areas.
- The Religious Education leader provides outstanding leadership of Religious Education. He has developed a strong and expert team of leaders and classroom practitioners. Outcomes in Religious Education are excellent reflecting the high profile the subject has in the Academy.
- Pastoral care is a significant strength of the Academy. It inspires pupils to respond respectfully and willingly to the mission of service to others. The Academy is totally inclusive of pupils with different strengths and challenges and offers unstinting support to their families.
- Prayer and worship are central to daily life in the community. Pupils have many opportunities to practice their faith and to experience the love of God throughout each day.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

- Continue to develop the pupil chaplaincy and Young St Vincent De Paul (YSVP) groups to provide further opportunities for pupils to plan and lead spiritual and effective prayer and worship and to enhance the charity work of the Academy.
- Extend the role and responsibilities of the Year 11 pupil leadership team to include service in the lives of younger pupils.
- Develop the assessment feedback sheets for pupils throughout the Academy to enhance their understanding of their level of attainment and the steps they can take to make further progress.



Overall Effectiveness

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.	1
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 governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.	1
Religious Education	1
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	1
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.	1
Collective Worship	1
How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' Collective Worship.	1
The quality of provision for Collective Worship.	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.	1



CATHOLIC LIFE

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

- Pupils benefit greatly from the many opportunities to contribute to the Catholic life of St Paul's Academy. They know they are part of a community that lives by Gospel values. The Academy is committed to the common good. In the words of the Executive Principal, it is a community "characterised by gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church."
- Pupils spoke warmly of the caring and spiritual ethos of the Academy. They feel valued as individuals and respond with behaviour that is exemplary at all times. Relationships across the community reflect the great mutual respect people have for each other. Year 11 pupil leaders said that people are aware of others who may need help. It is natural for pupils to respond with concern to the needs of fellow pupils.
- The Academy's deep concern for all pupils is reflected in the highly effective work of the ARK. Pupils who may not always find it easy to follow the normal pattern of the day know they can find support and guidance. They explained the various ways they can seek the support of others, such as the concern-slip post boxes that are monitored by the ARK. There is always a quick and confidential response to the pupil. It is a reflection of the deep concern for all pupils.
- Fundraising for people in need is an established part of school life. Pupils are very aware of the needs of others in the local and wider community and willingly take up the many opportunities to raise awareness of their challenges and to raise funds. A discussion regarding the charities for which they will raise funds is part of the half termly meetings of the pupil forum with the Principal half termly. A pupil described the extra enthusiasm and energy shown when organising a wide range of fundraising activities for their feast day in June.
- This year, the school has raised £10,000 for ten causes which included the King's Critical Care Unit, the Children's Ward at St George's Hospital and the Thamesmead Foodbank. Each year, staff, pupils and former pupils have taken gifts to the Ronald McDonald's Children's Hospice and King's College Hospital on Christmas Day. One pupil said that the experience was "a lesson in humility. I learnt not to take things for granted." Internationally, the school supports the work of a group of nuns in Kenya.
- The new Chaplaincy and YSVP groups are already established as part of the life of the community. The Chaplain and his team have detailed plans for their growth that will offer more opportunities for pupils to contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the Academy.



- The Year 11 pupil leaders are excellent role models for younger pupils. They are commissioned at the school Feast day Mass to show the community the importance of the role and the significance of their faith. They often act as ambassadors for visitors to the academy.
- Parents overwhelmingly confirm that St Paul's is a school in which their children are happy, well-educated and treated with care and respect. A parent said, "I cannot explain how grateful I am to the mentoring team at St Paul's. They will continue to support my son when needed and if I raise any concerns they will always listen."

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

- The Academy is distinctly Catholic. The Catholic ethos and identity of the school is visible to the school community and to visitors through the centrality of the religious icons and images displayed throughout the school. St Paul's is an excellent example of faith in action. A highly impressive display is entitled "All are one in Christ." It is made up of everybody's hand shapes into which they each wrote a promise about making an act of kindness and a commitment to others, both within the Academy and the wider community.
- Chaplaincy belongs at the heart of school life and is an important part of daily life. The Chaplaincy team is highly effective in supporting staff and pupils. Their dedication is appreciated by pupils. The Chaplain is an outstanding role model. He is a member of the safeguarding team as well as Inclusion Panels. With the support of his team, he has built up a strong presence in the community and parishes.
- The Chapel is effectively used for prayer and guidance. It is used regularly by members of the whole school community and their families.
- The mission of the Academy is encapsulated in the lives of the teachers and pupils. The mission of service permeates throughout the community. In interviews, pupils spoke warmly about the opportunities they are given to grow as people and serve others.
- Pastoral care is a significant strength. The level of care teachers have for their pupils is demonstrated by the calmness and cohesion of the community. Nobody is forgotten.



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

- Leaders and governors are fully committed to the welfare of all teachers, support staff, pupils and their families. They demonstrate a clear understanding of their role in providing a community of prayer, one that is strongly founded in the commandment to love. They have the vision and the passion to develop the Catholic life of the school further. They understand that strengthening the spiritual and loving ethos is a core responsibility.
- For the last three years, there has been an annual inset day for staff led by David Wells, on the importance of mission in the Catholic school and the impact on the lives of the school community.
- The governing body is highly ambitious for the Catholic life of the school. They understand the need for pupils to be given opportunities to grow in faith together in an environment of care. They actively reach out to Catholic families to offer them an effective place of learning and prayer. They have used finance wisely to support initiatives such as creating space for a chapel and by providing a separate budget for chaplaincy.
- The Executive Principal and his team embody the school's distinct mission to serve the disadvantaged and vulnerable. For example, they reach out to families who need help. There is unspoken support, spiritual, emotional and sometimes financial, for these families.
- Leaders, supported by governors, have launched an initiative to help parents and carers support their children who may be having particular difficulties. Families expressed their appreciation of this support and described the positive impact it was beginning to have on family life.
- Leaders and governors have established a school that is increasingly popular with the local community. They work effectively carrying the message of the Gospel to others. Applications from families in the local community are increasing in number because they know St Paul's will provide excellent academic and moral education of the whole child. They have recognised the great benefits for their children in attending a place where they will learn and live by moral and Gospel values.
- School leaders have played an active role in supporting the Catholic life of the school by leading prayers and reflections in briefings and by promoting the voluntary Masses.
- The Inclusion Panels in each year group show the deep commitment of leaders to meeting the needs of pupils, especially those in the direst of circumstances.
- They are managing the transition to a new Principal very effectively so that there will be a seamless hand over of responsibilities in the new academic year.



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1

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

- Levels of attainment on entry are below average. From their varied starting points, attainment and progress outcomes are high. The number of pupils achieving A* - C in Religious Education was above the national average at 76%. The A*/A, 42%, was significantly above the national average. The A*- C pass rate was above national averages and in line with core subjects in the school. This is continuing the upward trend over the last three years.
- The school has sustained excellent outcomes since the last advisor's visit who commented on the "consistently good performance and pupils' outcomes in GCSE Religious Education."
- Outcomes for pupils with various needs are impressive. Closing the gap between groups of pupils is a particular strength of the department, for example, in narrowing the gender gap at GCSE. In 2016 with the pass rate at A*- C, girls achieved 22% higher than boys. In 2017 the gap had narrowed to 6%. For the pass rate at A*/A, pupil premium pupils achieved 15% less than non-pupil premium in 2016. In 2017, it had narrowed to 4%.
- Behaviour for learning is outstanding. In all lessons, pupils were engaged and demonstrated a commitment to their learning. They were attentive and collaborated well with others.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is outstanding

- Lesson observations and reviews of pupils' work during the inspection confirm the Academy's view that teaching is very good with many examples of outstanding practice.
- Effective lessons were characterised by excellent subject knowledge and a range of methods that motivated pupils to engage in their own learning. Progress was clearly demonstrated in nearly all lessons. Pupils were confident in working together and individually and making presentations to the class.
- There is clear evidence of differentiation to support and challenge as appropriate. The department should now investigate ways of developing further challenges for the higher ability to build on the success at GCSE over the last three years.
- There is a robust and rigorous process of assessment. The feedback sheets have a positive impact in ensuring pupils know their current level of attainment and how to improve. In discussion with Year 9 pupils, they gave an example of GCSE questions that had been marked. They said how helpful it was to see suggestions on how to achieve higher marks, particularly in the 12 mark question. It was a clear demonstration of the



effectiveness of assessment throughout the Academy. Those who are falling behind others in certain areas are quickly identified and supportive intervention measures are put in place.

- Younger pupils were able to tell the inspector their levels and their targets for the next round of assessment.
- Year 11 pupils responded with enthusiasm to the extra support teachers give above and beyond the classroom and school hours. Teachers give of their time to ensure that pupils receive the best possible preparation for exams. One such session was observed. Nearly all Year 11 pupils were happy to begin guided exam practice prior to the start of the school day.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is outstanding

- Leaders and governors have an excellent understanding of how to deliver ever increasing improvement in attainment and progress. They have established a rigorous and effective system of dispersed leadership and training across the learning zones. They are well versed in asking the right strategic questions at the right time, offering appropriate challenge to school leaders.
- Leaders have ensured that 10% of curriculum time in Key Stages 3 and 4 is allocated to Religious Education in line with the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. At Key Stage 4, the Academy chose to follow the Diocesan approved option of a non-RC specification combined with additional content to ensure the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (2012) are met. The recent Learning Zone review clearly shows that schemes of work, teaching resources and assessment materials have been put in place in line with the new specification.
- Leaders and governors work very effectively together and are passionate about enhancing the learning of pupils. The A*/A and the A* - C grades for all groups of pupils reflect the quality of their leadership and commitment to their success.
- Pupil outcomes in Religious Education for all pupils are excellent as a result of high quality leadership and teaching in the department. The Head of Department provides outstanding leadership of the subject. He has built up a strong and cohesive team of teachers who are delivering an excellent education in Religious Education.
- Leaders and governors ought to be commended for their successful recruitment of teachers from Europe. This has ensured the Religious Education department has a full complement of teachers.
- Training arrangements and high quality CPD is provided for new teachers that helping them take more responsibility for themselves. One NQT described the level of support as "phenomenal". They have benefitted from training and support and are delivering excellent outcomes at GCSE.



- Religious Education is part of a whole school initiative to raise standards and have high expectations for learning. Leaders and governors have identified marking and assessment as a key to making further progress. There is an assessment every half term in Religious Education.
- Feedback sheets are completed, indicating areas of strength and misconceptions in learning.
- Pupils confirmed that they are very constructive and helpful in showing the way to improve further. They motivate pupils to aim higher. They confirmed how they appreciate the individualised support they are given.



COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

1

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life is outstanding

- Pupils respond enthusiastically to the many opportunities there are to experience and participate in prayer and worship every day.
- Pupils of other faiths are given the opportunity to lead assemblies to explain their own faith and worship. For example, pupils and staff led an assembly on Islam. To celebrate Diwali, pupils wore traditional dress and demonstrated the value of prayer in Hinduism.
- The Chaplain and pupils themselves affirmed that there is no embarrassment in offering intentions for prayer, for example, if a relative is ill. Pupils responded with sensitivity and with prayer when a former pupil died. The community came together to pray for his soul and for the family.
- Pupils said they enjoyed the variety of worship and that there were many opportunities to plan and participate in celebrations. The choir, musicians, dancers and drama pupils are regularly used to illustrate key points in assemblies and to enhance liturgical celebrations.
- The Parish Priest and the Chaplain confirmed the Inspectors' findings that pupils are respectful and reverential in assemblies and masses. Pupils, irrespective of faith, happily joined in. There is a high degree of mutual respect for faith and prayer.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is outstanding

- Collective Worship is a central part of daily life in the Academy. All Learning Zones contribute to the spiritual development of pupils by leading assemblies and by ensuring prayer is part of form time.
- The Chaplain is highly effective in providing many opportunities for pupils to attend acts of Collective Worship. He provides reflection sheets to support teachers and to ensure that prayer remains a central part of the school.
- The school makes excellent use of the Chapel. It is a wonderful space that enhances the strong prayerful spirit in the Academy. It is visually effective and inspires respectful devotion. The Chapel is open at all times for teachers and pupils to use for private reflections. It is available throughout the week for Mass and prayer services.
- Year groups have a weekly assembly and there are prayers in the form room daily. There is a voluntary Mass every Friday during Advent and Lent and every first Friday throughout the rest of the year. There are special liturgies, such as a welcoming liturgy



for Year 7 and a thanksgiving liturgy for Year 11. All liturgical feasts are celebrated, especially the feast day.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is outstanding

- Leaders and governors have ensured that there are many opportunities for prayer and worship. They carry out learning walks to monitor prayer and worship in classrooms. Support is given to staff to help them prepare assemblies.
- They monitor and evaluate provision through their regular attendance at masses and major seasonal liturgies and regular meetings with the Chaplain and his team.
- Governors have supported provision by allocating funds for a school chaplain. There is a separate chaplaincy budget. Training has been provided for the Chaplain including CPD in bereavement.
- The Chaplain is an inspiring presence in the community. His leadership and guidance ensure that pupils make the most of the many opportunities for teachers and pupils to pray or simply to take time out for quiet reflection and guidance.