

**St Peter's RC Primary School, Hawkins Street, Blackburn, BB2 2RY.**

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Inspection date 17<sup>th</sup> June 2016

Reporting Inspectors Mrs Jackie McNally  
Mrs Diane Bohan

Inspection carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Type of School Catholic Primary  
 URN 119514  
 Age range of pupils 4-11 years  
 Number on roll 454  
 Appropriate authority The Governing Body  
 Chair of Governors Mrs F Walsh  
 Headteacher Mr M J Duxbury  
 Religious Education Subject Leader Mrs M Dixon  
 Date of previous inspection 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012

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| <b>The Inspection judgements are:</b>                           | <b>Grade</b> | <b>Explanation of the Grades</b><br><br>1 = Outstanding<br>2 = Good<br>3=Requires Improvement<br>4 = Inadequate |
|---|--------------|---|
| Overall effectiveness of the school                             | 1            |   |
| The quality of Catholic Leadership                              | 1            |   |
| The quality of the Word   | 1            |   |
| The quality of the Welcome                                      | 1            |   |
| The quality of Welfare  | 1            |   |
| The quality of Worship  | 1            |   |
| The quality of Witness  | 1            |   |
| The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements |              |   |

## **CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL**

St Peter's is a large Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic Primary school with 416 FTE pupils on roll [plus 38 part-time nursery children]. The school is situated in the Mill Hill area of Blackburn and has a long history, with the original school being opened in 1887. The school serves the Catholic parishes of St Peter's and St John Vianney. The vast majority of the children are baptized Catholics (97%). There are 15 classes in the school and 85% of the teachers are baptized Catholics. The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is 29% and 14% of children are identified as having Special Educational Needs. There are a small number of children from minority ethnic groups (5.0%) and the percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is well below the national average.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

St Peter's RC School is an outstanding Catholic school where every child is valued and nurtured. The headteacher, staff and governors have high aspirations for the school and they strive to develop every child academically, socially and spiritually. There is a positive and welcoming atmosphere in the school and this creates a happy and secure learning environment for the children. Children's behaviour is excellent and at all times during the inspection the children were a credit to the school and their parents. There is a strong sense of community and links between the parish and school are very strong. Together the school and parish are a worshipping community and this provides the children with a strong sense of belonging. Children are encouraged to think of those less fortunate than themselves and they are keen to organise and participate in fund raising activities for a school in Sierra Leone and organisations such as Cafod.

The teaching of religious education overall is outstanding and the children demonstrate a secure religious knowledge and faith commitment. The lessons observed were of a high quality, but would be further enhanced through the use of additional differentiated activities. The school also need to ensure that marking provides children with opportunities to reflect upon their next steps in learning. Children are provided with a range of opportunities for worship and they are respectful and reverent. It is clear that the school is encouraging pupils to undertake increased responsibilities in leading worship and the pupil who are members of the chaplaincy team act as good role models. The school engages parents in the religious development of their child by welcoming them into school to worship together and providing information about the RE curriculum. The children are confident and enthusiastic learners who bear witness to the Gospel values.

## **THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:**

- The headteacher, staff and governors have high aspirations for this Catholic school and strive to create a community which is inspired by the Word of God.
- There is a strong community spirit and all members of the community bear witness to the Catholic faith through their relationships with each other.
- The children are provided with a wide variety of opportunities to worship and these opportunities are extended to the whole community.

## **THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS OUTSTANDING**

The quality of Catholic leadership is outstanding. The headteacher provides strong leadership and he is respected by the whole school community, who spoke highly of his relationships with the whole school community. The governing body is very effective in undertaking its role of leading the school and developing it as a Catholic community. They are passionate about the school, are committed to the high expectations and supporting the school's work. Fr Dutton and Fr Frank play a proactive role in the school and their contribution to the spiritual development of the children is highly valued. The leadership of the school clearly recognises that Christ is central to all aspects of school life and all staff are committed to creating a loving and nurturing environment for all children; this is a significant strength of the school. The mission statement was clearly evident across the whole school community.

The RE subject leader is passionate about her role and inspires others with her energy. She monitors books, undertakes learning walks and observes lessons. As a result of this monitoring, the senior leadership team have recently introduced a more rigorous marking policy which aims to promote children's learning further; this now needs to be monitored to ensure that it is consistent throughout the school. There are links with the local high school and other Catholic leaders, and every two years all staff attend a Catholic conference organised in conjunction with local schools.

Pupils are confident and enthusiastic about taking on responsibilities and they are able to talk about how they support each other and people in the wider community. The pupil chaplaincy team are excellent role models for other children and they are excellent ambassadors for the school.

### **THE QUALITY OF THE WORD IS OUTSTANDING**

The quality of the Word is outstanding, overall. The lessons observed during the inspection were of a very high quality. They included a variety of creative and engaging differentiated activities and a good pace was maintained throughout the lessons. The Word of God was central to teaching and the lessons observed showed that the children have a good knowledge of religious education; as well as knowing what it means to follow Jesus. There were many opportunities for children to share ideas and reflect upon their faith and children contributed confidently to lessons. In all lessons observed, the teachers demonstrated secure subject knowledge.

Various samples of children's work from across the school were examined during the inspection. Although the lessons observed during the inspection included differentiated activities, this was not reflected in the pupil books and therefore differentiation needs to be developed further. The marking policy has recently been reviewed and teachers are posing questions for the children and identifying next steps in learning. The quality of marking does however need to be regularly reviewed to ensure that it is effective and that children are being encouraged to provide appropriate responses to questions posed. Children have a good awareness of other world faith traditions and talked with enthusiasm about their recent interfaith week. The high quality of religious displays in the school reflects the school's commitment to Catholic teaching and the spiritual development of the child. Links between home and school are strong and parents are provided with information about the religious education curriculum.

### **THE QUALITY OF THE WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING**

The school takes great pride in providing a warm, welcoming and inclusive environment where committed staff have high expectations of pupils. All members of the school community said that they felt welcomed and there was a great sense of pride and belonging. Parents are regularly invited to attend school masses and assemblies and many talked about how they were invited to help in the classrooms. The school successfully welcomes all members of the community and has recently welcomed members of other faith groups into school to share their knowledge with the children during interfaith week. The school has excellent links with the parish and together the school and parish are a strong faith community. The children write to the older parishioners; an act which is really appreciated by the older members of the church. The parishioners are also welcomed into school to share the rosary with the children and then share a meal. The chaplaincy team talked about how they made cards to welcome new people to the school. The parents stated that St Peter's is a 'happy, friendly, welcoming school' and this opinion was shared by the children and staff.

### **THE QUALITY OF THE WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING**

Staff and children demonstrate a very high level of care and respect for others. Parents spoke very highly of the quality of the support they receive from the whole school staff. There is a genuine concern from all staff for the welfare of all pupils and every individual is valued and nurtured. Parents feel that their children are well looked after and safe. The school is seen as very inclusive and one parent said, "There are so many different backgrounds, but when they're here, they're all one." Parents also spoke of the school as a family

community and the great involvement of school in the life of the parish. The support of the school staff at Sunday Mass and in the sacramental programme was recognised and appreciated.

Throughout the inspection the children's behaviour was exemplary and they demonstrated care and respect for each other. The children act as excellent role models and this is demonstrated by the school council and chaplains. Pupils spoke about how much they enjoyed being at school and they were proud and excited to share the many things they have done to help others and to make their school a welcoming and prayerful place. These initiatives include: welcome cards for visitors, pray and play sessions, rosary and prayer groups, fundraising and linking with a school in York. All members of the school community recognised the work that was being done. The Christ-centred ethos of the school fosters a culture where children feel confident enough to express their views and share their experiences, knowing that others will value and respect them. This work is a real strength of the school.

### **THE QUALITY OF THE WORSHIP IS OUTSTANDING**

Prayer and worship are an integral part of school life and all members of the school community gather together to worship during assemblies, school masses and during opportunities to say the rosary together. The assembly observed during the inspection was well prepared, interactive and engaging. It focused on the story of the three trees, God's plan for us and how we can work together to achieve our goal. In both the class collective worship and assembly, there were opportunities for listening to the Word of God, quiet reflection and sharing ideas and thoughts. In the class worship, peer discussion was used to talk about the early church and what the Holy Spirit wants us to do, and the children gave thoughtful responses. The use of a prayer pail was an excellent idea. In each classroom, there is a focal point for worship and during the day there are a range of prayer opportunities for children. Additional opportunities for worship are also provided through retreat days at the local high school and recently each class has made a 3D station of the cross, which was displayed around the school.

The pupil chaplaincy team are committed and enthusiastic about their role and make a valuable contribution to worship in the school. The chaplains are responsible for going into each of the classes and talking to the children about the 'statements to live by'. They talked enthusiastically about the rosary sessions in school and the opportunities for 'pray and play out'. They also talked about the prayer garden where children can go if they need someone to talk to. During the inspection the chaplains led a prayer group during the lunch time break. They had confidently prepared the session including opportunities for sharing the word of God, prayer, personal responses and reflection; this was an excellent example of pupil led worship. The children are clearly developing the skills to lead worship and this good practice needs to continue to be shared throughout school.

### **THE QUALITY OF THE WITNESS IS OUTSTANDING**

Staff and pupils are confident and secure in their witness to Christ, the Gospel and the teachings of the Church. The school encourages and supports its pupils to be proactive citizens, who contribute to the decision-making process. This was especially evident in discussion with the school council and chaplaincy members who were committed to ensuring their school was inclusive of all. Several of those interviewed said, 'You can recognise a St. Peter's child' out in the community by the way they behave. The chaplaincy lead is committed to embedding the work of its enthusiastic young chaplains, who are having a real impact on the life of the school. The mission statement was clearly evident across the whole school community.

An explicit Catholic culture permeates the whole school and is clearly identifiable through relationships, decision-making and actions. Staff and children demonstrate and witness to justice, compassion and love in their relationships and are able to see the relationship between their own behaviour and Christian values; this was reiterated many times by pupils, staff, parents and governors. As a governor said, "Being a Catholic is very much at the forefront of everything."

**AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:**

- To adapt and personalise the religious education curriculum, so that children are offered the opportunity to learn through a wide variety of activities and ensure that this is reflected in pupil books and other sources of evidence.
- Further develop the quality of teaching and learning by providing the children with additional differentiated activities.
- Ensure that marking provides children with opportunities to reflect upon their next steps in learning.

17<sup>th</sup> June 2016

Dear Children,

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school. We really enjoyed spending the day with you and I am pleased to be able to tell you that you have an outstanding Catholic school.

We really enjoyed watching your lessons and you showed a great deal of enthusiasm for the topics you were studying. Your lessons were fast paced and your teachers planned interesting activities which sustained your interest and helped you to explore your faith further. Your religious knowledge is very good and you confidently shared ideas in class and listened attentively to other people's opinions. The standard of your work is good but we have suggested to your teachers that the written activities are adapted to suit the different abilities in the class. They are also going to provide you with more detailed feedback and questions which will help you to deepen your understanding and give you the opportunity to think about how you can improve your work in the next lesson.

We also enjoyed watching your assembly, prayer group and collective worship. You show a great deal of respect and reverence when you pray and you showed us that you understood the Word of God. Well done to the pupil chaplains who are helping you to develop your faith, they are excellent role models to follow.

We were very impressed by the care and respect you showed for each other and the special way you make everyone feel welcomed and valued. As your mission statement says, you are 'Growing together in Christ.' Throughout the day you and your parents told us how special your school is and you are obviously very proud of belonging to St Peter's. Your school has a lovely Catholic ethos and you should be very proud of yourself and your school.

God bless.

Mrs McNally  
(Section 48 Inspectors)

Mrs Bohan

### **SUMMARY REPORT TO PARENTS**

On Friday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2016 the school was inspected in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The full report has been made available to the school and can also be accessed via both the school website and the Education section on the website of the Diocese of Salford.

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