



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## INSPECTION REPORT

## SS PETER AND PAUL CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL COVENTRY

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Inspection dates 27<sup>th</sup> -28<sup>th</sup> April 2010  
Reporting Inspector Brenda Beale

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Type of School	Primary
Age range of pupils	4-11 years
Number on roll	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Mrs Patricia Garner
School address	Arkle Drive Walsgrave Coventry CV2 2EF
Telephone number	024 76615665
E-mail address	admin@ss-peter-paul.coventry.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	October 2006
DCSF School Number	331/3415
Unique Reference Number	103717

**Headteacher Mrs Helen Forrest**

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one Diocesan Inspector. The inspector visited three full religious education (RE) lessons to observe teaching and learning and students' behaviour, and held meetings with governors, staff, and groups of students. She observed the school's work, including Mass and Holy 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 students' work.

## Information about the school

Ss Peter and Paul is a smaller than average Catholic primary school and is one of two schools serving the parish of St Patrick in the city of Coventry. Most of the pupils are drawn from the parish of St Patrick but some travel from neighbouring parishes. 86% of the children are baptised Catholics. Whilst most pupils come from White British backgrounds, there is an increasing proportion of pupils from other ethnic groups and this has grown considerably since the last inspection. There is also a mix of pupils in other respects such as ability; there is a higher than average number of pupils on the SEN register. There are a significant minority, almost a quarter of pupils come from families experiencing social deprivation.

## Overall effectiveness of the school as a Catholic school

Ss Peter and Paul is a very good Catholic school with a significant number of outstanding features. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher has led to rapid and exceptional improvement. She has been helped in securing this improvement and the meeting of an ambitious vision through the support of a committed, united staff and an exceptionally capable and dedicated religious education (RE) subject leader. Morale is high and all members of staff have confidence in the leadership and are determined to continue to achieve and sustain further improvement. Since the last inspection there have been a new headteacher, a new RE subject leader and three other full time teachers. The new members of staff have made a significant contribution to improvement in teaching and learning across the school. The RE curriculum has benefited from the good leadership provided by the new RE subject leader. This has impacted very favourably on pupil attainment and progress. The outcomes for pupils are very good; their attainment is above average and their spiritual and moral development excellent. The headteacher has put in place highly focused clear-cut monitoring systems and procedures which enable her and the senior management team to make accurate judgements leading to the effective identification of key priorities for further improvement. A supportive governing body, ready to provide challenge, along with the headteacher and staff, are committed to living out the school's mission of '*spreading the Love and Light of Jesus, by following in his Footsteps, as we serve, learn and grow.*' This has led to every child being offered the best possible opportunities to experience and understand their faith. The pupils have responded well to these opportunities and demonstrate a willingness to learn and live out the Faith. The areas identified for improvement at the last inspection have been addressed. The RE subject leader has greatly developed the role in the school and, along with the headteacher, worked methodically on the other areas requiring development. The curriculum has been reviewed and adapted, though school improvement plans identify that work still needs to be done on the development of the family life programme. Monitoring of RE and the Catholic life of the school has been established. Training has been provided to enable staff to deliver RE effectively. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is excellent.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Reflect the growing variety of backgrounds in the school's acts of collective worship while preserving the Catholic character of worship;
- Revise the relationship and sex education programme so that it focuses more on relationships, starting with pupils lower down the school.

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

The outcomes are very good for all individuals and groups of students. All pupils make good progress in RE with some pupils making outstanding progress. Nothing inadequate was found in this area. The caring inclusive ethos of the school gives pupils the confidence and security to strive for success. They are keen to learn, apply themselves well and seek to produce their best work. The pupils are interested, questioning and enthusiastic and enjoy their RE lessons. Children with particular learning needs or disabilities are well supported in RE lessons and the worship life of the school. They are presented with challenge but with the support of teachers and their assistants are able to respond very well and succeed in their learning. As a result of careful planning, good to outstanding teaching and exceptionally good behaviour, standards of attainment are above average. At the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 attainment is generally above average in both knowledge and understanding and in the ability to reflect on meaning. Year 2 pupils were able to talk about the Bible and its structure and they know several stories from both Old and New Testaments and are able to relate them to their own lives. They spoke knowledgeably about Baptism and are looking forward to their First Communion preparation next year. They have an appropriate knowledge of the liturgical year and associated colours and are able to talk about prayer and recite several formal prayers they use frequently in their daily lives. They spoke about the Easter candle, the symbolism of water and why we have crucifixes and statues. Year 6 pupils demonstrated a very good knowledge of the Bible and its structure. Their knowledge of stories and teaching from scripture is very good, as is their knowledge and understanding of the sacraments, the liturgical year and signs and symbols. They know a wide range of formal prayers including the prayer to the Holy Spirit and the Hail Holy Queen. Pupils' contribution to and participation in the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. Parish catechists commented on the deep reflection the pupils demonstrated in preparing for Confirmation.

They are proud of belonging to this Catholic community and have a strong sense of personal worth. They take full advantage and respond well to the opportunities the school provides for their spiritual and moral development. The older pupils take on roles and responsibilities beyond the regular routines of the classroom. They help to supervise the younger children at play and carry out tasks around the school. There is an active school council who were critically involved in the review and rewriting of the school mission statement. They have an excellent capacity to forgive and be forgiven and an appreciation of why circumstances can affect people's behaviour. Behaviour is outstanding and pupils are caring and respectful of others in and beyond their community. They know they are loved by God.

All pupils are engaged by the vibrant, inspiring and varied acts of worship. They are at ease when praying, using a variety of types of prayer and worship with confidence and enthusiasm. At a Mass attended during inspection the children were prayerful and reverent; they sang with gusto and joy. They had been involved in the preparation and they read, served, acted as stewards during communion and some were involved in a sacred dance at the close of Mass. An outstanding Year 6 'Holy Time' was also attended during inspection. It was prepared and led by pupils. They had organised a beautiful focal point, chosen readings, written prayers, themed around light and their recent Confirmation. Some pupils prayed spontaneously giving generously of their private thoughts with a trust that was moving. Voluntary attendance at lunchtime collective worship is high: Rosary during October, Stations of the Cross reflections during Lent, Marian Worship in May. They respect those with different beliefs and are interested in other faiths. They understand fully about 'making the right choices' and the older children understand that moral decisions can be complex and require prayer and reflection.

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

Leadership is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. Both the headteacher and the subject leader are enthusiastic about the Catholic life of the school and a source of inspiration to others in the school community. The way leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the Catholic life of the school and plan for and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils is outstanding. The spiritual and moral development of the pupils is the leadership's highest priority. This is

reflected in the school's improvement plan, self evaluation and documentation. Self evaluation at all levels is highly analytical and challenging being based on searching and rigorous monitoring and leads to extremely strategic and focused planning. This impacts very positively on the pupils whose attitude to prayer and worship is very good and their behaviour outstanding. The headteacher lives out Gospel values in her dealings with others and is keen to involve children, parents, staff, governors and the parish priest in future planning for success. At a 'Futures Day' in October 2009 all pupils evaluated the mission of the school and through the work of the school council created a new mission statement for the school. Also in attendance were a group of parents, governors and the parish priest. This rigorous approach is also applied to the monitoring and evaluation of RE as a subject and as a result year on year improvement is evident. The RE subject leader is an exemplary teacher. She has a clear vision, outstanding subject knowledge and good leadership skills.

Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties very effectively. They do influence the direction of the Catholic life of the school and have been particularly successful in recruiting and retaining Catholic teachers. They provide support and challenge and when setting of the headteacher's performance targets they are mindful of the Catholic life of the school; this then ripples out across the whole staff. Relationships with the headteacher and staff are constructive and the chair of governors is diligent in carrying out her pastoral responsibilities to the children, parents and staff. Governors engage well with pupils and parents and are well informed about their views of the school. The governors have a good knowledge of the Catholic life of the school through regular visits, meetings and contact with staff and through more formal monitoring systems.

Community cohesion is good. The inclusion of all is at the heart of the work of the school. The belief that all people are equal is central to the Gospel and the Gospel values taught by Jesus are central to the mission to follow in Jesus' footsteps. This is a school that lives out its mission and a sense of justice, equality and fairness is evident in all aspects of school life. Through the Catholic life of the school, compassion for others is strongly promoted and to good effect, evidenced by the generous response pupils make to the wide range of charity appeals. This year the pupils are sponsoring children from an Indian compound to attend school and are in contact with these children. The Catholic life of the school also promotes other aspects of community cohesion very well promoting Fairtrade, showing respect for other Faiths and celebrating the variety of cultures within the school community. More needs to be done to reflect the variety of backgrounds in acts of collective worship. The school enjoys strong links with the parish and the secondary school which most of the children will attend. The curriculum actively promotes human rights and a respect for all. The raising of standards in numeracy and literacy is doing much to prepare pupils for future citizenship as is the outstanding development of their moral and spiritual values.

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

Teaching is consistently highly effective. Nothing less than good teaching was observed during inspection with most teaching being outstanding. Children spoken to during inspection said that their lessons were interesting and motivating and often 'really good fun'. Expectations are high. Teachers begin their lessons by making clear the learning objectives and all lessons contain an element of prayer and reflection. The subject knowledge of teachers is good and the outstanding expertise of the RE subject leader is generously shared with others. Resources are plentiful and of the highest quality. The excellent use of ICT in RE lessons is a real strength of the school and the RE leader has identified many first-rate sites to support teaching and enhance learning. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed and have a positive impact on learning. Pupils are highly motivated and well behaved and therefore, supported by the quality of the teaching, are able to make good progress and attain well. Pupils are provided with feedback, orally and through developmental marking. Teachers listen to, observe and question pupils during lessons; this helps to develop and reshape activities thus providing clarification and improvement to learning. In lessons observed teachers, through the activities they provide and their questioning skills, are helping pupils to develop their higher thinking skills. This is helping children to not only know and understand scripture and the teachings of the church but also to see meaning and enable them to apply this knowledge to their own lives and journey of faith.

Assessment procedures for learning have been and continue to be carefully refined and developed. Much thought and discussion has led to the establishment of procedures that really impact favourably on children's learning. Lessons are built on 'what we already know'. Evidence of pupils' existing knowledge is gathered at the beginning of each new unit of work, thus avoiding misconceptions about prior knowledge. Using this information with the level descriptors and the RE strategy teachers then plan the unit of work. By linking RE planning closely to level descriptors challenging but realistic targets are set. Pupil progress is being tracked to enable teachers to identify accurately children's level at the end of the year.

The time allocation for RE meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and the curriculum fulfils the *Curriculum Directory for Religious Education*. The pupils follow the diocesan *Curriculum Strategy for Religious Education* which has been customised to meet the needs of groups and individuals. The curriculum is monitored by the subject leader and the school capitalises on her expertise to tailor it to meet the needs of the school. The curriculum is greatly enriched by the high quality of the school's worship. Christmas and Easter liturgies do much to deepen children's knowledge. Children learn about other faiths and communities. This year the subject leader organised a Multi-Faith day where all year groups teamed up in pairs to explore another Faith for the day. This culminated in a *sharing assembly* at the end of the day to which parents were invited. The curriculum is further enriched by working with the parish on sacramental preparation programmes, retreat days and the diocesan family life programme *All that I Am*. The school has recognised and planned for the need to review and develop the relationship and family life programme; a need confirmed during inspection. Outstanding displays and exhibitions of children's work do much to enhance the curriculum and children's learning

The provision of collective worship is outstanding. It is central to the life of the school and both staff and pupils are given many opportunities for prayer. Vibrant, thoroughly prepared liturgies are enhanced by good use of ICT and music. The children are familiar with a wide repertoire of hymns and range of prayers. Themes are chosen by pupils and staff and reflect a deep understanding of the Church's mission and liturgical calendar. Liturgies are well planned and show progression, the Year 6 pupils demonstrating a sophisticated approach to their prayer service. Each classroom has an attractive prayer focus and the displays in hall used for assemblies and Masses are lovely and at the time of inspection skilfully linked the school mission statement to the Easter season. Plentiful and good quality religious pictures and artefacts greatly enhance the worship and prayer life of the school. The school improvement plan identifies that more needs to be done to reflect the growing variety of backgrounds in the school's acts of collective worship.