



Diocese of Arundel and Brighton

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **St Peter's Catholic Primary School**

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D/ES Number: 938 3333

Headteacher: Mrs Catherine Walker

Chair of Governors: Mrs Yvette Hart

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

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Date of inspection: 20 November 2012  
Date of previous inspection: 19 March 2009

Reporting Inspector: Mr Stephen Beck  
Associate Inspector: Mrs Angela Ireland

## **Description of School**

St Peter's is a one form entry school, similar in size to most primary schools. It is situated in the Worthing Deanery in the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton and is maintained by West Sussex Local Authority. It includes Early Years Foundation provision at reception age taking pupils from the age of four. There is independently managed pre-school provision on the school site. The school serves the parishes of St Peter's, Shoreham, St Theresa's, Southwick, Holy Family, Lancing and Christ the King, Steyning. There are 207 pupils on roll, 86% of whom are Catholic which is a significant increase since the previous inspection. This reflects the work undertaken by the school and parish to heighten the profile of the school locally. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is generally average. The school serves a mixed catchment area with average numbers on the special needs register at 17% which has seen a rise since the previous inspection. The free meals entitlement at 11% is below average. With only a small number of ethnic minority pupils, EAL needs at 6.8% are also below national averages.

### **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school**

At the time of its last inspection St Peter's school was described as effective with outstanding features and this continues to be the case. The school's mission to "Live out the Mission Statement through the promotion of the core values, Spirituality, Tolerance, Co-operation, Creativity and Independence, with Christ at the centre of everything we do" remains explicit and noteworthy. As one parent wrote, *"St Peter's offers a very full and rich school life to the children with Christ at the centre of all that is done."*

It has commenced with vigour, work on the areas identified in its recent Ofsted inspection as needing attention and this is already having an impact across the school including in the area of religious education. It is notable how well the school has managed staffing changes over the recent past and how the more established management team is sustaining progress and preparing for the imminent change in headship of the school.

All members of the school community, pupils, parents, staff and governors articulate their belief that they are valued by virtue of their God given individuality. St Peter's is a school that has rightly remained confident in itself during a period of change, supported by what is an explicit and shared vision. Its modus operandi is one of collegiality, with a clear direction that sees governors, headteacher and staff working closely together in a strong environment of trust, that allows for a true 'critical friend' approach to operate. These relationships are a strength, as is its raison d'être to serve its community and meet the needs of all pupils particularly those who are vulnerable. The school is particularly effective in reaching out to its families, creating a true sense of community in all that it does. As a parent wrote on their questionnaire, *"I am writing to express my support for the staff at St Peter's and my gratitude for all they do to provide an excellent Catholic education for both of my children. In my opinion the school maintains a strong Catholic ethos and provides a wealth of opportunities for spiritual development."*

The inspectors have been able to validate the school's own assessment of its effectiveness as outlined in its very good self evaluation form and clear religious education development plan. Governors demonstrate a good knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development reflecting their involvement in and knowledge of the school's self-evaluation processes. This reflects a good capacity for supporting future improvement. The school provides a very good Catholic education for its pupils. It has a distinct Christian, Catholic ethos which is all embracing and is supported by parents, staff, pupils, governors and parish priest alike. The school benefits from a Catholic vision that is, both well communicated across the whole school community and also shared, with all being committed to its development and implementation. The headteacher has developed a culture of expectation that builds a self-belief in pupils and staff that they can achieve. All are provided with every opportunity to develop themselves and are well supported in so doing. Pupils work in what they identify as a caring, safe and happy environment. They are extremely polite, very well behaved and the independence they show is commendable, as are their well-developed social skills. They have formed strong cooperative natures that will serve them well as they move through their lives.

**Grade 2**

### **Improvement since the last inspection**

Progress has been made on the areas identified in the last inspection. Community cohesion has been significantly extended through the school's support and links with an African child named Rhema and the award of International Schools Accreditation. It is on-going through the development of an excellent partnership with the Deanery Chaplain. Parents' awareness of the school's programme for sex education has been established and they have confidence in the programme. The issue of website development has seen additional links being provided on the school website and with the issue of the development of an outside prayer and reflection area, remain on-going. Both of these issues are identified in the school's religious education development plan.

**Grade 2**

### **The capacity of the school community to improve and develop**

All in the school are open to new ideas and work together to generate development. With the imminent change of headteacher following the move of the current post holder, who is appropriately held in high regard, to a larger school, the strong teamwork and shared commitment to the future will ensure that the school maintains a strong capacity to further improve and develop. This will be assisted by the commendable strength and quality of the school's parent partnership which reinforces the school's commitment to fulfil its Catholic mission.

**Grade 2**

## **What the school should do to improve further**

Governors and management should:

- Ensure that pupils are given more opportunities to engage in independent learning activities and research
- Further develop the assessment process and tracking of individual pupil progress so that assessment has an even greater impact on attainment
- Further develop the role of the religious education link governor

## **The Catholic Life of the School**

### **Leadership and Management**

St Peter's judges itself to be a good school and inspection evidence supports this view, but concludes that it also has many outstanding elements. The effective leadership within the school is marked by ambition, a determination to succeed and focus on the intrinsic value of the individual and the contributions they make to the school community. The headteacher gives very effective, resolute and determined leadership to the Catholic life of the school. She has a clear vision of Catholic education and the role of the school in the mission of the Church. The school has been, and is going through periods of transition that has seen new appointments to middle leadership posts and an imminent change in headship. There is, however, a clear commitment from all members of the school community to the on-going development of the school. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have ensured the maintenance of a clear vision for Catholic education that has been shared and is supported by all members of the school community. This has served to provide a positive and sustained impact. The mission statement is revisited with pupils, giving it appropriate exemplification and emphasis throughout all the school does.

The school offers a broad curriculum that is marked by an emphasis on cross curricular learning that impacts on the religious education curriculum and development of the whole child. Integration of opportunities to foster spiritual and moral development across the school curriculum are a strength of the school that see the embedding of core values, effective use of circle time and development of a consistent Education for Personal Relationships (EPR) scheme.

Members of the governing body are active within the school and are keen to support its on-going development. All are justly proud of the school's proactive role in serving its parish communities and there is a clear articulated desire to move the school forward. Effective emphasis is being given to succession planning in the area of staff recruitment to preserve the Catholic character of the school.

A good number of parental questionnaire responses were received with almost 100% being positive and supportive of the school. On one questionnaire parents wrote, *"The fact that my husband and I can strongly agree with these statements after only half a term of our child being at St Peter's is a credit to the school! We could give concrete examples for each statement. ...."*

The priests are very supportive and actively involved in the life of the school and their commitment is greatly valued for both the curriculum support offered and chaplaincy provision made to the whole school community. They work hard to further improve what are already strong home, school, and parish links.

The Deanery partnership between both primary and secondary schools is exceptionally strong. They come together to jointly fund a shared chaplain and this is already impacting on both classroom teaching and the Catholic life of the school.

**Grade 2**

## **The Prayer Life of the School**

St Peter's school is a prayerful community that respects the faith journey of each person whilst nurturing the faith of each individual. Broad provision, that is clearly central to the life of the school, is made for staff and pupils to engage in formal and informal prayer and acts of collective worship. From the earliest age pupils' response to prayer is laudable as they act with reverence and keenness to participate.

The school has a clear collective worship policy that sees Mass celebrated in school at the beginning and end of the school year, on Holy Days of Obligation, at the beginning of Advent and Corpus Christi for the children who have received their First Holy Communion. An additional Mass is celebrated for Education Sunday and Community Parish Masses are held within each of the three churches of Shoreham, Steyning and Lancing. Children also have the opportunity to celebrate a class Mass once a year. Class Masses are celebrated with all the Key Stage 2 classes. These celebrations are enhanced by being accompanied by a Collective Worship leaflet that children take away from the celebration and reflect on in their religious education books and spiritual journals. Pupil participation in liturgical celebrations is very good.

Prayer is interwoven into the school day, commencing with class prayers in the morning, collective worship on scheduled days, lunchtime prayers and afternoon prayers, as well as prayer during religious education lessons and spontaneous prayers when a suitable moment arises. Governors' and staff meetings commence with prayers. Of particular note is the Year 5 leading of Christian meditation, which they have been taught and are now disseminating to the rest of the school. The frequency and emphasis laid on prayer engenders a sense of the importance of taking time to worship and reflect. Children have written their own prayers reflecting life around the school. These are clearly visible as you walk around the school environment.

Pupils respond well to assemblies and collective worship, and enter into discussions and sing hymns. There is a weekly assembly for each key stage which is planned in such a way as to make them age appropriate. These assemblies are closely linked to the Here I Am programme and scripture. The occasion of a class assembly is one that is looked forward to with anticipation by the pupils not directly involved. Teaching staff take it in turns on a rota basis to prepare assemblies ensuring that a range of styles are adopted and emphasising to the children that God's work belongs to everyone. This is further promoted through a recently started school liturgy group to prepare art work and reflections for forthcoming school liturgies and school Masses. An impressive display linked to Remembrance Sunday greatly supported pupils understanding of this concept. The on-going proposals to develop an external area for prayer and reflection will further enhance the current very good provision.

In an assembly led by the headteacher very good use was made of candles, incense, music and a darkened environment to create a prayerful atmosphere. It was very well planned and linked well to a homework topic. The assembly made good use of prayer and pictures brought from home to generate a sense of 'awe and wonder'. The provision for spiritual development is outstanding and has impacted on a number of non-Catholic staff who over recent years have converted to Catholicism. As one parent wrote, *"We love St. Peter's, we are from a non-Catholic background but love the Catholic religion and what it has taught our child."*

**Grade 1**

### **How effectively does the school promote community cohesion?**

St Peter's is a welcoming community in all aspects of its daily life and continues to be an actively inclusive school that works hard to promote and develop community cohesion in the widest sense. The school's Ofsted report noted from discussions with pupils and evidence from books that pupils had regular opportunities to learn about other cultures and this is evidenced in displays around the school and in pupils' books. Staff reinforce the impact children have on the lives of others, within the U.K. and global community through assemblies and the wider curriculum. This is further enforced through each class being linked to a CAFOD country, the school's work for Rhema and the use of a school shop for Fairtrade Fridays and other charity fundraising. When recently working on their Judaism topic a Rabbi from a local synagogue came and spoke to the pupils about symbolism within the Jewish faith.

The pupils are enthusiastic about taking on charity projects and recently took part in fundraising for the RNLI annual SOS Day and the Diocesan Good Shepherd Appeal. They have joined with the local schools in Shoreham which have pledged to raise £10,000 towards the new Tamar class lifeboat coming to Shoreham in the near future in addition to supporting pink day for Cancer awareness and green day for a local hospice. After school clubs are run by Brighton & Hove Albion Football in the Community and Worthing Thunder Basketball Club, creating links with local sporting organisations. Pupils are also aware of rights and responsibilities through knowledge of UNICEF. Pupils have the opportunity to be involved with a range of school activities inside and outside school. Choir, French, football, art and gymnastics are just a few examples of the many clubs offered that are monitored to ensure a range of pupils are invited. The school choir sings at local nursing homes as part of Christmas celebrations, affording an opportunity for the school to reach out to a wider audience beyond the normal parish and school community.

The school works in partnership with the Shoreham and Southwick network of schools. Eleven local schools work together on projects to ensure the needs of the whole community are met, e.g. the appointment of a Home / Family Worker, provision of a school Counsellor, Gifted and Talented programme and SMILE campaign being just a few examples. Families are very well supported, particularly those who are vulnerable or in need. A family expressed their gratitude to the school for the support their family received following a family bereavement. Pastoral support at St Peter's is outstanding.

The pupils are always proud to represent their school in external events e.g. Adur Arts Festival, District Sports, Cross-Country, Maths Challenges etc. The school is justifiably proud of its partnership with parents who are valued as first educators of their children and as an important part of the school community and this is built on strong communications, which are a strength of the school. The school's Parent Teacher Association plays an important role in the school's work with the community.

Pupil voice is well served through an effective school council that feels it has a real impact on the provision within the school and projects undertaken. Pupils are given a range of opportunities to work with and support each other with older pupils showing maturity and responsibility in their commitment to work alongside and support younger pupils. These were witnessed through assembly buddies and peer mediation. Through these roles which they take on with verve and enthusiasm they develop a good understanding of service to one another which they are able to transfer to the context of their wider lives. The strength of community was marked by parents who promulgated the view that *'teachers know our children and their families well'* and this was further reinforced by the comment in a meeting with parents who articulated the view that *'The school has a wonderful family feel. It is lovely to see how the older children know, like and care for younger children. It is a true community.'*

**Grade 1**

## **Religious Education**

### **Achievement and Standards in Religious Education**

Catholicity is the heart of St Peter's and as a result of the Catholic ethos and the caring atmosphere leading to high emotional intelligence within classrooms, pupils are empowered to discuss their own beliefs and the traditions of the Church. This is further supported by class spiritual journals and big question books.

Attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with national averages. Pupils are gaining religious education knowledge, skills and understanding at a good rate. They are able to apply this learning to their own lives and experience. The majority of pupils meet age appropriate levels of attainment and a significant number above this. Pupils' oral responses are of a high level and this standard is likewise unusually reflected in their written work. Pupils engage very well during lessons and their behaviour is exemplary both inside and outside their classrooms. Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons and are able to utilise different learning strategies including paired and group work. They would benefit from more opportunities to engage in independent learning activities and research. Pupils place a high value on their books and this is reflected in presentation. There is good subject coverage with a broad range of recording. Pupils have clear knowledge of their targets and can reflect on their learning. The pupils are particularly religiously literate and have a good knowledge of scripture.

**Grade 2**

### **Teaching and learning in Religious Education**

Teaching is generally of a very high standard, is inspirational at times and in a number of instances is outstanding. Classroom management is particularly strong with consistent expectations across the school. Lessons benefit from strong planning consistently applied throughout the school with teachers successfully building on previous learning. The best teaching benefits from secure subject knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith with teachers consistently setting above age related expectations to which the pupils rise. Assessment is developing very well. It is impacting on learning through levelling of pupils work, based on school moderation.

The school appropriately plans to develop this further by its transfer to an electronic version that will allow easier analysis of target groups etc. Teachers are well aware of children with additional needs in their class and adjust questioning, work and support to meet the needs of those children. Children with additional learning needs feel valued, supported and able to seek extra help when required and as a result make good progress. They are particularly well supported by learning support staff who operate discreetly but effectively within the classroom, successfully bringing those pupils' learning forward.

In one lesson seen, true 'awe and wonder' was experienced due to inspirational teaching. The lesson was marked by excellent use of higher order questioning, good use of teaching assistants to support learning and pupils being mesmerised by 'precious' artefacts such as a glass heart and a glass diamond. This created a very spiritual learning environment. The lesson saw the excellent development of religious vocabulary, good differentiation by activity and strong cross curricular links. In another lesson the learning environment was enhanced by candles and incense. A good range of questioning and the effective use of the interactive whiteboard and differentiated activities served to greatly support the obvious learning that went on. In a Key Stage 1 lesson the teacher made imaginative use of resources to foster a sense of 'awe and wonder' and a desire to learn through the use of frozen spheres containing secret messages to develop the concept and an understanding of what it is to have to wait for something and this was linked to the Advent theme. In a Key Stage 2 lesson excellent use was made of the historic context in which Isaiah lived and works of art were viewed to introduce the topic.

**Grade 2**

## **Quality of the Curriculum**

Pupils at St Peter's benefit from a rich and exciting religious education curriculum that results in a sense of success and enjoyment. A number of staff are experienced in teaching religious education in a Catholic school. Those who are non-Catholics or are newer to the teaching profession with less experience are provided with training and are supported by other colleagues in line with the very supportive nature of the school. The demands of the religious education curriculum are therefore well met. Teachers' subject knowledge and the teaching of other faiths is strong.

The school follows the Diocesan recommended religious education scheme, 'Here I Am' and is currently looking to update this scheme through the adoption of 'Come and see' subject to Diocesan guidance. The religious education curriculum is designed to provide equality of access and an opportunity for all pupils to make progress. It more than fulfils the requirement of the Bishop's Conference meeting the required 10% of curriculum time being allocated to religious education and this is well used. It is further enhanced by strong cross curricular links and the effective use of information, communication technology in lessons.

The religious education curriculum is enriched by the schools PHSE and Circle Time schemes of work that includes a sex education programme based on Diocesan guidelines. The development of this programme since the previous inspection, involved governors, parents and staff and has a high satisfaction level among parents.

**Grade 2**

## **Leadership and management of Religious Education**

Leadership and management of religious education at St Peter's is of a high order. The school has a strategic leadership team for religious education. The team consists of the headteacher, an assistant head, the Year 3 teacher with responsibility for pastoral support and the reception teacher who is the dedicated religious education co-ordinator. Each member of the leadership team has a specific role and meets regularly to strategically develop and raise achievement in religious education. Working in partnership with the headteacher, the religious education leadership team provides strong subject leadership, strategic direction and gives practical support through the delivering of assemblies to reinforce the Sunday Gospel.

Dispersed leadership throughout the school successfully promotes pupils' spiritual and moral development. The religious education co-ordinator has responsibility for this curriculum area and models excellent practice and is an inspirational leader, keeping staff informed about developments in this curriculum area through, professional development sessions delivered to staff, in service training, staff meetings and key stage meetings. It is commendable how she has developed excellent practice through implementing a baseline assessment in religious education for pupils on entry to the school. Other teaching and support staff are active in both sacramental and catechetical duties in the parish.

Monitoring procedures provide a structured monitoring and observation plan which is distributed to all staff. Monitoring of planning, lessons and work is structured using a proforma produced by the religious education leadership team that incorporates feedback to individual staff to ensure that improvements can be made.

Parents are fully informed and understand the content and importance of religious education in the school, through the school prospectus, termly parents' letter, St. Peter's Post, invitations to join in with school liturgies and Masses, both in school and in the parish.

There is an annual religious education plan which states clear targets and success criteria. This is reviewed in conjunction with the Section 48 self-evaluation form as part of the process of generating the new plan. Governors are kept up to date with school developments through the termly headteacher's report.

Performance management procedures reflect the individual needs of the staff and the developmental targets for the school. Targets set are reviewed before the new cycle of performance management commences. Teachers' professional development needs are identified in consultation with them and training is organised accordingly.

The religious education coordinator is responsible for spending the religious education budget in line with the religious education action plan. Each class has its own, 'Here I Am' folder as well as materials to support its teaching. Resource boxes exist for each of the 'World Faiths' studied in the school, along with a range of other resources and artefacts. The book 'Spiritual Garments' has been purchased to support staff understanding of children's liturgy and every class has their own liturgy box containing age appropriate resources.

The school has already identified the need to further develop the roles of link governors, including religious education.

**Grade 1**