



INSPECTION REPORT

St Paul's Catholic Primary School

Sundridge Park, Yate, South Gloucestershire BS37 4EP

Telephone: 01454 866790

Fax: 01454 866792

e-mail address: Julian.clements@southglos.gov.uk

DÆS Number: 803 3438

Headteacher: Mr Julian Clements

Chair of Governors: Rev. Fr. Eugene Campbell

Date of inspection: 16th and 17th July 2007

Date of previous inspection: 26th and 27th March 2001

Reporting Inspector: Mr P Bates

Description of School

St. Paul's is an average sized primary school situated close to the centre of Yate in South Gloucestershire. There are 166 pupils on roll of whom 57% are baptised Catholics. This percentage has been decreasing over the past two years. It has an average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. It is an extremely inclusive school which results in a higher than average number of pupils joining the school having started their education elsewhere. It also serves a Traveller's site and has a growing number of pupils of Polish heritage, many of whom arrive unable to speak English.

The school buildings are in good condition and a seventh classroom has been completed ready for occupation in September. The beautiful grounds around the school contain a woodland walk, a grass amphitheatre for outdoor lessons and services and various play equipment. The Parish Church and nursery are also situated in the grounds.

Key for inspection grades

- Grade 1: Outstanding
- Grade 2: Good
- Grade 3: Satisfactory
- Grade 4: Unsatisfactory

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

St Paul's is an effective school, which provides a good Catholic education for its pupils. The leadership of the Headteacher, supported by the Deputy Headteacher and the Religious Education Co-ordinator, is very good. They share a clear vision for the school and have the determination to ensure that it is achieved. The Governors fully support the school and are committed to helping the school achieve its mission. The quality of teaching is good, as is the developing assessment system. The monitoring that has taken place is thorough and helpful. Pupils make good progress through the school and by Year 6 are producing some outstanding work. Pupils are happy and thrive because of the ethos that permeates the school. They abide by the school rules and behave well. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Links with parents and parish are very good and contribute positively to pupils' learning and spiritual and moral development. Parents consider that St Paul's is an inclusive school which nurtures and teaches their children in an exemplary way and where every child matters.

Grade 2

Improvement since the last inspection

Very good progress has been made on the issues raised at the time of the last inspection, even though there have been four changes of co-ordinator since then. The current co-ordinator has raised the status of RE in the school which is now seen as a core subject. The co-ordinator monitors teaching and pupils' progress and has introduced a comprehensive assessment system. There is evidence that this is beginning to lead to greater differentiation in RE tasks in all year groups. The RE co-ordinator is also building up a portfolio of evidence. The percentage of time allocated to the teaching of RE now meets the 10% requirement.

Grade 2

The capacity of the school community to improve and develop

The school has provided an accurate self-evaluation and there is a Religious Education Action Plan as part of the School Improvement Plan. The Headteacher and Religious Education Co-ordinator are aware of the school's strengths and development needs. They are well supported by the committed Governors and Staff. The Parish Priest, who is also Chair of Governors, visits the school regularly and actively supports the religious life of the school. The school, home and parish work well together and have good links with the wider Catholic community. The school is well placed to improve further and to address the points for action.

Grade 1

What the school should do to improve further

- 1 Ensure the standards and presentation of work is consistent throughout the school.
 - 2 Continue with the assessment work already started, to ensure all pupils reach their full potential, especially the more able.
 - 3 Support staff in the teaching of Religious Education, by offering the opportunity to attend in-service training.
-

The Catholic Life of the School

Leadership and Management

The leadership of the school is strong and clearly focused on its Catholic mission. The Headteacher and Management Team have a clear understanding of the needs of the school community which is shared with staff, parents and pupils. There is a committed governing body that support the school well, in particular the Parish Priest who is a regular visitor to the school. There are close links between, home, school and parish which are much valued by the parents. Communication is good within the community. Parents feel that the school provides for very good care of their children and appreciate its Catholic family environment. One parent wrote “the school supports our children, not just academically, but also spiritually”. The school Mission Statement ‘Raising Gods’ children to distinction’ recognises the individual needs of all pupils and underpins all that is done in school. The Catholic ethos of the school is excellent, the outcome of the high quality leadership and management.

Grade 1

The Prayer Life of the School

The provision for prayer and collective worship is good. Prayers are said at appropriate times during the day and pupils generally respond well. Every classroom has a well presented RE area and teachers make good use of artefacts, such as candles, to remind pupils of God’s presence. All class timetables include an opportunity for reflection which makes an effective contribution to spiritual development. It also helps pupils understand the importance of their relationships with their peers and teachers. Pupils showed a good knowledge of formal prayers and were also confident in writing and saying their own prayers.

There is a planned programme of Masses and non-Eucharistic services. These involve careful preparation by the Parish Priest and staff. The Headteacher leads a weekly assembly related to the current “Here I am” topic with the Co-ordinator’s assembly generally following the Liturgical Year. First Holy Communion preparation is carried out within the parish and is well supported by the school. A voluntary session during the lunch period, led by the Headteacher, gives Key Stage 2 pupils the opportunity to visit the Church for a period of quiet reflection and prayer. This is very well supported. Worship makes a good contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils.

Grade 2

Religious Education

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education

The quality of provision for Religious Education is good. Pupils enter the school with a wide range of ability in Religious Education; some being regular attendees at church, for instance and others having very little experience of their faith. The good teaching, the Catholic life and the ethos which pervades the school ensure that pupils achieve well and make good progress in the knowledge and understanding of their faith. In the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, pupils showed a good knowledge of the life of Jesus and were able to talk about the miracles he performed. The school has a close relationship with the parish and on the topic of Special Places, one child remarked that her special place was the church and it “makes me feel peaceful and safe”. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils reach a good standard and the presentation of their work is outstanding and should be used as a model for the rest of the school.

All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and English as a second language, make good progress. Pupils’ moral development is very good. Pupils are polite and their behaviour is generally good, both in class and around the school. Pupils are confident that if they do not understand the learning or have any personal problems, they can ask for help from any member of staff.

Grade 2

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

The quality of teaching and learning overall is good. This finding is consistent with the school’s own evaluation. The school uses a variety of teaching styles and teachers use questioning well to develop pupils’ thinking. Generally, lessons move at a good pace, which holds the interest of the pupils. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties is well matched to their needs and they receive very good support from the teaching assistants. Challenges in RE need to be sufficient to academically stretch the more able pupils. The school is aware of this and the new assessment procedures and levelling of work should help identify these pupils and enable work to be set, which will present appropriate challenge. A portfolio of pupils’ work is being developed. The marking of pupils’ work usually affirms achievement and sometimes helps pupils to see how they can improve. Parents are sent a termly newsletter, which offers suggestions on how they can support topics being covered in school. Parents appreciate this communication. Annual reports contain detailed information on the progress pupils are making in Religious Education.

Grade 2

Quality of the Curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good. It fulfils the requirements of the Bishops' Conference with 10% of curriculum time devoted to Religious Education following the 'Here I am' scheme. All teachers teach Religious Education and support is given to the non-Catholic teachers, when needed, by the Co-ordinator and the Parish Priest. The school recognises the importance of ensuring all staff have the benefit of additional training and some staff have attended the Diocesan five day modular course.

The school uses the Diocesan Personal Relationship Programme 'In the Beginning' and link it closely with its own PSHE scheme of work. The parents have been fully involved in its introduction and are kept well informed of their children's' progress.

The school is very aware of the importance of giving the pupils a good knowledge of other faiths and traditions and this is covered in the religious scheme of work and the programme of assemblies. During the period of the Inspection, the Key Stage 2 pupils visited a Hindu temple as part of this programme. The school is proud to be an inclusive school, welcoming pupils of all abilities and cultures. There are appropriate resources to support the teaching of Religious Education. Books, displays and reflective areas around the school reflect the strong Catholic ethos.

Pupils develop their understanding of the needs of others through supporting a wide range of charities. The recent 'One World Week' in support of CAFOD was so successful that the resources/visual aids produced are being used by the organisation as examples of good practice on the topic of global issues.

Grade 2

Leadership and management of Religious Education

Religious Education is well managed by the Subject Co-ordinator, who is knowledgeable, organised and efficient. With the strong support of the Headteacher, she gives guidance and support to the rest of the staff. Her example has a growing impact on the standards in the school. The whole staff are committed to their role in support of the Catholic ethos of the school and the teaching of the faith. The Parish Priest has produced supportive materials for staff, who feel less confident in preparing their own liturgies.

Lessons, acts of worship and reflections are monitored by the Co-ordinator and the Headteacher with constructive feedback being given to staff. The clear vision of the management as to what the school should be doing in Religious Education, promises the good standards already achieved will be improved over the coming years.

Grade 2