



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD



Inspection Report

Name of School: St Peter's Catholic Primary School

LEA: Havering

Inspection Date: 18th March 2016

Reporting Inspector: Pamela Brannigan

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: 241
Appropriate Authority: The Governing Body
Date of previous inspection: October 2008

School Address:
Dorset Avenue
Romford
RM1 4JA

Tel. No. 01708 745506
Headteacher: Mrs J. Waterfield
Chair of Governors: Mrs S Marshall

Information about the school

St Peter's Catholic Primary School is one form entry in Romford in the London Borough of Havering and part of the diocese of Brentwood. The school currently has two Reception classes and there is a strong possibility that the school will become two form entry in the future. It serves the parish of St Edward the Confessor, Romford with a small number of pupils coming from farther afield. There are currently 241 pupils aged 4-11 on roll and the school is over subscribed. The proportion of Catholic pupils is 92%. The majority of pupils are from White British background with a smaller number from a range of other ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is slightly above the national average and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below it.

Key grades for inspection

1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires Improvement 4: Causing Concern

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 1

St Peter's is an outstanding Catholic school. It has a strong Catholic ethos which is at the heart of all it does. Outcomes for pupils are excellent as is the provision for Catholic education and the capacity for sustained improvement. Opportunities for spiritual and moral development are part of religious education and the wider curriculum. Pupils are given many opportunities to understand what it means to be part of a Catholic community through opportunities for prayer and worship and charitable outreach. Leaders are excellent role models and are fully committed to all aspects of the Catholic life of the school. Teachers and support staff set high expectations for pupil behaviour which results in calm, hard working classes. Governors are experienced, well informed and well placed to challenge and support. Pastoral care is given a high priority by all members of the school community at every level. Relationships within the school are very good and pupils interviewed said they feel safe and well cared for. There are many opportunities to develop a wide range of interests through extracurricular activities. Parents welcome the high standard of religious education, the Catholicity of the school and the way their children's prayer life is supported and developed. Pupils' standards of attainment are in line with and often exceed diocesan expectations.

The school has a very good capacity for sustained improvement. The last inspection in 2008 identified no major areas for development other than those already stated by the school in its self-evaluation. Since then standards in religious education have risen for all groups. There are plans to begin moderation meetings with other Catholic schools in the deanery to share judgements and further improve assessment. The school gives a high profile to religious education and has strategies to share good practice and support new teachers.

The headteacher, her deputy and governors have a clear vision for the Catholicity of the school and the central place of prayer, worship and religious education. The headteacher who is also subject leader ensures that all staff are given opportunities to extend their knowledge and improve their skills through staff meetings and attendance at diocesan led training. Three teachers hold the CCRS or equivalent qualification and the headteacher has a degree in Divinity. Governors join staff for a day each year when priorities for school development are decided. In addition, they support the headteacher in evaluating the Catholic life of the school. They are dedicated, have a wide range of expertise and are fully involved in the life of the school through frequent visits and meetings with subject leaders.

The current leadership has a very good capacity to maintain effectiveness. The experienced headteacher who is also subject leader shows outstanding leadership of the school through the way she ensures that self-evaluation gives staff and governors an accurate understanding of itself as a Catholic community. She is very well supported by all staff. There is a clear focus on prayer and worship throughout the school. The parish priest from St Edward the Confessor is a frequent visitor to the school. Effective systems are in place to develop and strengthen initiatives which lead to good outcomes for all groups of pupils.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to implement the areas identified in the school improvement plan.
- Develop the moderation of religious education assessments with the deanery group of Catholic schools

Outcomes for pupils

Grade 1

Both attainment and progress in religious education is outstanding. Pupils make very good progress year on year so that by the time they reach Year 6 attainment reaches and sometimes exceeds diocesan expectations. All lessons observed during the inspection were good or outstanding and pupils worked with interest and commitment. Pupils spoken to said they like religious education and enjoy a wide variety of activities during the lessons. They work well together whether in groups or pairs. Pupils have a good understanding of the liturgical year and are able to apply religious ideas to their own lives. Workbooks are very well presented, show coverage of the curriculum and indicate excellent progress made by all groups. Pupils show high levels of understanding of the sacraments, Catholic teaching and moral issues. Behaviour for learning is excellent and pupils are courteous and thoughtful to adults and each other.

Pupils make a very good contribution to the Catholic life of the school. The mission statement is on display in every classroom and well known by pupils. There are many opportunities to understand the needs of others in school and the wider community. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities including membership of the school council and the Prayer and Worship group. Pupils are given opportunities to suggest the charities they wish to support. In recent years these have included Cafod and Brentwood Catholic Children's Society as well as a collection of food for homeless people and refugees. They have a good understanding of the theology underpinning their actions and are encouraged to see themselves as part of a community with responsibilities for other people and the environment. They value the sense of friendship and belonging created within the school.

Prayer and worship are central to school life and has an impact on pupils' understanding of their faith and their personal, moral and spiritual development. All pupils are given many opportunities to participate in assemblies, masses and collective worship. Each class begins the day with prayers and reflections. The centrality of the Church's liturgical year with its seasons and celebrations are leading to a good understanding of the links with the sacraments and life of Christ. The Prayer and Worship group leads assemblies, recently to promote the Year of Mercy as well as leading Rosary groups in May and October. Each class has an attractive prayer table which includes religious vocabulary and pupils' work. Pupils are developing the ability to pray in different ways and at different times. They use the traditional prayers of the church, meditation and their own prayers, many examples of which were seen during the inspection. The parish priest from St Edward the Confessor is a frequent visitor to the school for a programme of masses and liturgies as well as services of Reconciliation during Advent and Lent. As they develop, 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 shared by all members of 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 that all members of staff are there to help if they need support. Pupils value their school and all it offers. They know they are respected, listened to and encouraged to help each other. Parents speak very highly of the school, the headteacher and the care given to their children. They appreciate the support the school gives to pupils through extra-curricular activities. They also praise the excellent quality of education and are overwhelmingly positive about the support given to their children's prayer life and the commitment and approachability of staff.

Leaders and managers

Grade 1

Leadership at all levels is outstanding. The headteacher in partnership with the governors demonstrates excellent leadership of the school by the way she directs the Catholic identity of the school through religious education and collective worship and prayer. Staff and governors are all committed to providing the best possible environment for the pupils. The headteacher ensures that the School Improvement Plan gives priority to Catholic Life and religious education. The current system of self-evaluation is detailed and accurate. The headteacher as subject leader has very good knowledge of areas for development in religious education and is very well placed to support colleagues.

The headteacher monitors religious education by means of lesson observations, work scrutiny and joint planning which is followed by feedback to individual teachers. She attends the deanery group for subject leaders to prioritise areas of improvement. The impact of rigorous monitoring results in high standards in religious education. The school constantly seeks to 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 regularly review the school's aims and periodically review the Mission Statement. In 2015 they were instrumental in determining a new vision of the school and gathered the views of pupils and staff which they shared with parents. The parish priest offers effective support and visits regularly to act as an additional resource in classroom religious education. Governors are able to challenge as well as support. They attend diocesan training to enable them to fulfil their role 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. There are good links with other schools, both deanery and local authority run, through visits, sporting and cultural events. 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 through curriculum information evenings and newsletters which enable them to support their children's education and faith journey. The school makes every effort to maintain and develop good parish links. This helps pupils, families and parishioners to see school and parish as one community.

Provision

Grade 1

The quality of teaching and learning in religious education is very good. During the inspection lessons observed were good or outstanding. They are planned carefully with clear learning intentions and an excellent range of activities. The school has made a major investment in resources including class sets of bibles which are supporting pupils' understanding of scripture. Pupils benefit from the high profile given throughout the school to religious education lessons. In all classes observed pupils were engaged and made good progress. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and respond well to pupils' comments as they take every opportunity to develop understanding. Excellent support by teaching assistants enables all groups of pupils to make progress. This is a feature of lessons throughout the school. Marking is positive, interactive and enables pupils to identify next steps in their learning. Very good monitoring, 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 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. Engaging religious education displays around the school emphasise the centrality of faith to the work of the community. At the time of the inspection a room was devoted to the Stations of the Cross which included pupils' reflections and art work. Many parents visited the Stations after attending a Year 5/6 liturgy on 'Looking Towards Easter.' 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 school's programme of retreat days for Year 5 and Aylesford day for Year 3 supports pupils' faith journey and sense of worth. The support given to families through a wide range of extra-curricular activities also gives a strong sense of community to the school. There is every indication that current high standards are likely to be maintained or improved.

Provision for prayer and worship at St Peter's is very good. Assemblies and liturgies are well planned and contribute greatly to pupils' spiritual development. They often include visual presentations, bible readings drama, singing and music. During the inspection an outstanding assembly led by Year 1 celebrating Palm Sunday included every pupil. A very large group of parents were in attendance. Pupils are involved in collective worship several times a day in their classrooms and are given opportunities for meditation and personal reflection. Each classroom has a very attractive prayer focus with religious artefacts and display boards which include children's work. Pupils attend Mass several times a term. They prepare for this by composing bidding prayers, reading, offertory and as altar servers. Music is strength of the school and singing is of a high standard. A prayer garden offers opportunities for informal prayer and reflection. Parents, families and parishioners are invited to masses, other celebrations and attendance is very high. Pupils are given many opportunities to develop their knowledge of Catholic traditions through Reconciliation, Stations of the Cross and Rosary as well as good links with the local parish.

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.