



Archdiocese of Birmingham

INSPECTION REPORT

ST PETER'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Augusta Place, Leamington Spa CV32 5EL

Inspection dates 18th-19th November 2015
Reporting Inspector Mr Paul Nutt

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3-11 years
Number on roll	120
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Mr Michael O'Riley
Telephone number	01926 427497
E-mail address	admin3542@welearn365.com
Date of previous inspection	November 2010
DFE School Number	937/3542
Unique Reference Number	125714

Headteacher Miss Tess McNamara

Previous inspection: 2

This inspection: 2

DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



Evidence

- The inspection was carried out by 1 Diocesan Inspector.
- The focus of the inspection was on the effectiveness and use of the school's self-evaluation of religious education (RE) and Catholic life.
- To validate the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation of teaching and learning, the inspector observed 3 full RE lessons with the headteacher or RE subject leader.
- The inspector completed a work scrutiny and held a discussion with pupils to evaluate the impact of teaching on their learning over time.
- Meetings were held with governors and the parish priest.
- The inspector observed a whole school Mass, a Class 5 Prayer assembly, a liturgy assembly, a hymn practice and undertook a learning walk to look at aspects of learning, the presentation of the Catholic life of the school, and pupils' behaviour.
- Other documents such as RAISEonline, the Action Plan RE 2015-16, Self-Evaluation and Rapid Action Plan November 2015, and an audit of RE and Catholic life were read alongside the self-evaluation.

Information about the school

- St Peter's is a smaller than average Catholic primary school serving the parish of St Peter Apostle in Leamington Spa.
- It is one of three Catholic primary schools in the parish.
- The number of Catholic pupils is currently 90%; nearly a third speak a language other than English at home.
- The number of pupils receiving pupil premium funding is well below average at 2.5%, as are the numbers with special needs and/or disabilities.
- Baseline data on entry indicate that children have a limited knowledge of the Catholic faith.
- The headteacher has been in post since September 2014, with a new teaching team and structures since the beginning of this term.

Main Findings

- St Peter's is a Catholic school whose overall judgement of "good if only just" in its self-evaluation can be validated. However, given the recent history of the school, there are not as yet sufficient examples of systematic processes, or evidence of impact leading towards school improvement of RE and Catholic life.
- Collective worship is a strength of the school, with a range of provision, including a strong prayer life, and pupils' engagement.
- Strong and committed leadership is evident in all areas of the school, notably in its faith life and ethos through the drive and example of the headteacher, and evidence of support for teaching and staff development has been available throughout the inspection.
- Monitoring and evaluation processes towards school improvement have been developing, since the arrival of the new headteacher; they provide a secure basis for moving forward at pace.
- There is strong and committed governance at the school, and governors demonstrate sound knowledge; engagement and commitment are evident in their regular visits and involvement with school life.

- The parish priest, as chaplain to the school and a governor, gives strong support in the preparation of collective worship, sacramental preparation and, when requested, guidance with aspects of faith and within the classroom.
- There is within the school significant capacity for swift, strong and lasting improvement.

School self evaluation

Catholic Life and Collective Worship

- Collective worship is a real strength of the school and the school's judgements can readily be validated. Preparation and delivery are of a high standard; pupils, including the small percentage of non-Catholics, are fully engaged and benefit greatly from the range and relevance of their experiences. After Mass, for example, they all complete a brief proforma, used as part of the evaluation and improvement process
- The prayer life of the school is strong and beneficial to all pupils, individually and collectively. As they progress through the school, opportunities for focused personal prayer and reflection are developed. Class prayer assemblies are a regular part of school life, and provide opportunities for direct links with individual lives and the wider world: the Class 5 assembly observed linked directly with tragic events in Paris a few days earlier.
- Strong, personal engagement from school staff, here as elsewhere, ensures that the faith life of the school is monitored and evaluated, though for now the evidence base is rather spoken than written. Pupils' responses confirm these assertions.
- Although Catholic life in school is strong, there is, at this stage, too little evidence from structured, systematic processes for self-evaluation to be judged better than good: there is not enough hard evidence of impact or analysis leading directly to school improvement. Pupils demonstrate, both in their words and daily behaviours, their engagement with, and benefits drawn from, the life, ethos and mission of the school, which is actively promoted by staff and governors.
- The mission statement provides a point of reference for good relationships and behaviour, and maintenance of the quality of school life and ethos. Together with good quality displays, prayer corners and artefacts, this provides opportunities for pupils to practise their faith. The school should actively seek a statue of St Peter for prominent display and reverence.
- The faith and liturgical life of the school are strong, with positive engagement from the parish priest in sacramental preparation, whole-school worship, governance, and less formal visits.
- Senior leaders discuss the life of the school and outcomes for all children's learning and development in faith; these discussions and developments are then presented to governors, whose involvement and challenge ensure consistency and progress.
- Pupils are confident to talk about the faith life of the school and are keen to demonstrate their understanding of the meaning and purpose of prayer. They speak easily about the importance of the Mass in their lives, and the value to be gained from the recently-introduced class prayer bags. They are also able to identify charitable support offered by the school.
- Parents receive regular information from the school and are invited to express their views through parents' meetings or less formally; the results are collated and subsequently discussed. Families are actively included in sacramental preparations.

The recently purchased prayer bags should provide further opportunities for their involvement in the faith life of their children and the school community.

- Mass for the dedication of the basilicas of Saints Peter and Paul was celebrated in church during the inspection. It indicated a very high level of engagement and reverence from the pupils, singing with enthusiasm, praying attentively and listening to readings and the homily, responding to Father John's questions. Pupils were actively involved in all required roles. Behaviour throughout, including walking to and from church, was calm and reverential.
- Collective worship is monitored by the headteacher and individual class teachers on a regular basis; governors and the parish priest are also very active in ensuring the quality and appropriateness of whole-school worship. The Mass observed was well attended by parents and parishioners.

Governance

- Governance in school is secure. Since the arrival of the new head, committees and the focuses of governors have been reviewed and better suit their joint functions of support and challenge.
- The close links of individual governors with the school, and their effective, planned visits, ensure that they keep abreast of the life of the school, demonstrating involvement and interest, and monitoring unobtrusively what is happening. They report back their findings to the governing body.
- Governors are very well informed about the school, to which they have a very strong commitment; they recognise and celebrate the quality of its life and ethos. In this regard, they pay fulsome tribute to the leadership and personal faith example of the headteacher and RE subject leader.
- They have taken an active part in the appointment of new staff, and the choice of reading materials for classrooms and the school library resources.
- Governors receive reports from the headteacher, including Catholic life and religious education, and use the opportunity to enquire and challenge. Contact with the headteacher, and also other staff, takes place on a less formal, though more frequent basis, and much of it unrecorded at present.
- Processes are in place for governors to receive, in the appropriate committee and then full governing body, planning documents, assessment outcomes and progress reports. These processes are comparatively new, and need to be fully and consistently implemented. Governors now request greater rigour in the evidence provided, and this should ensure that they are able to play their full part in the oversight, agreement and implementation required.
- The role of the parish priest, as school chaplain and link governor, is very valuable. He visits school regularly, meets with senior staff, speaks to the children, supports staff members with collective worship and sacramental preparations, and contributes, when requested, to the delivery of aspects of the curriculum.

Religious Education

- The school's judgement that teaching, progress and attainment in RE are good can be validated as reliable: all 3 lessons observed were judged to be at least good. There is some historical evidence that good progress and understanding are achieved across both key stages and attainment is broadly comparable with

literacy. Conversations with older pupils indicate that this is the case. Records completed this term support this judgement.

- The quality of learning and understanding in RE is good overall, as indicated in lessons, written work, and in discussions with pupils. The introduction of formative assessment for learning and a developing cross-curricular approach are to be welcomed, and already beginning to bear fruit. Feedback, written and spoken, is precise and positive, and pupils' learning benefits from its consistent use.
- Teaching is secure and well planned. Lesson observations early this term had revealed that one colleague required additional support. An action plan was drawn up, to include external training opportunities, and performance has already improved. The recently introduced system of shared observation outcomes encourages confidence in a peer support opportunity which teachers are using with confidence.
- RE is well led in the school. The subject leader, since her arrival at the beginning of this term, leads by example in her classroom and in her commitment to all aspects of school life, especially collective worship. Clearly structured monitoring and evaluation procedures have been put in place, with regular schedules and follow-up to all staff; there is already evidence available of some impact leading towards school improvement.
- Wholesale staffing changes have taken place for this school year, with high expectations for best practice at all times, and rigorous standards promoting school improvement. This has led to greater consistency, and teaching and learning are now secure, well planned and accurately evaluated. However, the evidence base to support these judgements is modest in so short a time, though there is certainly consistency of use and reliability of application.
- Book trawls, lesson observations and learning walks are conducted according to a published schedule, and exemplars of pupils' work, with agreed moderation within the school and beyond, are now available to support staff. Individual support is developed with teachers, as appropriate, especially for non-Catholic colleagues, with effective use made of professional development opportunities available from the Diocese and within the Warwickshire cluster.
- The curriculum for religious education is well planned, with clear links to the recommended diocesan programme, an appropriate balance between learning about and learning from religion, and pupils' spiritual and moral development. Vocational development, however, requires attention and improvement, as there is too little evidence available in planning, around the school or in conversations with pupils.

Overall effectiveness of the school

- With the arrival of the new headteacher in September 2014, an audit was conducted, which resulted in the identification of urgent key priorities.
- An action plan is now in place and driving improvements. The recommendations from the last s48 inspection have now been addressed.
- Children's knowledge of the Catholic faith is limited on entry to the school, but progress for all groups is good. Attainment in RE is good, and by the end of Key Stage 2, all pupils are working at levels broadly comparable to English.
- Pupils' learning and progress in RE is good overall, with that of pupils with learning needs and disabilities outstanding. They all respond positively in lessons, where there is a range of teaching styles and differentiated activities. They are grouped in

each class according to ability into 3 broad bands. SEND pupils are not included in these 3 main groups.

- Teaching, including non-Catholics, demonstrates secure subject knowledge, and uses a good range of strategies to secure engagement and progress. Marking and feedback given by teachers is helping the pupils with their learning. Further opportunities for extended writing, and a reduction in low-level tasks for lower ability pupils, would move learning and progress forward. Classroom support is deployed most effectively.
- Lessons are well planned, with shared objectives and good use of questioning.
- The curriculum is based upon "Learning and Growing as People of God", planned fully in line with DES guidance, with topics adapted to the needs of all pupils.
- Monitoring and assessment are undertaken regularly, according to a published schedule. This includes baseline assessment and analysis, monitoring the school environment, dates for submissions of assessments, observations, pupil interviews, book trawls and drop-ins.
- Outcomes are recorded and discussed, by the headteacher and RE subject leader, with individual teachers. They are then used to ensure that individual targets are relevant and delivered.
- In spite of the limited space within school, classrooms and other spaces provide an improving learning environment. There are displays to support learning, and prayer corners which contribute to the faith life and ethos of the school. Effective use is made of pupils' own prayers, and the prayer life of the school is very good.
- Pupils' behaviour reflects their understanding of gospel values; they regularly arrange charitable acts, write their own prayers, for example at times of disaster or crisis, and support the local food bank throughout the year. They have an outstanding understanding of Christian service.
- The school leadership and governors continually promote the Catholic life of the school, which is strong. They serve as role models to bring alive the faith, and to ensure that it infuses all areas of school life. They have been aspirational in identifying appropriate priorities, for example the appointments of all new staff. This has consolidated success and secured further improvement.
- Collective worship is good. It is given a high priority and the pupils' responses and reverence are of a high order. Worship is planned in line with the school's agreed expectations, and reflects the liturgical year. There is a range of different opportunities for collective worship: weekly whole-school Mass, liturgy assembly, hymn practice and class prayer assemblies. Pupils are encouraged to take an active role, individually and collectively. Parents and parishioners attend Masses; the parish priest leads the celebration, is an active member of the governing body, and visits the school informally at other times.
- The sacramental programme, led by the parish priest, is very carefully planned and reviewed to ensure that it provides appropriate preparation for both pupils and their families.

Recommendations

- Further develop formal systematic processes for monitoring and evaluating Catholic life and RE, with taking account of its impact on school improvement
- Senior leaders and governors should revisit the areas of Catholic life and RE, to produce shared understandings and routes of accountability
- Conduct a thorough review of vocation and service in all aspects of school life, in order to strengthen pupils' understanding of meaning and purpose.

