

Catholic Diocese of Northampton



INSPECTION REPORT OF DENOMINATIONAL CHARACTER AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

(Under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005)

ST PETER'S VOLUNTARY AIDED CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL Prospect Road, Marlow, SL7 2PJ

DfS School No: 825/3371

URN: 110473

Head Teacher: Miss A McCluskey

Chair of Governors: Mr A Temple

Reporting Inspector: Mrs R Jones

Associate Inspector: Mrs K Williams

Date of Inspection: 29th January 2013

Date Report Issued: 14 February 2013

Date of previous Inspection: 25 November 2009

The School is in the Trusteeship of the Diocese and
in partnership with Buckinghamshire Local Authority

Information about the school

St Peter's Catholic Primary School is a one form entry school for pupils aged from 4-11 years. There are 189 pupils on role, 90% of whom are baptised Catholic. The school is situated in Marlow, Buckinghamshire serving the parishes of St Peter's, Marlow and St Dunstan's, Bourne End. The majority of pupils are white British. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is much lower than the national average. There are fifteen children on the special educational needs register, five with statements.

Key grades for inspection

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 2

St Peter's Catholic Primary School is a good Catholic school. Staff work well together for the good of the pupils and there is a good capacity to improve. The school's Catholic identity permeates the daily life of the community. The leadership team under the guidance of the RE subject leader strive to provide a strong spiritual purpose throughout the school. Pupils' personal development along with their faith awareness is demonstrated in their good behaviour and positive attitudes. Pupils are proud of their school and they know that staff care for and guide them. Prayer and worship are central to the life of the school. Prayer is a strong feature. Generally, pupils make progress in RE in line with national expectations. However, there needs to be more challenge for the most able pupils.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

Grade 2

The school has a good capacity to improve and develop. St Peter's has improved in all the areas highlighted at the last inspection. The mission statement has been reviewed, is well known by pupils and staff and is visibly displayed throughout the school. A variety of assessment procedures have been developed to ensure that pupil progress is adequately monitored and recorded. Attainment in RE is tracked and targets are set for the children to enable them to make progress. Marking in RE is now more thorough and work is on-going to develop further in this area. The RE subject leader has an overview of the school and has developed an action plan for RE which is included in the School Development Plan.

The inspectors largely concur with the school's self-evaluation with the exception of the quality of provision which is satisfactory. The headteacher and RE subject leader have a good overview of the schools strengths and weaknesses.

The subject leader working with the headteacher have successfully introduced the new "Come and See" scheme of work for religious education. Support for teachers to deliver this more challenging curriculum is on-going. Staff are benefitting from training to improve their teaching skills in RE. The governing body is very supportive of the school and members are working to develop their role in fostering and monitoring the Catholic life of the school and in improving the quality of religious education. The commitment and vision of the headteacher and RE subject leader means the school is in a good position to raise standards further.

What the school should do to improve further

- improve all teaching to at least 'good' to ensure equality of provision across the school
- raise standards by ensuring there is appropriate differentiation and challenge to meet the learning needs of all the pupils
- improve the quality, quantity and standards of presentation in pupil's written work.

Outcomes for pupils

Grade 2

Pupils benefit well from the school's positive Catholic ethos. The pupils are confident and articulate with a strong sense of self-worth. They display respect and care for each other and feel safe at school trusting adults who listen to them and help them when needed. The school provides opportunities for the pupils to become responsible and caring members of their community as demonstrated in the "buddy system". Pupils are also encouraged to be reflective about their feelings towards others, their behaviour and about their learning. They demonstrate a developing awareness of the needs of others through fund raising. Pupils' achievements are regularly recognised and celebrated. The School Council is developing, giving pupils the opportunities to share their ideas and views on how the school can be improved further.

Pupils respond well to worship engaging with respect and reverence. They are actively involved, writing their own prayers and participating in dance and weekly presentations at assembly. Each classroom has a prayer focus linked to the current RE topic and liturgical season. The pupils have a good understanding of key celebrations and of the annual liturgical cycle.

The chaplaincy team at St Peter's is strong and provides good support for pupils, staff and families. The parish priest from St Peter's church is a weekly visitor who encourages questions from the pupils and gives presentations on various topics to help deepen the pupil's understanding of their faith. The Chaplaincy team work well to ensure the children feel safe and are aware of how to access help if needed. They contribute very effectively to the well-being of the pupils.

The excellent response of the pupils and their good behaviour helps them to develop a sound knowledge of the Catholic faith during their time at the school. The majority of pupils enter school significantly above the national average. They then achieve levels of attainment in religious education and make progress in line with national expectations. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are offered a range of activities to promote learning such as role play, model making, hot seating, partner work and ICT. Whilst pupils work well together there needs to be greater challenge in the tasks provided especially for the most able. The presentation of pupils' work is inconsistent and the quality and quantity of work produced needs to reflect more fully their capacity for spiritual and reflective thought and their deepening understanding of their Catholic faith.

Leadership and Management

Grade 2

The RE subject leader working with the headteacher ensure a shared vision for St Peter's. The school's Catholic identity is affirmed in the many displays which reflect the liturgical year and current RE topic. Under the strong, focused leadership of the RE subject leader, staff are very well supported thus enabling standards both in the planning and teaching of RE to rise in the future. All teachers have had in-house training to ensure the full implementation of the new RE scheme "Come and See". The leadership team and governors have recently undertaken a series of learning walks. This, along with other monitoring and evaluation strategies, has helped the school to identify future RE priorities in the School Development Plan.

Parents support the school very well. They are invited and welcomed to assemblies and celebrations during the school year. There are very strong links with the parish of St Peter's. The parish priest is a weekly visitor and part of the chaplaincy team. Mass is celebrated regularly in school and pupils also attend school masses at St Peter's church. The RE subject leader works closely with the parish catechist to prepare pupils to receive the sacraments of First Eucharist and Reconciliation.

Governors fulfil their statutory and canonical responsibilities and are supportive of the school. The headteacher keeps governors informed about religious education and

Catholic life of the school. They are increasingly active in the monitoring of all aspects of the school's life.

St Peter's greatly values all members of the school community. Pupils raise money for local, national and international charities. The school works closely with the SVP Society and the 'Transworld Aid' group in the parish. St Peter's is a member of the Buckinghamshire Catholic Schools Partnership and joins with other schools to take part in "Praise in the Park" and "Hope in the Park". St Peter's continues to work closely with St Mary's University College to train and develop teachers. The RE curriculum includes the study of Judaism and Islam.

Provision

Grade 3

Collective worship, prayer and Chaplaincy play an important part in meeting the spiritual needs of both staff and pupils. Many opportunities are provided to enable a full and active participation in the school's spiritual life and to allow for a personal response to God. There are also opportunities throughout the school year provided for parents and parishioners to participate in a variety of celebrations.

The quality of classroom religious education is satisfactory overall with good features observed in some lessons. Where teaching is good teachers have secure subject knowledge, high expectations, offer effective questioning and a range of teaching strategies and provide pupils with challenging and engaging tasks. In many lessons observed however, a lack of pace, challenge and effective differentiation prevents pupils from making sufficient progress. There is too much teacher talk.

The RE curriculum is good in meeting pupils' needs. The new "Come and See" RE syllabus meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory and has been fully implemented. A whole school approach is used for planning. 10% of curriculum time is allocated to RE in-line with the recommendation of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. The use of scripture was evident in the pupils' books.

The curriculum contributes well to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Cross-curricular links to drama, dance, ICT and music were evident in the lessons observed and in teacher planning. Pupils are also given the opportunity to study and develop understanding of other faiths. During an observed assembly on light pupils learnt about Diwali as well Candlemass.

Assessment of pupils' work continues to develop. Assessment strategies provide detailed information on the levels achieved by pupils. Pupils are starting to evaluate their own work but this needs further development. Marking does not yet sufficiently enable the pupils improve their work or know what to do to achieve their targets.

The inspectors would like to thank all members of the St Peter's community for their warm welcome, their interest in the inspection process and their willingness to work with the inspection team.