

# DIOCESE OF MIDDLESBROUGH

Inspection of Religious Education  
Collective Worship  
and  
The Catholic Life of the School



**School:** St Peter's Catholic Voluntary Academy

**Address:** Normanby Road,  
Southbank  
Middlesbrough  
TS6 6SP

**URN:** 140751

**Headteacher:** Mrs Pamela Hanrahan

**Chair:** Mrs Barbara Hewitt

**Date:** 28 - 29<sup>th</sup> April 2015

**Inspectors:** Mr Paul Welford / Mr Paul Martin

**Date & Grade of Last Inspection:** July 2010 Grade 2

**Overall Grade for this Inspection: Outstanding Grade 1**

## INTRODUCTION

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

The report of the inspection is produced for the Bishop of Middlesbrough (Code of Canon Law 804 and 806) and for the governors of the school. The Inspection reviews, evaluates and plans further improvements in the school's witness to the Catholic faith and Curriculum Religious Education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation. The Inspection schedule follows criteria set by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers.

### What Inspection Grades mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding Catholic school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a Catholic school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Requires Improvement	These features, though of adequate quality, require improvement to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate Catholic school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils.

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Peter's Catholic Voluntary Academy is a smaller than average , 11 – 16 mixed V.A. Academy primarily serving the Teesside communities of South Bank, Eston and Grangetown. The school gained academy status in April 2014 following the rescinding of a notice to close the former St Peter's Catholic College. The school is now part of St Oswald's Learning Trust working in partnership with 3 local Catholic primary schools. Pupils come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds but the majority from deprived wards and the school deprivation indicator is well above average. The percentage pupils known to be eligible for free schools meals is 55.8% and well above average compared to schools nationally. The percentage of pupils from minority groups and those whose first language is not English are both well below average. The percentages of pupils categorised as SEN school action, SEN School action plus or with a statement of Special Educational Need are each well above the most recent national averages. In 2014 there were 11 pupils with a statement of Special Educational Need and 2 Looked After Children (LAC). KS2 prior attainment is lower than national and significantly lower for some year groups. At 94.1%, overall attendance in 2014 was below the national average of 94.9%. Most pupils come from Catholic primary schools and the percentage of pupils baptised as Catholics is 73% with a further 20% of pupils coming from other Christian denominations or world faiths.

**Pupil Catchment:**

Number of pupils on roll: 455

Planned Admission Number of Pupils: 105

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: 73%

Percentage of pupils from other Christian Denominations: 16%

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: 4%

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: 7%

Percentage of pupils with special needs: 38%

**Teaching Staff:**

Full-time Teachers: 30

Part-time Teachers: 9

Percentage of Catholic Teachers: 33%

**Support Staff:**

Full-time Classroom Support Staff: 9

Part-time Classroom Support Staff: 8

Percentage of Catholic Classroom Support Staff: 39%

**Secondary School R.E. Dept. Staffing:**

Number of Full-time R.E. Teachers: 3

Number of Part-time R.E. Teachers: 1

Percentage of Catholic R.E. Teachers: 75%

Percentage of R.E. teachers with CCRS: 0%

**Percentage of learning time given to R.E:**

Key Stage 3 10%, Key Stage 4 10%, Key Stage 5 N/A

**Parishes served by the School:**

St Andrew's, Teesville;

St Anne's, Grangetown;

St Peter's, South Bank.

# 1. OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

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## MAIN FINDINGS

St Peter's is an outstanding school. Witness to Catholic Life and tradition permeate the whole school and Catholic ethos is clearly evident in the relationships between all stakeholders. Pupils are proud of their school and readily involve themselves in the many opportunities for supporting others through work, prayer and example.

Standards in RE have improved year on year for the past 3 years and projected achievement for 2015 indicates further improvement. The progress of disadvantaged pupils in RE is equal to and in some cases exceeds that of their peers.

Leaders and managers at all levels are highly effective in managing and developing the Catholic life of the school including provision for religious education.

The school self-evaluation accurately positions the school on its journey and clearly sets out its strengths and areas for development.

### What the school needs to do to improve further:

- Further increase the prominence of the Catholic life of school/collective worship within the School Improvement Plan and also making this more explicit through, for example, the Mission Statement;
- Implement effective strategies to increase the percentage of A\*/A grades in GCSE RE;
- Further develop the already high quality planning to ensure all lessons move with appropriate pace and challenge.

## 2. OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS

### How good outcomes are for pupils, taking into account variations between groups

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school</li> </ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education</li> </ul>	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How well do pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship</li> </ul>	1

#### The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school

Pupils understand value and respect the long Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the parish communities and the newly formed St Oswald's Learning Trust. Pupils involve themselves in a range of extra-curricular activities which support others less fortunate than themselves. This includes outreach work in the community and within local churches. Some examples of this include substantial support for CAFOD, supporting a local hospice, regular visits to a local care home, collecting for local food banks and participation in a 'sleep out' event organised by Teesside Philanthropic Society to raise awareness and money to support families facing homelessness. A parishioner commented that pupils are always willing to come forward and help in any way they can in parish events and other community projects, for example, the Catholic Holiday Fellowship.

Pupils take full advantage of the many opportunities initiated by either themselves or the school for involvement in activities with a religious character. These include a range of seasonal and themed activities surrounding collective worship making use of imaginative and creative resources. E.g. in tutorials observed, pupils participated in collective worship centred on the post Easter theme of 'death is just the beginning' using the analogy of a caterpillar which were presented an actual pupae to be released by all tutor groups later when they hatched.

As well as the wider community, pupils consistently contribute to the common good in their own school. Through the School Council and the recently formed Faith in Action Group, they have lead groups through which activities with a religious nature can be planned and executed. In particular, the school's Faith in Action Group, which was instigated in September 2014 and is part of a Diocesan pilot, is having a significant impact in developing pupils' independence and their ability to reflect on the needs of others and how these can be met, for example organisation of a pupil initiated sing-along event for later this year. The RE department provides substantial support, guidance and advice to these groups in the same way it ensures all religious activities, religious teaching and acts of worship are carefully co-ordinated throughout the school.

#### How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious education

For the past 3 years there has been successive improvement in standards for RE. In 2014 the percentage of pupils attaining grades A\* - C, at 73% exceeded the national the figure. However, attainment for grades A\*/A for that year were significantly below national figure and the RE department appropriately recognises that improving outcomes for the more able is a key priority and this aspect is a component of the current development plan. In 2014, 55% of pupils made expected progress in RE with 20% exceeding expected progress. Both these outcomes are higher than that for the other core subjects in 2014 and projections for RE

indicates substantial increases in outcomes for 2015. This steadily improving trend is true for all groups including SEN and those for whom pupil premium funding provides support. In 2014, in this latter group disadvantaged pupils made the same or better progress than their peers.

Through the schools well designed recording and tracking system, pupil's attainment and progress are monitored at half-termly intervals. The RE department carefully analyses this frequent data and is very adept at monitoring pupil's progress on an individual basis introducing interventions to support learning as necessary. This approach is applied effectively in KS3 where pupils enter RE with prior attainment below and sometimes significantly below national averages but make steady improvement through the key stage with progressive increases in the percentage of pupils on or above target year on year.

Pupil survey results and comment from pupils show that the overwhelming majority enjoy their religious education and have strong and positive relationships with their teachers. This is evident in RE lessons where pupils concentrate very well, are rarely off task and participate in the various activities with enthusiasm.

### **How well do pupils respond to and participate in the schools collective worship**

Acts of collective worship, be they are formal celebrations, assemblies, tutor group time or other occasions, engage pupils' well. Pupils take part fully in prayers and liturgies and do so with confidence, including those who are not Catholic. This is either through planning and presentation or by reflective response. Pupils deliver and participate readily in issues which impact upon their Catholic belief and how they should respond, e.g. observed house assemblies which profiled the importance of human rights. In this act of collective worship, pupils both presented and responded to deeply important issues with maturity and respect.

Pupils are skilful, appropriate to their age, in writing their own prayers and intercessions during tutor time. They enjoy the "Spiritual Day" each week where they have an opportunity to plan and prepare their own liturgies as well as learning about themes in the Church's year. Older pupils support their younger tutor group members in developing skill and confidence in liturgical preparations.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. The same positive behaviour is seen during acts of collective worship with many pupils volunteering to lead prayers, doing so with increasing confidence and skill; this being well supported by a range of staff as well as senior pupils. Pupils are clearly at ease when praying with others and make use of the various opportunities available formally and informally through the day. The school has a large chapel, centrally situated which is used frequently by pupils and staff on an individual or group basis. Examples of pupil work are always displayed in the chapel area. Teachers and other staff provide a clear role model to pupils through use of the chapel for informal early morning prayers.

### 3. PROVISION

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#### How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

• The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education	2
• The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning	1
• The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	1
• The quality of provision for the Catholic life of the school	1

#### The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education

Well planned and creative approaches to teaching promote successful learning in RE. The RE department frequently meet to plan and share approaches to teaching and use of resources. As a result there is a consistency of presentation shared among teaching staff which ensures the curriculum is comprehensively delivered. Careful standardisation includes both internal checks for correct interpretation of levels and grades as well as external validation through regular attendance at diocesan RE meetings.

Nearly all teaching is effective in ensuring that pupils are enthusiastic, consistently interested in their learning and make effective progress. Creative use of resources and high pupil participation were a feature of the most effective lessons. As a result, in most lessons, pupils are keen to learn, engage well with the learning materials and respond well to challenge. Pupils' learning is enhanced by the range of learning styles used to enthuse and interest them. However, in a small minority of teaching there was need to further develop the already high quality planning to ensure the lesson moves with appropriate pace and challenge particularly for the more able who progress rapidly through some activities

Marking of pupil work and effectiveness of both written and oral feedback is of a high quality. Pupils clearly take a pride in their work and all work scrutinized demonstrated consistently high quality presentation. Achievement and effort are celebrated and pupils know their current and projected grades/levels and frequent targeted assessments ensure they know how well they are progressing to reaching these targets.

#### The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning

The curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference with just in excess of 10% curriculum time devoted to RE in each year group. The curriculum and other activities are responsive and relevant to pupils needs, include appropriate study of other world religions and is suitably differentiated to ensure all pupils are fully engaged in the learning whatever their prior attainment. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic and highly motivated learners engaging well with innovative and creative approaches to teaching.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities to improve their spiritual, moral and vocational development. For example, the whole school RE curriculum is significantly enriched by the Spiritual Day programme - a wide ranging programme of spiritual activities and development tailored to specific themes related to the liturgical year which is followed by all pupils in tutor groups as well as assemblies and other activities. The RE curriculum is further enriched through the impact of visiting speakers, the growing confidence and independence of the Faith in Action Group and a well constructed Personal Social, Health

and Economic Education (PSHEE) programme; all of these make an outstanding contribution to pupils holistic development

### **The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school**

High quality collective worship opportunities are many and varied and they are at the core of daily school life. The wide range of prayer opportunities are planned very effectively and permeate daily life throughout the school

The RE department in conjunction with senior and pastoral leaders ensure a comprehensive and well co-ordinated programme is in place. A consistency of approach by all school staff is addressed through a centralised training programme delivered to all staff by the RE department. The RE department also provide a well constructed set of resources which provide excellent support for all staff especially those less familiar with Catholic practice and tradition. As a result, staff are skilled in planning collective worship and pupils in their turn are effectively led in developing their skills with respect to planning and leading collective worship. Senior and pastoral leaders regularly monitor and evaluate collective worship to ensure high quality is consistently maintained across the school.

### **The quality of provision for the Catholic life of the school**

Resources provided through the RE/Chaplaincy team and the overtly Catholic nature of the overall learning environment ensures that all stakeholders, as well as visitors to the school, are immediately aware that the school is a caring and supportive family underpinned by clearly practised Catholic values. This could be further enhanced by making this aspect of provision more prominent in both the School Development Plan and through display of the school Mission Statement.

Evidence gathered from parental surveys shows the very large majority are very positively about the Catholic life of the school and the manner in which Catholic beliefs and values are threaded through all aspects of school life. Staff survey result also emphasize the way a positive Catholic ethos flows through all school life. For example one survey comment states: *'The Catholic ethos is so clearly embedded in every aspect of the school – you can't just see it you can feel it'*.

Parents and parishioners talk very positively about the school's Catholic mission and in particular how every pupil is supported in their overall development. Parents appreciate the many quality opportunities provided by the school to support their children's spiritual development and see the school as a very caring community.

Excellent relationships have been nurtured between school and local parishes, where mutual support provides further opportunities for pupils to develop spiritual and morally.

Positive personal and social relationships are clearly seen in pupil's day to day interactions. This feature is an appropriate reflection of similar relationships clearly evident among school teachers and other staff who clearly promote and develop the unique nature of each child through their work and witness. This is also very evident in the schools Herlingshaw Unit which provides daily support for vulnerable pupils whatever their level of need delivering carefully tailored programmes to address individual requirements. These range from programmes for pupils who require short daily respite to those which address more complex needs.

Many pupils talk freely about how the school has helped them in a range of ways. Pupils described how they had developed spiritually as a result of the school's extended curriculum as well as provision for collective worship. A pupil commented that *"Every pupil here is cared for, no matter what their background or ability - no one is overlooked at St Peter's"*.



## 4. LEADERS, MANAGERS AND GOVERNORS

### How effective leaders, managers and governors are in developing the Catholic Life of the school

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How well leaders, managers and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school, including collective worship, and plan improvement to outcomes for pupils</li> </ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How well leaders, managers and governors monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils</li> </ul>	1

### How well leaders, managers and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school, including collective worship, and plan improvement to outcomes for pupils

The schools leaders, managers and governors are unequivocally committed to their work and witness, ensuring that the Catholic Mission of the school is their fundamental priority together with the spiritual and moral development of pupils. They ensure that the provision of the Catholic life of the school permeates every aspect of school life on a daily basis. Leaders and managers are excellent role models providing leadership and guidance at all levels.

Leaders, managers and governors effectively monitor and evaluate provision for the Catholic life of the school and collective worship. Leaders and managers have clearly defined monitoring structures and policies in place which enable them to self-evaluate accurately and are rigorous in ensuring that plans are well developed to drive continuous improvement in the current academic year and beyond. For example, as well as monitoring collective worship in assembly time, the school ensures collective worship in day to day tutorial time is well planned for and carefully monitored to ensure consistency across the school. This monitoring is very effectively carried out by the pastoral leaders and head of RE.

Leaders ensure that parents know what is going on at school and how their children are progressing through regular communication, as well as information on the school's web site. The school seeks regular feedback from parents following all parent evenings. The views of parents, pupils and staff are important to the school and frequent questionnaires ensure that leaders are aware of any concerns or where improvements can be made.

All new staff to the school are provided with induction training with respect to working in a Catholic school. All staff are confident they can call on leaders and managers for support when necessary in ensuring, for example, that they have appropriate resources to facilitate quality collective worship.

### How well leaders, managers and governors monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils

Leaders, managers and governors effectively monitor and evaluate provision for each aspect of Religious Education. This is evident through clear and frequent monitoring records and a well-constructed and relevant Departmental Development Plan for RE which dovetails effectively with whole school priorities set out in the School Development Plan; each with areas for improvement clearly defined and timelines recording progress to completion.

A coherent and robust tracking system ensures that the school has frequent and accurate evidence to provide various stakeholders with up to date progress for the various pupil groups. There is a well established target setting and review process associated with the regular periodic assessment points so that leaders and managers can quickly identify any issues affecting pupil progress introducing appropriate interventions as necessary.

The governing body is enthusiastic and passionate about further developing and sustaining the Catholic Life of the school and provides strong support through the programme of governor meetings and the involvement of a link governor. The governing body carries out its statutory and canonical responsibilities with skill and commitment and is fully involved in decision making to steer strategic direction and in evaluation of school policies. They are very well informed of the very large majority of provision for each of the key religious aspects of their remit, i.e. Religious Education, Catholic life and collective worship. However, this aspect of leadership could be further enhanced by ensuring governors are more actively involved in monitoring and evaluating more formally, the provision for daily collective worship.

For all aspects of religious education, Catholic life and collective worship, as well as formal monitoring, the day to day business and strategic direction are communicated and discussed through frequent and well focused leadership team briefings and morning staff briefings. This is complemented by the very important informal information sharing and updating by school staff with each other throughout the day.