

INSPECTION REPORT

Cathedral School of St Peter and St John

Inspection date 21st May 2013

Reporting Inspector Sister Judith Russi
Mrs Carolyn Page

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

Type of School	Catholic Primary
URN	105964
Age range of pupils	3-11 years
Number on roll	190
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Mr Ian Clarke
Head teacher	Mrs Margaret O'Brien
Date of previous inspection	June 2008

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades 1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3 = Requires Improvement
Overall effectiveness of the school	1	
The quality of Catholic Leadership	1	
The quality of the Word of God	1	
The quality of the Welcome	1	
The quality of Welfare	1	
The quality of Worship	1	
The quality of Witness	1	
The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements		

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

The Cathedral School of St Peter and St John is a smaller than average sized primary school with 190 pupils serving the parish of St John the Evangelist as well as drawing from surrounding parishes. 70% of pupils are baptised Roman Catholic. Half of the pupils are white British. Other pupils come from a range of ethnic backgrounds with "Any Other White Background" being the largest group. 19.3% of pupils belong to the "Showman's Guild", Fairground families. 30% of pupils have English as an additional language. The overall proportion of disabled pupils and those with Special Educational Needs is above average at 14%. The number of pupils eligible for school pupil premium is above average.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS OUTSTANDING – EXCELLENT

The Cathedral School of St Peter and St John is an outstanding Catholic school which has developed into a centre of excellence offering the children a rich faith experience which permeates all aspects of school life. The cohesive team of governors and staff have dedicated themselves to the building up of a Catholic learning community which is a source of inspiration. The impact of the school's commitment to excellence throughout has raised standards to an exceptionally high level. The priority given to children and families on the margins of society is inspirational. The children receive a Catholic education which enables them to understand their place in the world as future stewards who can influence, change and contribute to the common good for all people. The school has many national and international awards including Green Flag Status (ECO) International Schools Award and Eco Bronze Award 2012. The governors, headteacher and leadership team lead the school with a clear vision and sense of purpose recognising the dignity and value of every member of the community. The school's priority for the growing numbers of pupils and their families in the greatest need, its inclusivity, passion for learning and emphasis on personal development ensures that all pupils receive an integrated Gospel based formation and education in a spirit of joy and celebration.

KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- The leadership and vision of the school at all levels is excellent.
- The Catholic life, relationships, behaviour and care for all within the school is inspirational.
- The outreach to parents and families in the local community is exceptional.

THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP IS OUTSTANDING - EXCELLENT

The outstanding strength of excellent leadership of the school has developed over time due to a joyful ethos which recognises the importance of developing to the highest possible level the gifts of others. The governors and leadership team are not afraid to take risks and think differently in order to best serve the many complex needs of the children. The headteacher has prepared her team through a distributed leadership model, where all members of the school community have an impact on the success of the school. There is a strong sense of ownership and vision across the community. Governors, the staff team, pupils and their families are unified and guided by the Mission Statement which is clearly displayed, known and lived. Link governors are attached to all classes and have a detailed and informed knowledge of the life of the school which significantly impacts on their governance and decision making. Religious Education (RE) is led by the senior leadership team through a distributive model to ensure the highest possible standards with a view to widening the areas of responsibility to incorporate the 5WS as discrete areas of responsibility. Pupil

leadership has been developed through the School Council and more recently through the training and establishment of the Pupil Chaplaincy Team. Pupils were found to be confident and enthusiastic about taking on responsibility. The leadership of the school has a secure overview of the strengths and areas for development due to the robust and highly effective strategy for self- evaluation, development and succession planning. The wide ranging and numerous tributes and awards which the school has received are all testimony to the outstanding leadership.

THE QUALITY OF WORD IS OUTSTANDING

The school has developed the RE scheme, The Way, The Truth and The Life to meet the needs of the pupils using a high level of creativity and critical thinking skills. Teaching and learning was found over time to be outstanding and in many instances excellent. Learning across all Key Stages moved forward quickly, was creatively differentiated and pupils clearly achieved the objectives. In the Early Years and Foundation Stage, teaching and learning was inspirational. The linking of science and RE enabled Nursery children to achieve a very high level of knowledge and understanding of the Ascension story. This was further enhanced by exploring the feelings of the friends of Jesus as they said 'goodbye'. Excellent teaching and learning continued into Reception through the use of helium balloons to symbolise the spreading of the Good News. Pupils continued to demonstrate learning at a high level through Key Stage 1. The creative use of drama and art to deepen understanding and learning of the Ascension story and the fruits of the Holy Spirit greatly enhanced pupil achievement and enjoyment in learning. Teaching and learning was mostly outstanding and often excellent across Key Stage 2 lessons. The continuing use of cross curricular links, science informing RE in Year 6 and 4, art, technology and drama in Years 5 and 3, inspired pupils to think differently and achieve at a high level. A wide range of teaching and learning activities and independent learning enabled pupils to explore and challenge one another in a mature and inventive manner. Marking was consistently diagnostic and interactive serving to affirm and identify next steps for learning. The integration of the themes for the Year of Faith was exemplary. Pupils clearly understood what they were about and could explain why they had been displayed on classroom doors. Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural education was found to be outstanding. Pupils were readily able to talk about the beliefs and values of the Catholic community. The Religious Education budget is set according to the needs of the curriculum and the Catholic life of the school and is adjusted on yearly bases in line with other core subjects. All classes receive a minimum of 10% RE curriculum time.

THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING

The welcome extended to all visitors is underpinned by a common vision built on Gospel Values and the Mission Statement. The school actively seeks to engage with and support members of the community, especially those who are often marginalised or discriminated against. In this regard the school is clearly a beacon of hope. This is particularly appreciated by the parents who had taken the trouble to express in writing how they felt appreciated, valued and safe. The numerous letters and cards from parents and visitors paid tribute to the unique character of the school and recognise that the headteacher and her team actively encourage their contribution to the life of the school and care about each one individually. All members of staff demonstrate a keen sense of community affiliation and the strength and quality of relationships exemplifies respect for the dignity of every member of the school community. Children, parents and staff are rightly proud of their school.

THE QUALITY OF WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING

The school demonstrates a high level of respect and care for everyone. Children are confident that teachers will treat their concerns seriously. The Welfare provision for the pupils is further enhanced through the allocation of extra provision for the most vulnerable children. Two members of staff have been trained to support parents in parenting skills. Further support is also provided through Caritas social workers actively engaging with the school. The development of the "Reggio Room" as a positive space where children can go to spend quiet time with an adult in reflection and peace is much appreciated. When asked about bullying, pupils stated that it was not an issue as everyone knew exactly what to do if there were any problems. The school's provision for safeguarding and keeping children safe is outstanding. The provision for Sex and Relationships Education is through the Diocesan Guidelines for Education for Personal Relationships. Quality before and after school care is provided for families needing extra support. Commitment to healthy lifestyles for all is a priority. The school offers a wide range of clubs and activities to develop the whole person. The school actively reaches out to those in need at home and abroad through a wide variety of charity work. Behaviour of pupils around the school is outstanding.

THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

The whole school policy for prayer and worship ensures a wide range of opportunities to develop and enrich the prayer life of the community. This includes Masses, assemblies and collective worship during RE lessons. The school has actively sought ways of helping the children to develop the art of meditation and reflection in the midst of their busy and sometimes stressful lives. Each morning all classes take part in a period of meditation which is very creative and focused on Christ moving and working in and through their lives. Each classroom has a focal point and beautifully displayed prayer stations are clearly visible around the school. The active involvement of Fr Anthony Sudlow as Chaplain to the school and Canon Tony McBride as Governor, are greatly appreciated. The whole school time of prayer and worship focusing on the recent Year 3 Sacramental celebrations at the Cathedral, was creative, reflective and well balanced. An outstanding feature of the school is the collective appreciation of the centrality of prayer. Children are actively trained to lead prayer and worship wherever possible. The importance of prayer and worship was witnessed and expressed in lessons, as well as by Governors, parents and pupils. Parents and friends are frequently invited to celebrations in the school and the Cathedral.

THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS OUTSTANDING

Witnessing to Christ and the values of the Gospel permeate every aspect of the Cathedral School. Most striking is the way in which the community celebrates diversity and the uniqueness of all God's family. The staff and pupils' recognition, understanding and celebration of the value and importance of each person were seen to be exceptional. The identity of the school community is explicit in both the environment and the relationships within the school community. Displays celebrating the life of the school echo and give witness to a Christ centred universe. The buildings and grounds are lovingly cared for with great attention to beauty and care. This is particularly evident in the creation of the Memorial Garden. The values of the school have a very definite impact which extends beyond the school into the community. This was clearly seen in the activities which engaged the pupils in issues of justice and peace and care for the environment actively encouraging an Earth care ethic. It is clear that the school stands as a witness to Christ's love, justice, forgiveness and compassion. An outstanding feature of the school is the ease with which the children speak about their life in relation to scripture and many showed an excellent knowledge and understanding of scripture and its meaning for their lives. Pupils clearly felt

proud to be people of faith and spoke very confidently about why this was important. Relationships and behaviour at all levels were excellent. The work in supporting CAFOD, St Joseph's Penny, Loaves and Fishes and Cornerstones are just a few of the many projects the school have undertaken in response to the their understanding of the individual's responsibility for caring for those in need.

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- Further develop teaching and learning in RE through the use of a higher level of theological language across all Key Stages.
- Continue the development of the Chaplaincy team to further the already high level of pupil engagement in the Leadership of the Catholic life of the school.
- Act as a catalyst and beacon of excellent practice for other Diocesan Catholic schools

May 30th 2013

Dear Pupils

Thank you so much for the wonderful welcome you gave us when we came to visit you. Your school is an excellent school. This is because you and your teachers are working so hard to always do your very best and you look after one another so well.

You have a beautiful school. We loved all the displays, your prayer corners, gardens and looking at your work. Your work is of an outstanding standard and we could clearly see that you take your learning very seriously and are proud of your achievements. To help you develop even further your teachers are going to introduce you to a high level of new language in RE which is already outstanding. Your creative ideas are very good and we could see that you can make connections between what you are learning in RE with other areas of the curriculum. Thank you for letting us share so much of what you are doing. We were very impressed by your beautiful Assembly Year 3. Thank you to the pupils in Year 6 who explained so much about what they are doing and really impressed us with their confidence and how much they knew.

Your teachers are keen to help you develop the Catholic life of your school even further and to do this they have started the pupil Chaplaincy team to work with Father Anthony and Miss Scraff. This is very important and we hope it will do great things in helping you to lead the Catholic life of your school.

God bless you all and have a really happy term.

Yours sincerely

Sr Judith Russi

(Section 48 Inspector)

Summary Report to Parents

On 21st May 2013 the school was inspected in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The full report has been made available to the school and can also be accessed via both the school website and the Education section on the website of the Diocese of Salford.

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