



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD

Denominational (S48) Inspection Report

Name of School: St Peter's Primary School
Local Authority: Havering
Inspection Date: 11th July 2022
Reporting Inspector: Angela O'Hara (Lead Inspector)

This Inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 and 2011.

Type of School:	Primary	School Address:	Dorset Avenue
School Category:	Outstanding		Romford
Age range of pupils:	4-11		Essex
Gender of pupils:	Mixed		RM1 4JA
Number on roll:	417		
Appropriate Authority:	The Governing Body	Tel. No.	01708 745506
Date of previous inspection:	18 th March 2016	Headteacher:	Mrs Jennifer Waterfield
		Chair of Governors:	Mr Mark O'Donoghue

Information about the school

St Peter's Catholic Primary is a two form entry primary school in the Diocese of Brentwood. It has grown from a one form entry school, with the transition completed in September 2021. The school serves the parish of St Edward the Confessor. Pupils attending the school are also drawn from the surrounding parishes of Corpus Christi Collier Row, St Mary Mother of God Hornchurch and Christ the Eternal High Priest Gidea Park. The school has 417 pupils on roll of which 67% are baptised Catholics, 21% are pupils from other Christian denominations and 12% are pupils from other faith traditions. 29% of pupils have English as an additional language and 9% of pupils are on the SEN register, the latter being well below national average. 8 members of the teaching staff (full and part-time) are Catholic. 68% of the school population are from ethnic backgrounds other than White British. There are more than 30 home and first languages spoken by families of the school.

Key grades for inspection

1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 1

Although the Mission Statement has been in place for some time, it is known and understood by all members of the school community. It is visible in all school documentation and in the school environment. It drives all aspects of school life and the strategic direction of the school. This is evident on the School Development Plan which sets out the school's priorities in relation to its Catholic vision of education; with emphasis on each child achieving their potential and where each child's religious development and faith is nurtured. Pupils are able to explain the difference between the mission and the vision. On questioning one year 6 pupil said, "The mission is where we are, and the vision is where we will be and what we will become."

The school is an inclusive and celebratory place in which to learn and work. It is rightly proud of its rich and diverse population. Parents and pupils spoke enthusiastically about this.

Displays around the school are of a consistently high quality and the environment is one of inspiration and aspiration. Pupils are proud of the quotes on doors and in corridors that remind them of their gifts and uniqueness.

The school places emphasis on the social teaching of the Church and demonstrates, through its direct teaching of Religious Education (RE) and also in modelling, that faith is to be lived out and that all are called to serve others. Pupils commented that this is reflected in all areas of learning, besides Religious Education or Personal Social Health Education (PSHE).

The leaders and governors are committed to the school's development and recognise its place in the wider mission of the Church. They are knowledgeable about the school and so are able to make a positive contribution to the Catholic Life of the school, which includes working with the leadership to regularly evaluate the school's Catholic character.

Relationships in the school's wider community are excellent and there is a sense of genuine and purposeful partnership between the school, home and parish. There is regular and frequent communication and mutual support between home and school and active involvement with the parish and the parish priest. This is a real strength of the school.

Parent surveys show that parents feel that the school teaches positive values and attitudes and parents on the school gate spoke of the school as being a 'nurturing' place for their children to learn. Parents also commented that they always feel welcome in the school and that the staff members are always ready to listen.

Pupils appreciate, value and actively participate in shaping the Catholic Life and mission of the school. Their voice is actively sought by school leaders through informal conversations and questionnaires. Pupils are aware of the importance of their Patron Saint.

Prayer and worship are central to the life of the school and pupils develop a firm understanding of the prayers and rites of the Church throughout the Church's year. Pupils enjoy the opportunities offered to come together in worship and song and to develop their own personal prayer life. Pupils appreciate the prayer garden which they use for class liturgies. They are keen to make even more use of this space. With support pupils are becoming more skilled at leading prayer and worship.

Religious Education is well planned and given high priority. The quality of teaching is never less than good and sometimes outstanding, leading to high standards and good progress. The subject is expertly led by the RE lead who is also the headteacher.

A comprehensive programme of professional development ensures that staff are equipped with firm subject knowledge. A range of creative approaches to teaching ensures that lessons are lively and enjoyable and pupils respond accordingly.

Early career teachers report that they are well supported by their mentors in order to develop their understanding of the requirements and expectations of the RE curriculum through effective professional development and the example of other expert teachers on the staff.

What the school should do to improve further:

- Share the excellent practice in the school so that more teaching can be judged as outstanding and so that pupils are challenged in their thinking through probing and extended questioning.
- Continue to develop the role of the prayer and worship group leaders so that they are able to lead their peers in wider prayer and worship opportunities across the school to develop independence in planning liturgy in the classes and beyond.

CATHOLIC LIFE

Grade 1

Pupils show a deep respect for themselves and others as made in the image and likeness of God. The behaviour of pupils is exemplary in and around school. Pupils listen to each other with respect both in class and in more informal interactions around the school. The staff provide excellent models and one pupil remarked, *"I love the school. The teachers are so supportive."*

Pupils enthusiastically embrace and respond to the high expectations set by the school for learning and behaviour. Pupils remark that the school encourages them to be independent and take on responsibility. They take a leading role in those activities which promote the school's Catholic Life, such as the Eco Council and when questioned are able to explain how this relates to Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si*. Pupils are aware of their responsibility towards those in need and support a number of charities through fundraising events, such as CAFOD, Mary's Meals and Hope for Havering, as well as other local charities such as the local food bank.

A number of pupils spoke about how the school is inclusive and how everyone is respected. Older pupils were also able to explain what is meant by the Common Good.

The learning environment is celebratory, of high quality and clearly reflects the school's mission and identity. Signs and symbols, displays and prayer areas in classrooms and communal areas clearly

express the school's Catholic character. The four school houses are named after the British Patron Saints and prominently displayed in the hall, In addition all classes have their own named saint.

Clear policies and structures are in place, which provide the highest levels of pastoral care for pupils. The school provides a number of support programmes, including the Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA) programme, *Time to Talk* and Youth Mental First Aiders. A special space in school is available to support pupils who require additional quiet and care. This is marked out as different from the learning spaces by the use of soft furnishings and quiet music. Pupils are able to explain how this space is used to provide for pupils who may need extra support at times. Pastoral care with a commitment to nurture is a strength of the school and recognised by pupils and parents.

Pastoral programmes, Personal Social Health Education (PSHE) and Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) are delivered in line with Diocesan directives. Pupils spoke of how they are supported in their personal development and wellbeing. Pupils are aware of the importance of staying safe online. Specific teachers have responsibility for safeguarding and staff members have specific roles to provide a listening ear for any concerns raised by pupils. During the inspection, older pupils reported that they felt well prepared for secondary school.

The provision for safeguarding, supporting and nurturing pupils is excellent. One parent commented, *"The Community spirit of St Peter's school is something I am very proud of. St Peter's staff go out of their way to ensure pupils are happy and safe and secure in their Catholic values and are well-rounded individuals when they leave primary school"*

Through the school website, parents are kept well informed of the planned lessons based on the *Journey in Love* programme, which is delivered to all pupils to support RSE and social, emotional and spiritual development. The *Jigsaw* programme clearly sets out the planned provision for wider personal social education.

Wellbeing for pupils and staff is high on the school's agenda. A wide range of guidance and materials are available to help parents support their children's mental wellbeing and the governors and leaders of the school prioritise staff wellbeing. Governors have adopted the *Education Staff Wellbeing Charter* and the Diocesan policy on wellbeing. Views from staff are regularly sought on the impact of school policies.

The parish priest is a regular visitor to the school and is proud of St Peter's. He knows the school very well and is recognised as a key chaplaincy figure. He provides spiritual support for the whole community and the Sacraments for older pupils during Lent, as well as celebrating Mass in school at key points in the year.

Parents take up the invitation to join the school for class assemblies and other religious liturgies. Many pupils at the school are actively involved in the parish. Pupils are also involved in Diocesan projects and celebrations, such as the Oscar Romero Award and the Annual Diocesan Citizen Award.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Grade 1

Evidence in books shows that pupils make very good progress in each key stage including SEND (Special Education Need) pupils where support is notably effective through deployment of additional staff and scaffolding in lessons. Overall standards are high and work presented in books shows that pupils regard the subject highly and are proud of what they have achieved.

Marking in books is used to affirm and extend pupils' responses and the school has established effective assessment processes to monitor progress. In-school moderation ensures that teachers are able to share practice and monitor achievement. The school is keen to re-establish the practice of deanery moderation which will further strengthen and secure teachers' judgements.

Pupils are confident when talking about their learning and show that they are religiously literate, using subject specific vocabulary to express their ideas and knowledge. There is an emphasis on subject specific vocabulary in all subjects across the curriculum and in RE pupils are challenged to use this in their oral responses and recorded RE work. The level of religious literacy is high in all age groups; for example in one class of very young pupils a pupil talked about 'reconciliation'. In other classes, pupils were able to identify and recall various scripture passages or parables that Jesus taught to illustrate their verbal answer. Pupils are confident in making links between their learning in RE and their life experiences and how they are called to act in response to Jesus' teaching.

Interviews with pupils show that they are wholly positive about the subject and in particular enjoy the range of creative ways that RE is taught. They spoke about how drama and art contribute to their understanding. Evidence in books show opportunities for drama and role play, as well as the use of artworks to explore scripture.

Pupils are able to make appropriate and accurate references to scripture and build upon their prior learning. Even the very youngest pupils in the school could explain what they had learned about saying sorry and forgiveness from the stories of Zacchaeus. Pupils use their knowledge, understanding and skills effectively, to reflect deeply and theologically.

The quality of teaching in RE is never less than good and sometimes outstanding, because teachers are well supported by an extensive and consistent programme of professional development led by the RE subject leader, who is also the headteacher. Subject knowledge is strong across the teaching team and teachers are supported to look for ways to extend pupils' learning and understanding even further. In-service training and records of regular monitoring of pupils' books and teachers' performance shows that this aspect is developing well.

Questioning in lessons is very effective and in lessons that were outstanding, teachers used carefully crafted and targeted questioning to challenge pupils thinking, often inviting them to explain and extend their answers. In one lower key stage 2 class, pupils were challenged to consider the impact that the preaching and example set by Oscar Romero played in the development of El Salvador. Pupils explored issues of injustice and inequality and an appropriately selected short video was used to set the context. In the lesson the teacher pressed pupils to expand upon their answers asking "why?" and "why not?" The lesson enabled pupils to consider deeper meanings and the implications of acting out of faith and belief. Pupils' responses were thoughtful and deeply reflective and showed that they had gained further understanding of some complex concepts. When questioned about what they thought Oscar Romero might have felt knowing he was placing himself in danger, the response from one pupil was, "*that doing the right thing comes with a cost*". In this lesson, as in several others observed, the teacher's subject knowledge was key in being able to provide challenge.

Feedback in the form of written marking and verbal teaching points helps pupils to know what they need to do next to improve their work. Time is allocated in lessons to allow pupils time to respond to feedback, or complete their work and this was evidenced in some, though not all, books.

School timetables show that RE is given the appropriate amount of allocated time in line with the directive from the Bishops' Conference. The content and coverage in pupils' RE books also confirm that an appropriate amount of curriculum time is devoted to the subject.

The governors have a firm understanding of the requirements and expectations of RE in school. The termly report by the headteacher to the Teaching and Standards Committee and visits to school, enable governors to have an accurate picture of standards and the quality of RE. They are not

complacent and challenge the headteacher and senior leadership team to ensure that the school continues to move forward.

Governors are visible at all parents' evenings and new parent meetings and carry out an annual survey to check parents' views.

Resources for RE are appropriate and good use is made of resources and visits to support the teaching of other world faiths. Visits to a local synagogue and mosque have enabled pupils to deepen their understanding of the practices of the Jewish and Islamic communities.

A number of parents spoke positively about the way that world faiths are taught in the school and how important this is. One parent wrote, "*The taking of the children to other places of worship is really good education and experience for them*". Another wrote "*I am pleased that year 5 visited the mosque this year as I think learning about other religions is an important part of understanding the world we live in*". A number also spoke about how diversity is celebrated at the school. Pupils highlighted the Diversity week and also the recent St Peter's food fest celebrating the rich cultural heritage of the school's population.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Grade 1

Collective worship is well planned and all members of the teaching staff take responsibility for leading at various times throughout the week. Collective worship is central to the life of the school and staff and governors regularly pray together, for example at the start of meetings.

Collective Worship has a clear purpose, message, and direction. The themes chosen for worship reflect a firm understanding of the liturgical season and the Church's mission in education.

The headteacher models excellent practice offering pupils a celebration at the start of the week, which is based on Sunday's gospel and which challenges them to act upon its message. She is an inspirational model and witness to the school's Catholic character and the joy and celebration in worship. During the inspection pupils across the whole school joined in wholeheartedly with prayers, hymns and actions. They also showed deep reverence at moments of silent prayer and reflection. The focal point at the front of the hall set an example of a prayer focus with appropriate liturgical colour, candles, Bible and interactive prayer book for pupils to use.

Staff are skilled in helping pupils to plan and deliver quality worship when appropriate. They have a good understanding of the purpose of Collective Worship and the wide variety of methods and styles of prayer.

In recent surveys, pupils stated that they enjoy the creative ways that worship is expressed and especially the way that music is used to enhance liturgy. This was also evidenced in some of the RE lessons observed. In one class pupils sang with great gusto a hymn about God's beautiful world as a way of setting up the learning that was to follow, which centred on the words of a psalm. Pupils explored the meaning of the words and then in groups, worked to devise actions that reflected the words. The lesson was a joyous busy and purposeful experience for the pupils and they made good progress in their understanding.

Pupils are able to offer suggestions as to how the Gospel message can be lived out. Pupils describe how the prayer life of the school helps them. One pupil said, "*prayer helps me be close to God- it strengthens my connection to Jesus*".

The prayer and worship group and pupils, particularly in key stage 2, are developing their skills in preparing and leading liturgy and prayer. In year 5 the use of a liturgy planner assists pupils structuring the liturgy so that all the key elements are included. A number of pupils in this year group

and others were able to describe the elements of gather, word (Scripture), respond and go forth. This is an area for development in the school which has already been identified.

All classrooms have a designated prayer space, many of which are beautifully set out and cared for. All have candles and reflect the colours of the liturgical year. In all cases, this prayer focal area is used interactively to enable pupils to offer their own prayer intentions. Pupils have access to their own prayer journals, which they use to record their thoughts and reflections. A specific responsibility of the Prayer and Worship group has been to monitor the prayer focal areas across the school.

Pupils know the main prayers of the Church and the prayers which are said at the start and end of the school day and before meals. A number of the older pupils were able to explain that there are different forms of prayers.

Personal prayer experiences are also developed through the increasing use of the outside prayer garden and pupils commented positively on this. Opportunities for spiritual retreat are offered to year 5 pupils when they make a residential visit to the Diocesan retreat centre Walsingham House.

Parents are welcome to attend the various assemblies and liturgies in the school. One parent wrote *"The school really does have its Catholic identity at the heart of everything they do. As well as RE lessons the children participate in liturgical services regularly. The whole school community is invited to join in for class liturgy services and masses. The highlight of my year as a parent is always the Easter celebrations at St Peter's."* Governors monitor the provision of Collective Worship through regular attendance.