



## DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD

### Denominational (S48) Inspection Report

**Name of School:** St Peter's Catholic Primary School  
**Local Authority:** Essex  
**Inspection Date:** 11<sup>th</sup> July 2019  
**Reporting Inspector:** Stephen Beck

This Inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 and 2011.

<b>Type of School:</b>	Primary	<b>School Address:</b>	St Peter's Primary School
<b>School Category:</b>	Voluntary Aided		Coxes Farm Road
<b>Age range of pupils:</b>	4 – 11		Billericay
<b>Gender of pupils:</b>	Mixed		Essex CM11 2UB
<b>Number on roll:</b>	422	<b>Tel. No.:</b>	01277 653770
<b>Appropriate Authority:</b>	The Governing Body	<b>Headteacher:</b>	Mrs. K. Parker
<b>Date of previous inspection:</b>	July 2014	<b>Chair of Governors:</b>	Mr. S. Foster

## Information about the school

St Peter's Catholic Primary School is a larger than average voluntary aided school in Billericay in the county of Essex and part of the Diocese of Brentwood. It serves the parishes of The Most Holy Redeemer, Billericay and Our Lady of Good Counsel, Wickford. There are currently 422 pupils aged 4-11 on roll and the school is over subscribed. The proportion of Catholic pupils is 90%. There is a below average number, at 5.6%, of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average at 6%, as is the number of pupils who receive the Pupil Premium at 6.6%.

The school has a number of external accreditations that include: the 'Full International Schools Award'; 'Green Flag Eco Award'; 'Healthy Schools'; 'Fairtrade'; 'Schools Games Gold' and 'Artsmark Silver'.

Plans are currently being progressed to formalise the current school to school support in place through the formation of a MAT. St Peter's is taking a lead in this development through the Headteacher and Chair of Governors.

## Key grades for inspection

1: Outstanding      2: Good      3: Requires improvement      4: Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

**Grade 1**

St Peter's was rated as outstanding at the time of its last inspection and to its credit continues to be so, providing a beacon of excellence in Catholic education. This reflects its constant striving to be better and focus on developing the highest levels of provision possible to meet the needs of all its pupils. The Catholic nature of the school permeates all aspects of school life, recognises the uniqueness of the individual and encourages pupils to develop their gifts and talents to the full. Excellent use is made of the school's extensive grounds with the school itself being equally well used and effectively maintained. This creates a strong environment to support learning.

Worship in various forms is a vibrant and daily feature of the school. There is a high level of commitment from all staff to the pursuit of excellence and this work is supported by rigorous whole school planning, evaluation and review and as a result, excellent teaching secures high levels of attainment and progress.

St Peter's is a welcoming school from the point of first contact and on arrival this continues with everyone you meet, reflecting a strong collegiate, caring atmosphere that pervades the school. It is an exceptionally well led school with an explicit Catholic ethos that is evident through high quality displays including pupil work and messages promulgating the school's mission and values.

The Headteacher who took on the role relatively recently has made a significant impact in moving the school forward. She has built on the school's existing strengths and promptly identified and initiated actions to address areas for development. She has a clear vision for the school, has built up a strong staff team and skilfully generates excitement, encourages ownership and develops loyalty in unique ways. She and the Religious Education Leader have formed a strong team that sees their respective strengths combine to the benefit of the whole school and the strong development of Religious Education. As a parent wrote on their questionnaire return, '*An emphasis is put on key morals such as Respect, Resilience, Reciprocity and my children often refer to these. I think the school provides children with an important sense of belonging which is imperative to them being happy and open to learning*'. Another wrote, '*Our children's journey of discovery of God is being beautifully supported at school*'.

Governance at St Peter's is outstanding. Governors know their school and are both challenging and supportive. They are active members of the local school community, are well known, well organised and serve their school well.

## What the school should do to improve further:

With no significant areas for improvement, the school should progress the areas identified through their own strong self-evaluation which is linked to the school development plan giving priority to;

- Reviewing the policy for Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) in consultation with staff, governors and parents, to take account of new national and diocesan guidance.
- Progressing the school's planned involvement in the 'Faith in Action' programme.

## CATHOLIC LIFE

## Grade 1

The 'Catholic Life' of St Peter's is outstanding. The school Mission Statement, *'Loving and learning together with Jesus'* is lived throughout the school and beyond as a result of the dedication of all to the whole child. At St Peter's, it is recognised that everyone is on a journey that holds Christ at the centre of all they do. This enables pupils to make positive contributions to the life of the school, as they are happy, secure and confident and consistently contribute to all aspects of school life with energy and commitment. Pupils are proud to be a part of St. Peter's family and speak about their school and the wider community with pride. This is reflected in the enthusiasm and eagerness they show through their active participation in the decision making of key issues within the school community. Pupils in each class work together to create class rules, which reflect the Mission Statement and St Peter's Gospel Values. This results in the pupils adhering to school rules with belief. Behaviour is exemplary across the school and pupils support each other to be the best that they can be. The pupils are very quick to recognise and celebrate each other's achievements and often draw the attention of staff to each other's successes. Pupils show a high level of self-respect and respect for each other during all parts of the school day. Playtimes are supported by pupils who have volunteered to be play or sports leaders in the playground and with the Reception pupils at lunchtimes. Pupils are very reflective with regards to their actions; they are quick to notice when something isn't right or could be improved and will offer suggestions and solutions. Pupils are eager to take an active role in the life of the school, which can be seen in the numerous committees that play a strong role within the school. These include 'School Council' and 'Eco Committee'. Pupils are actively involved in decision making. They have worked together with staff to create their class rules, a 'Be Kind' charter and house point reward system. They often suggest ideas for charity events and outreach work. They are not afraid to speak up on matters that are important to them. Throughout the school, commitment to the Gospel values is witnessed by how everyone behaves. Pupils and staff are positive role models for each other, are worried when someone is unwell or upset, show impeccable manners and are courteous, kind and caring.

The school's 'Junior Disciples' have developed over time. They were first commissioned during the school's 'Mission Week' and the school has significantly developed their role over the last couple of years and they play an active role in supporting and developing the 'Catholic Life of the School'. They give an abundance of suggestions and ideas for initiatives within the school and readily give up their own time to support other children in their faith development e.g. Prayer groups, supporting in the chapel, 'Bible Club', tours around the school. The school nominates a pupil for the 'Citizenship Award' at the Cathedral in Brentwood with recipients of the awards being chosen for active participation in liturgical life of the school and Parish and for the dedication to the 'Common Good' with a focus on the environment. This year, members of the school's Liturgical Choir were asked to lead the singing at the Cathedral.

The Headteacher initiated a 'Mission Week' to further develop spirituality across the school and bring a new energy to the life of the school. This successful 'Mission Week' led by the staff with the support of the Parish Priest has enabled pupils and staff to deepen their faith. In addition, she has introduced a Pilgrimage to Hosanna House/Lourdes to enhance the school's links with HCPT and deepen the pupils', parents', staff and governors' spiritual journey which has grown over recent years. Many Year 5 pupils, their parents and members of The Most Holy Redeemer Parish community experience this pilgrimage. The visits have been extremely successful with pupils, staff and parents appreciating the

opportunity to develop their faith. Some have gone on to visit again with various HCPT groups.

Pupils and staff have a palpable sense of belonging to this vibrant Catholic school community. They flourish in an atmosphere where everyone is valued and is expected to achieve. The school provides the very best pastoral care to all pupils, particularly those in most need including engaging the services of BCCS to provide counselling. This care results in a happy, caring community where witness to Jesus Christ is at the heart of the school. A parent wrote, *'The care and understanding we have received at St Peter's is way above what we thought could come from a school. The team at St Peter's is brilliant'*.

The school's leadership and management promote the 'Catholic Life of the School' extremely well. They show deep commitment to this distinctively Catholic, thriving community. Development of this 'Catholic Life' forms the first priority for school improvement and this is well communicated to all. Parents and other stakeholders are kept well informed about the school and its Catholic mission through regular newsletters and an engaging and informative website that celebrates the 'Catholic Life of the School'. Governors offer support and challenge effectively and are welcome and established visitors around school. Parents commented very positively on the sense of family within this school community, created by the Headteacher, Governors and Staff. They are very supportive and clearly value the long term impact the 'Catholic Life' of this school has on their children. They speak of this school as "a beacon" in their community and within education.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### Grade 1

The quality of teaching, learning and progress is outstanding. All pupils enjoy their learning, speak with passion, have very positive attitudes and work at a swift pace throughout lessons. They apply themselves with enthusiasm to the challenges set by the teacher. They generally enter reception at a below average standard; some with little or no understanding of the Catholic faith. Through the immediate immersion in the Catholic life of St. Peter's along with the strategic introduction and teaching of Religious Education which permeates the whole curriculum, pupils quickly grow in their faith, understanding and spirituality. They make very good progress as a result of their needs being well met. They continue to make outstanding progress throughout KS1 and KS2 as a result of very good teaching. Reception pupils join the rest of the school in liturgies, celebrations and Masses from the outset and are immersed in the religious life of the school and consequently make accelerated progress. Pupils are proud of their work, are religiously literate, articulate and reflective. Groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Teachers are adept at differentiating work and providing additional adult support. Pupils' skill development is very good with a wide range of examples in books. Samples included evidence of pupils being able to interpret sources accurately, to reflect and evaluate and to pose questions which were then investigated. Lessons, across all three key stages, were observed. In all lessons the standards of teaching and learning was exceptionally high. Teachers skilfully engaged and inspired pupils, who responded thoughtfully and attentively. Probing questions enabled pupils to explore and deepen their learning. Teachers demonstrated excellent subject knowledge. None of the lessons observed during the inspection were less than good, with a majority being either outstanding or on the cusp of outstanding and this validated the school's similar judgements over time. Older pupils in one lesson observed, were provided with some scenarios to categorise as just or unjust and to pose questions to follow up with. This provided a platform for some excellent debate and higher level thinking skills to which the pupils rose. Excellent links were made to Scripture with pupils using Bibles confidently. The pupils' ability to maximise their learning in these less controlled environments reflects the very strong behaviour for learning ambience around the school that generates a real 'learning buzz' in classrooms. St Peter's is an exemplar school for the teaching of Religious Education that could usefully be shared.

Effective planning ensures that lessons are linked to pupils' needs. Assessment is effectively used to inform planning, track pupil progress and target support and challenge. Pupils are confident in expressing and exploring their ideas and demonstrate an extensive religious vocabulary. Support assistants facilitate pupils' learning using well planned, discreet and sensitive support. Marking of pupils' work is regular and affirmative and indicates an effective dialogue between teacher and pupil. Self-assessment is developing well, with pupils contributing to their end of topic assessments. Pupil

progress reviews ensure that support can be put in place where needed. Moderation (in-house and external) validates teachers' judgements and a portfolio of work samples provides a reference point for teachers. Since the last inspection, the school has worked hard to develop robust systems of assessment in Religious Education and these are now well established.

Leaders and Governors are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Religious Education. They ensure that the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in every respect and in each key stage. They ensure that the required amount of curriculum time is given to Religious Education in each key stage. Religious Education has full parity with other core curriculum subjects, in terms of professional development, resourcing, staffing and accommodation. Leaders and governors' self-evaluation of Religious Education is a coherent reflection of rigorous assessment, tracking, monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge. This is well informed by current best practice in Religious Education. This results in targeted planning and strategic action taken by the school which leads to outstanding outcomes in Religious Education. Governors are fully informed of standards in Religious Education and the Subject Leader regularly reports to them. They are fully aware of their responsibilities and ratify all Religious Education policies.

The Religious Education Subject Leader has successfully introduced new initiatives and works closely with the knowledgeable and supportive Link Governor for Religious Education ensuring the governors are fully appraised of all aspects of developments in this area. She is an organised, effective and creative subject leader and a role model of outstanding practice. She has a clear vision and is making an impact on teaching and learning in Religious Education, resulting in outstanding practice. Parents receive regular updates and newsletters about Religious Education, formal reports on the achievement of their children and there is a wealth of information on the schools website. Parents' questionnaires overwhelmingly agree that they are fully informed about their child's Religious Education and were 100% supportive of the school.

Through careful planning and teaching of world religions (Islam and Judaism) children deepen their knowledge and understanding of other faiths, are able to draw on the similarities with their own faith and to show a deep respect for their differences. Alongside the teaching of world religions, the children also follow a cultural calendar whereby each year group celebrates a festival from a different religion which is then shared in a key stage assembly.

The Parish Priest is fully supportive of staff in their preparation for lessons. He welcomes invitations to speak to classes or for them to visit church. He is a regular visitor to the school and is well known by all members of the community who are highly appreciative of the time and support he gives to the school. In addition to the educational support he provides, his impact pastorally is greatly valued.

## **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

### **Grade 1**

All aspects of Collective Worship at St Peter's is outstanding. It is a very prayerful and spiritual community where various forms of worship are regular and meaningful parts of the day. There is a calm and peaceful ethos which pervades the school and is reflected in the pupils' excellent behaviour, manners and consideration for others. From the earliest stages, pupils recognise the special nature of liturgical symbols and show respect. They are aware that religious beliefs are important, demonstrating respect for their own faith and the faith of others.

Pupils participate in and are actively involved in planning, daily Collective Worship, whether this be whole school, phase, year group or within individual classes. Class assemblies, Masses, Reconciliation services, end of unit reflections, and prayer clubs, encourage pupils to deepen their faith and understanding and to spend time with Jesus on a daily basis. Many opportunities are provided for all pupils to explore and deepen their faith both within the school day and beyond. Pupils speak enthusiastically of school liturgies and assemblies. They enjoy inviting parents and carers to these occasions. Many parents and carers attend and are appreciative of their inclusion in the school worshipping community. They also speak appreciatively of the close involvement of the Parish Priest and his contribution to school life and in particular to Collective Worship.

Adults provide excellent role models for pupils and contribute significantly to their spiritual and moral development and this is evident when pupils lead their own liturgies. Pupils commented that worship and prayer are at the heart of this school community. Praying together is part of the daily life of staff and pupils. High quality displays and focal points in all classrooms and corridors are imaginatively resourced and carefully designed.

The school provides a rich and varied provision for Collective Worship. Assemblies are linked to liturgical and Religious Education themes. Prayer is an integral part of the life of the school at all levels. Staff regularly pray together and recognise that this guides their work and spirit of vocation. The school's Collective Worship extends to parish and diocesan events, providing the experience of being part of a wider worshipping community. Collective Worship is an important part of school life and is skilfully woven into the school day and school calendar. In an assembly attended on the topic of 'Laudato Si', the Pope's message on caring for our environment was well presented. Good use was made of a bandaged globe with pupils explaining how they could work to improve things. Excellent references to scripture were made. The assembly focal point provided opportunity for reflection and the celebration was greatly enhanced by music and singing which are strengths of the school's worship.

Leaders and Governors are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Collective Worship. They know how to provide clear policies and guidelines to plan and deliver quality Collective Worship. They lead Collective Worship within the school and are appropriate models of outstanding practice for staff and pupils. They promote pupils' planning and leading of Collective Worship. They have an outstanding understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and are able to make these accessible to the pupils in a contemporary context. Monitoring of Collective Worship is embedded and is supporting worship across the school. Leaders are keen to continue regular professional development for staff, incorporating liturgical formation and the planning of Collective Worship. Governors are informed of policy guidelines and monitoring of Collective Worship. They are also invited to and attend Collective Worship celebrations. A parent wrote, *'I believe the school put a strong emphasis on Catholicism and Religious Education through their teaching. Children are able to be Prayer Leaders and Junior Disciples and also use music /songs to help them understand topics / learning more. Parents are regularly invited in to join in Masses or watch assemblies, where we are always made to feel part of the school community'*.