



INSPECTION REPORT

Ss Peter and Paul

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DfE Number: 801/3402

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Headteacher: Mrs C Burns

Chair of Governors: Mr A Palmer

**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: December 8th & 9th 2021
Date of previous inspection: July 2nd & 3rd 2015

Reporting Inspector: Mrs A Fowler
Additional Inspector: Mrs T Sessions

Description of school

SS Peter and Paul serves the parishes of the Cathedral of SS Peter and Paul, Clifton and St Mary-on-the Quay, Bristol City Centre. It is a small primary school with approximately 167 pupils on roll. The school is very diverse with 48% of pupils having English as a second language. 58% of the pupils on roll are baptised Catholics, 5% of pupils are eligible for free school meals which is well below the national average and 7% of pupils in the school have special educational needs or disabilities which is also below average.

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school (summary statement)

Grade Outstanding

This is an outstanding school because:

- Pupils are exceptionally well behaved and extremely proud of belonging to the school.
- Staff and Governors are fully committed to promoting and developing the Catholic Life of the school.
- There is a strong culture of inclusion and respect for diversity.
- Staff are committed to developing their understanding of religious education.
- Pupils are involved in the evaluation of the school as a Catholic community.
- Prayer is central to the life of the school and older pupils act as leaders and role models for younger pupils.

The capacity of the school community to improve and develop is good because:

- The headteacher and chair of governors are unreserved in their commitment to maintain and strive for improvement in its Catholic life and RE.
- Pupils are eager to take on responsibilities and are very supportive of the school.
- The school leadership is aware of the challenges the pandemic has produced and is working at mitigating these effects.
- The school works closely with the Newman Partnership.
- Issues raised by the last inspection have been addressed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Review the Religious Education Curriculum to allow for the development of tasks to support working at greater depth.
- Enable pupils to become more confident in assessing their own progress.
- Ensure the Religious Education Development Plan fully reflects the impact of actions taken.
- Continue to develop pupils as leaders.

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

- Pupils have a good understanding of the nature of the school as a Catholic community. Through various surveys which aim to capture 'pupil voice' they take part in evaluating the Catholic nature of the school. They take responsibility for different aspects of school life, for example the chaplains organise a weekly litter pick. They are also able to contribute ideas about the school itself, contributing for example to the design of new toilets. Pupils feel that their ideas are valued. Friday Star Assemblies enable pupils to celebrate each other's success and recognise the way pupils are living out Gospel Values.
- Pupils are immensely proud of their school which they regard as a family community. The school is divided into four houses with house chaplains helping to organise and lead these. This enables the chaplains to be visible and to act as role models for younger pupils, for example by mediating disputes between them. Due to the pandemic, some aspects of allowing pupils to take responsibility have had to be suspended, for example, acting as reading buddies. However, these will be reinstated as circumstances permit.
- Pupils understand the connections between faith and life and recognise that beliefs must lead to action. They raise money for a variety of charities both at home and overseas. Two recent examples mentioned by pupils are St James Priory (caring for the homeless in Bristol) and supporting the Afghanistan refugees. Recently they have also focused on the environment, connecting this with their work on creation, the Pope's encyclical '*Laudato Si'*' and the issues raised by the recent Glasgow Summit. This work reinforces a clear sense of belonging to a wider community. There are strong links with their neighbour, St Joseph's Care Home. Although some of this has had to be suspended due to concerns about covid, pupils were able to sing for the residents standing outside the home. The chaplains were recently able to work with other chaplains from the Newman Partnership and spoke of how much they valued this opportunity and that it provided them with new insights and ideas.

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

- The mission statement is known and understood by all pupils and there is a focus on Gospel values. At present, partly as a response to the Pandemic, the school is focused on, 'Be Kind' and pupils have clearly taken this to heart and understand how they can try to live this out. They have a mission song which all pupils

understand and sing enthusiastically which reinforces the ideas behind the mission statement

- Displays in the classrooms and around the school make the Catholic identity clear and the expectations of behaviour are linked to the school's ethos. Pupils feel supported by staff and consider that their concerns are treated seriously. Pupils understand that to be truly Catholic you must value and respect others and speak highly of the opportunities to learn about other cultures and faiths. All Key Stage 2 pupils take part in the diocesan Leaders in Faith Award.
- The school has reviewed its provision for relationship and sex education and has adopted the 'Ten, Ten' programme *Life to the Full*. As this has only just begun it is too soon to evaluate its effectiveness but there is a review schedule in place. Parents and governors were consulted about the scheme.

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

- Leaders and governors understand the nature of the school as a Catholic community and have attended training to develop further their understanding. The school's website and newsletter highlight this aspect of the school and provide information for parents and the wider community. This highlights the liturgical season, the work of the house chaplains and the prayer life of the school. All diocesan requirements with regard to Catholic life are fulfilled. One piece of work by the chair of governors involved reviewing recruitment procedures to ensure the school was fully inclusive. This is an excellent example of applying Catholic principles to practical issues.
- The school leadership has conducted surveys amongst pupils and parents seeking their views on school life and the Catholic nature of the school. Information is provided to governors through the Headteacher' Report, visits to the school, the work of link governors and informal discussions.
- The School Development Plan (SDP) highlights areas for improvement for the Catholic life of the school. However, there is a need here to fully evaluate the plan and the impact of actions taken.
- The school has recently begun developing the understanding of staff with regard to *Catholic Social Teaching*. Staff have received training on this, but the work is in early stages. When implemented this should allow formal opportunities for spiritual and moral development to be planned through the curriculum, building on existing informal opportunities and links.
- The school has embraced the *Diocesan Pastoral Plan* and the themes of deepening prayer, enabling communion and strengthening mission are included on all religious action plans and the SDP. The provision, for example, of copies of Luke's Gospel for pupils reflects the leadership's commitment to the Diocesan Plan.

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

- Pupils speak highly of their work in RE. They enjoy most aspects of their lessons and value what they are learning. They have high levels of religious literacy and speak knowledgeably about scripture stories and sacramental life.
- Teachers build on previous knowledge and all pupils are making progress. However, there needs to be a focus on developing tasks which challenge pupils and enables them to achieve greater depth. The pupils themselves reflected on the fact that they liked being challenged with difficult work. Assessment is in place which enables the progress of different groups to be tracked and there are intervention strategies for some pupils.

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

- The majority of lessons are well planned and focused on how tasks enable pupils to learn. The use of questioning techniques to recap previous learning and develop pupils' understanding is well embedded. In most lessons pace was effective and promoted engagement with tasks being well structured and purposeful. Some lessons provided outstanding examples of this. Where this was less effective the tasks didn't help pupils develop their understanding and seemed disconnected from the learning. Paired and group work was well established and normally effective in helping the learning process. Lesson planning needs to pay more attention to those pupils who find work challenging.
- It was not sufficiently clear that pupils knew how to improve their own work. They relied heavily on teacher input. The majority of marking was diagnostic, but comments were not always acted on. The lack of clear success criteria meant pupils were unable to be effective at self-evaluation.

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

- Religious education receives 10% of curriculum time and the scheme used is approved by the diocese. However, the planning needs to be reviewed to ensure tasks are sufficiently challenging and appropriate. The teaching of other faiths is a strength of the school and valued by pupils. This impacts on their understanding of the world around them.
- The link governor for RE is new in post and has attended training on this role. They have already attended one meeting with the coordinator and are aware of the need to develop this further and to have a more targeted approach. Book

scrutinies, lesson observations and pupil surveys all take place and the results recorded. It is not yet clear what the impact of these activities is or how they are used to improve planning. Staff feel able to approach the headteacher and others if they need greater clarity. Training has been provided for them to enable them to increase their knowledge and this is valued.

- The curriculum leader is relatively new in post and has attended training. Their understanding of their role is not as yet sufficiently developed. The lack of a clear vision means they do not effectively plan improvements to teaching and learning. Their documentation needs to be more structured and to reflect the impact of actions taken.
- There is a programme of monitoring and evaluation in place and the school has recently worked with the Newman Partnership to moderate RE work. It is not sufficiently clear what impact this will have on planning.
- The scheme of work at present does not formally plan for development of tasks at greater depth. Opportunities for peer and self-review are not yet formally established.

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

- Pupils respond to the opportunities offered for prayer within the school. Acts of worship reflect the Church's year and pupils are offered the opportunity to reflect and respond. The school has adopted a fourfold planning structure, gather, listen, reflect and mission which enables those leading prayer to plan more effectively.
- Older pupils plan and lead prayer in their respective classes and help younger pupils to prepare. All Key stage 2 pupils take part in the Leaders in Faith award which has a requirement to take part in leading prayer activities. They also run a Rosary Club for younger pupils.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year and the symbols, prayers and activities associated with each season. All pupils are familiar with basic prayers and join in with confidence.
- Prayer encourages pupils to be reflective and pupils respect those from other faiths and are eager to learn from them. Pupils from other faiths are encouraged to share their own festivals with the school community. Pupils are able to link faith and life and recognise that prayers are more than words.

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

- All legal and diocesan requirements are fulfilled.
- Prayer is central to the life of the school and many opportunities are offered for both formal and informal prayer throughout the day.
- Leaders and governors prioritise prayer and ensure that all staff are aware of what this means. Non-Catholic staff feel supported in taking part in the prayer life of the school and receive an explanation of various aspects of prayer. Parents are invited, within the restrictions of Covid, to participate in prayer activities. During the inspection parents were involved in the Key Stage 1 Nativity Play.
- Every classroom has a prayer area which reflects the liturgical season and offers opportunities for pupils to actively respond through, for example, the use of a Prayer Box. A special Prayer Area exists incorporating the stained-glass windows of Jesus, St Peter and St Paul. This is open to all pupils and used by all classes for acts of collective worship.
- Activities had to be curtailed (and to a certain extent still are) by the pandemic but opportunities to take part in online services were provided when pupils were working from home and reflected the Church's year.
- The school takes part in Masses from the Cathedral and pre covid took part in Masses at St Mary-on-the-Quay. Throughout the Covid Lockdowns prayer

opportunities were held online enabling the children and their families to participate.

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

- Leaders have an extensive understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and are skilled at making these accessible to pupils in a contemporary context.
- Leaders and governors ensure that staff realise this is a priority of the school and that teachers are able to lead prayer within their own classrooms.
- Training for staff has taken place, including within the Newman Partnership, which has developed skills and led to greater confidence. Staff meetings are also used to reflect on the liturgical season to provide staff with greater knowledge and this has led to more confident planning.
- The pupil chaplains working with other chaplains from the Newman Partnership were also able to reflect on their knowledge and develop their skills in leading prayer.
- A retreat day was provided for staff and was valued by them.
- The prayer life of the school is monitored by governors through the curriculum committee as well as through the Headteacher's Report. Pupil surveys are carried out. The impact of this monitoring needs to be more clearly shown.

Summary of Parental Questionnaires

There were 52 Parental responses. The vast majority were extremely supportive of the school, though a small minority of parents felt there were, at times, communication problems. Many parents commented on the nature of the school, for example: "SS Peter and Paul is a small, warm, friendly school where every child is unique". Some parents commented on the relationships within the school: "Every teacher even the head knows perfectly every single child and follows their evolution". Finally, the inclusive nature of the school was praised for example one family said: "As parents..... from a different religion the school has an outstanding approach to accommodate and make parents/carers feel at ease. "