



## St Pancras Catholic Primary School

De Montfort Road, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1SR

School Unique Reference Number: 114568

<b>Inspection date:</b>	June 24 <sup>th</sup> 2014
<b>Lead Inspector:</b>	Theresa Kenefick
<b>Associate Inspector:</b>	Margaret Clerkin

	Previous Inspection:	June 2011
<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	This inspection:	<b>1</b>
	<b>Catholic Life:</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Collective Worship:</b>		<b>1</b>
<b>Religious Education:</b>		<b>1</b>

### SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Pancras is an outstanding Catholic school because:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>St Pancras is an outstanding Catholic school in most respects with capacity to improve further in the future. It is an exceptionally warm school with a strong sense of community and belonging, led by a dynamic, energetic headteacher whose vision is clear.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The quality of collective worship is overall outstanding and the leadership team are clear about what needs to be done to further improve in this area. There is a great breadth of opportunities provided for pupils to gather as a community to worship and pray.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Catholic life of the school is outstanding characterised by a high quality of nurture and support. Pupils benefit fully from the experiences provided for them on a daily basis. Equally, pupils play an active role in contributing back to the community which they hold in high regard.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The quality of religious education is for the most part outstanding with a few aspects still good. Where teaching is outstanding, lessons are well crafted by expert teachers and learning is challenging and inspiring with excellent pace.</li> </ul>

# FULL REPORT

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Pancras Catholic Primary is a mixed voluntary aided school, situated in the Lewes Deanery of the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton and primarily serves the parish of St Pancras. Located in the heart of Lewes, this is a smaller than average size primary school with 117 on roll, aged from four to eleven. It has a wide catchment area stretching to Brighton, Eastbourne and Hastings.

Demographic factors in the catchment are changing and the socio-economic background of the children is very diverse. This may be due to the high rental market in the immediate vicinity of the school as well as serving two local universities. Consequently, the school's deprivation indicator is in line with the national average. However, the school's stability percentage is well below the national average.

Attainment on entry is broadly below national average and the number of pupils with learning difficulties is increasing annually, especially pupils with speech and language difficulties and English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average with 24% eligible for Pupil Premium. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those for who English is not their first language is above the national average. The percentage of children on the special educational needs register is above the national average at 31%, with just one child with a statement of special educational need.

Classes are vertically grouped in mixed ages from Reception to year four, with year five and six being straight classes.

39% of pupils are baptised Catholic; a further 22% are practising Christians of other denominations, 2% from other faith backgrounds with the remaining group having no denomination. There have been a number of staffing changes since the last inspection, particularly at senior level, with the current headteacher appointed in 2011.

## WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

### **Collective Worship**

- Provide regular opportunities for pupils to independently create and lead imaginative and inspirational acts of worship.
- Ensure that all acts of collective worship contain opportunities for spontaneous prayer and time for personal, quiet reflection.

### **Religious Education**

- Harness the ability of more able pupils, and then others, by allowing them more freedom for creative personal expression and response in their work, removing the scaffolding currently over provided by worksheets.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to engage in peer discussion with less direct teacher led dialogue.
- Embed fully the opportunity provided for pupils to respond to teacher's marking and as such encourage deeper thought and reflection.

# CATHOLIC LIFE

## THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- The quality of provision of the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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

- One parent stated, 'St Pancras creates a happy nurturing environment' and this was very evident in the strong sense of belonging in the school. Pupils are at the centre of shaping the school's mission and ethos and are given ample opportunity to have their views heard and responded to, for example through Pupil Voice, the school council, the weekly pastoral care group and questionnaires such as the exit interview for year six.
- Pupils across the school enthusiastically embrace community life as evidenced by, for example, a nurturing buddy system, which is understood by all. It is helpful and supportive of all members of the school. Relationships are excellent in the school. Children spoke passionately about St Pancras and as one pupil said, "Everyone accepts you for what you are, you can be yourself."
- Pupils were actively involved in establishing a set of values which guide behaviour and conduct in the school. They are clear about the role of reconciliation in relationships and in one lesson in year two about forgiveness, one pupil stated, " We should forgive people even when they really annoy us." As a result behaviour in the school is judged to be excellent.
- Recognising and applauding personal achievement are central to daily life, with much coveted merit certificates rewarding children for anything from 'being a good friend' to achievement outside school.
- Pupils were readily able to give examples of how they serve others. There is a high level of ownership of the Missio Prayer, which they say daily and which pupils like because it "helps them to consider the needs of children all over the world." Carol singing for the local community, taking food to St Anne's for the homeless and fundraising for CAFOD, Shoe Box and Mary's Meals further enhance the pupils' understanding of service.
- Pupils demonstrate a strong religious identity and regardless of faith pupils verbalise this identity clearly.
- Pupils are very proud to be members of St Pancras and are able to give very good examples of the outwards signs of it being a Catholic school – prayer focus areas in every classroom, signs and symbols around the school and the beautiful prayer garden.
- Good opportunities are given for children to come to know their parish and diocesan communities, ranging from direct involvement in parish masses to taking part in the Good Shepherd mass at Worth Abbey.

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

- There is a clarity about the school's mission statement which places 'Christ at its centre, nurturing spiritual growth for all', in a school where everyone is encouraged to 'discover their

potential and embrace wide ambitions'. Pupils throughout the day voiced principles of their mission as, "We always let our little light shine" and "Be the best we can."

- St Pancras is a supportive and joyful community where there is a tangible feeling of support and nurture for each other. There is a true sense of family in the community, which one parent spoke of as the 'soul' of the school.
- The learning environment is immaculate and exceptionally well presented, providing pupils with a model of high expectation; it demonstrates a true value of the faith and is extrinsically Catholic. This provides excellent concrete and effective signs to the whole community of the school's mission and identity.
- There is a palpable sense of children supporting children, evidence of a high quality pastoral care system which consists of a number of specific programmes which support the most needy and vulnerable: two Rainbows groups, a Relaxation Therapy and a Nurture Group. Pupils voiced how valuable the Rainbows sessions were in supporting their wellbeing. The whole school meets on a weekly basis in family groups to discuss personal wellbeing issues.
- The Programme for Education in Personal Relationships aligns with diocesan guidelines and provides an excellent structure for nurturing children's social, moral and physical development.
- Staff demonstrate that they clearly work as a team and are committed to the vision of the school and its journey towards further excellence.
- The school behaviour policy is deeply rooted in the teachings of the Church, premised on principles of justice, healing and reconciliation. Children themselves, in family groups, compiled the behaviour code and fully own it. It is reviewed annually. One child stated, "This is a bully free school. There is no reason to worry because you can speak your mind and teachers will always help you."

#### **How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is**

- The headteacher is an exceptionally strong witness to the school's central purpose, 'to educate each child entrusted to our care to their full potential, to sustain and develop and practice of our Catholic Faith and to demonstrate the presence of Christ in our community'. She is clearly dynamic with a vision for the school which is forward thinking and vibrant and the response of the community is evident. One parent wrote, "The school has become increasingly Catholic in nature over the past few years." Parents value the relationship that the headteacher has with the children.
- The school's own self evaluation and discussions on the day of inspection demonstrate that the senior leaders know their school very well, have a very clear understanding of their strengths and know what they need to do to further strengthen the Catholic life of the school. Their passionate commitment to the task of providing an authentic experience of the Faith is tangible.
- The school is committed to looking outward to the deanery and diocese, taking a lead on organising a deanery cluster in-service day on the use of scripture for 72 teachers in June 2014, a day which served to enhance the Catholic life of all schools involved.
- The School Development Plan illustrates well targeted planned improvements for the future. This is a school which looks to partner schools and settings for collaboration and examples of best practice which can be shared. There is evidence that staff have visited outstanding settings to benchmark standards.
- There was high percentage response to the parent questionnaire, with fifty two returned forms. All but a couple were highly supportive of the work that the school does for their children and a clear message emanating from many was encapsulated by one parent who said, "We are very grateful for the exceptional quality of religious education which our daughter has been offered at St Pancras. It is a real enrichment for whole family."

- The headteacher leads by example and seeks to nurture all families and the individual needs of each child. One parent described how the headteacher had ‘cradled’ her child, maximised her potential and promoted self confidence and the parent was very grateful for this.
- The governors, led by an ambitious Chair, are undoubtedly very ambitious for the school, highly supportive of the leadership team and committed to whole school improvement. There is a designated governor for RE and along with other governors, they have driven forward with school improvement since the last inspection. Their impact is evident. Of significant note, a current initiative, The Friends of St Pancras, led by the Chair intends to galvanise links between the parish and the school. The Chair voiced his recognition of the impact of the headteacher on standards in the school, describing her as energetic, tireless and dynamic.

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP / PRAYER AND WORSHIP

- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school’s Collective Worship
- The quality of provision for Collective Worship.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

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### **How well pupils respond to and participate in the school’s Collective Worship is Good**

- In the observed act of worship, a whole school assembly, pupils acted with reverence and some played an active part with readings, playing the piano and operating the PowerPoint. Pupils sang joyfully and joined in with community prayers.
- Pupils are regularly involved in preparing liturgies for the school, for example the Mary Devotion and Corpus Christi liturgy and they play an active role in bringing assemblies to life, setting up assemblies with a prayer focus, candle, artefacts and a Bible. Pupils regularly write bidding prayers for use in school and in the parish and one of these was heard during the year six lesson. Pupil-led liturgy was not observed on the day of inspection.
- Prayer is embedded in the fabric of the school and at the heart of the religious life. Pupils make a very good contribution to this; they lead their class prayer, choosing and reading for others. The Pupil Press, a regular newsletter to the community demonstrates that pupils write their own prayers and show an awareness of the wider world in which they live.
- In some lessons observed teachers had included opportunities for personal reflection and spontaneous prayer. Pupils also spoke about circle time when each person shares a prayer or thought. If someone does not want to speak aloud they touch the person next to them or say the prayer in their head. The school is currently finalising a ‘Prayer Book’ which includes traditional prayers of the Faith as well as prayers from other faiths and languages.
- Many pupils expressed a clear understanding of the Church’s liturgical year, its seasons and its feasts. Opportunities for reflection are built into the school calendar, for instance the 100 days of peace during the Olympic Games. Pupils knew that their prayers reflected the Catholic religious season and festivals of other faiths including Hannukah, Divali and the Chinese New Year. The school records a high level of attendance at the lunchtime Rosary club during May where children choose, read and lead prayers.

- There is a very clear and deep sense of respect for different faiths so eloquently expressed by pupils who know the importance of their school's diversity and value difference. All these experiences contribute to their spiritual and moral development which is outstanding.
- This is a prayerful, worshipping community which is highly inclusive.

#### **The quality of provision for Collective Worship is outstanding**

- Collective worship is clearly central to the life of the school and prayer is a natural part of the school day, with pupils and staff valuing its importance to their daily lives. There is a great breadth of experience provided for the community to worship together, as recorded in the school's big books of liturgies and celebrations. Pupils spoke with fond memories about The Stations of the Cross earlier this year and St. Pancras Day.
- Adults regularly pray together, with all meetings beginning and ending with a prayer focusing on a relevant liturgical event.
- The school's own records, confirmed by parents spoken to, indicate that liturgies, assemblies and masses are very well attended by parents and their responses reflect the high sense of involvement they feel in the community. One parent stated that liturgies involving the children trigger an emotional response on a regular basis. Parents also confirmed that increasing numbers of parents are attending assemblies and liturgies.
- Diversity of faith and an understanding of other traditions are clearly woven into daily learning and worship.
- The parish priest, Father Jonathan plays an active role, visiting and working with classes on a weekly basis. Parents spoke highly of his warmth and the contribution he makes, valuing that he knew all children by name. Father Jonathan's vision for the school is that each child leaves St. Pancras with a strong sense of dignity and self worth and knows that they are loved by God.

#### **How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship is outstanding**

- The headteacher is an excellent role model who provides a clear vision and direction for prayer and worship, committed and passionate to delivering an experience of faith which is of the highest quality. The senior leadership team play a key visible role in modelling the expected excellent standard of collective worship in the school. Monday's gospel assembly is led as an example of best practice by the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team and this was referred to by parents, pupils and the Chair of Governors.
- All teachers prepare and lead key stage and whole school assemblies and prepare liturgies for staff meetings.
- Liturgical and spiritual development are seen as a priority in the professional development of the headteacher and other staff, with all having religious education targets as part of the appraisal process.
- The school values feedback from all stakeholders and parents and pupils expressed very positive experiences of collective worship. Monitoring and reviewing standards are key elements of practice. External validation of the excellent work going on is highly valued by the leadership team and serves to drive development forward. This was evident on the day of inspection apparent in the openness of the leadership team to receive constructive advice and comment. Notably, Ofsted in 2013 and the diocesan Education Advisor in 2014 both recorded that attitudes and prayer behaviour was excellent in observed liturgies.

# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

## THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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

- Unprompted, pupils spoke passionately about learning in RE and clearly value it as one of their most important lessons. They say that teachers make learning special and fun.
- In the outstanding lesson observed pupils were always on task, worked independently and achieved a good level of output. They were enthusiastic in their learning.
- Evidence in the pupil's books indicates a high level of expectation and a response from pupils which is at least in line with standards observed in other diocesan schools. The range and quality of tasks designed for pupils is broad, interesting and encouraging.
- There is a high level of religious literacy across the school, with children of diverse faith backgrounds demonstrating a good ability to explain the Faith and its story.
- As a result, pupils are making sustained progress over time. With more open ended tasks and less scaffolding from teachers all pupils, but significantly the more able, will achieve even higher standards.

### **The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is good.**

- Of the lessons observed on the inspection day, the quality of teaching was good with one example of an outstanding lesson. The school's own evidence indicates that the standard of teaching has risen significantly since the last inspection and that typically lessons are always good and regularly outstanding with some teachers.
- All teachers observed demonstrated a confident level of expertise and they had very well prepared lessons which promoted good learning. A strong commitment to CPD has ensured that all teachers have attended all the diocesan 'Come and See' training and this is evident in their planning and delivery. Learning objectives were clearly communicated to pupils and activities were for the most part well designed and interesting. Resources were well prepared and facilitated children's progress during lessons.
- Progress across the school is at least good and sometimes better.
- In the outstanding lesson, which focused on Moses receiving the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai, pace was excellent with activities which were clearly time-bonded, leading a high level of motivation for the pupils. In this case, enthusiasm and passion shone through. The school's own self assessment accurately records that teachers 'ask probing questions during lessons to check how well children have understood their work'.
- Where teaching was not outstanding there needed to be more opportunity provided for the most able pupils to express their understanding in more independent, creative ways, with less scaffolding provided by the teacher. This would bring about a higher level of work, pupil engagement and enthusiasm in lessons. Selecting appropriate starting points for these more able pupils will ensure that they rapidly engage in tasks which match their ability.

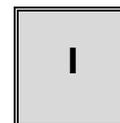
- In two lessons, less able groups were observed engaged in role play activities and their level of engagement and enthusiasm was not as good as might have been intended. More challenging tasks which truly stretch the thinking and reflection required by these pupils would have enhanced the quality of learning.
- In lessons which are not yet outstanding, teachers should provide many more opportunities for pupils to express their thoughts through peer discussion, less directed by the teacher.
- Marking is clearly very affirming of pupils' achievements across the school. Where practice is outstanding pupils are given very regular and systematic opportunities to respond to advice. While there is evidence of this type of marking across the school, it still needs to be fully embedded as solid practice in all classes.
- Celebration assemblies led by the deputy head teacher provide a regular and excellent arena for rewarding children's achievement and exemplifying to other high expectations in RE.
- Assessment procedures are very well embedded across the school as evidence in the school's portfolios and in the pupils' books. There is strong evidence of both in-school and cross-school moderation of standards.

**How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is outstanding.**

- There is a very strong sense of strategic action being taken on the part of the school, led by a passionate headteacher supported by her deputy head teacher and able team, which results in standards which are ever improving. Leaders involved with RE have a clear vision for the future. The school clearly evidence where feedback to teachers regarding practice has had a positive impact on standards and this places the school in a good position to improve further.
- In their own self evaluation schools leaders, including the school governors provide a coherent reflection of rigorous monitoring, searching analysis and self challenge which is well informed by best practice.
- Senior leaders inspire confidence and whole hearted commitment from pupils and colleagues, leading by example and ensuring that RE has a very high profile in the school. The deputy head teacher launches all new 'Come and See' themes in child-centred, interactive assemblies.
- Curriculum planning is of a high quality which was reflected in all the lesson plans seen on the inspection day.
- Opportunities for celebrating and experiencing the liturgical life of the Catholic Church and the wide diversity of beliefs within the school community are clearly woven through the curriculum. This is in strong evidence in the pupil's work, in whole school big books and in central displays.
- Religious education is afforded a good budget for resources and the impact is such that prayer focus areas in classrooms and other areas around the school place a high value on the Faith. The investment in the prayer garden and other outside areas all contribute to creating an environment worthy of an outstanding Catholic school.
- Sacramental preparation which is parish lead, is fully supported by the school at appropriate times, for instance with Holy Communion. Pupils are able to celebrate this important event through the May Procession and Corpus Christi, on one occasion scattering petals. Within the recent past, several pupils have been baptised into the Faith, testament to a parish and school community which is impacting positively on the wider community and drawing families to the Faith.

## Summary of Inspection Judgements

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.



### Catholic Life



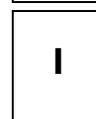
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.



The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school



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



### Collective Worship



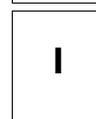
How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' Collective Worship.



The quality of provision for Collective Worship



How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.



### Religious Education



How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.



The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education



How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

