

INSPECTION REPORT

St Peter and Paul’s RCP Pilkington St, Bolton BL3 6HP

Inspection date 23rd January 2017

Reporting Inspector Damian Harrison
 Des Burns

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

Type of School Primary
 URN 105225
 Age range of pupils 3 - 11
 Number on roll 232 (including Nursery)
 Appropriate authority The Governing Body
 Chair of Governors Maria Borszcz
 Headteacher Trish Grogan
 Religious Education Subject Leaders Trish Grogan and Vanessa Knowles
 Date of previous inspection 18th April 2012

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades 1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3=Requires Improvement 4 = Inadequate
Overall effectiveness of the school	1	
The quality of Catholic Leadership	1	
The quality of the Word of God	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

SS Peter and Paul's is an average sized Roman Catholic Primary School situated in the town centre of Bolton. There are 232 pupils on roll with about 55% who are baptised Catholic. The school serves the parishes of St Edmund's and St Patrick's. The number of children eligible for support through pupil premium funding is above average. So is the proportion of children with special educational needs and/or a disability. The number of children with English as an additional language or from minority ethnic background is well above the national average. From starting points which are typically low, the children make good or better progress and by the time they leave the school they are performing very well. There are 10 teachers in the school (including the headteacher), six of whom are Catholic and three with, or working towards, the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. SS Peter and Paul's works very closely with other schools in Bolton Catholic Schools Education Partnership (BOSCEP). The school is an Investor in People and has the International Schools Award.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS OUTSTANDING

SS Peter and Paul is an outstanding Catholic school. It is led exceptionally well by the headteacher who brings a clear vision to the school. She works relentlessly to ensure that the children receive a high quality of Catholic education. She is well supported by a strong, cohesive staff team who share her vision for the school. Governors play a critical role in maintaining the successes the school enjoys. Together they create an exceptionally warm Christian ethos in which the children feel loved, respected, safe and well cared for. They enjoy school immensely as shown in their happy, smiling faces. The quality of teaching in religious education (RE) is always at least good and very frequently outstanding. Standards are high with the children making strong progress from their starting points. The curriculum is rich and well planned, and the children learn effectively in all areas, particularly RE. Prayer and worship is at the core of the day to day life of the school. The children respond very positively to the range of experiences and celebrations they take part in. They are mature in their outlook, showing dignity and respect, and they see the value of quiet reflection and contemplative prayer. The capable GIFT team and the school council play a significant contribution to the faith dimension of the school. This is a highly inclusive school, reaching out to all members of its community. The mission statement –'Growing in faith together and holding God's hand, we dream, believe, achieve' is at the heart of this Christian community and all aspects of school life are touched by the Gospel values inherent in the words of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Relationships are exceptionally strong at all levels and the environment of the school reflects the centrality of the school's Christian mission. As a result the welcome given to children and families, parishioners and the broader community is deeply appreciated and the sense of belonging is profound. There are excellent links with the parishes and a solid partnership with parents. The children engage with the school's values fully. Hence, their behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary. Justifiably, they are proud of their school, they flourish in it, and are very well supported in their journey in faith. They understand how they can use the gifts they have from God to make the world a better place, and for this reason, they strive to be as good as they can be in all they do. As a result of systematic school improvement planning, effective monitoring and the dedication and commitment of the staff team, the school is going from strength to strength and has successfully addressed the areas for development in the last inspection.

KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher with her clear vision for improvement, the dedicated staff team, including the committed deputy headteacher, who, with drive and dedication, make this a highly effective Catholic school.
- The exceptionally positive relationships which exist, bringing to life the mission of the school, in Christian love and compassion.
- The children's exemplary behaviour and attitudes, who with confidence, kindness, politeness and aspiration, make this school a special place to be.

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

The headteacher, ably supported by her deputy headteacher, provides aspirational leadership for the school. She has a clear vision for the school and a strong sense of purpose. Together, they lead RE exceptionally well, building on the successes achieved in recent years. They have created a strong, cohesive staff team and their determination to develop and enhance the catholic education of the children is evident throughout the school. The staff team benefit from a highly effective governing body who support and challenge the school well. Central to the success of the school is the mission statement which has been revised since the last inspection. It has been systematically reviewed and has a high sense of ownership from all groups in the school. This means that the Catholic life of the school is exceptionally strong, with Gospel values underpinning the school's unique identity. A significant strength of the school is the sense of 'family and love', which all members of the community value deeply. Consequently, the quality of support given to all the children and, in particular, the vulnerable and needy, is extensive. The school has a comprehensive School Strategic Development Plan. School self-evaluation systems are robust and rigorous. The school knows itself well and energetically works towards accurate school improvement. The leadership of the school is relentless in its drive for improvement and has expectations of everyone in the school. One child commented 'we are expected to be the best we can be – in every way'. Religious education is included in this and developed well. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is strong in all age ranges and the holistic approach to teaching and learning underpins the good progress the children make. SS Peter and Paul's is particularly effective in the support and development of staff and pupils in their response to the rich diversity of the cultural, faith and denominational background of the children and families. They have created a harmonious community in which all children thrive and succeed. The school is outward looking and works well in collaboration with other schools, particularly the Catholic schools in Bolton.

THE QUALITY OF THE WORD IS OUTSTANDING

The mission statement of SS Peter and Paul's has been reviewed in recent years and now defines the school's unique identity. The deep sense of ownership of the mission statement is felt across the whole school community and permeates all aspects of school life. Through regular links with, and exploration of Sacred Scripture, the mission statement is brought to life with a strong relevance to Gospel values, with the Word of God at the centre. The school is keen to explore ways in which the vibrancy of the mission statement can be more overtly celebrated on a day to day basis. Standards in religious education are high, as they are in other curriculum areas. The school meets its requirements to provide 10% of curriculum time religious education. Religious education is well resourced and remains a priority for the school. Some outstanding lessons were seen. The quality of teaching observed was always at least good, with many examples of outstanding elements.

The children talk with enthusiasm about their education and they feel that they achieve well and make very good progress. Parents also share this view. Inspectors agree, as evidenced through the scrutiny of children's work, analysis of data, the attitudes to learning and the way the children talk about the rich learning experiences they enjoy in religious education and other curriculum areas. They have the opportunity to develop the skills of philosophical enquiry, as detailed in the 'big questions' class books. Assessment systems are well established in the school, supporting the children's progress in their learning. The school uses this information to inform next steps in learning and school priorities for development. They are looking to explore how the children can have greater opportunity to respond to the feedback and marking from their teachers, to enhance progress further and to show that their learning has moved on. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children is a clear strength. The children present themselves as well-rounded articulate young people. They fully understand their responsibility to bring goodness to their world, local and nationally. As a result of this, behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary. The children talk with confidence about the impact they can make, and more so, how they can influence others. This is rooted in their very good understanding of Sacred Scripture and its relevance to their lives.

THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING

SS Peter and Paul's provides a comprehensive welcome to all, rooted in love, respect and dignity of the individual. Parents spoke with sincere gratitude about the welcome they received when they first arrived at the school and

how quickly they became part of the school family. Indeed, some of their experiences demonstrate that this is a school which makes an extraordinary effort to ensure that families are well supported when they join the school community. One parent commented 'the school has warm relationships and a deep sense of care. Knowing that they are always there for you is amazing'. This dimension of the school has been extremely significant to the successful integration to many families, particularly those in vulnerable and challenging circumstances. The school's population is diverse drawing from a wide range of international, cultural and faith and denominational backgrounds. SS Peter and Paul's celebrate this. As one child said 'we may be of different faiths, but we grow in faith together'. The sense of belonging to the school community is tangible and parents see the school as an extension of their families. The school's open door policy is valued and parents feel welcome to approach the school, even if they feel their issue is relatively small. This sense of welcome extends to the governors as well, who feel actively involved in school life and are encouraged in every way to do this. Pupils play a central part in the welcome the school provides. They are confident and proud of their school and respond to visitors with an impressive level of maturity and eloquence. The welcome the school gives is rooted in the day to day witness given to Jesus Christ, with Gospel values brought to life through genuine mission and ministry. Consequently, everyone feels part of the school family, fully valued and supported, and respected for who they are.

THE QUALITY OF WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING

The provision of welfare across the school community is of the highest order. Relationships are exceptionally well developed and there is a deep sense of care and love between pupils and staff. Governors, too, value this enormously. The rich diversity of the school is taken as an opportunity to fully appreciate the individuality and uniqueness of each person and this brings about a real sense of togetherness. Safeguarding procedures are well established and effective in keeping the children safe and happy. Parents were keen to express the view that their children love to come to school and feel very well cared for. One parent said 'the children enjoy their holidays, but only the short ones, as they are desperate to get back to school'. The provision for pupils with special needs and disabilities is strong. A wide range of provision and strategies are in place to meet the broad spectrum of need in the school. This includes a highly effective welcome to families, systematic family support, quality provision for children with emotional, behavioural and mental health issues and the availability of support through Rainbows/Sunbeams group sessions and Whizzy Wizard (who listens to children's concerns and worries).

The school follows a comprehensive programme for sex and relationships education and appropriate policies are in place. This helps the children in their understanding of human relationships in the Catholic context and prepares them well for their future lives. Pupil voice is valued in the school. The children feel listened to. They talk impressively about how their views have been acted upon and they have a real sense of ownership of the improvements the school has made. The capable GIFT team and school council give testimony to this. Governors, staff and pupils have worked extremely hard to create a safe, attractive and vibrant environment which reflects the Catholic life at its centre. In line with the high quality of welfare within the school, in turn, the children look outward to support others in the broader community to afford them the compassion and consideration they need.

THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

SS Peter and Paul is a vibrant worshipping community. The prayer life of the school is well developed and varied. It is important to the children and they value this aspect of the day to day school life enormously. The experiences of prayer are broad including whole school assemblies, class worship, Masses, contemplative prayer and the children's own prayers and reflections. The children approach worship with reverence, respect and enthusiasm. The Amamus room provides a central point for the children and staff to find a quiet moment, and from there the GIFT team are proactive in their leading of prayer and worship. Sacred Scripture is extensively used to promote deeper thought in prayer and the words of Jesus Christ find a relevance to the lives of the children. A whole school assembly was well structured and led by the children. Assemblies include singing, drama, thought provoking questions, formal prayers and school prayers. A period of collective worship observed in a lower Key Stage 2 class was profoundly moving. All the children were fully engaged in a wide range of prayerful activities including song, the creation of their own personal prayers (which some shared openly), contemplation and meditation, and the creation of beautiful petitions for others. The creative approach to worship in the school gives the children a rich experience of prayer and this is fully inclusive to all, regardless of the background of the pupils. The children spoke with enthusiasm about their experiences of retreat and visits to the Schoenstatt shrine. Parents, governors and parishioners are invited to participate in many of the school's celebrations, in line with the school's rich welcome

and inclusive culture. These are broad and varied and reflect the liturgical calendar. The school has used its funds wisely to create a bright, attractive environment which reflects the centrality of prayer and worship in school life. Projects such as the Amamus room will provide a powerful resource for the children for years to come. SS Peter and Paul provide greatly valued support to the parishes of St Edmund's and St Patrick's with the Sacramental Programme. The parish priests, Father Haugh and Father MacNamara (retired) regularly visit the school and are instrumental in developing and deepening the faith and understanding of the children. As a result, the children express their warm fondness of them.

THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS OUTSTANDING

SS Peter and Paul's brings to life the values of Jesus Christ through the Gospel in a profound way. The mission statement underpins school life and in particular, the high quality of relationships that exist throughout the school. The mission statement is reinforced by 'statements to live by'. The school is built on a deep sense of care, respect, dignity and compassion. The sense of ownership and pride of being part of this Catholic community is clearly evident by all who are involved in the school regardless of their cultural or faith background. The children talk about their responsibility to be good people and how they can achieve this in school, at home and in the broader community. One child said 'we know that little things add up and can make a big difference'. The school supports a wide range of activities and good work and many of these are rooted in the wishes and decisions of the children. Such examples include CAFOD, the Emmaus project, Mary's meals, The Destitution project, Macmillan coffee morning, Jeans for Genes, and so on. The school website is informative and reflects the Catholic mission of the school. The school's physical environment is bright and well displayed with evidence throughout of the importance of the faith dimension of the school. The Amamus room, the design and decoration of which involved the children's ideas, provides a lasting central focal point for quiet prayer and reflection. It is a base too for the impressive GIFT team who are so instrumental in enhancing the school's Christian ethos. The school curriculum is broad and balanced with religious education at the core, providing a strong foundation for the children's learning. Teamwork is a strong feature of the school, particularly with the staff, who collectively respond to their ministry and mission with vigour and enjoyment. Rightly so, governors are proud of all the adults who work in the school and what they provide for the wonderful children. As a result, the school fully recognises God at the heart of all they do and gives outstanding witness to the church's mission in education.

AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

- To develop a greater level of opportunity for the children to respond to the feedback and marking of their teachers in order to enhance the progress they are making in their learning.
- To explore a wider range of opportunities to celebrate the vibrant school's mission statement in action.
- To further develop the school's religious education curriculum through staff training to achieve greater knowledge and understanding of the 'Come and See' programme.

Date: 29th January 2017

Dear Pupils

Thank you for the welcome you gave us on our visit to your school. It was a privilege for us to spend the day at SS Peter and Paul's and to see what is so special about your school. Your school is an outstanding Catholic primary school which excels in every way. Your behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary. You are polite, well-mannered and enthusiastic about your learning. We were very impressed about the range of things that you do to make the world a better place to be in and you should be proud of the impact you make on the local community in which you live.

You have a school which has excellent leadership with a headteacher who has a determination to give you the best quality Catholic education as possible. The staff team share this with her and as a result you achieve well and make good progress. They do this by expecting everyone to live by school's the mission statement and this means that you have a school where relationships are exceptionally strong. You told us that you feel happy, safe and well cared for. Your parents agree with you and they too are very proud of the school. We thoroughly enjoyed your assembly and we can see how the prayer life of the school is very important to you. You are thoughtful, reverent and have a mature approach to your growing in Faith. We could see very clearly that the Gospel message of Jesus is alive in your school.

We have asked your teachers to think about ways in which you can celebrate your school's mission statement a bit more openly with you. Also we have suggested that they give you a greater chance to respond in your books to the feedback they give you about your learning. They agree and are looking forward very much to working with you on this.

You have every reason to be proud of your school and the efforts that you have made to make it the outstanding place it is to learn in.

Yours sincerely,

Damian Harrison
Des Burns
(Section 48 Inspectors)

Summary Report to Parents

On the 23rd January 2017 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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