



Diocese of Arundel and Brighton

INSPECTION REPORT

St Peter's Catholic School
Horseshoe Lane East
Guildford
Surrey
GU1 2TN

e-mail address: info@st-peters.surrey.sch.uk

DfES Number: 125276

Headteacher: Mr R Guinea
Chair of Governors: Mrs H Read

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Bishop of Arundel & Brighton
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Date of inspection: 11-12 November 2013
Date of previous inspection: 13 February – 15 February 2008

Lead Inspector: Dr J Lydon
Associate Inspector: Mr P Ward

Description of School

St Peter's Catholic School is voluntary aided. It is situated in the Guildford Deanery of the Diocese of Arundel & Brighton. It is maintained by Surrey Local Authority. The principal parishes which the school serves are St Mary's, Rydes Hill; St Joseph's, Guildford; St Pius X, Merrow; St Edmund's, Godalming and Christ the Redeemer, Cranleigh. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 61%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to religious education is 8% in Key Stages 3 and 4 and 5% in the Sixth Form.

The school takes pupils from 11 to 18 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 1119. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is broadly around average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free schools meals is 10%. Around 13% of the pupils receive extra support in class. The proportion of pupils from homes where English is an additional language is 8%.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1: Outstanding; Grade 2: Good; Grade 3: Satisfactory; Grade 4: Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

As a Catholic educating community St Peter's is outstanding. Leadership and management are outstanding, particularly in the context of the overall support for both staff and students, evidenced by staff and students during the inspection and by a recent survey in which 91% stated that staff morale was very high. The central element of the Mission Statement, "our purpose is to be Christ to all", is realised in practice rather than simply in public rhetoric. The support of the chaplain is a significant strength of the school, a view shared by both staff and students. Collective worship is vibrant and has improved significantly since the last inspection including the introduction of formation for Eucharistic ministry which constitutes a significant development and develops further the school's excellent links with the local Deanery. The school has a very good capacity to improve further.

Grade 1

Improvement since the last inspection

- All action points of the last inspection report have been addressed.
- A new chaplain has been appointed and collective worship is now monitored effectively.
- Assessments for learning strategies are now embedded in RE lessons.

Grade 1

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase curriculum time for religious education in Key Stages 3 and 4 in order to meet the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and reflect the fact that it is the core subject in a Catholic school.
 - Ensure that the Department is resourced adequately in order to sustain student progress in learning and teaching.
-

The Catholic Life of the School

Leadership and Management

The leadership and management of this Catholic school are outstanding. The leadership of the school is strongly focused on its Catholic mission, on raising standards and promoting the personal development of students. This has created a shared sense of mission among staff, evidenced by the staff survey. The headteacher, who has an affirmative presence around the school, and the leadership team have a clear vision for the development of the school as a Catholic learning community created and supported by students, parents, staff and governors. Governors fulfil their role in relation to strategic direction, challenge and accountability, being particularly conversant in interpreting assessment data. They provide a visible presence at key school functions. A balance is maintained between effective and challenging quality assurance strategies, ensuring that resources are managed effectively, and that there is a high standard of pastoral support of both staff and students. The inclusion of all learners constitutes a central feature of the life of St Peter's, evidenced by surveys and interviews during the inspection. Behaviour is outstanding with students confirming that the very low level of bullying is dealt with promptly and is more than compensated by the "tightly interwoven nature of the school community" cited by one student. Very good links exist with parents, parishes and external agencies which reinforce the high standard of care, guidance and support provided by the school. The whole school community demonstrates solidarity around the school mission.

Grade 1

The Prayer Life of the School

The Eucharist and prayer are central to the life of the whole school community. The standard of Assemblies and prayer during tutor time observed during the inspection was outstanding. Students were both engaged and respectful. Planning constitutes a significant element in all liturgies and involves both teaching and support staff and students. Learners prepare and lead acts of worship with confidence, skill and enthusiasm. There is a programme for the formation of Sixth Form Eucharist ministers together with a structured programme of Retreats and Days of Recollection for all year groups.. There are innumerable examples of liturgical celebration including prayer carousels prepared by form tutors, opportunities for the sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent and Advent, a Christian Union and a Prayer Club which endeavours to focus on faith in action. The Mission Week, a biannual event, creates a significant impact and offers to students the opportunity to engage in a variety of prayer styles. The impact of the liturgical life of the school was evidenced by the responses of students during the inspection and questionnaires and surveys among both staff and students. Such evaluations form an integral part of planning for future liturgies. The commitment of the school to sustaining this key aspect is demonstrated by the appointment of an Assistant Headteacher whose primary role involves the promotion of the spiritual life of the school community. The chaplain provides an inspirational presence, evidenced by staff, students and surveys and he constitutes a central as

opposed to a peripheral presence in all aspects of school life, particularly those related to pastoral care. He is supported by the Community Life Group.

Grade 1

How effectively does the school /college promote community cohesion?

The inclusion of all is a central goal and a shared vision of this Catholic school in which staff and students of other religious traditions feel very much included. One parent suggested that "each student is treated as an individual and confidence is built in the young people in their care". Students resonated with this view suggesting in addition that they "learn to value the opinions of others". Disabled students are accepted and respected and achieve as well as their peers. There is compelling evidence of community cohesion within and without including a very effective Student Voice. A number of staff emphasised that community is modelled by them and elicits a response from students, manifested particularly in the support of members of the school community experiencing difficulties. Curriculum provision of Citizenship is a particular strength, evidenced by outstanding achievement. This is translated into practice in the remarkably successful fundraising by students supported by staff. Over £22,000 was raised last year including £13,000 emanating from the Sponsored Walk on the Patronal Feast Day. A variety of local, national and global charities, chosen by students, are supported including two local homeless shelters, Children in Need and CAFOD. In addition students are engaged with ART VENTURE, a group which supports vulnerable adults. St Peter's is a Fair Trade School and has achieved Full International Status. Students prepared and led parts of the Mass for Education Sunday in the local Parish for the last three years.

Grade 1

Religious Education

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education

Achievement and standards in religious education are outstanding. Almost all learners, including those with special educational needs, make at least good progress and many make very good or outstanding progress based on value added measures. At Key Stage 3 progress of students is excellent with 92% of students reach level 5 or above. At Key Stage 4, GCSE results show that students make outstanding progress relative to their ability while exceeding their target grades. 86% achieved grades A*-C compared with 80% in the previous year which constitutes a significant improvement. At A level students met their target Grades. There has been a noteworthy increase in the number of students choosing A Level Religious Studies. There is little difference in achievement between different groups of students of comparable ability. Students demonstrated a high level of progress in becoming religiously literate with students in Year 9 discussing confidently the divinity of Christ and Sixth Form students exploring accurately the theology of the Trinity. Based on pupil interviews with inspectors, all students were unanimous in their appreciation of the quality of their learning experience in RE, particularly in regard to lessons being adapted to suit a variety of learning styles. Behaviour in lessons is outstanding overall. Sixth Formers valued their lessons because it empowered them to articulate confidently their religious beliefs when challenged by peers outside of the school context.

Grade 1

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

Based on the lessons observed and on the written evidence of observations by members of the Leadership Team prior to the inspection, the quality of teaching is outstanding. Students display a positive attitude to religious education and work well with teaching and support staff and with each other to advance their learning. Some lessons observed were outstanding and demonstrated that students are stretched through effective questioning, peer and self-assessment and oral feedback from teachers. The introduction of a particular style of peer marking is particularly innovative and students confirmed that they had been equipped to engage in the process of making an accurate judgement. Lesson planning is excellent and student needs are assessed diagnostically through a rigorous tracking process. Quality is assured by a well-structured system of appraisal while learning walks and peer observation is normative. Displays in classrooms contribute to the positive learning environment.

Grade 1

Quality of the Curriculum

The religious education curriculum of the school is aligned to the 2012 Religious Education Curriculum Directory and adapted to the needs of students. The Key Stage 3 curriculum has been adapted to meet appropriately the needs of the school community and has been mapped against the Curriculum Directory. At KS4 students follow the Edexcel specification 'Religion and Society' (Unit 8) and 'Religion and Life based on Catholic Christianity' (Unit 3). At KS5 students study the AQA Religious Studies specification, completing the units on Ethics and Philosophy of Religion at AS and A2. A new programme of General RE has been introduced in the Sixth Form, the development of which is a key aspect of the Department Development plan. The curriculum time devoted to religious education is 8% across Key Stages 3 and 4 and 5% for General Religious Education in years 12-13. Curriculum time afforded to RE is, therefore, slightly less than the Bishops' Conference requirement of 10% in Key Stages 3-4.

Grade 2

Leadership and management of Religious Education

The leadership and management of religious education is outstanding. The newly appointed Head of RE has already made a significant impact, evidenced by students and other colleagues who regard him as a first rate practitioner. The Head of RE and his team have a strong sense of the educational mission of the Church and the place of RE in contributing to the school's mission. The Headteacher line manages the Department supporting the assertion that it is at the core of the curriculum. This is augmented by the support of the Link Governor Fr Colin Wolczak, the local Dean, ensuring that Governors are effectively discharging their responsibilities. The Head of RE oversees an appraisal process and has introduced a pioneering student questionnaire which indicated that the majority of students believed that RE lessons were good and sometimes outstanding. He is committed to building an effective, outstanding team of RE teachers and is supported effectively by the 2nd in RE. Resources are organised efficiently and the commitment of the RE team is palpable, characterised by good communication between its members.

Grade 1