



St Polycarp's Catholic Primary School

Waverley Lane, Farnham, Surrey. GU9 8BQ
 School Unique Reference Number: 125206

Inspection date:	12 – 06 - 2014
Lead Inspector:	Mr Stephen Beck
Associate Inspector:	Mrs Angela Ireland
Headteacher:	Mrs Ann Gunn
Chair of Governors:	Mrs Mary McGrath

Overall Effectiveness	Previous Inspection:	1
	This inspection:	1
Catholic Life:		1
Collective Worship:		1
Religious Education:		1

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Polycarp's is an outstanding Catholic school because:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It has sustained and continued to build on its highly effective, distinctly Catholic ethos that places equal value on academic achievement and the pupils personal faith development. ▪ The headteacher gives outstanding direction to staff and pupils as she nurtures and empowers them to give of their very best. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerous opportunities for personal and collective worship result in pupils' spiritual and moral development being outstanding. • Prayer and worship are exceedingly strong and integral to the life of the school. • Worship and liturgical messages are |
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relationships are excellent and pupils behaviour exemplary • Pupils are encouraged to strive for excellence in all areas of their academic and personal development. • As evidenced in its self-evaluation it has a depth of understanding of its strengths and areas for development. 	<p>delivered in a lively, interesting and prayerful way and where possible are interactive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worship is greatly enhanced by high quality music, singing, artefacts and focal points. • Acts of worship are not seen in isolation but are reflected on in class deepening pupils' relationship with God.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Catholic Life of the school is marked by the awareness of the governors, headteacher and leadership teams of the importance of promoting pupil contributions to the life of the school. ▪ Pupils are encouraged to recognise commonality and respect differences and as a result are proud of their backgrounds and beliefs and have a strong sense of personal worth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The quality of religious education seen was in the majority outstanding with none less than good. ▪ The teaching team has great strength and considerable subject expertise. ▪ As a result of excellent teaching pupils have high levels of religious literacy from which they can build moral reasoning and think morally.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Polycarp's Catholic Primary School is Voluntary Aided. It is situated in the Guildford Deanery and is maintained by Surrey Local Authority.
- The school takes pupils from 4 to 11 and the number of pupils currently on roll is 407 drawn from 296 families and of these 87% are Catholic.
- The school is larger than average sized primary schools.
- It is a popular school drawing from a wide geographical area.
- Demographic changes are seeing an increasing number of bilingual pupils and a growing number of ethnic groupings.
- The school shares its site with the Catholic Church of St Joan, the parish which it serves.
- Higher than average numbers of pupils (26%) join the school at Key Stage 2 reflecting above average levels of mobility.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is well below average at 11%.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is significantly below average at 3%.
- Currently 20% of pupils come from backgrounds other than White British and this figure is on an upward trend, although only a small number are at the earliest stages of learning English.

Since the last inspection the school has successfully progressed the points for action and has moved to the new Diocesan approved 'Come and See' religious education programme.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

- Provide even more opportunities for older pupils to engage in higher level skills and independent research.
- Consider reviewing the content of the school's website to provide opportunities to more explicitly celebrate the religious life and curriculum of the school.

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

- Pupils have a strong sense of belonging to the school community and that of St Joan's parish with which strong links have been established. They are keen to take part in all aspects of the Catholic life of the school and to make a contribution themselves.
- Pupils are very inclusive in their behaviour and acceptance of different backgrounds and needs. They are interested in finding out about other faiths and are fascinated by similarities and differences.
- Pupils are eager to take on responsibility within school and the wider community. They are very aware of the Catholic character of the school and what this means in terms of relationships with God, their behaviour in being ambassadors for the school and in caring for other children, in fact living the Gospel.

- Through the School Council, Eco Committee and One World Committee pupils are able to influence the development of the Catholic character of the school. They are keen to take on this responsibility.
- It is central to St Polycarp's ethos that each child is made in God's image and as such is nurtured so that they develop their unique gifts and value everyone's talents.
- Pupils look beyond their community to the needs of others, for example through each class signing a covenant for the poor each year to raise funds for a charity of their choosing.

The quality of provision of the Catholic Life of the school

- The school mission statement was created by the current staff, pupils, parents and governors. This ownership of the statement sees it lived out in the daily life of the school. It is commendable that it has also been shared with the parish community.
- All members of the school community care about each other, their well-being and development. St Polycarp's is a very welcoming school from the point of first contact.
- High standards of behaviour reflect Gospel values and a sense of following in the footsteps of Jesus is explicit.
- The school has an 'open door policy' and communication between parents, staff and the parish is excellent.
- There is a well-established and clear policy for PHSE and SRE that is understood and appreciated by parents.
- Display work is of a very high standard. The reception area was marked by a striking display on Pentecost. A corridor display relating to Mary provided a well-used prayer area and focal point for pupils that the school plans to maintain.
- Artefacts are well chosen and strongly illustrate the Catholic nature of the school.
- Classroom focal points are consistent and are of a very high standard. They are well used to celebrate pupils' work and to offer opportunities for prayer and reflection.

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

- The leadership of the school in its widest sense is fully committed to developing the Catholic life of the school. There is a strong collegiate approach in which an openness to challenge is evident that not only focusses on continual improvement, but does so in an atmosphere of true critical friendship.
- Provision is regularly monitored and evaluated and changes are made as necessary. The drive for improvement provides an emphasis that makes it clear complacency is not an option.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the school mission and are fully committed to it. They bear witness in their daily lives and continue to do so after leaving St Polycarp's.
- A vast majority of parents are supportive of the school's Catholic ethos and value it. Particularly valued are the sense of community and targeted support given to families. The school benefits from a strong supportive Parents Association that both fundraises and provides a social network for the school.
- The exceptionally strong relationships between school and parish, greatly strengthen the Catholic life of the school. The school and parish maximise the advantages of being so geographically close to each other. The school liaises well with a number of other parishes from which its pupils come and fosters links whenever possible.
- St Polycarp's benefits from, and highly values, the time given to the school by the parish priest, who provides a comprehensive chaplaincy role to the whole community. This greatly strengthens the home, school, parish partnership.

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

- Pupils respond well to collective worship of all kinds, they enjoy being involved and are keen to take part. They are taught and given the skills to plan and lead collective worship both in school and church.
- Collective worship contributes substantially to children's spiritual & moral development. The headteacher and parish priest work together so that all aspects of collective worship are mutually supportive to their communities.
- High levels of participation were evident in all acts of worship seen. Pupils are engaged, prayerful, reverent and keen to contribute.
- Pupils are given many opportunities to compose their own prayers which they do from a very young age. These are often used in liturgical celebrations. These complement a knowledge and understanding of the traditional prayers of the church.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship

- Collective worship is central to the life of the school.
- Collective worship is high quality. Staff place great emphasis on planning for it and pupils are keen to be involved in its development.
- The pupils have a rich liturgical experience in school and in school masses. This reflects their keenness to continue and develop their faith while at St Polycarp's and beyond.
- There are excellent opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually. This has led to some families choosing to become Catholics as a result of pupils attending St Polycarp's. This reflects the philosophy of evangelisation that runs through the school, based on the recognition of each individual's faith journey.
- Provision is enhanced by high quality music, singing, artefacts and focal points.
- Importantly, acts of worship are not seen in isolation, but are reflected on in class. This helps to deepen pupils' relationships with God.

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

- Worship is carefully planned around the liturgical year.

- The leadership team are good role models in practice as they demonstrate their own strong faith. They try to live out the Gospel values and are visible at parish celebrations as well as attending First Holy Communion celebrations in all of the parishes.
- The leadership team evaluate provision on a regular basis and adapt practice accordingly.
- Leaders' own spiritual development is seen as a priority. The headteacher attends diocesan pilgrimages. The religious education coordinator and headteacher are both Eucharistic ministers. All leadership team members attend training and retreat days when possible and are actively involved in their parishes.
- Through frequent visits and involvement in school life governors have a good understanding of the quality of provision and its ongoing development.

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

- Pupils clearly enjoy religious education lessons and they understand their value. They are able to apply what they have learnt in the context of their daily lives. They are focussed. The vast majority of pupils concentrate well and are eager to complete tasks independently. They can discuss what they have learnt and show that they are reflective, not only in lessons, but generally.
- Progress is evident within lessons and over time as reflected in pupil workbooks.
- Religious education is highly valued and there is no significant difference in the progress of vulnerable groups. It is noteworthy that one of the school's disabled pupils has been awarded a religious education scholarship at an independent secondary school for 2014.

- Attainment in religious education is evidenced to be high and is at least in line with other national curriculum subjects and frequently above.
- As a pupil said, "I like my religious education lessons because I learn about how Jesus wants me to live and I can then do this in my life."
- Pupils are religiously literate across the school and this is a strength.
- Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons and said that the new programme of study was challenging and the questions more interesting.
- Work in books is very well presented and demonstrates progress over time.
- Pupils take pride in the presentation of their work and record it in a variety of ways.
- Pupils settle quickly to work and are able to work individually, in pairs and in groups and rotate these approaches with ease. Behaviour in class is exemplary.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious education

- School observations show a consistent level of outstanding teaching. There is a number of experienced staff, including the religious education coordinator who work hard to support new staff and those who are of other faiths. Non-Catholic staff are paired with a Catholic year partner and they work closely together to plan.
- Lessons are varied, lively and enthuse pupils. Staff are very pro-active in finding out more and have a desire to 'get it right'.
- Marking is thorough and gives pupils the opportunity to reflect on their learning. Developmental marking is evident with opportunities for pupils to respond becoming embedded.
- Teachers have high expectations of engagement and demonstrate the importance of religious education at St Polycarp's.
- Teachers are skilled at questioning.
- Lessons are planned and resourced to a high standard.
- The outstanding lessons seen were marked by challenge, creativity, strong cross curricular links and excellent classroom management. In a Year 3 group activity, decisions were being made about what was and what was not a sin and this was adjudicated by a pupil acting as a judge.

- Lessons are strengthened by extensive new learning and progress made over the lessons, which build on previous learning.
- Pupils are very well supported, especially those with additional needs. Supporting adults are well prepared, with the relationships between pupils and adults having a positive impact on learning.
- Continuity of assessment from the previous programme to the new one has been very well managed and is supporting the school in making accurate judgements.
- Moderation has taken place and the school plans to continue to develop this within the deanery cluster.

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

- Leaders prioritise religious education and ensure that best practice is shared. Time is given for staff training and discussion (particularly when a new topic is to be covered). They ensure religious education has a high profile and is seen as a core subject.
- Religious education is prioritised in the School Development Plan, is well resourced and receives funding comparable to other core subjects.
- The religious education coordinator is proactive in providing information for staff, making sure that they understand Catholic doctrine and the liturgical year.
- The parish priest is generous with his time providing CPD for staff and spiritual guidance. The chaplaincy role he provides to the school community is highly valued and much appreciated.
- Additional time is prioritised in the timetable to allow Year 3 sufficient time to prepare and celebrate First Holy Communion with the Sacrament of Reconciliation celebrated in school.
- Families take the opportunity to become involved in liturgical celebrations (including non-Catholic families).
- The religious education governor works well with the subject coordinator and has a sound grasp of attainment, the school's strengths and areas for development. She provides a good link to the governing body.
- Parents are provided with information on the religious education curriculum in line with other areas and feel well supported to help their children at home.

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	
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Religious Education	
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