



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: March 8th & 9th 2010
Date of previous inspection: 23rd & 24th April 2007

Reporting Inspector: Mrs A Fowler

Description 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. The school has recently gone through a period of change with a new head teacher in September 2009 and a new chair of governors.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 2

The school is a good Catholic school. Its catholicity is central to its mission with the head teacher committed to promoting the ethos of the school. The leadership have a clear vision for the future of the school. The school is inclusive in approach and a caring community, valuing all who go there. Pupils are proud of the school and parental support for the school is very high. Parents commenting for example, "St Peter's is a lovely school where the staff really care for the pupils". Other Parents said that the school reinforces their own values and develops pupils in their understanding of God. Another comment, reflecting the diversity of pupil backgrounds, said "children are taught to accept differences and respect everyone". The involvement and commitment of one of the priests from the schools feeder parishes ensures that there are good links between school and parish. The children understand what it means to be part of a community centred on Christ.

The capacity of the school community to improve and develop

Grade 1

The school has undergone a period of change in both staff and governors but moral amongst the staff is very high with a growing sense of optimism. The leadership has a clear vision of how to improve and this is understood and shared by all. Expectations are high. The governors understand their role and are also committed to improvement. The new chaplaincy team has a clear vision of the help they would like to provide and this is also indicative of the high levels of support for the school from the governors. The school has a culture of monitoring and evaluation and has therefore a clear sense of the opportunities and challenges the school faces.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to develop the chaplaincy team by providing a separate budget for chaplaincy and gradually developing its remit.

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- Working with the diocese, develop clear schemes of work which provide opportunities for progression and allow the pupils to become increasingly theologically literate.
 - Support staff in their own development as far as religious education is concerned.

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 clearly proud of their community. They are given many opportunities to take responsibility through the school council, through the engagement of older pupils with younger ones, for example at lunch time and through the many charitable activities the school undertakes. They express their own views with confidence. Although the school has pupils from many different ethnic backgrounds pupils integrate fully and respect difference. Their spiritual and moral development is good and values are reinforced by the whole school community. The school has specifically targeted certain key values which are introduced to pupils through a structured programme with links to all aspects of school life including assemblies and religious education.

Pupils' response to the prayer life of the school is good. There are a variety of opportunities for both formal and informal prayer. In the Mass which took place during the inspection pupils played a full and active part. They sang joyously, composed their own prayers which were presented at the offertory, read the prayers of the faithful and the readings and behaved respectfully at all times. They were able to reflect in silence and understood the key messages presented to them. They understand the liturgical year and are able to link key teachings to action.

The school is developing a culture of helping pupils to become independent learners and this approach is extending to religious education which pupils in the main enjoy. Pupil surveys show that pupils respond positively to their experiences in religious education particularly when there are opportunities to engage in drama or other creative tasks.

The level of challenge and the selection of tasks do not always allow pupils to demonstrate what they are capable of or respond in a way which encourages theological literacy. Sometimes opportunities to develop critical thinking skills are missed. However the pupils do have a good grasp of the main teachings of Jesus and are able to recount many gospel stories. They are able to make connections between the parables that they know and their own lives.

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 school has a culture of monitoring and evaluation which supports a reflective approach to planning. The Catholic ethos of the school is seen as central to all that the school does. Management frequently undertakes for example learning walks around the school. The development of a chaplaincy team, involving parents, governors, priest and staff is a very positive move and although in its early days is already enhancing the life of the school. They are providing resources and expertise to staff to develop both their knowledge and their skills in planning prayer and worship. Parents are encouraged to participate in the life of the school with a parent's room provided, they are consulted about their views and encouraged to participate in the various liturgical activities within the school. Relationships between the school and parishes are good, as are relationships between the school and the diocese. 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. At present there is no formal induction programme for staff but the school is aware that this needs to be developed and inset days with regard to the Catholic life of the school need to be on a regular basis.

The governing body has been through a period of change and has plans to expand its membership. Governors are knowledgeable and enthusiastic, very committed to the life of the school and involved in the monitoring and evaluation process. The chair of governors, together with the governors involved in the chaplaincy team, are frequent visitors to the school and understand it well.

Community cohesion underpins the thinking behind many school activities. Pupils receive information about other faiths through their RE lessons and this is reinforced through talks by members of other faith communities and visits to various places of worship for example the year 4 visit to a mosque. In the summer term all the school will be taking part in a project to produce a patchwork quilt which will tell the story of different cultures. The school supports local events and pupils are taken to see various different places in the local community; they take part in various charitable events including supporting CAFOD and the Haiti appeal. There is a parental support programme organised in the school. The governors are aware that the makeup of the governing body does not reflect the school community and are actively taking steps to encourage a more diverse membership.

How effective is the provision for Catholic Education?

Grade 3

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. They 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. The liturgical year is well marked with special services in Advent, Lent and Holy Week. The May procession has also been reintroduced and pupils spoke about this with real enthusiasm. As well as these traditional practices pupils are also able to express their own thoughts and prayers in a creative way. In order to develop the prayer life even further the new chaplaincy team will support both staff and pupils with resources and ideas so that pupils will be able to take on a leadership role. The team are also reviewing the different activities to consider their impact on pupils. The assembly seen during the inspection was a thoughtful, well designed assembly aimed at developing the pupils' understanding, creating time for reflection and reinforcing the links with daily life. The next stage of development is to encourage pupils to take on more leadership roles with regard to assemblies and liturgies.

The Bishops' Conference requirements for the time given to RE are fulfilled and the syllabus chosen has opportunities to connect faith to life. At present the schemes of work developed from the syllabus present insufficient challenge and do not give the range of opportunities for progression. Teachers are actively trying to engage pupils in the lessons through the use, for example, of drama, creative thinking and role play. They need to be clearer about what constitutes adequate success criteria for RE, tasks need to reflect the full range of abilities and offer sufficient challenge. The school is working closely with the diocese to ensure that these changes are brought about.

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 they highlight two good points and one area for development are well understood by pupils. The school is beginning to use levels for assessment but at present because the tasks themselves need developing this is not as accurate as it could be.