



Archdiocese of Birmingham

INSPECTION REPORT

ST PETER'S CATHOLIC FIRST SCHOOL BROMSGROVE

Inspection dates 15 - 16th March 2012
Reporting Inspector Mr Joseph Skivington

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4-9 years
Number on roll	287
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Mr Gary Macpherson
School address	Rock Hill Bromsgrove B61 7LH
Telephone number	01527 831872
E-mail address	office@st-petersrc.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	November 2006
DFE School number	885/3310
Unique Reference Number	116872

Headteacher Mrs Catherine Clubley

DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



Evidence

The inspection was carried out by 1 Diocesan Inspector. The focus of the inspection was on the effectiveness and use of the school's self evaluation of religious education (RE) and Catholic life. To validate the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation of teaching and learning, the inspector observed 6 RE lessons. In addition the inspector completed a work scrutiny and held a discussion with pupils to evaluate the impact of teaching on their learning over time. He held meetings with the chair of governors, the headteacher and RE co-ordinator, and parish priest. He observed a whole school assembly and a hymn practice, the presentation of the Catholic life of the school, and pupils' behaviour. He looked at a range of evidence related to the school's self evaluation such as RAISEonline, the development plan, and teachers' planning. Alongside the validation of school self evaluation, the inspector gathered evidence about collective worship, evidence which will be shared with other diocesan schools.

Information about the school

St Peter's is an average size Catholic first school serving the parish of St Peter in Bromsgrove, which has a broad range of socio economic indicators. The number of Catholic pupils is currently 51%. The proportion of ethnic minority pupils is low, as are the number of pupils eligible for free school meals and the percentage of those with special needs and/or disabilities. Attainment on entry is broadly in line with the national average overall.

Main Finding

In its self evaluation, St Peter's judges itself to be a good school and in this it is justified. All pupils benefit from and contribute to its vibrant Catholic ethos and their response to the good provision for collective worship is outstanding. Support from the governors has been consistent and concerned, while new leadership has proven its effectiveness and ability to move the school on. The senior leadership team knows the school well and has clear plans, which have their origin in increasingly effective procedures for monitoring provision and outcomes.

School self evaluation

The school is developing self evaluation procedures through more frequent reviews and reflection on its current practice, which then lead on to clear and measurable objectives. These include a forthcoming whole school reflection and a sharper focus on its mission. The teaching and learning of RE is monitored regularly through subject review, lesson observations, and book trawls. While these are programmed and timely carried out with a sharing of good practice in staff meetings, the impact on improved performance and outcomes is not always consistent. For example, more work remains to be done to ensure that the best practice is implemented and that common areas for development, such as greater challenge for the more able rather than simply provision of extension work, become part of the practice of all. The scrutiny of written work does not always pick up on evidence, or lack of evidence, of progress over time. The quantity and quality of written work varies considerably with examples of excellent, reflective writing contrasted with some less well thought out and poorly presented work, which does not improve over time. The school is well aware of such inconsistencies and in its self evaluation and planning is rightly focussing on raising the expectations of teachers to provide better challenge and a better record of all the work, including non-written, that the pupils do. There is, however, a good balance between the content of RE and the pupils' grasp of what it means in their daily lives.

The curriculum is broad, balanced and accessible to all pupils, based on *Learning and Growing as People of God*. The liturgical life of the school is enriching as the Church's calendar unfolds and is celebrated. Evaluation of impact is being made an integral aspect of curriculum planning, in order to keep under constant review and improve even further on the quality of assemblies and the prayer life of the school. The relationship education programme is likewise well planned, as is the sacramental preparation programme written by the subject leader and supported by parish catechists.

There is a very evident focus on self evaluation and review which touches every area of Catholic life and RE and which is beginning to make a real difference to outcomes. There is a real sense that leadership is on a mission to make this school the best possible, and the school is correct in judging its capacity to improve as good. Governors are actively aware of the school's evaluation of Catholic life and RE, but there is room for a yet more challenging approach.

Overall effectiveness of the school¹

Outcomes for pupils in RE are good, with variation closely linked to the quality of the teaching they receive. Pupils' baseline assessment in RE indicates prior knowledge and religious experience to be at or slightly below expectation. By the end of Key Stage 1 attainment is in line, and by the end of Year 4 it is well in line and above expectation. This represents good achievement. Pupils with particular learning needs are well catered for and make the same good progress as the others, although in some cases written tasks are clearly beyond their capabilities so that work is left unfinished. Extra challenge is sometimes wanting for the more able pupils, where they can delve deeper into a topic and have to make real intellectual effort, as well as being encouraged to voice their own questions. Pupils are unanimous in saying they enjoy RE lessons and appreciate that they have the opportunity to feedback to their teachers on how best they learn in lessons. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent.

Collective worship is good. The pupils, through their time at St Peter's, absorb and internalise the attitudes and values inspired by the message of Jesus. They well understand the connection between these and how they should act towards others and behave in their own lives. They are quick to praise, to thank, and to forgive. Every pupil regardless of faith, or none, feels a valued member of the school community and participates eagerly and reverently in prayer and liturgy. They have the opportunity to take the lead in planning and presenting their own class assemblies. In a whole school assembly just before Mothering Sunday both staff and pupils from Year 4 interacted with each other in drama and prayers, which explored vividly the events in Mary's life and her response to God's calling. Pupils' response to prayer invitation is very impressive while the excellent use of prayer bags has brought whole families together in prayer. Many photographs of pupils and their families praying together at home, led by the children is testimony to their commitment and faith. They pray well and their own compositions reflect their growing maturity and understanding. They sing with tremendous enthusiasm and obvious gusto. This excellent response sits well with the school's own self evaluation.

Provision is good overall, with both good and satisfactory teaching. Planning is effective although it does not always take account of prior learning particularly in the case of setting lesson objectives, which target the learning needs and abilities of individual pupils.

¹ As the quality of the school self evaluation has been affirmed, the judgements in this section of the report conform to those of the school.

Assessment for learning is developing with some good practice. For example, in Year 4, a lesson on the Beatitudes was challenging for all abilities, but the teacher was able, through group work and separate ability groupings, to let them work out for themselves what each Beatitude might mean. The more able pupils were able to essay thoughtful and reasoned answers as a result while the others came to a good understanding of their meaning. Although the school is gathering relevant information on levels of attainment and progress, this data is not yet informing teaching strategies consistently and effectively across all classes. The marking of written work varies in terms of impact on progress over time, with some good practice being developed and spread to other classes. The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils and allows them to become acquainted with other world religions. The school is working on developing extra opportunities to see these religions at work and witness in real life.

Recommendations

Ensure that the quality of written work is more closely monitored, particularly in terms of teachers' marking having a discernable impact on progress over time.

Ensure that assessment of pupils' work does not stop at the information gathering stage, but rather leads to the planning and shaping of teaching strategies to meet the individual learning needs of all the pupils.



March 2012

Diocesan Education Service,
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B46 3EA

Dear Parents and Carers

Section 48 (Diocesan) Inspection of St Peter's First School, Bromsgrove

I am writing this letter to share with you the findings of the diocesan inspection of your children's school. Diocesan inspection now explores in detail the school's own view of itself as expressed in its self-evaluation. For this reason, much of the report is more technical than used to be the case. You are still entitled to have a copy of the full report should you want one and it will be available on the school website or by request from the school office.

The school has a good Catholic ethos which informs all that it does. The present leadership is making a significant impact on developing its Catholicity, based solidly on clear self evaluation, which will sustain and move the school swiftly forward. Pupils speak very highly of the school and are using the opportunities to become involved and take ownership of their own education well. Their attainment and achievement is good. The pupils enjoy their work in RE and are eager and valued members of the school community. Teaching in RE is overall good and we observed some satisfactory as well as good lessons.

I have recommended that the school should keep a closer eye on the quality of the written work of the pupils, and in particular that all teachers' marking really helps them and results in obvious progress over time. Also I have indicated that the assessment data on pupils' attainment and achievement could be better used by all teachers to shape their lessons and their lesson objectives to meet the needs of all pupils.

I met and talked with many of the pupils, whom I found were invariably welcoming and courteous, and I was impressed by the contribution they make to the school community and their own education. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. They are a credit to the school and to their families and those who care for them.

It was a pleasure and privilege to inspect St Peter's and I wish it every success on its road to excellence.

Yours sincerely

Joseph Skivington
Diocesan Inspector