

**ARCHDIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK
COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS & COLLEGES**



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Archbishop of Southwark and Inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

St Paul's Academy
Wickham Lane
Abbey Wood
SE2 0XX

URN 105135

Chair of Governors Mr David Mallen
Principal Mr Patrick Winston
Inspectors Mr Michael Edwards
Ms Maureen Rebbitt

Inspection date 15-16 May 2008

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COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS & COLLEGES**
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Introduction

Description of the School

St Paul's Academy, with specialisms in sport and enterprise, was established by the Archdiocese of Southwark in 2005 on the site of the former St Paul's Catholic School with plans in place to move into a new building in Abbey Wood in 2010. The academy seeks to serve both the Catholic and local community with a designated 33% of community places. It is situated in the Deanery of Greenwich and is situated in the Parish of St Patrick's, Plumstead. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 72% overall, with 63% in years 7, 8 and 9 (representing the first three years of the academy). The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to religious education is 8.5% in both Key Stages 3 and 4.

The academy takes students from 11 to 16 years. The number of students currently on roll is 750. The attainment of students on entering the school is broadly average. The percentage known to be eligible for free schools meals is well above average. 6.3% have a statement for special educational needs and a further 25.4% on roll with additional educational needs which is above the national average. The academy also has a designated Special Provision Unit for 16 students with moderate and complex difficulties. The academy serves a socially disadvantaged area and 53.6% of its students come from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. A significant proportion of students (17%) come from homes where English is an additional language.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding	Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 2	Good	Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness as a Catholic school

St Paul's Academy is a very good Catholic school with many outstanding features. It seeks to serve both the Catholic and local community, welcoming all those who embrace its values and share its quest for excellence. It is a model of an inclusive Catholic school that seeks to serve the common good and thereby making a significant contribution to community cohesion. It provides excellent care for its students within a safe environment where they feel valued. It has a distinct Catholic identity, welcoming those of other faiths or of none, which pervades its daily life and underpins relationships, which are very good. It is led by an outstanding principal and is very well supported by governors, staff and parents. They have all worked hard to develop and

sustain high quality provision under the extremely challenging circumstances of inadequate buildings and facilities. This is the first Section 48 inspection since the academy was founded. It has established a sound view of its strengths and areas for development through its self evaluation. There are good links with local clergy and parishes, including the local Anglican Vicar, and the school has a very well planned and supported programme for chaplaincy offering many excellent opportunities for the religious and spiritual development of the students. Opportunities for prayer and worship through assemblies and other liturgies are very good. Although the religious education curriculum broadly meets diocesan requirements, the religious education curriculum for Key Stage 3 is in need of careful review in the light of the academy's decision to condense the Key Stage 3 curriculum into two years and also in the context of its multi-faith and community dimensions. The Key Stage 4 curriculum is appropriate and innovative, offering the opportunity for a significant number of students to achieve a GCSE in Religious Studies at the end of Year 10 and a GCSE in Philosophy and Ethics by the end of Year 11. The attainment of students compares favourably with other subjects in the academy and national data. The quality of teaching in religious education is overall good. The leadership of the school have realistically identified their priorities for development which indicates a capacity to improve even further.

Grade 2

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Ensure that the quality of the daily act of worship in form groups always reaches the standards of the best through continued support given to all staff with effective monitoring.

Review the structure, leadership and management of the religious education department in order to ensure that good practice is shared and developed, policies are in place, especially for assessment for learning and application of targets and levels, and that they are consistently applied, monitored and evaluated.

Implement the planned review of the Key Stage 3 religious education curriculum to make it even more appropriate in meeting the needs of students in the context of covering the elements of the Curriculum Directory in two years and of the nature of the academy that actively seeks to welcome students from other faiths or of none.

The Catholic life of the school

Leadership and management

Leadership of the academy is outstanding. The principal leads by example and has a strong presence and is well supported by the vice principal in this crucial stage in the development of the academy and within the limitations of the present site. Senior staff are committed to the mission of the academy which has an impact on its ethos as a positive, affirming, caring community which reinforces the academy as a place of learning based on gospel values. The principal promotes a clear vision as a Catholic community that actively welcomes the opportunity to serve the local community and is fully supported by the governors. High priority is given to ensuring that the Catholic life of the academy is sustained and developed through effective leadership of chaplaincy in partnership with learning mentors and outside agencies. There are strategies in place to develop religious education which stems from accurate self-evaluation and a vision for what is needed to develop the leadership and management of religious education and its Key Stage 3 curriculum. Governors are very effective in monitoring and supporting the Catholic life of the school and are fully aware of the developments needed to improve the religious education provision. The academy's self evaluation accurately describes the school, identifying its strengths and ways in which the academy could improve.

Grade 1

Quality of Catholic life of the school

The quality of the Catholic life of the academy is outstanding. There are effective visual images and displays around the school that celebrate its mission and ethos. A good example of this is the central display in the hall with eye-catching posters "All are one in Christ", and current liturgical themes such as "Come Holy Spirit" together with photographs of away days and retreat days. The academy is most welcoming. Relationships are very good. Students are courteous to and considerate of each other and are respectful towards staff both in lessons and around the school. Students feel cared for and valued and most are happy to be in the academy and the majority of parents are highly supportive. The academy provides a high level of chaplaincy and pastoral support. Local parish clergy come into the school and support the sacramental life of the academy as does the local Anglican priest. The vice chair of governors is also a local parish priest and is in the school each week as part of the chaplaincy team. The experienced full-time and part-time lay chaplains give outstanding service to the community ensuring that chaplaincy is inclusive and connects with all aspects of the life of the academy. There are good opportunities provided for the spiritual and

religious formation of students through the reflection days and the retreat programmes as well as spiritual and moral development through prayer, worship and assemblies and in the context of lessons. There are very well established links with a number of charities and such concern for others is extremely important in the academy. Significant sums of money have been raised to provide resources for an education project in Kenya and a whole range of charities including a local hospice, McMillan, Vision Aid and CAFOD for example. The programme of assemblies, the religious education lessons and other areas of the curriculum have developed students' understanding and appreciation of the needs of others both locally and globally.

Grade 1

Quality of provision for personal and collective worship

Planning and provision for personal and collective worship is excellent. There is a well organised programme for worship that includes Masses, assemblies and a range of other opportunities during the liturgical year. There is good opportunity for student participation in the assemblies. However, the quality of the acts of worship could be improved through encouraging a higher level of student response and ensuring that the quality of worship in form groups always reaches the expected standards of the academy.

Grade 2

Community Cohesion

The mission statement is lived out in its commitment to community cohesion. The inclusive nature of the academy where every person is welcomed, encouraged and valued in their own right is promoted at every level. The chaplaincy and mentoring teams, along with other outside agencies, work closely together to provide an outstanding level of support for the students embracing its multiracial and multicultural dimensions and promoting positive relationships. Community cohesion extends into the local community most especially through the specialisms of sport and enterprise and also through the Designated Special Provision the academy offers. Those who lead in these areas are dedicated to ensuring that the academy actively promotes community cohesion. There are many opportunities for collective worship where all members of the community are welcome. Away days and retreats are subsidised making it possible for all students to participate.

Grade 1

Religious education

Achievement and standards

The inspectors agree with the school's own self evaluation that achievement and standards in religious education are good. At Key Stage 3 students are making good progress. The majority of students enjoy their religious education lessons and make a positive contribution to lessons. At Key Stage 4 students are making very good progress. Last year 63% of Year 11 achieved grades A*-C and 62 Year 10 students were entered with 94% achieving grades A*-C. The number of students achieving A* and A grades is significantly good with 25% of the Year 11 students achieving these grades and 40% of the Year 10 cohort. Achievement and progress compares well with the Key Stage 3 data. Students appear to enjoy religious education and participate well in lessons. Very good opportunities are provided in lessons throughout the school for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Grade 2

Teaching and learning in religious education

Teaching is overall good and sometimes outstanding with some satisfactory elements and the inspectors agree with the school's own judgements on teaching and learning. Most teachers put considerable time and effort into the preparation of creative and challenging lessons although they tend to be predominantly teacher led. Students reported that they enjoyed their religious education lessons. Assessment for learning is in the process of being developed and the academy has an effective system in place for monitoring and tracking students' progress. This needs to be developed so that the department takes greater ownership of monitoring outcomes. Assessment and marking could be enhanced with a more consistent use of formative comments by teachers in students' work and through implementation of levels of attainment consistently throughout the department. Good use is made of ICT. Classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards which are generally used well in lessons to enhance teaching and learning. Provision for students with special needs is generally good and teachers ensure that lessons are appropriately differentiated to meet the needs of students including suitable challenges for the most able. Good use is made of support assistants in lessons. Lessons are well planned. In the best lessons the overall pace and challenge is good and a variety of teaching and learning opportunities were seen. In most lessons opportunities for spiritual and moral development are good.

Grade 2

The religious education curriculum

The curriculum time given to religious education in both Key Stages 3 and 4 is 8.5% of the total taught curriculum time. However, bearing in mind that this total time is greater than that offered in most schools, the time allocated would be equivalent to 10% compared with other schools. It therefore meets the requirements of the Bishops of England and Wales in this context. The Key Stage 3 curriculum has been condensed into two years and is based on using resources from *The Way, The Truth and The Life*. This needs to be reviewed in terms of making it even more appropriate in meeting the needs of students in the context of covering the elements of the Curriculum Directory for this Key Stage in two years and of the nature of the academy that actively seeks to welcome students from other faiths or of none. At Key Stage 4 the academy teaches the AQA specification in Religious Studies and additionally the OCR specification in Philosophy and Ethics for the more able students. These have been successful, meet the needs of students and give the opportunity for pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding of their own faith and the faith of others. Overall students are making good progress. There are enrichment activities mainly delivered by the chaplaincy team which include away days, retreat opportunities and liturgical celebrations. The programmes for both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 create opportunities for students' spiritual and moral development.

Grade 3

Leadership and management

The inspectors agree with the academy's own self evaluation in this area. Although students' achievement at the end of Key Stage 4 is good, leadership and management of the subject require some evaluation. There needs to be a comprehensive department handbook in place which contains useful information about the department, for example, its policies and programmes of study along with details of tracking and monitoring student progress across Key Stages 3 and 4 as well evaluations of teaching and learning in the department, assessment, marking and moderation, records of meetings, self-evaluation, development plans, finance and pupil views on teaching and learning in religious education. Such management tools do not appear to be fully in place. This would ensure a consistent approach across the department and thereby raise achievement even higher.

Grade 3
