



Diocese of Arundel and Brighton

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **St Peter's Catholic Primary School**

Chapmans Lane, East Grinstead, RH19 1JB

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DfES Number: 126060

Headteacher: Mrs M Claffey

Chair of Governors: Mr S Parr

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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

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Date of inspection: 18 January 2011  
Date of previous inspection: 07 October 2007

Lead Inspector: Mrs A Ireland  
Associate Inspector: Mrs B Dowswell

## **Description of School**

St Peter's is a voluntary aided, one form entry school. It is situated in the Crawley deanery in the diocese of Arundel and Brighton. It is maintained by West Sussex LA. The principal parishes that the school serves are Our Lady and St Peter's, East Grinstead and St Bernard's, Lingfield. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 77%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to religious education is 10% in both Key Stages. The school takes pupils from 4-11 years. The number on roll is 209. The attainment of pupils on entry to school is broadly average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. An average proportion of pupils has special educational needs. The great majority of pupils comes from white British or White backgrounds. There are a few pupils for whom English is a second language, although this number is growing.

### **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school**

This is a good and improving school with outstanding features such as the leadership and management of its Catholic life and its commitment to community cohesion. Its mission statement with its emphasis on the uniqueness and dignity of the individual, the commitment to Gospel values and the importance given to prayer and worship, drive the work of the school and contribute to its strong Catholic ethos. Under the guidance of the recently appointed headteacher and with support of the new senior management team and governors, the school continues to develop. Relationships within the school community are excellent and contribute to its success. Pupils are making good progress. More able pupils are now being appropriately challenged and as a result, standards are rising. Assessment procedures have improved. Assessment needs to continue to be developed in order to raise attainment still further. Relationships with parents and the parish are very good and contribute to the welcoming and inclusive community which is St Peter's.

**Grade 2**

### **Improvement since the last inspection**

The issues which were identified in the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. Assessment has significantly developed and is now making a positive impact on attainment. Work is accurately measured against national levels of attainment and the results carefully monitored to ensure that all pupils are making progress. The implementation of assessment for learning, more accurate teacher assessment, the introduction of a more creative curriculum and a focus on differentiated tasks, mean that all pupils, including the most able, are now being effectively challenged. Appropriate training and support has meant that teachers are more confident in delivering religious education. Regular monitoring of teaching and learning is in

place and the headteacher, senior management team and governors now have a shared understanding of the importance of good quality religious education.

**Grade 2**

### **The capacity of the school community to improve and develop**

The school has continued to build on the strengths identified in the previous inspection. The headteacher, who was appointed in 2009 is committed to maintaining and developing the school's strong Catholic ethos and raising attainment across the school. In this she is well supported by the newly appointed deputy, the new senior management team and the governors. Staff have high expectations of their pupils. There is a strong culture of collaboration, staff support and collegiality across the school which impacts very positively on the standard of education pupils receive. The school is in the process of developing very good systems of assessment and evaluation with clear plans for the way forward. It is therefore very well placed to improve further.

**Grade 1**

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Continue to develop assessment procedures including the tracking of individual pupils' work and target setting in order to raise attainment even further.
- Explore ways of enhancing the teaching of other faiths through a programme of visits and visitors.

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## **The Catholic Life of the School**

### **Leadership and Management**

The mission statement with its 'golden rule' 'to treat other people as you would like to be treated' drives the work of the school. All members of the community, including pupils, clearly understand its importance and strive to live according to the Gospel values enshrined in the statement. All help to support the strong Catholic ethos evident in the excellent relationships and the many high quality artefacts and displays around the school, such as the display featuring a recent visit to the church. The headteacher is an excellent leader with a clear vision of Catholic education and a determination to drive up standards. In her calm and affirming way she empowers staff to fulfil their potential and has created a strong cohesive team, strengthened by her senior management team and the newly appointed deputy. Governors, many of whom are newly appointed, are effectively fulfilling their role in relation to the school's Catholic foundation. Led by their knowledgeable chair, governors are rapidly developing their role as critical friend and are in the process of creating effective structures to ensure that they are fully informed about standards and attainment. The care given to pupils is outstanding. It is summed up by one pupil who said, 'we are surrounded by people who help us.' The pupils themselves are delightful, friendly, outgoing and caring. Their behaviour is outstanding. Parents are recognised as the first educators of their children and the school seeks to support them wherever possible. They are invited to school and class Masses. They are kept well informed about their children's progress and the general life of the school through e-mails, newsletters and a comprehensive website. Their views are regularly sought and their help and support is welcomed by the school. The positive attitudes that parents have towards the school

are summed up by a parent who wrote, 'we could not be happier with the Catholic educational environment our children are taught in. They are treated with kindness, love and respect'. The relationship with the parish is very good. For example, parishioners were recently invited to a special service and asked to contribute to the school's mosaic in celebration of the school's one hundred and twenty fifth anniversary. Support for the parish based preparations for the sacraments is excellent. The Parish priest regularly visits and is regarded by the school as a valued member of the school family, partaking fully in its life, work and worship. The school is currently exploring ways of developing parish links further by extending the role of the deacon within the life of the school and finding ways in which parishioners might become more actively involved. The school has strong links with other schools in the deanery, including the Catholic secondary school, participating in events such as the annual Mass held for Year 6 pupils.

## **Grade 1**

### **The Prayer Life of the School**

Mindful of the fact that pupils come into school with a variety of religious experiences including those from other Christian traditions, other faith backgrounds or little understanding of Church, the school seeks to ensure that worship in school is as inclusive as possible. There are good arrangements for pupils to participate in acts of worship through a full and varied programme of Masses, Key Stage and whole school assemblies and special liturgies such as services of Reconciliation. These acts of worship contribute greatly to the spiritual and moral development of pupils and help them to become more liturgically aware. Parents and parishioners are invited to the school Masses which are celebrated throughout the year. Key Stage 2 pupils are fully involved in preparing and participating in Class Masses. The assembly observed on the theme of the 'Word of God' was very relevant to the faith life of the pupils. The lovely focal area helped to create a very prayerful atmosphere. There was lively interaction between the head teacher and pupils who were attentive and prayerful throughout. Pupils leading the prayers spoke clearly and with confidence. The assembly was enhanced by music provided by pupils who played the flute and the recorder. The assembly concluded with a challenge to 'spot the saints' within the school community. The school is currently developing assessment procedures for monitoring collective worship in order to continue to improve provision. Prayer is at the heart of the school community and is a strength. Pupils know the traditional prayers of the Church and from the earliest years are encouraged to compose their own prayers which are then used for class prayer and liturgies. Prayer and reflection are regularly built into religious education lessons. For example, pupils in a Year 1 class gathered in a circle at the end of the lesson to listen to the words spoken by Simeon and to say a prayer chosen from their own class prayer book. The school has well established voluntary prayer groups for pupils and parents. Parents who are unable to attend are invited to have their intentions included in prayer sessions. Focal areas in classes and in the school's public areas are very attractive, relevant and well used. The lectionary laid open at the relevant page is beautifully enthroned in the entrance area, reminds everyone entering the school of the importance of the Word of God.

## **Grade 2**

### **How effectively does the school promote community cohesion?**

The school believes that 'each member of the school community is a unique, dignified, and special individual, a valued and important member of the school'. This is what drives the school and helps create a warm, happy and welcoming environment, where the emotional, spiritual, moral, academic and social needs of pupils are met. Through the Friends of St Peter's, parents and friends organise functions which help to bind the community together and in the process,

raise considerable amounts of money which are spent on improving facilities and opportunities for pupils. The support given to all pupils, including those with special needs, is excellent enabling all to participate in the life of the school. Strong links with families and outside agencies enable the most vulnerable of pupils to achieve their potential. The learning mentor is proactive in helping pupils to overcome barriers to learning. The rainbow programme which is managed by the school supports pupils who are bereaved and parents, staff and pupils spoke warmly of the support they received from the school community during times of difficulty or loss. The headteacher personally responds to pupils who are worried or distressed who place a note in the 'Have a word' box. The diversity of God's people is celebrated through the curriculum and the general life of the school and is evident in the displays such as the ones on Hinduism and Chinese culture. The school is currently developing links with another Catholic school and a school in France in order to give pupils the opportunity of finding out more about children with very different life experiences and cultures. A variety of clubs and extra-curricular activities, such as dance, origami and story-telling clubs, encourage pupils to develop their gifts and talents. Pupils are given very good opportunities to exercise responsibility and care for others in the school community in a variety of ways such as Play leaders and Buddies who support pupils at playtimes. The school council is actively involved in improving the life of the school. For example, they were involved in the purchase of a log cabin for the playground. The school is committed to protecting the environment and has been awarded an international eco school silver award. The eco committee works within the school and in partnership with other local schools to develop a greater awareness of pupils' responsibilities as stewards of creation. Pupils are encouraged to care for the needs of others less fortunate than themselves and support a wide range of charities both local and international. The school has very good links with the local community, for example, pupils were responsible for designing and creating a beautiful garden in a local park and as part of the East Grinstead group of schools work with other schools on a range of group projects.

**Grade 1**

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## **Religious Education**

### **Achievement and Standards in Religious Education**

Pupils' attainment on entering the school is broadly average. They make good and steady progress as they move up through the school, so that by the time they reach the end of Key Stage 2, they are at least matching national expectations with a good number exceeding them. This is generally in line with attainment in English. There is no significant variation between boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress because their needs are well met by the provision of appropriate activities and effective adult support. Pupils from the earliest years are developing a very good religious vocabulary which helps their understanding. They have a very good knowledge of scripture and older pupils use Bible references with ease. For example, pupils in Year 4 were able to find Bible references associated with Baptism and Confirmation and to decide which piece of scripture related to which sacrament. Pupils' knowledge of Church teaching, including teaching on the Mass and the sacraments is very good. More able pupils achieve very well because they are given challenging activities which help them to develop a wide range of higher level thinking skills. Pupils have excellent oral skills which enable them to take part in class and paired discussion. They use a wide range of skills gained in other curriculum areas to help them to progress. This was demonstrated in the Reception class where groups of pupils were engaged in painting, collage work, handwriting and used the '2create a story' ICT programme in order to compile a

class missal. 'I can' statements enable pupils to assess their own work and to move their learning on. This is good practice. Pupils have very positive attitudes to religious education and their teachers. One pupil spoke about 'good teachers who understand and help us to learn in all sorts of ways'. They tackle activities with enthusiasm and remain on task. Excellent listening skills and exemplary behaviour help to create a very good work environment where very little time is wasted. Because pupils are encouraged to decide on the best way to record their work, books include a wide variety of presentation including ICT, leaflets, spider grams and empathetic writing. Work is generally of a very high standard. Books are exceptionally well presented and pupils justifiably take a real pride in their work.

**Grade 2**

## **Teaching and learning in Religious Education**

Teaching is never less than satisfactory with most lessons being very good with outstanding elements. Very good teaching is marked by high teacher expectation, very good questioning techniques which both challenge and deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding of their faith, and the provision of interesting activities which are well matched to pupils' ability and encourage independent learning. Teachers take every opportunity to relate what they are teaching to the pupils' own lives and experiences thereby contributing to their spiritual and moral development. For example, pupils in Year 5 were asked to think about the scripture readings related to the rosary. In groups they looked up various Bible references which related to individual mysteries. During the plenary session they were asked to reflect on how praying a particular mystery could help them in their lives. Teachers have excellent classroom management and the positive and affirming relationships which exist within the class enable pupils to enjoy their learning, develop self confidence and to a foster a determination to do well. Teaching assistants are very well prepared and well deployed and as a consequence, make a positive impact on teaching and learning. The team work which is evident between class teachers and teaching assistants is a strength. Since the previous inspection the school has worked hard to successfully implement good assessment procedures. Planning sheets identify success criteria and assessment strategies and work is assessed against national levels of attainment. Assessment for learning is in place and pupil self assessment using 'I can' statements is developing well. Staff moderate pupils' work together on a regular basis. This ensures accuracy of judgement and consistency across the school. The tracking of individual pupils' work is in place. The school plans to develop this area to enable them to quickly identify underachievement and target pupils appropriately. The school should continue to develop assessment procedures, including the tracking of individual pupil progress and target setting, in order to raise attainment still further. All teachers mark positively. Interactive marking is developing and in some classes there is evidence of pupils responding to teachers comments in order to progress. This good practice should extend across the school

**Grade 2**

## **Quality of the Curriculum**

The school fully meets the requirements of the Bishops to give 10% of curriculum time to religious education. Teachers use the 'Here I Am' programme very creatively in order to provide a curriculum which is interesting, challenging and clearly matched to ability. For example, pupils in Year 6 were asked to do research on the significance of hands in sacramental symbolism and then to record their findings in a variety of ways. The resulting work was of a very high standard. Teachers' planning is detailed and thorough. In some classes ability groups are clearly identified on medium term planning. This is helpful to the subject leader when monitoring provision and should be extended across the school. Resources, such as artefacts and sets of Bibles are of good quality and well used to support

learning. The teaching of other faiths is comprehensively taught and the school has a good collection of resources to support this aspect of the 'Here I Am' programme. Pupils with other faith traditions are encouraged to share their experiences and are happy to do so. The school should now explore the possibility of developing a programme of visitors and visits to places of worship in order to complement the learning done in class. Religious education is well linked to education for personal relationships. The sex education policy has recently been reviewed in line with diocesan guidelines and is firmly rooted in the teachings of the Church. There is a comprehensive policy to support religious education. When it is next reviewed, the section on assessment should be updated to reflect the school's current good practice.

**Grade 2**

### **Leadership and management of Religious Education**

Leadership and management of religious education are good. The subject leader is an effective and dedicated leader who works hard to ensure that religious education maintains a high profile throughout the school. Religious education is regularly monitored by the subject leader and head teacher as part of a rolling programme and includes class observations, key stage meetings, learning walks, and scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning and assessment. This ensures that high expectations remain and attainment continues to rise. The subject leader regularly liaises with the link governor who is the parish priest. He is actively involved in supporting the 'Here I Am' themes such as Baptism, Confirmation and local Church. Good support is given to staff by the subject leader through informal help and effective staff training. Teachers new to the 'Here I Am' programme are well inducted. Teachers are committed to delivering good quality religious education and know their subject well. Both the head teacher and the subject leader keep abreast with local and national initiatives through attendance at diocesan training sessions, including the working party on assessment, and deanery group meetings. The budget for religious education is allocated in accordance with the action plan and class resources are of very good quality. Both libraries contain a small selection of religious education books. These could be extended in order to support all aspects of the religious education curriculum. All members of the school community work hard to successfully create a stimulating, attractive and well cared for environment both internally and externally. The quality and care taken to the display pupils' work in classes and around the school is commendable.

**Grade 2**