



INSPECTION REPORT

St. Peter's Catholic Primary School

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DfES Number: 3370

Headteacher: Mr. H.F. Bradley

Chair of Governors: Deacon C. Robinson

Date of inspection: April 23-24, 2007

Date of previous inspection: First Inspection

Reporting Inspector: Mr. Joseph Skivington

Description of School

St. Peter's is a large Catholic Primary School, the result of a recent amalgamation (2005) of infant and junior schools. This is a first inspection. The school serves a diverse catchment area in and around Gloucester. Of the 500 plus pupils on roll, around 87% are baptised Catholic. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is about average, and there has been a recent increase in pupils for whom English is an additional language. The school has close links with the parishes it serves. Attainment on entry is slightly below average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1: Outstanding

Grade 2: Good

Grade 3: Satisfactory

Grade 4: Unsatisfactory

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

St. Peter's is a good school with some outstanding features. The excellent leadership of the head teacher is reflected in the wholehearted and proactive support of the governors, staff and parents in realising the mission of the school. The strong Catholic ethos and witness of the school is felt in the wider community. The provision for collective worship and the spiritual and moral development of the pupils is excellent, because of the care taken by all concerned for the pupils' welfare to build up a community where all are welcome, and the Good News is lived out in their daily lives. The quality of the provision for religious education is good. Good teaching promotes good learning, because it meets the needs of all the pupils. The systems for the assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress are not yet fully embedded. Leadership of the subject is good, management satisfactory.

Grade 2

Improvement since the last inspection

This is a first inspection of a newly formed primary school.

The capacity of the school community to improve and develop

The school's self-evaluation documents have highlighted well the areas where improvement is needed, and these have been translated into realistic objectives within the school development plan. Since the amalgamation a new religious education coordinator has taken up the post and is building on solid achievements already secured. The capacity to improve is good because there is a vision and clear direction, and the appointment of two experienced staff to the senior management team has bolstered the delivery of the subject. There is, besides, a willingness to embrace best practice in every aspect of the school's work and mission, by seeking advice from outside agencies, such as the diocesan advisers, and continued INSET and training for all staff.

Grade 2

What the school should do to improve further:

- 1 Advance effective assessment and marking systems within RE, which will inform teaching and learning, and lead to raised standards of achievement.
 - 2 Develop ICT as an aid to independent learning within RE.
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The Catholic Life of the School**Leadership and Management**

The quality of the leadership of the head teacher and senior staff in leading and developing the Catholic life of the school is excellent. Together with the support of the governing body and school chaplain, this has ensured high standards and clear direction in maintaining high quality care and education. The strong, Catholic ethos of the school is supported by all the staff. The school mission statement is clear and prominent, its aims incorporated into the whole culture of the school. The spiritual and moral development of the pupils is of prime importance, and the governors fulfil their role very well in relation to the school's Catholic foundation. The monitoring of the specifically Catholic aspects of the life of the school is good, because the mission statement has been revised and revitalised, and the response of the parents and pupils has been sought and carefully evaluated.

Grade 1

Collective Worship

The quality of Collective Worship is excellent. There are ample opportunities for prayer throughout the day. Pupils pray with reverence and feeling, making the Sign of the Cross reverently and listening attentively. They are able to reflect silently, for example, in a lesson where they focussed on an allegorical account of the Resurrection. The liturgical life of the school is well planned and reviewed, the pupils themselves participating enthusiastically. The Mass celebrated during the inspection was marked by the full participation of pupils in readings, bidding prayers, offertory, and exuberant singing. The combined effect of the homilies they hear, the messages of the parables and stories from the Gospels, as well as the many exhortations in lessons and assemblies to respect life and care for others, has a tremendous influence on their spiritual and moral development. This shows itself in their good behaviour around the school and their well-developed sense of right and wrong. In conversation with them, they were able to talk about prayer, its efficacy, and the different types of prayer, both thoughtfully and with understanding. They themselves compose prayers, which are heartfelt and reflective, an indication of their own personal spiritual growth. Attractive wall displays around the school affirm and celebrate the pupils' work, and demonstrate to the visitor the very Catholic nature of the school.

Grade 1

Religious Education

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education

Pupils enter the school with skill levels which are slightly below that which is expected nationally. They make good progress through the school, so that, by the time they leave, their levels of attainment are in line with national expectations. This represents good achievement across both key stages. Pupils with learning difficulties generally achieve as well as the others because of the extra, valuable support they get from the teaching assistants. By the end of Year 1 pupils are able to use the basic language of religion, understanding symbolism and able to retell a parable in their own words. In Year 2 pupils extended writing skills develop, with some good work on the significance of Baptism, and thoughtful prayers of gratitude. On occasion less able pupils struggle to complete work if it is not tailored to meet their learning needs. Year 3 and Year 4 produce work which indicates a growing understanding of symbols, such as light, the significance of the bread and wine at Mass, and are able to write with empathy, for instance, on the Last Supper or the Stations of the Cross, exploring Mary's feelings. By the end of Year 6 they are able to justify opinion with simple argument, can relate what they learn to their own lives, showing a sound sense of right and wrong, and compose prayers and reflective pieces of work, such as an Easter anthem, or their hopes for the future. More able pupils write with impressive use of language, originality and understanding. In interview pupils showed a secure grasp of the main tenets of the Faith. Pupils work hard, and behave well both in lessons and around the school.

Grade 2

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

Teaching and learning are both good, with some outstanding practice. Excellent teaching is characterised by good preparation, pace and high expectation of the pupils. They respond well to this and make very good progress in these lessons. Challenging questions encourage good intellectual effort. The generally good teaching provides effective strategies, which interest the pupils and encourage independent learning, as in a lesson examining the different accounts of the Easter story. The teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs well, providing a good balance between help and challenge. However, the marking of written work is not always consistent and often does not show the pupils how they can improve, or challenge them to think harder or write more at length. Teachers use PowerPoint tellingly in presenting topics and prompting pupil response in lessons, but the use of computers to encourage independent learning and research has yet to be fully viable. Pupils enjoy their lessons when there are a variety of activities, such as drama and larger group discussion, and are particularly interested in learning about other religions as well as their own.

Grade 2

Quality of the Curriculum

The curriculum is well balanced and inclusive, following diocesan guidelines. The policy for relationship education is under review, involving parents, governors and staff. Creativity in the curriculum is rightly focussed on providing enriching activities, such as festivals, stage productions, charity fundraising, days of reflection, visits to local mosques, and an Art club which has produced superb Stations of the Cross and stained glass windows. Citizenship and social cohesion strands are evident in the responsibilities given to the older pupils for the younger children, the school council, and

the strong links with the parishes. The whole curriculum contributes enormously to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils because it enables them to live out the values of the Gospels in their everyday lives, for example, in being able to recognise others' needs, and to exercise their spirit of generosity towards them.

Grade 2

Leadership and management of Religious Education

The leadership of the subject is good. The new coordinator is well supported by senior management, the cluster grouping, and diocesan advice, as well as expertise from within the school. INSET training for staff is already being provided, and morale is high. Management of the subject at this early stage is satisfactory. Assessment and monitoring of pupils progress is not yet fully embedded, particularly in establishing baseline assessment and linking outcomes more rigorously to level descriptors. This will guide teachers in their planning and lead to better learning and pupil achievement. A policy of consistent, challenging marking of pupils' work, which shows them how to improve, has yet to be achieved. Equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled vigorously. Resources are adequate and managed well. The development plan ensures that the religious education programme stays close to the school's mission statement, and how it achieves this is an expressed target of the governors for the coming year. The plan does not include any strategy to develop the use of ICT to encourage independent learning and research skills. The governors discharge their responsibilities well. All statutory requirements are fully met.

Grade 2