



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD



Section 48 Inspection Report

Name of School: St Peter's Catholic Primary School,

Inspection Date: 9th July 2014

Reporting Inspector: Mrs Pamela Brannigan

URN 115167

This Inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of School: Primary
School Category: Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils: 4 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 420
Appropriate Authority: Essex
Date Previous Inspection: 1/11/2006

School Address: Coxes Farm Road
Billericay CM11 2UB

Tel. No. 01268 553502
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Headteacher: Mr John Peoples

GRADE 1

Information about the school

St Peter's Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided school in Billericay in the county of Essex and part of the diocese of Brentwood. It serves the parishes of The Most Holy Redeemer Billericay and Our Lady of Good Counsel Wickford. There are currently 420 pupils aged 4-11 on roll and the school is over subscribed. The proportion of Catholic pupils is 95%. There is a below average number of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average as is the number of pupils who receive the pupil premium.

Key grades for inspection

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 1

St Peter's is an outstanding school where leaders are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. Outcomes for pupils, the provision for Catholic education and the capacity for sustained improvement are excellent. Opportunities for spiritual and moral development are interwoven through religious education, prayer and an understanding of what it means to be part of a Catholic community. The headteacher and senior leaders are excellent role models and have put in place initiatives linked to the Catholic life of the school as well as teaching, learning, assessment and monitoring. Pastoral care is excellent and shared by all members of the school community. Relationships are very good and pupils feel well cared for and appreciate opportunities given to be involved in all aspects of school life. Parents welcome the Catholicity of the school; appreciate the good communication with staff and the very wide range of extra-curricular activities available for pupils. Pupils' standards of attainment are in line with and often exceed diocesan expectations.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

Grade 1

The school has an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement. The last inspection in 2010 identified no major areas for development other than the continued implementation of current good practice. Since then the implementation of the agreed understanding of levels of attainment in religious education have informed lesson planning and assessment. Staff inset to assist the introduction of the new religious education programme 'Come and See' has also ensured sustained improvement. Currently moderation meetings are held each term in school and the deanery to share judgements with other Catholic schools. The school gives a high profile to religious education and has very good strategies to share good practice and support new teachers.

The headteacher, senior leadership team and governors have a clear vision for the Catholicity of the school and the central place of prayer, worship and religious education. The headteacher ensures that all staff are given opportunities to extend their knowledge and improve their skills through staff meetings and attendance at diocesan led training. Six teachers hold the CCRS qualification and an equivalent qualification is held by two more.

The current leadership has an excellent capacity to maintain effectiveness. The experienced headteacher shows outstanding leadership of a Catholic community through his commitment to all aspects of school life. He, his deputy and the subject leader for religious education have a clear focus on prayer and worship in which they are well supported by all staff. Governors have a wide range of expertise and many are involved in the life of the school. Systems are in place to develop and strengthen initiatives which lead to good outcomes for all pupils. The religious education subject leader is well placed to support colleagues. She has attended diocesan training linked to the new religious education scheme which she has disseminated to colleagues.

What the school should do to improve further

As identified in the School Improvement Plan

- Develop the assessment process in religious education through a formal three year rolling programme.
- Implement a consistent approach to the end of each topic providing opportunities for reflection.
- Further develop pupils' knowledge of the traditional prayers of the Church.

Outcomes for pupils

Grade 1

Pupils make a very good contribution to the Catholic life of the school. The mission statement 'Loving and learning together, with Jesus' is on display in every classroom and well known by pupils. They respond very well to opportunities to understand the needs of others in school and the wider community. They are keen to take on responsibilities including membership of the School Council, Ambassadors, Eco groups and as prefects. Several local, national and international charities are supported throughout the year including Cafod, Cancer Research and Great Ormond Street Hospital. Pupils also have a cultural exchange link with a school and children's home in South Africa and have raised funds to support their work. Pupils are encouraged to see themselves as part of a global community with responsibilities for other people and the environment. Pupils show respect for adults and each other. Behaviour is excellent and pupils value the sense of community and belonging created within the school.

Prayer and worship are central to school life. Pupils respond very positively to opportunities to develop their faith journey. They are eager to participate fully in assemblies, masses and class acts of worship which follow the Church's liturgical year, its seasons and celebrations. Each class has an attractive prayer table which often includes a prayer box or book compiled by pupils. They are developing the ability to pray in different ways and at different times. They use scripture, the traditional prayers of the church, meditation and their own prayers, examples of which were seen during the inspection. Pupils' own prayers are used to head the school's newsletter. Older pupils are able to apply aspects of Jesus' life and teaching to their own lives and understand that a sense of service is part of being a member of a Catholic community.

Pastoral care is very good and given a high priority by staff and governors who work closely together to promote the spiritual development of pupils and the Catholic life of the community. Pupils feel safe, well cared for and know where to go when they need support. Pupils value being in a friendly environment where they are listened to and encouraged to help each other. Parents value the care given to their children, the quality of education and the approachability of staff.

Attainment in religious education is very good and progress is outstanding. All lessons observed during the inspection were good or outstanding and pupils worked with interest and commitment. Pupils spoken to said they enjoy their religious education lessons and appreciate the wide range of tasks involved. They are eager to participate in activities and work well together whether in groups or pairs. They have a good knowledge of the Catholic faith appropriate to their age and are able to integrate religious ideas into their own lives. Workbooks are very well presented, show coverage of the curriculum and indicate excellent progress made by all groups. Standards of attainment are in line with or exceed diocesan expectations.

Leaders and managers

Grade 1

The headteacher supported by his deputy and subject leader demonstrates excellent leadership of the school through the way he inspires and promotes the provision for the Catholic life of the school. He communicates a clear Catholic vision to the whole community which is affirmed by staff and governors who are all committed to providing the best possible environment for the pupils. Together with the subject leader he has developed a system of self-evaluation which is detailed, accurate and identifies

areas for improvement. Together the senior leadership team have a very good knowledge of areas for development in religious education and are well placed to support colleagues.

Senior leaders monitor religious education by means of lesson observations, work scrutiny and joint planning which is followed by feedback to individual teachers. There is currently a very strong focus on planning and assessment as the school consolidates the implementation of the 'Come and See' religious education programme and the updated Curriculum Directory. The school has put in place strategies to give further challenge to all groups of pupils. Much emphasis is placed on staff development which includes teaching assistants who play a key role in the school.

Governors work closely with senior leadership and have a very good understanding of strengths and areas for development. They are well informed about the life of the school through the headteacher's report and frequent visits. Recently a programme of closer liaison with subject leaders has been put in place to enable governors to have a more detailed understanding of developments in religious education. Governors are involved in all aspects of the religious life of the school and are in a good position to challenge and support effectively.

Leaders ensure that the school is a welcoming community where everyone is respected and valued. Diversity is celebrated and pupils are taught to respect other faiths which are well taught. There are very good links with other deanery schools. Pupils are given exceptionally good opportunities to develop a sense of service and show compassion for others through charitable fund raising, fair trade activities and involvement in the local community. Opportunities for spiritual development ensure that pupils are able to reflect on their own lives and experiences. Parents are invited to many school events and are kept well informed about their children's welfare and progress. They appreciate the good level of contact with the school which includes curriculum information lessons which enable them to support their children's education and faith journey.

Provision

Grade 1

Provision for prayer and worship at St Peter's is outstanding. Assemblies and liturgies are very well planned and contribute greatly to pupils' spiritual development. They often include visual presentations, bible readings drama, singing and music. During the inspection a whole school assembly led by the headteacher linked 'Sea Sunday' with the gospel account of the calming of the waves. The needs of seafarers and the work of Cafod enabled pupils to reflect on the way communities can reach out beyond their immediate locality to help others. Pupils participated through responses and excellent singing. They are involved in collective worship in their classrooms and are given opportunities for personal reflection. Each classroom has a very attractive prayer focus with religious artefacts and display boards which include children's work. Masses and age appropriate liturgies are celebrated in school throughout the year. There is a prayer garden available for pupils and classes. Parents, families and parishioners are invited to many celebrations. The priest from Most Holy Redeemer parish visits twice a week and supports the school through class masses, liturgies and Reconciliation in Lent. He also acts as chaplain on an informal basis. Pupils visit the church to develop their knowledge of Catholic traditions. Links with both parishes are very good with many pupils acting as altar servers and as members of the school choir which sings at First Holy Communion masses.

The quality of teaching and learning in religious education is excellent. During the inspection all lessons observed were good or outstanding. They are planned carefully with clear learning intentions and a varied range of activities. The school has made a major investment in resources including new sets of bibles for Key Stage 2 which has led to increased familiarity with scripture. Pupils benefit from the high profile given throughout the school to religious education lessons. In all classes observed pupils were fully engaged and made very good progress. Teachers respond well to pupils' comments and take every opportunity to develop understanding. Higher order questioning was a feature of lessons observed. Very good support by teaching assistants is a feature of lessons especially in Early Years. Marking is positive, interactive and enables pupils to identify next steps in their learning. Very good assessment, planning and tracking supports the attainment and progress of all groups of pupils.

The quality of the religious education curriculum is outstanding. At least 10% of curriculum time is devoted to religious education. The new religious education programme 'Come and See' has been in place for a year and is currently being embedded. The headteacher gives religious education a central

place in the life of the school and this is demonstrated by the budget devoted to it and the current level of resources. Religious education displays around the school emphasise the centrality of faith to the work of the community. The curriculum enables pupils to become aware of their responsibility for each other and their environment. It contributes very well to their spiritual and moral development. The support given to families through a wide range of extra curricular activities gives a strong sense of community to the school. There is every indication that current high standards are likely to be maintained or improved.

The inspector would like to express her thanks and appreciation to all members of the school community for their welcome and openness during the inspection.