

Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Paul's Catholic High School, Wythenshawe

URN: 139456

Carried out on behalf of the Right Rev. Mark Davies, Bishop of Shrewsbury on:

Date: 21-22 June 2023

Overall effectiveness The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....	2
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Collective worship (p.7) The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.....	2
The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- St Paul's is a welcoming and inclusive Catholic community with a mission statement that reflects this aspiration.
- Excellent pastoral care and outreach are rooted in the school's Catholic identity.
- Special educational needs provision in religious education is excellent.
- The Youth St Vincent de Paul (Youth SVP) and Diversity Council are excellent examples of pupil involvement in the Catholic life of the school.

What the school needs to improve:

- Increase the opportunities for more students to be involved in student-led chaplaincy groups.

- Further develop the questioning skills of teachers and deploy a wider range of teaching strategies to ensure all pupils are fully engaged in RE.
- Monitor form time prayer to ensure it is embedded and the good practice is shared.

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:.....	2
Pupil outcomes The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school	2
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	2

St. Paul's is a school with a deeply rooted mission at its heart: 'Founded on the love of Christ, and recognising the unique worth of each individual, St. Paul's exists to foster, with care and compassion, personal, spiritual and academic growth, extending into the community and beyond'. The school lives out this mission in the day to day. It is distilled in the five core values of service, respect, stewardship, compassion, and love which are clearly known by the students and also through the school prayer. It underpins the school behaviour management system, rooted in the 'belong, believe, achieve' strategy. Relationships are warm, caring, and inclusive. Students feel welcomed and respected here. Careers provision ensures a strong partnership with Catholic post 16 colleges with guaranteed places for all St. Paul's students. The majority of students continue to post 16 education in a Catholic context. Post 16, the school continues to reach out to former year 11 students to ensure that they are safe and happy.

The physical witness to the school's Catholic identity and mission is everywhere and these aspects of the school are treated with respect. Chaplaincy plays an important role in the school's mission. Students are articulate and confident when they talk about the impact that the Catholic life of the school has on them. They are proud of their school and the contributions they make to school life and understand they have the power to impact decisions at school leadership level when they think that things need improving. There is a real respect for the staff and provision at the school and this comes out very clearly both in the interactions observed between students and staff, as well as in how the students speak about the staff. The willingness to take in pupils and staff from a neighbouring school which was closing, a school with no faith context, bears testament to the inclusive Catholic ethos at St Paul's. Those students and staff have welcomed being part of St. Paul's and recognise the distinctive nature of this community. The school has willingly embraced the

newcomers and drawn them into the St Paul's family. Students of other faiths feel included at St Paul's and their voice welcome. Chaplaincy is a developing strength of the school and the Diversity Council and Youth SVP are positive expressions of the school's mission. Pastoral care, the care for the whole community and support for parents and carers are exemplary. Parental and staff feedback confirms this. St Paul's is a community which pulls together and works in harmony. Students and staff are drawn to the ethos of the school. The dignity and worth of each individual in this community is recognised and celebrated. Staff speak warmly about the sense of family and the welcome offered here, and from interactions between students and staff around school, this is clear. The school celebrates its mission widely. It lives it out through the work of the Youth SVP who engage in fundraising and social action in the community. This work is firmly rooted in Catholic Social Teaching.

Governors and the Corpus Christi Multi Academy Trust (MAT) hold the leadership to account in relation to the Catholic life and mission of St Paul's. They recognise that the culture and ethos of the school is led by the example of the headteacher. Under his direction, the school is a calm, respectful and loving environment. Relevant staff development is in place; this includes a strong commitment to the North West Catholic Dioceses leadership programme for all senior leaders. Leaders and governors take an active role in working alongside and with the MAT and the Diocese of Shrewsbury.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

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

2

Provision

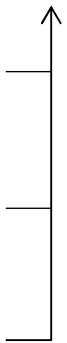
The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education.....

2

Leadership

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

2



Students speak positively of their learning experiences and respond well to the activities they are presented with in their religious education lessons. They behave well and show mutual courtesy and respect in their lessons. This stems from the positive relationships fostered by their teachers and support staff. The strength of these relationships helps create a safe space for students to ask questions and express their views. With the additional support of a carefully constructed religious education curriculum, students can confidently recall prior learning using good levels of religious knowledge and literacy. Within most lessons observed, students made gains in knowledge and understanding. They persevere with written work in class showing resilience when work is more challenging. As a consequence of these factors, they achieve well in religious education when compared with other core curriculum subjects.

Lessons in religious education are carefully planned across the department and follow a structure which allows most students to make progress. Students routinely begin lessons with a quick-fire recall task and use green pen to fill gaps in learning or to correct errors. This helps students to accumulate a bank of knowledge over time and to see links to prior learning. In the strongest teaching observed, teachers were able to build on students' spoken answers to deepen their thinking. Students are confident in asking questions and, in the best examples, the teacher was able to run with the direction of travel of a student's question and take the whole class into new learning. When teachers pose questions which require longer consideration, not enough time is always given to allow students to think. When Teaching Assistants are deployed, they support students with learning needs well. Students within The New Horizons provision experience a skilfully adapted religious education curriculum which allows students with special educational needs to make good progress. A great deal of thought has gone into ensuring that students with special educational needs are able to access a bespoke religious education curriculum that is ambitious and designed

for their needs. In the best lessons seen, teachers' effective questioning skills and use of a wide range of teaching strategies ensured high levels of student engagement.

The subject leader of religious education leads her team with enthusiasm and with a clear vision for the subject. Expectations are high. The curriculum content and sequencing of learning are carefully planned. In preparation for the new *Religious Education Directory*, the department is working collaboratively with the diocese and another school to ensure the new curriculum is compliant and appropriate to the needs of their students. The quality of marking and assessment seen in books (in lessons and in the sample provided) was varied. A recent self-evaluation of the department identified this as area for development. Leaders have also identified and planned for more opportunities for the religious education team to share best classroom practice so that a wider variety of teaching strategies can be confidently deployed. The school is compliant with the minimum 10% curriculum time allocation for religious education. There is a regular programme of quality assurance of the department, both external and internal. Leaders and governors are very engaged in this process and there is a link governor for religious education.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

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

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

Leadership

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

2

St. Paul's students enjoy a variety of worship experiences including form time prayer, liturgical assemblies, and retreats. In each, the structure gives opportunities for reflection and links the school prayer to day-to-day action. The lay chaplain works hard to provide wider quality opportunities for worship. In all form times observed, the routine and structure of prayer was clear. Silence, calm and respect were noted. In the best examples the tutor drew students to a deeper reflection on the prayer for the day. Students are involved in the preparation of prayer and liturgy. For example, the Year 7 retreat day includes student preparation of the liturgy to which parents are invited. The Youth SVP are eloquent advocates for prayer and liturgy and proud of their involvement in Mini DASH (the diocesan schools' youth group), in liturgy and in this community. One student recognised that it had brought them closer to God. The commitment to Catholic Social Teaching, justice and the preferential option for the poor are clearly seen. Money raised has been for CARITAS, local food banks and for a prayer garden space at the front of the school.

The school observes the liturgical year and daily expressions of worship reflect this. Form prayer and liturgical prayer assemblies are rooted in the school's mission statement and the use of the school prayer is a regular feature. Most students engage well in this worship, are respectful and behave appropriately. Examples observed were thoughtful and considered. In one particular liturgical prayer assembly the reverence was palpable. The parish priest is a welcome visitor to school. From staff and parental feedback, the celebration of Mass at key times of the year is always a highlight and a respectful experience. The feast of St Peter and Paul is a particular day of celebration for the school, with themed workshops and Mass for the whole community. The school is also involved in the celebration of Corpus Christi MAT Mass including St Paul's choir leading worship at the most recent gathering. The chapel is a beautiful space and offers a calm prayerful context. This includes the opportunity for meditation based on the Psalms. Staff and students know

the chapel as a quiet place to escape to in a busy day. Staff lead prayer at morning briefings on a rota basis. The school is involved in a visit to Medjugorje in October with the local parish with 10 students and 2 staff joining the parish pilgrimage.

The school policy sets out a clear framework and structure for prayer and liturgy including a quality assurance process. Leaders ensure that governors are involved in the overall review process and have a role in it. Regular monitoring of form time prayer is now needed to ensure it is embedded throughout the school and that the good practice seen is shared. Staff are committed to the prayer and liturgical life of St Paul's and have embraced the changes in the newest structure that the school has implemented. They recognise too the support in place for them within school from the leadership team, lay chaplain and head of religious education to deliver prayer and liturgy, and the most recent external professional development and review enabled this further. Staff and students who are not Catholic feel included, affirmed, and celebrated in the prayer life at St Paul's.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Paul's Catholic High School
School unique reference number (URN)	139456
Full postal address of the school	Firbank Road, Newall Green, Manchester M23 2YS
School phone number	0161 499 0000
Name of head teacher or principal	Mr Alex Hren
Chair of governing board	Mr Stephen Marciniak
School Website	www.stpaulshigh.net
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Corpus Christi MAT
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	11-16
Trustees	Diocese of Shrewsbury
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	June 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Jane Beever	Lead inspector
Claire Marrin	Team inspector
Martin Reynolds	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