

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. PETER'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

HAWKINS STREET, BLACKBURN, BLACKBURN BB2 2RY

Inspection date 31st January 2012

Reporting Inspectors Mr P. Eavers, Mrs A. Lubomski

Inspection carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Catholic Primary
URN	119514
Age range of pupils	3-11 years
Number on roll	425
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of Governors	Mrs F. Walsh
Headteacher	Mr M. J. Duxbury
Religious Education Co-ordinator	Miss M. Dixon
Date of previous inspection	May 2008

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades 1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3 = Satisfactory 4 = Inadequate
Overall effectiveness of the school	1	
Spirituality	Statement	
The quality of the Word of God community	1	
The quality of the Welcome community	1	
The quality of Welfare	2	
The quality of Worship	1	
The quality of Witness	1	
The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements		

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Peter's is a Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic Primary school, admitting 95% baptised Roman Catholic pupils. It serves the Roman Catholic Parishes of St Peter's and St John Vianney.

The School is situated in the Mill Hill area of Blackburn. It has a long tradition within the area with the original school being opened in 1887. The new school opened in September 2008. There are currently 425 FTE on roll. (Dec 2011). The age range of the learners is from 3 to 11. The indicative admission number is 60.

Children entering school come from diverse home backgrounds; many experience hardship and economic difficulties whilst others are from professional families. The catchment area includes a high percentage of late 19th and early 20th century terraced housing. There is also a large council estate nearby. Newer property has been built and there are 'new build estates' on the outskirts of the area. 70% of the school's population is made up from 3 main wards: Mill Hill, Meadowhead and Ewood.

The school's deprivation indicator is 0.25 which is higher than national figure of 0.23. 80% of the school's population are living in areas which are classified nationally as being in the bottom half of deprivation. 56% of pupils live in the bottom 25%, 21% of the pupils live in the bottom 10%, 14 % live in the bottom 5%, 4% live in the bottom 1% nationally for deprivation.

15.5% of pupils receive Free School Meals (FSM) which is low considering the deprivation indices. The school is placed in Group 2 for FSM benchmarking which ranges from 12% to 40%. Pupils have a predominately white/UK heritage. The number of SEN pupils, 26.4%, (January 2012) is higher than national average of 19.3% and higher than LA average, 24%,

The school offers many additional experiences in the form of after school activities. There is a strong tradition of participation in sport and the school also provides music tuition, self esteem clubs, library clubs, prayer groups, dance and art activities. Before school there is a breakfast service which is regularly attended by a large group of pupils.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St Peter's RC Primary is an outstanding Catholic school.

St Peter's is an outstanding Catholic school. It is very successful in offering its learners a holistic Catholic education in a warm, friendly and supportive environment. The school community, very well supported by the governing body, works very hard to ensure the pastoral and spiritual needs of all learners are met. The school is firmly at the heart of the parish it serves. Positive relationships are evident throughout the whole school community. The strong spiritual commitment of the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team, together with the hard work and dedication of the staff, has created a culture in which Gospel values are clearly evident and all are encouraged to "have life and have it to the full" (John 10:10). Pupils and staff are proud to belong to St Peter's school community. They enjoy coming to school and have high expectations of themselves and others. They are friendly, polite and welcoming and the behaviour of pupils at all times is very good. The prayer life of the school is a particular strength. The school offers its learners a wide variety of opportunities to develop their talents. As affirmed in its Mission Statement, the school helps all members of its community to "live, learn, work and grow together in Christ"

Improvement since the last inspection

The previous Section 48 inspection did not raise any issues to improve.

What the school needs to do to improve further:

- **Continue to share the elements of exemplary practice which exist in Religious Education to enhance the learning, teaching, assessment and environment for all pupils.**

- Continue to develop the role and voice of pupils at a strategic level both within and beyond the school.
- Continue to develop the active role of parents in the life of the school.

SPIRITUALITY IN ST. PETER'S RC PRIMARY

St Peter's is a safe, secure and welcoming school. There is a strong sense of community and common purpose. Children and adults know that they belong to and are valued as members of a community where they live, learn and work together in the presence of Christ. Leadership at all levels, including the governing body, embodies a Christ-centred approach which promotes the value of each individual as a child of God. Children have a secure sense of the love of Christ and show respect for others. They are eager and confident when talking about their faith and their growing relationship with God and demonstrate a sense of attentiveness, stillness and prayerful silence during times of worship. Children and staff rejoice in their own and others' achievements and have a strong sense of care and service to others.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORD OF GOD COMMUNITY is outstanding

The school's Mission Statement is known, lived and witnessed to throughout the school. Staff, children and Governors are confident in talking about why the Mission Statement is important to them and how it influences the daily life of the school.

The Religious Education co-ordinator, fully supported by the Headteacher, Governing Body, Parish Priest and Senior Leadership team, has enabled the school to develop a clear vision on how high quality RE should be taught. Her creative approach greatly enhances the teaching of Religious Education and faith development in the school and provides clear leadership and support for all staff.

Teachers place high priority on the teaching of RE which is demonstrated in their planning. As a result the quality of teaching is good, and in some cases outstanding, across the school. This is evident in children's work and their contributions to lessons. Teaching is inclusive, and in a number of cases inspiring, and challenges children of all abilities. The use of ICT significantly enhances the learning in RE. Where constructive marking is used to enable children to reflect, it challenges and provides good support to improvements in children's learning.

There is a culture of continuous improvement in teaching and learning. Teachers and teaching assistants have good knowledge and understanding of the teaching of RE. The role of teaching assistants in classes contributes significantly to effective learning in RE lessons. From September 2011, the school has successfully introduced the new RE scheme of work providing effective training for staff in moderating children's work confidently.

Pupils' attitude to learning is very good; they show a genuine interest in and enthusiasm for their RE work and can talk openly about topics and themes they have covered. High quality classroom resources are well used by staff. As a result, RE activities are stimulating and well matched to the children's needs and abilities. The school's Development Plan reflects its commitment to maintaining high quality resources for the teaching of RE. Through well considered activities children are challenged to think deeply on a range of issues, develop empathy for key religious and historical figures and use their creativity to express their thoughts in range of different ways. Children have a good awareness of cultural differences and other world faith traditions. Inter-faith days together with organised visits and visitors give the children first hand experiences of other faiths.

Links between the home, school and parish have traditionally been and continue to be very strong. The parents, Governors and past pupils are proud to be part of St Peter's and continue to identify very strongly with the existing school community within its new surroundings. The school has a well established and effective programme of Religious activities which are well supported by a large number of parents and members of the wider community.

Specific Areas for Development

- Continue to build on and share the elements of exceptional practice that exist in the teaching and assessment of RE across the Key Stages.
- Continue to develop the pupils' role in outreach to the local community.

THE QUALITY OF THE WELCOME COMMUNITY is Outstanding.

St Peter's provides a very warm, welcoming and inclusive environment where committed staff have high expectations of the pupils. The strong welcoming tradition of the school is maintained through deep faith commitment and a genuine supporting ethos from all staff, children, governors and members of the clergy. A shared knowledge and understanding of Christian beliefs and gospel values support the school's distinctive ethos.

The move to the new building, in 2008, is viewed by parents, staff and Governors to have been a great success, not only in the physical aspect of moving two schools into one but the re-establishing of a Catholic community. The new school has given even more strength and sense of welcoming unity to the community in developing the Catholic life of our school. There are excellent examples of classroom learning environments being used very effectively to support, engage and celebrate the work of all the children in the class.

The school welcomes a wide range of visitors, parents, representatives from other Faith backgrounds, student teachers and members of the wider community with love and respectful care. This helps to build solid relationships and lasting partnerships. Children and staff who are new to the school are quickly made to feel welcome and valued as members of the school community. Staff and children are happy in the school. They share the love of Christ readily with visitors, communicate very confidently and show a very real desire to involve everyone in the life of the school.

Respect for the dignity of the individual is clearly evident across the school. The caring ethos and the development of pupils' personal qualities are of paramount importance to the staff and Governors.

The school constantly strives to find ways of engaging all members of the community. Staff, children, parents and Governors identify strongly with the school. Those interviewed stated that they were proud to belong to the St Peter's community. Past pupils regularly return to visit and volunteer within the school. Staff turnover is very low. Children interviewed described the school as 'a spell-binding, magnificent, perfect community' in which they felt they were 'spoilt'.

Specific Areas for Development

- Share more widely the excellent practice which exists within the school to ensure that all classrooms provide equally welcoming and stimulating learning environments.

THE QUALITY OF THE WELFARE COMMUNITY is Good with many outstanding features.

Staff and children demonstrate a very high level of respect for, care of and service of others. Throughout the school there is good practice which allows learners to feel safe and well cared for and to adopt safe practices. There is genuine concern from all staff for the welfare of all children. Incidents of bullying are rare.

An important part of the school's philosophy is to help children to experience and learn to cope with a wider social environment; pupils are taught how to relate well to other people and to see things from another's point of view; they are taught the importance of learning to share, to be tolerant and to care for others; to be honest, reliable and show concern for each other and their property; to value other cultures and other people's rights to their beliefs.

Children who are experiencing a period of low self-esteem are supported through the self-esteem club which is run by parent volunteers. Whilst the school works very hard to ensure that parents are welcomed and valued within the school, there is scope to develop parental involvement in the life of the school further.

Whole school responsibility toward others is a strong feature of the school. Children learn that it is important to help others and have compassion for those less fortunate. The school supports local, national and worldwide causes. Regular fund raising days are organised by the school e.g. food collection for those in need in the local community; Year 6 taking the lead for raising money for St Joseph's Penny. CAFOD is generously supported by both pupils and their parents. Older pupils are encouraged to develop their leadership skills by taking responsibility for younger children, helping to monitor and support their playtime and dinner routines.

Staff and pupils are free to express their opinions and know that these will be valued. Pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 represent their class peers on the School Council. They have been involved in decision making, e.g. questionnaire and survey for extended school provision. They have been responsible for representing the school at various events. The council regularly reports back to the senior leadership team and help to make decisions within the extended school cluster. There is scope to develop further the role of pupil voice at a strategic level within and beyond the school.

Governors and senior leaders ensure that careful consideration is given to supporting the needs of all the children when making budget, staffing and resource decisions. For example, the school funds a representative from Caritas to work with targeted families on a weekly basis and two children are financially supported each year to go to Lourdes with HCPT.

Specific Areas for Development

- Continue to explore ways in which parents can contribute significantly to the life of the school
- Develop the influence of pupil voice at a strategic level within and beyond the school.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORSHIP COMMUNITY is Outstanding.

Pupils and staff are confident and skilled in planning and leading prayer and worship which is pupil-centred, creative, inclusive and relevant. Children are given a range of prayer opportunities through which they can develop their relationships with God and pray as a community. The school's KS2 Prayer group provides an excellent example of pupil leadership and active involvement in relevant, inclusive worship and meditation. Both this group and the Rosary group are voluntary groups which are popular and well attended by boys and girls alike. Each class presents a weekly prayer petition sheet for inclusion at prayer group. In addition Parish groups are invited to attend rosary once every half term followed by a school meal shared with the pupils. The Prayer Garden, where children are able to read, write and reflect on a range of prayers, is popular with and well used by pupils at break and lunchtimes.

There is a systematic and developmental prayer programme across the whole school which incorporates a wide range of traditions and ensures that prayer is age-appropriate, inclusive and relevant. Staff are trained and supported in the formation and education of the prayer life of the school and have expressed the desire to develop this training further.

A high level of creativity is evident in the worship, liturgies and celebrations, engaging all pupils and staff. Children respond well to collective worship opportunities in school. They are aware of its importance and are reverent in their behaviour. All children are encouraged to speak to God in their own special way.

The school actively prepares pupils to take a leadership role in engaging with families and parishes in prayer and worship. Parents respond positively to how the school offers a good range of opportunities for prayer and worship. They attend assemblies and seasonal events in large numbers. Parents and parishioners speak very highly of the pupils' reverence and prayerful behaviour at school Masses and when pupils are involved in leading parish liturgies.

All staff have access to a high level of dedicated funding and resourcing and as a consequence the school is well equipped with resources for prayer and collective worship. A special section of the Library is assigned to RE. The school has recently commissioned a special cross for the main hall. This is used very effectively as a focal point for liturgy and worship. Each classroom has an area set aside as a focus for Collective worship. These are well used and enhanced by signs and symbols that have been used in key stage assemblies.

Specific Areas for Development

- Continue to develop staff confidence and skills in planning and leading prayer and worship.

THE QUALITY OF THE WITNESS COMMUNITY is Outstanding.

As evidenced in the paragraphs above, staff and pupils are confident and secure in their witness to Christ, the Gospel and the teachings of the Church. The school encourages and supports its members to be pro-active citizens who contribute to the decision-making processes at a local and national level. For example, the Eco Warrior group explore global issues and how these affect God's creation through activities such as monitoring the energy usage of the school and actively encouraging the recycling of paper. Year 5 are currently involved in an environmental project with a local transport provider. The school has organised and hosted Blackburn with Darwen Catholic Primary School Conferences and it encourages and supports staff to complete the CCRS. Since the last inspection the Headteacher has completed the MA in Catholic School Leadership and two members of staff have joined the East Lancashire Catholic Leadership group.

An explicit Catholic culture permeates the whole school and is clearly identifiable through relationships, decision-making and actions. The impact of the Mission Statement is evident and tangible across the school community, through the implementation of policies and procedures and the high expectations of all. For example, agreed whole school Performance Management objectives are regularly linked to Catholic nature of the school and teachers are encouraged to choose a Performance Management Objective related to Religious Education.

The Governing Body is very effective in undertaking its role of leading the school and developing it as a Catholic Community. They uphold the distinctive nature of the school and are very supportive in helping develop its ethos and culture. The school's chaplaincy is well-resourced, relevant and inclusive and has a high impact on the life of the school. INSET and staff training place high emphasis on the Catholic Life of the School. Yearly spiritual well being days are a feature of the school's whole staff INSET provision.

Staff and children clearly demonstrate and witness to justice, compassion, reconciliation, love and forgiveness in their relationships and are able to see the relationship between their own behaviour and Christian values.

Members of the wider community comment that "you can recognise St Peter's pupils when they are out in the community through their actions and attitudes to others".