



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## INSPECTION REPORT

### ST PETER'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL COBRIDGE, STOKE-ON-TRENT

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Inspection dates	8 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup> November 2011
Reporting Inspector	Dominic Collins

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Type of School	Primary
Age range of pupils	3-11years
Number on roll	241
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	K Daley
School address	Waterloo Road Cobridge Stoke-on-Trent ST6 3HL
Telephone number	01782 235040
E-mail address	<a href="mailto:stpeter@sqfl.org.uk">stpeter@sqfl.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	May 2009
DCSF School Number	861/3402
Unique Reference Number	124315

<b>Headteacher</b>	<b>Dianne Mason</b>
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DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



MAKING CHRIST KNOWN TODAY

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by 1 Diocesan Inspector. The inspector visited 3 full religious education (RE) lessons to observe teaching and learning and pupils' behaviour, and held meetings with governors, staff, and groups of pupils. He observed the school's work, including assembly and circle time, and looked at a range of evidence, including key documentation such as the school's development plan, monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in RE, and pupils' work.

## Information about the school

St Peter's is an over subscribed Catholic Primary School serving the Catholic parishes of St. Joseph Burslem and St Peter Cobridge. Almost all pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly Pakistani and Bangladeshi, with 1% from white British backgrounds. Most pupils speak English as a second language and very few children are fluent speakers of English on entry. The school is located in an area of profound multiple deprivation and pupil mobility is high, with pupils who have recently entered the country joining the school at different stages. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also above average. The school collaborates closely with another local Catholic school in a formal arrangement, where the headteacher, who is also a national leader of education, leads and manages both schools.

## Overall effectiveness of the school as a Catholic school

St Peter's is an outstanding Catholic School. The headteacher leads a dedicated and caring staff team with an inspiring vision and together they successfully provide a high quality education, fully supported by enthusiastic and committed governors. The school has an extremely positive Catholic ethos wherein there exists a warm and welcoming atmosphere of calm and mutual respect for all. Pupils are able to articulate its distinctive mission, 'together, one family, one community'. Central to the success of the school's work is the appreciation and understanding of other faiths and cultures. The school fosters a genuine respect for religious autonomy, where each child is valued as one of God's children and is nurtured to embrace and live Gospel values in their daily lives. Clearly, 'every child does matter here'. Pupils enjoy their RE lessons; they engage fully and make outstanding progress due to the excellent teaching and support they receive in their learning. By the end of Key Stage 2 their attainment is at the national average. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding. The effective combination of dedicated staff and governors, with a shared vision to drive the school forward will ensure its continued success. School evaluation is thorough and accurate. A comprehensive RE school development plan is in place and is being systematically addressed.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure the higher ability children are extended and all children are given greater opportunities for individual learning.
- Provide greater opportunity for children to plan and lead liturgies.

## How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils

Overall pupils make excellent progress in their religious education from their initial starting points indicated by baseline data. Children's spiritual knowledge on entry has a strong correlation to their parents' religious commitment. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils are given a very positive start to their faith journey which is rapidly developed and nourished throughout Key Stage 1, by the end of which, children have a strong sense of spirituality and a deeper understanding of their own identity as part of a Catholic school. Attainment is in line with the national average. Pupils engage fully in the variety of learning activities provided for them and enjoy their RE lessons. Learning is further enhanced by the outstanding quality of relationships throughout the school. Pupils have developed a mature work ethic and demonstrate a very positive attitude to their learning. At the end of Key Stage

2, unit assessments indicate pupil attainment to be in line with diocesan expectations. However, given their very low starting point, the quality of pupils' learning and their progress in RE are outstanding. An extremely positive ethos permeates the school community in every way. The children clearly understand and live its values and mission, 'Together, one family, one community', through the way they show respect, kindness and a genuine friendship towards each other. They realise the importance of their own contribution towards creating a harmonious and happy environment and understand the consequences of their actions and the influence this has on others. This is reflected by their exemplary behaviour, during lessons and around school generally in the playground and during mealtimes. A developing maturity is also evident through their smart appearance, initiative and positive attitudes.

Pupils appreciate how much they are valued by the staff and realise that they too, have a duty of awareness and consideration for members of the school community. Within this climate of mutual respect, love and security, the school is truly enriched through the way all pupils can strive towards a common goal to learn and pray happily together regardless of origin, belief or cultural difference. Pupils are eager to engage in a variety of responsibilities around the school and they perform their duties with pride. These include membership of the school council, classroom monitors, school 'house' leaders, and preparing assemblies and Masses.

Through clear behaviour support strategies and a strong emphasis on living out the school values, children are able to relate their lives to the way Jesus lived with His friends, guiding and teaching them how to follow his example. Pupils understand the importance of key celebrations highlighted in the school and parish throughout the liturgical year. Festivals of other cultures such as Divali, Chinese New Year, Ramadan and Eid are shared and celebrated to develop an understanding and respect for other faiths. The children are sensitive to the needs of others and eagerly respond to fund raising initiatives to support the work of CAFOD, Father Hudson's Society, Children in Need and other world issues such as the Pakistan earthquake appeal and the floods in Bangladesh.

Pupils' response to daily collective worship and prayer is good. During the inspection, children were seen to pray reverently in a natural and reflective way. They understand the importance of prayer in their daily lives and are able to write their own prayers and petitions. Assembly themes are carefully considered and well matched to pupils' own experience. Children were fully engaged during and assembly about families. The intimate, prayerful atmosphere resulted in pupils responding readily to offer their own prayers for family members. Similarly, a theme that focused on places of worship in the immediate area of the school was effective in promoting an understanding of different forms of prayer and worship. It is evident that pupils appreciate and respect the different beliefs of others and their attitudes to spirituality. Prayer and collective worship makes a very positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of the pupils and is nourished by the example and commitment of all members of staff.

## **How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the school**

The school leadership is outstanding. The headteacher sets high standards and expectations for all members of the school community. Leaders and managers both within the school and across the collaboration are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. Through their knowledge and understanding of what is required, they provide a high level of support to colleagues in how the teaching of the Gospel values are central to all practice within the Catholic school. A continuing cycle of professional development for all staff is firmly in place. The RE subject leaders warmly acknowledge that their own professional development is further enhanced through the collaboration between the federated schools, with whom a very effective partnership has been established in order to promote and enrich the provision of religious education.

The dedicated and caring staff know the children well and together they foster a happy and secure environment that articulates the school mission 'together, one family, one community'. This united approach, promotes an atmosphere of calm and mutual respect for all and has a powerful impact on the Catholic life of the school. The school RE development plan is shared by all staff and

succinctly reflects a systematic audit and evaluation of provision for and outcomes from, the Catholic life of the school. Well established systems are in place for monitoring the teaching and learning of RE across the school, rigorous assessment procedures are conducted in accordance with diocesan guidelines and end of unit assessments are used effectively to track pupil progress. Analysis of data is converted into an informative progress matrix for each year group. RE lesson observations, the monitoring of planning, and scrutiny of children's work are conducted by the RE subject leader and headteacher. This forms a comprehensive evaluation cycle, the outcomes of which directly inform the RE development plan and also link to performance management targets.

The governors are dedicated in supporting the school's mission. They are actively involved in the Catholic life of the school, have a clear understanding of their role, and fulfil statutory and canonical responsibilities effectively. The governors are committed to maintaining and developing the Catholic character of the school and the spiritual well being of all staff and pupils. They seek to recruit Catholic teachers or those who are fully committed to the Catholic ethos of the school. The headteacher and staff feel well supported by the governors and work effectively together with a shared mission to take the school forward. The chair of governors meets regularly with headteacher and is also kept fully informed through the headteacher reports, liaison with the leadership team and involvement in the Catholic life of the school, by attendance at Masses and school events whenever possible. The parish priest is also vice chair of the governing body. He leads the preparation for the sacraments, celebrates Mass in school each week and engages effectively with pupils, staff and parents. Governors fully support the school in developing the provision of religious education while at the same time holding leaders and managers to account in order to sustain improvement and the best possible outcomes for the children.

At St Peter's school the inclusion of all is a central goal and a shared vision. The welcoming ethos is one of happiness, unity and mutual respect, where all pupils are valued, supported and fully integrated into the school community. The school is successfully promoting a sense of common identity among the pupils and the values that underpin its Catholic character. The RE curriculum is suitably adapted so that it helps all the children to understand and respect differences in others, building upon the many opportunities to explore the common values of other faiths and cultures. Pupils' awareness of diversity, justice and peace is developed through the *rights respecting school charter*, which is centred around Gospel values. Provision for collective worship celebrates and reflects the religious diversity within the school community. The pupils, parents and carers engage well with the school ethos. All parents are encouraged to become involved in their children's learning and readily respond to the opportunities offered. For example, adults who speak English as an additional language are invited to work in school. Language group sessions are arranged to help families, especially those new to the community. The school has also produced CDs of reading books in a number of languages for parents to share with their children. Community and fund raising events are held in school which includes parents of a variety of backgrounds and cultures. The school supports the work of CAFOD, the local Douglas MacMillan Hospice and other worthwhile charities. St Peter's is effectively promoting community cohesion with its partner school in the collaboration and with other local schools, thus providing opportunities for children of different faiths and cultures to work together. In addition a programme of visits to other faith centres is also established.

## **The quality of the school's work in providing Catholic education**

The quality of teaching in RE is consistently effective with outstanding teaching observed during the inspection. Each lesson is characterised by succinct developmental planning, clear learning objectives shared with the children, and interesting well matched activities that present an appropriate level of challenge towards successfully achieving them. Pupils' behaviour during lessons is exemplary and the very good relationships that exist between teachers and pupils, together with the attractive displays and bright well resourced classrooms, contribute to a very positive environment for teaching and learning to take place. Evidence of pupils' excellent progress is displayed in their RE books and by their thoughtful responses and opinions given during the lessons. They are happy enthusiastic learners, are eager to achieve and readily respond to the exciting range of teaching activities that make their lessons interesting and enjoyable. Examples

include dance, role play, collaborative activities and varied forms of recording, which are used very effectively to enhance learning objectives. The school has developed a good range of resources including ICT to support the teaching of RE and these are used imaginatively within lessons to maximise learning. Excellent support staff are effectively deployed to provide additional guidance to individuals and groups in their learning.

Effective systems for evaluating pupil progress are firmly established and consistently applied. End of unit assessment data is used to inform planning in order to guide children in the next steps of their learning. A strong emphasis has been placed on the use of assessment to inform staff about pupils' attainment. As a result, this whole school approach, supported by staff training, has ensured that the assessment of RE throughout the school is thorough, informative and effective. Pupils make outstanding progress in RE relative to their starting points.

The RE curriculum complies fully with the requirements laid down in the Curriculum Directory for Religious Education and has been successfully adapted to meet the needs of all learners. Long, medium and short term planning ensures full coverage of the programme and is systematically monitored by the RE subject leaders. A full report is submitted to the governors. Central to the success of the school's work is the respect and appreciation of other faiths. The curriculum has been developed with this in mind so that it helps children to see and understand differences in people. RE extends beyond the classroom and permeates the excellent Catholic ethos of the school, providing pupils with many opportunities of how to live the gospel values in their daily lives. The school has established positive links with the parish, thus providing further opportunities for evangelisation. The parish priest is a frequent visitor to the school and is always willing to enhance RE provision by joining lessons and engaging with the children in their work. Sacramental preparation is thorough and involves parents and carers fully throughout the programme.

Provision for collective worship is excellent. Prayer is an integral part of the school day and there are many opportunities for staff and pupils to pray together. In each class and around the school, high quality prayer focus areas allow children to contemplate their faith and are a reminder to them of the importance of prayer in our daily lives. Pupils have opportunities for formal and reflective experiences of worship. They respond reverently and thoughtfully, clearly enjoying their prayer time together. The parish priest celebrates a weekly Mass for the school and access to the church is also made available throughout the week.