



INSPECTION REPORT

ST PETER'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

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DfE Number: 916 3370

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Headteacher: Mrs C Baron

Chair of Governors: Monsignor L Slattery

**Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Diocese of Clifton
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005**

Date of inspection: 9th and 10th March 2022

Date of previous inspection: 10th and 11th March 2016

Reporting Inspector: Mrs B McLaughlin

Additional Inspector: Mrs A Barrett

Description of school

St Peter's is a large inner city two form entry Catholic primary school which serves six parishes (St. Peter's, Gloucester; St. Augustine's, Matson; English Martyrs, Tuffley; St Mary's, Newent; St Margaret Mary, Coleford; Our Lady of Victories, Cinderford).

There are 419 children at the school. The proportion of children who are baptised Catholic (92%) is high. The proportion of children with Special Educational Needs is above the national average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those speaking English as an additional language are above the national average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals and known to be eligible for support from the pupil premium is below the national average.

There have been no significant changes in leadership since the last inspection; however, a number of new staff have joined the school.

The school is part of The Little Way Partnership of Catholic schools in Gloucestershire.

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school (summary statement)

Outstanding

This is an outstanding school because:

- It is a strong, vibrant, inclusive community steeped in Gospel values, which permeate every aspect of the school's life. All members of the school community are active in their commitment to the school's mission.
- The headteacher offers outstanding leadership. She is driven by her commitment to Catholic education and inspires staff and pupils alike.
- Staff share in the ownership of the school's values and are positive role models across the school.
- Pupils demonstrate a deep sense of belonging to this welcoming, inclusive Catholic community and engage enthusiastically in all that the school offers.
- Chaplaincy is a model of excellent practice and has gone from strength to strength under the guidance of the very experienced and dedicated chaplaincy leader.
- The RE leader is a skilled practitioner who has established a clear framework for the teaching and monitoring of religious education.
- The school is fully attentive to the needs of pupils and staff provide the highest levels of pastoral care.
- Teaching is consistently good and often outstanding in all key stages.
- Pupils make good progress in religious education.

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- The Governing Body is highly ambitious for the Catholic life of the school and makes a meaningful contribution to its mission.
 - The school is highly regarded by parents and has excellent links with parishes. The local parish priest makes a significant contribution to the mission of the school.

The capacity of the school community to improve and develop

The capacity of the school to improve is good. There is a commitment to continuous growth and improvement, which is rooted in the school's Catholic identity, and which is articulated by leaders, governors and staff. There are many well-established and effective structures in place. These ensure high expectations and continuity while also welcoming a variety of creative approaches.

The area for improvement identified in the previous inspection has been fully addressed. The school has put in place strategies to provide further opportunities for pupils across all year groups to be able to engage in more extended, reflective writing on the topics they are learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that school improvement planning formally identifies priorities, success criteria, accountabilities, and progress in relation to the Catholic and prayer life of the school, and religious education.
- Given the growing demands of partnership working, create extra capacity, within the leadership team, for the oversight of religious education and the Catholic and prayer life of the school.

a) The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school

- Pupils demonstrate a strong sense of belonging to this welcoming, inclusive Catholic community. They are active in their commitment to the school's mission, "Following in Jesus' footsteps, we live, love and learn together as a school family to build a better world."
- Pupils willingly participate in activities which enable them to contribute to the development of the school's Catholic character, such as their involvement in the recent review of the mission statement. As part of the process pupils said they wanted a greater focus on building a better world, which was consequently added to the statement.
- Pupils are alert to the needs of others, both within and beyond the school community. They demonstrate a genuine understanding of how to act in the light of the Gospel values, which they frequently express as having 'honey on your heart'. This is evident in a wide range of charitable work, which includes donating to the local food bank, raising money for Mission Together, visiting local care homes and responding to immediate needs in our world, such as collecting items to support the victims of the war in Ukraine.
- The behaviour and attitudes of pupils are exemplary. They demonstrate high levels of respect and care for each other. The affirmative Catholic ethos encourages them to listen, praise and support each other, as evident in the nomination of pupils to be celebrated as examples of the school motto, 'Live, Love, Learn'.
- Pupils embrace the numerous opportunities to take on responsibilities associated with the Catholic life of the school. They serve as members of the School Council, chaplaincy group, prayer group, 'Live, Love, Learn' group and eco committee.
- The response of pupils to the chaplaincy provision of the school is outstanding. All pupils have the opportunity to be involved in some capacity and many seek to become chaplaincy leaders.
- Pupil chaplaincy leaders meet regularly and have created a schedule of varied activities and events for the whole school year. At the time of the inspection, they had just launched an Easter colouring competition and the 'Rainbow Raffle'. They are also responsible for the reflection tables in each classroom and work with their peers to develop and monitor the use of the tables before reporting their findings to staff.
- Pupils enjoy opportunities to participate in retreats, visits to places of worship, to local care homes and to partner Catholic schools. They are excited that, following the removal of restrictions relating to the Covid pandemic, these visits are being reintroduced. Furthermore, they welcome the many opportunities they have to listen and learn from visiting speakers and workshop providers.

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- Pupils value and enjoy the opportunities the school provides for their physical, social, emotional and spiritual development. They speak positively about their learning in relation to Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE).

b) The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school

- The school's mission statement is at the heart of all that happens at St Peter's. It is regularly reviewed to ensure that it meets the needs of the evolving school community. These reviews include pupils, staff, governors and parents, and as a result the mission statement is owned and understood by all.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Staff promote high standards of behaviour, which are rooted in Gospel values. The regular whole school focus on values empowers pupils and deepens their understanding. Each term, they vote on which value they wish to be the focus for the following term. This is then reinforced through the Tuesday core values assembly and pupil rewards.
- Staff receive high quality induction and, under the guidance of the headteacher and chaplaincy leader, they participate in ongoing professional development relating to the Catholic life of the school. Many staff additionally engage with support and training provided by the diocese.
- The school environment clearly reflects its Catholic identity and ethos and shows that they are fully alive in the daily life of the school. The 'Spiritual Space', at the heart of the school, is a beacon of its faith life as are the many vibrant and topical displays around the school. Additional spaces, such as that devoted to St Joseph, and the provision of thoughtful artefacts encourage pupil participation and interaction.
- Staff provide first class pastoral care and are well supported by the highly effective pastoral leader and the well-developed systems that are in place. This pastoral care also extends to families, who greatly value the help they receive.
- The spiritual development of pupils is supported by the close links between the school and the parish priest, who is a regular visitor in school. His involvement strengthens pupils' understanding that spirituality is part of daily life.
- The chaplaincy provision, coordinated by the chaplaincy leader, is excellent and key in supporting the Catholic life of the school. It enables pupils of all ages and abilities to frequently participate in a variety of engaging activities, on a class level, as a whole school or voluntarily.
- Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), and Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) are carefully planned to reflect Catholic teachings and principles. Details of the schemes have been fully shared with governors and parents.
- The school's website clearly reflects its Catholic mission. It contains sections on Catholic ethos, mission, worship and core values; as well as many photographs which celebrate pupil participation in the Catholic life of the school.

c) How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school

- Leaders and governors are deeply committed to, and effective in, promoting the Catholic life of the school. They see it as a core leadership responsibility and ensure the whole curriculum contributes to the spiritual and moral development of pupils. They embrace and promote the Bishop's vision for the diocese through active participation in diocesan initiatives and attendance at training and conferences.
- The headteacher, supported by governors and the chaplaincy and RE leaders, continually strives to build on the school's strong Catholic tradition. She is tireless in her communication of the school's mission, which she does with positivity, care and ambition for the children.
- Monitoring of the Catholic life of the school is robust. The chaplaincy leader has a regular programme of monitoring and evaluation, which includes activities undertaken by pupils.
- The governors' Mission and Ethos committee, which meets three times each year, receives regular executive summaries which detail the findings of monitoring, as well as areas for development. These are accurately identified. They receive verbal reports from the chaplaincy leader and undertake school visits, which would benefit from being formally documented and reported to the full Governing Body.
- The school has a range of very successful strategies in place for engaging parents. These include daily contact at the school gate, inviting parents to events in school, the use of social media, the school newsletter and the website. The Parents and Friends of St Peter's Association actively promotes and reinforces the Catholic life of the school. As a result, parents have an excellent understanding of the school's mission and are very supportive of it.

a) How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

- Overall, most children, from their varied starting points, make good progress in each key stage, with no significant variation between groups of learners. Pupils with special educational needs are effectively supported and therefore make progress comparable to other groups. The progress of pupils in religious education was maintained during the period of home learning due to the Covid pandemic.
- The religious literacy of pupils across the key stages is extremely strong and plays a key part in enabling them to grow in their understanding of faith. This was evident in all year groups, where children confidently used key words in response to teacher questioning. Year 2 pupils spoke confidently of the Kingdom of God and Year 6 pupils were impressive in their explanation of catechumens.
- Pupils' attitudes to all aspects of their learning in RE are consistently positive and have a good impact on the progress they make. They enjoy their lessons, participate enthusiastically and relish opportunities to develop a fuller understanding of the subject. They embrace the many planned opportunities to "think, develop and deepen" the link between their learning in religious education and daily life.
- Pupils respond well to the high expectations and academic challenge of staff. These are consistent across all year groups. They enjoy their religious education lessons and as a result behaviour is excellent.
- Pupils respond well to opportunities to engage with a variety of learning approaches and activities in religious education. They particularly enjoy drama, debate, role play and art, which they see as helpful to their understanding and of which they would like to do more.
- Pupils, especially older ones, have many opportunities to write in depth. They confidently use prompts, writing frames and research to develop their comprehension and analysis. Pupils take great pride in their work as evident not only in its presentation but also in the quality of writing, their participation in pair work and contribution to class discussions.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how teachers assess their learning and the different types of feedback given. Younger children, in particular, enjoy receiving stamps in their books. Older pupils respond to the pink pen comments of their teachers, which require them to further improve previously completed work.

b) The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education

- Teachers have a clear framework for planning, which enables them to prepare lessons which consolidate and extend pupils' learning. This is further enhanced through regular opportunities for joint planning.

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- Teachers display high levels of confidence in the delivery of religious education. There is a tangible commitment to the subject with ongoing dialogue and reflection, which is a result of the strong leadership of the headteacher, RE and chaplaincy leaders.
 - Teachers have very high expectations. They structure lessons so that in all classes, prior learning is checked before new content is shared. This is then reinforced through a wide range of collaborative and independent activities, resulting in extremely high levels of pupil motivation and concentration.
 - Teachers are skilful in their use of questioning, providing challenge to pupils and encouraging them to think more deeply, spiritually and ethically.
 - In most lessons teachers use time effectively to maximise pupil participation and learning. This is further enhanced by the range of engaging teaching approaches and resources.
 - Teaching assistants are skilled and proactive in supporting the delivery of learning objectives and reinforcing subject content and vocabulary, as well as supporting individual pupils. This was seen in a Year 5 lesson where the teaching assistant recorded the key discussion points made by pupils and the teacher, thus providing a commentary on the lesson and an aide-memoire for subsequent activities.
 - Staff know their pupils well and have excellent relationships with their class, promoting high levels of engagement and interest. Staff use praise and affirmation frequently and see it as an integral part of learning. Pupils' work is celebrated and over the course of each term, it is added to a growing classroom display on the topic of study.
 - The teaching of other world faiths is systematically and thoughtfully included in religious education lessons. Pupils speak particularly highly of these lessons and would welcome additional opportunities to extend their knowledge of other faiths.
 - Whole school systems for feedback are in place. However, there is some variation in their application, meaning that some teacher comments are not linked to learning objectives.

c) How well leaders and governors monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

- Leaders and governors ensure that the religious education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and that the required amount of curriculum time is given to religious education. As a result of this, the quality of work produced by pupils has parity with other subjects.
- Leaders ensure that high quality resources are available for the teaching of religious education and spending in religious education is on a par with other core subjects.
- Governors are active in promoting and checking the content of courses to ensure that the programmes of study are in line with diocesan guidelines, so that the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils.
- Leaders understand the importance of monitoring and assessment. There are strong, well-embedded systems for tracking and monitoring the delivery of religious education.

The RE leader engages in a range of regular activities, which include lesson observations, planning and book scrutinies, pupil conferencing and analysis of assessment data.

- The RE leader produces executive summaries of her monitoring and appropriately identifies areas for improvement. However, more emphasis needs to be placed on ensuring that the findings are used to determine required actions, success criteria and timescales for completion. These can then be formally reported to governors, enabling them to assess the impact of provision in religious education more robustly.
- The RE link governor, with the other members of the Mission and Ethos committee, has a good understanding of the school's approach to the teaching of religious education. This would be further strengthened by the regular sharing of religious education progress data.

The Prayer Life of the School

Grade 1

a) How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's prayer life

- All pupils participate fully in the school's rich prayer life, which punctuates the day. They are prayerful, respectful and reverent during a variety of prayer opportunities, which include traditional prayers as well as those written by pupils.
- Pupils across the key stages demonstrate high levels of interest and enjoyment in the school's prayer life. For example, they take turns in routinely leading their classmates in morning prayer as well as being active participants in whole school prayer and worship. During whole school collective worship observed during the inspection, pupils listened and watched attentively as Year 3 pupils enacted the story of Zacchaeus. They sang enthusiastically, reflected in silence and confidently joined in the school prayer.
- Pupils value the many opportunities to engage in prayer and worship in school, and when possible, at the local parish church. Many such opportunities for pupil involvement exist, through the regular prayer club, Monday whole school Gospel assemblies and Tuesday core values assemblies which are led by volunteer pupils and the headteacher. The whole school joins in hymn practice on Thursdays.
- The liturgical calendar underpins school life and there are high levels of pupil participation in seasonal celebrations such as reflections on Holy Week and Christmas.
- Pupils value and respect the "Spiritual space" at heart of school and expressed excitement at being able to gather there as a whole school community to pray together, following the Covid pandemic.
- Pupils use a variety of approaches to prayer which include scripture, religious artefacts, liturgical music and other forms of prayer both traditional and contemporary. This was seen during voluntary prayer club, where two Year 5 pupils, led a thoughtful lunch time session to a group of children from both key stages. At the end of the prayer a year 1 pupil spontaneously commented on how much he had enjoyed the session and thanked the pupils who had led it.

b) The quality of the prayer life provided by the school

- Prayer is the heartbeat of every school celebration and is central to its life. The school provides a loving, prayer-centred and inclusive environment. The rich provision for the prayer life of the school makes a significant contribution to the spiritual life of the whole school community.
- The school has an established track record of providing opportunities for the pupils to develop spiritually through its prayer life. A focus on the liturgical year offers a variety of opportunities and prayer experiences. This is particularly evident in Holy Hour which

the whole school is invited to attend during Lent and Advent. Additional opportunities for spontaneous prayer would further enhance the school's provision.

- Prayer and collective worship are given a high priority in terms of planning, resourcing and support for staff. This extends beyond school. Children are keen to take home the prayer teddies, knitted for each class by a local group and which, together with other resources, are part of the school prayer bags.
- The headteacher and chaplaincy leader are inspirational role models in the prayer life of the school. The parish priest, a regular visitor to the school, provides exceptional support for prayer.
- The importance of prayer is understood by all members of the school community. Staff come together to pray each Monday morning. The school newsletter and website contain regular and topical prayers and the Parents and Friends of St Peter's also include prayers in their publications.
- Displays in and around the school are vibrant and supportive of the school's prayer life. Pupils have opportunities to write a variety of prayers and many of these are displayed in classrooms, on display boards and in pupil created prayer books. The reflection table in each classroom, is maintained by pupils and acts as a focal point for prayer throughout the day.
- The prayer life of the school is further enhanced by the outdoor spiritual space which is used by the prayer club and individual pupils and staff. The Live, Love, Learn garden and forest school provide additional opportunities for the children to consider and respond to Pope Francis' Laudato Si encyclical and care for our common home.

c) How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the prayer life of the school

- Leaders and governors have continued to sustain and build on the school's strong tradition as a prayerful community, seeing this as an ongoing whole school priority for all. A clear focus is placed on modelling and supporting important prayer opportunities within the school community. The headteacher and chaplaincy leader are inspiring role models in this.
- Leaders and teachers have a secure understanding of the liturgical year, seasons and feasts, and ensure that prayer and collective worship are relevant and have a clear purpose and message. They promote pupils' planning, leading and evaluation of prayer and collective worship.
- Teachers are very effectively inducted into the prayer life of the school and they value the support provided by leaders. They are acutely aware of the importance of prayer and are active in promoting this important area of school life.
- Staff have the opportunity to participate in professional development opportunities to support prayer and collective worship. The headteacher and chaplaincy leader encourage and signpost staff and pupils to access a range of prayer and worship ideas and resources.

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- The governing body is overtly committed to the school's mission and the governors' Mission and Ethos committee regularly receives reports on chaplaincy which includes reference to the monitoring of the prayer life of the school. They scrutinise these reports and have a strong understanding of any desired future actions. Governors visit the school and attend collective worship and Mass. They continued this during the pandemic when school worship was online.

Summary of Parental Questionnaires

There were 141 parental questionnaires received. They were all positive in their praise of the school and their children's education. Some typical responses included:

"Children are helped to learn Christian values alongside their education, to grow in Faith and to develop in the way of Jesus Christ our Lord."

"It's an amazing school with great method of teaching. Committed teachers and leadership. More so, since my child has started in this school, he seems to be developing in faith, he sings and prays better at home than before."

"Staff really go beyond to accommodate students and parents."

"All members of staff should keep up their good work. Each and everyone deserve credit for all the hard work especially during the pandemic."

"This is an excellent school and is well led, staff are friendly and caring. The children are taught excellent values and are encouraged to help others who are in need, cannot fault this school."

"I feel very privileged to send my children to this wonderful school. They all love attending St Peter's and have flourished over the years. It's has been so lovely to be welcomed into and be part of the school community."

"Teachers are always very supportive and helpful."

"An excellent school which provides a nourishing and enriched learning experience through the Catholic ethos. Always follows the ethos of Live, Love and Learn in everything they do."

"The Catholic ethos is everywhere, it's in everything they do and learn. The children are loved for their individuality and told frequently that they are children of God. They're always seeking out new ways to help the children to spread God's love and really feel that in their lives."

"The school feels like family."

"Following in Jesus' footsteps through Live, Love and Learn Mission. Faith is at the centre of children's learning."

"Everyone is friendly. The school promotes good family values. They are very much aware of social issues and if needs arise, they always help the community, organizations in any way that they could help. Children's families are always supportive of school's projects."

"Mrs Baron and her team do a wonderful job my children are always happy at school."

"Great teachers all round lovely school"