



INSPECTION REPORT

St Peter's Catholic Primary School Gloucester

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URN Number: 134928

Headteacher: Mrs Carol Baron

Chair of Governors: Mr James Evans

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Diocese of Clifton
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Date of inspection: February 10th 2011
Date of previous inspection: March 8th & 9th 2010

Reporting Inspector: Mrs A Fowler

Description and context of School

St Peter's is much larger in size than most other primary schools in the diocese. Pupils come from a wide range of heritages. About two thirds of all pupils are of White British heritage. Other groups represented include pupils from Asian or Asian British-Indian backgrounds. The school serves three parishes within the Gloucester deanery, St Peter's Gloucester, St Augustine's Matson and English Martyrs Tuffley. The school has good relationships with all the parishes and enjoys strong support from parents. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion identified as having special educational needs, mainly related to speech language and communication difficulties, including those with statements, is below average. There are an increasing number of pupils with English as an additional language. Since the last inspection building work has started on a new Nursery and a new school building, to replace the current one. The School was given a notice to improve by Ofsted in December 2009 and has since made remarkable progress with Ofsted revisiting the school at the beginning of February placing the school in the Good category. This section 48 monitoring visit follows on that inspection and is therefore a briefer report than normal intended to provide a snap shot of the school at present.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 2

St Peter's is a good Catholic school with some outstanding features. Its Catholicity is central to its mission with the head teacher and governors committed to promoting the ethos of the school. During the last twelve months the focus has been to raise standards; this drive has also raised standards in RE. Pupils are proud of the school and clearly excited by their learning. The whole community is able to articulate and reflect on the values the school promotes. The local parish priest is a regular visitor to the school and helps ensure that relationships between school and parish are good.

The capacity of the school community to improve and develop

Grade 1

Since the previous inspection the school has already taken steps to address the issues identified. The leadership team and the governors are committed to raising standards and to promoting the Catholicity of the school. They know their school well; have effective processes for monitoring and evaluating the distinctive nature of the school, and a vision of where they want to be in the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that progress in written activities is truly progressive and reflects the full range of assessment opportunities.
- Continue to embed the new syllabus so that it translates into an effective scheme of work with assessment opportunities in place
- Continue to develop the chaplaincy team working towards including pupils in its make up

How good are outcomes for pupils, taking account of variations between different groups?

Grade 2

Pupils are fully involved in the Catholic life of the school. They are able to articulate clearly what it means to be part of a Catholic school and are proud of their community. They respect each other and the adults model the behaviour they wish to see. Their spiritual and moral development is excellent and values are reinforced by the whole school community. These values (the focus was on peace during the inspection) are reinforced by worship, through classroom activities and in displays around the school.

Pupils' response to the prayer life of the school is good. During the Mass which took place during the inspection pupils were fully involved, through music, and through taking part in the readings and prayers of the Mass. Younger pupils in particular were helped to understand the meaning of some of the music through signing the words as well as singing. They understand the importance of prayer and are able to make connections between faith and life.

The school's focus on learning has translated well into RE lessons. During the lessons observed their joy in learning was apparent and lessons generated a spirit of enquiry which reinforced the ability of the pupils to think critically, draw conclusions, work as a team and reflect on their own work. In a year two lesson for example pupils had been asked to select from a given set of appropriate images and words for a prayer card for someone who was ill. One child looking at a picture of a wine glass explained that this could be for a party in which case she wouldn't use it but it could also be that the family were going to Mass and this could show the wine used at Mass. For young children this is excellent analytical thinking. Older pupils were showing an increasing use of religious language and an ability to work independently using and analysing source material. Lessons were well planned and structured and made good use of ICT facilities. What is less secure is the translation into written work. There were some excellent examples particularly from year 6 work where pupils had been given written tasks that were structured in a way that enabled them to reach higher levels but this practice wasn't consistent. This is partly because the new scheme of work is not fully embedded and more work needs to be done on deciding appropriate written tasks. The school is already aware of the need to do this. Marking also needs to be more consistent and constructive. Where suggestions are made to pupils to improve work opportunities should be provided to see that this is followed through.

How effective are leaders and managers in developing the Catholic Life of the school?

Grade 2

Good leadership and management promote the Catholic life of the school. The head teacher is providing inspiring leadership with a clear vision of where she wants the school to be and has created a culture where improving learning is the overriding priority for everyone in the school community. The staff share this priority and there is a strong sense of mutual support. The Catholic ethos of the school is seen as central to all that the school does. The chaplaincy team involves parents, governors, priest and staff and is an excellent way of supporting both classroom RE and the religious life of the school. The team reports to the full governing body and thus acts as a source of information for the governors to help them monitor the Catholic life of the school. The governors have also appointed a link governor for RE which furthers helps develop the monitoring and evaluation procedures. Governors are frequent visitors to the school and therefore gain information first hand. The coordinator contributes enthusiastically to the prayer life of the school and has plans to further develop monitoring and assessment procedures that will enhance her leadership skills. Adults are excellent role models for pupils. Children making their first communion or first confession within the parish are helped to understand what this means, the events are cause for celebration and those children receive a special blessing in the school Mass. Parents and pupils are consulted about decisions with pupils having the opportunity to take part in the school council. It is inspiring to see pupils reflecting on their own learning and excited by it.

Community cohesion underpins the thinking behind many school activities. Pupils receive information about other faiths through their RE lessons. This is supported by visits to different places of worship and initiatives from the school which focus on different cultures. Display work around the school reflects the pupils' interest and understanding. The school takes part in various charitable events including supporting CAFOD and the Haiti appeal.

How effective is the provision for Catholic Education?

Grade 2

Prayer is central to the life of the school and provision for spiritual and moral development well thought through. Staff pray together at the start of meetings and pray with pupils. Adults role model the kind of attitudes towards prayer that they would like to see in the pupils. Pupils are offered opportunities to experience the sacraments and to develop in their understanding of what these mean. Pupils are able to express their own thoughts and prayers in a creative way. Many of the focal points in classrooms and displays around the school reflect their work. The values programme makes explicit the connections between prayer and life and helps pupils make connections between the life of Jesus and their own lives. The Bishops' Conference requirements for the time given to RE are fulfilled. The RE syllabus is new to the school and needs to be fully embedded. In particular the schemes of work need to make sure that progress in written activities is truly progressive and reflects the full range of assessment opportunities. The school's culture emphasises assessment for learning and pupils are clear on the need to improve their own work and are being given the skills to help them do this. The "two stars and a wish" system where staff and pupils are able to highlight two good points and one area for development is well understood by pupils and encourages them to reflect on their own work.