



## SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the  
Archbishop of Southwark and Inspection of  
Denominational Education under Section 48  
of the Education Act 2005

**URN 102667**

**SS Peter and Paul Catholic School  
Cricket Green  
Mitcham  
CR4 4LA**

**Inspection date: 05<sup>th</sup> May 2017**

Chair of Governors:	Mrs Helen Arnold
Headteacher:	Mr David Hennessey
Inspectors:	Mr Stephen Beck Mr John Bonnici

### **EDUCATION COMMISSION**

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# SECTION 48

# Introduction

## Description of the school

SS Peter and Paul Catholic School is a voluntary aided school situated in the Merton Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is maintained by Merton Local Authority. The principal Parish the school serves is SS Peter and Paul with a number of pupils worshipping in other parishes including the Polish Church in Balham and the Portuguese Mass in Vauxhall. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 83%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to religious education is 10% in all key stages.

The school and Nursery take pupils from 3 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 467. The attainment of pupils entering school is below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is 15%. Around 17% of the pupils receive extra support in class. 30% of pupils live in areas of socio-economic deprivation. The proportion of pupils from homes where English is an additional language is above average at 41%. 33% of pupils are from white British heritage. A significant number of pupils are from Black African and Sri Lankan heritage. Pupil mobility is high at 15%.

## Key for inspection grades

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

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## Overall effectiveness of the school in providing Catholic Education

**GRADE  
2**

SS Peter and Paul is a good Catholic school where a warm and caring welcome is extended to all. Difference is celebrated and pupil aspirations are high. Pupils are provided with a broad experience of Collective Acts of Worship which ensures that their pastoral and spiritual needs are met.

The Headteacher has high expectations of staff and pupils. He knows the school well and has a clear vision for future improvement. Together with a dedicated staff he has created an ethos where everyone recognises the need to work together as a “family,” showing love and concern for all its members.

The school has been through a period of significant change since the previous inspection, including the reconstitution of the governing body and the creation of new committees and governor roles. The Chair of Governors is also the Religious Education link governor. The leadership structure in the school has also changed in that there is no longer a Deputy Headteacher but rather three Assistant Headteachers (Pastoral and Wellbeing, Teaching and Learning, Inclusion). A new parish priest at SS Peter and Paul began his tenure in January 2017. Throughout this period of change, all school leaders and governors have remained deeply committed to nurturing the Catholic life of the school.

They lead by example and promote spiritual and moral development through worship, the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. Consequently, pupils appreciate and understand the richness of the Church’s mission and its relevance to their lives. Leaders and governors know the school’s strengths and priorities for improvement and recognise the need for robust and systematic monitoring and evaluation processes to ensure that the pupils maximise their potential.

The regularly revised Mission Statement is brought alive through a linked set of aims, of which there are child friendly versions in each classroom. There is a sense of ownership of these by the whole school community. Pupils enjoy coming to school and the School Council expressed how proud they are of all the opportunities given to them. Pupils are friendly, polite and welcoming and their behaviour is exemplary. They work hard to achieve the high expectations of the adults who work with them and enjoyed every opportunity to share their work with the inspectors. The staff and pupils demonstrate a very high level of respect, care and service to others.

The leadership of Religious Education across the school is strong with a dedicated subject leader who works alongside the Headteacher and assistant Headteacher to ensure that the Catholic life of the school is at the forefront of the school’s work.

A high percentage of parental questionnaires were returned and were wholeheartedly positive about the school. One parent commented, “We are very pleased with the Catholic ethos within the school. My children are always talking about Jesus and religious events.” Another wrote “I feel the school has done its very best for the children. Ours have been very well looked after and their Religious Education is always at the forefront of the school.”

### **What steps need to be taken to improve further?**

Governors, Headteacher and staff should:

- Ensure that the teachers use ongoing assessment to inform planning so that all pupils are provided with necessary support and challenge.
- Develop opportunities within the Catholic cluster group, for peer to peer observations of identified good practice, to further improve standards and make lessons more active, thereby further increasing pupil enjoyment and achievement in Religious Education.
- Complete the current consultation regarding the introduction of 'Journey in Love' as the school's preferred Education for Personal Relationships programme and embed the teaching of this through a whole school cross curricular approach, including Religious Education.

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

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school is good. They work in a school characterised by its warm, welcoming atmosphere and clarity of vision for the future and ongoing improvement. There is a purposeful, well ordered working atmosphere in the school. Staff and pupil relationships are good and children are valued and appreciated with the development of the whole child being a priority.

The pupils demonstrate their awareness of the needs of others through the ways they serve the school community such as being members of the School Council or Prayer Leaders as well as participating in fundraising activities throughout the year. They are able to link why they raise money or items for others with what they learn in Religious Education lessons. This is evidenced through their support for a variety of local and international charities, such as a CD of Christmas Hymn Aid to the Church in Need the Love in a Box appeal and "Wear a Hat for Brain Cancer Day."

Pupils contribute well to the liturgical life of the school and this enriches their education. They act with reverence and respect during times of worship. With the guidance of their teachers and other adults, pupils, even the younger ones, often participate in the planning and leading of Collective Acts of Worship.

By the end of their time at SS Peter and Paul, most pupils have greatly benefitted from the Catholic life of the school, as they have been provided with opportunities to develop a knowledge and understanding of their faith while enhancing their spirituality through Religious Education lessons and the Catholic life of the school.

The school has developed strong and active links with the parish.

## **How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education**

Generally, the pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities with outcomes for pupils with additional or special needs also being good. Presently, pupils' attainment is not consistent across and between Key Stages. The inspectors confirm the school's assessment that attainment and progress in Key Stage 1 is better than in Key Stage 2. School leaders believe this is due, in part to the greater detail and analytical skills needed to attain the higher levels. The school has reviewed the current provision and staff are taking steps to ensure greater consistency of challenge in teaching, learning and pupil progress.

Moderation for formal assessment tasks shows a good understanding for the lower attainment levels and a developing understanding for higher levels of attainment. Analysis of assessments undertaken provides evidence of the pupils generally attaining an appropriate level for their age and stage of development in each key stage. The Religious Education leader has been proactive in organising school moderation between eight local Catholic schools. She shares the outcomes of these moderations through regular staff meetings giving teachers greater confidence in their assessment of pupils' learning.

Consideration could be given to conducting peer lesson observations across the cluster group where outstanding practice is identified.

Pupils are becoming increasingly more religiously literate. Their knowledge, understanding and skills are developing appropriate to their age and capacity. They are developing the skills that enable them to reflect spiritually, think ethically and theologically and are becoming more aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. Pupils' engagement in and enjoyment of their learning is good as shown by their interest, enthusiasm and excellent behaviour whether they are working independently or collaboratively. Pupils use talk partner strategies well, to reinforce learning and are anxious to learn and improve their knowledge, understanding and skills as they begin to develop into independent learners.

### **How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship**

The Catholic nature of the school is evident in many ways, such as the physical environment through displays, prayer focal areas and the prayer garden, a variety of Collective Acts of Worship as well as cross curricular links and educational visits.

Since the last inspection, under the guidance of the Religious Education leader, the level of pupil involvement in the liturgical life of the school has developed significantly and reflects the new expectations for this aspect.

Pupils show great reverence and respect during liturgies and Masses and are able to quietly reflect during prayerful activities. Their knowledge of the Church's liturgical year is very good. They are confident in reciting traditional prayers and know the correct responses, for example at the beginning and end of a Gospel reading. Pupils' knowledge of the Church's liturgical year helps them to create appropriate focal points for assemblies and other Acts of Worship. They are gaining confidence in preparing class liturgies and supporting adults in preparing for whole school Acts of Worship. The school is actively developing pupils' skills in this area to enable them to play an even more prominent role and work independently.

The school has an established team of Prayer Leaders. The pupils greatly value being appointed to this role and demonstrate leadership in a variety of ways, from helping to change liturgical cloths, updating displays and being good role models in leading 'Stations of the Cross', prayer clubs and other liturgical events. They are given the opportunity to share their work and ideas with other prayer leaders in the Deanery schools through Prayer Leader cluster meetings, celebratory picnics and Masses. At the beginning of their time as prayer leaders they receive a blessing from the parish priest during a Mass at SS Peter and Paul's church to help guide them in their work.

Pupils receive a regular copy of the "Wednesday Word" which parents confirmed they found very useful in helping them support the religious development of their children at home.

An excellent assembly was led by Year 3 pupils. It reflected the school's strong and well-developed emphasis on pupil led liturgy. It was a reverent and reflective assembly on the topic of the month of May being the month of Mary. Pupils from Early Years to Year 6 were attentive, engaged and active as appropriate throughout the celebration. This assembly was well planned and resourced with pupils speaking out with confidence. A message in

the assembly about when to say “yes” was well demonstrated and provided good ongoing reflection for the pupils. Links to Mary’s role as a mother were highlighted.

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

The school's leaders and governors promote the Catholic Life of the school exceptionally well. The Catholic mission of the school is at the heart of all school life and pupils' spiritual and moral development is central to the school's vision. The deep commitment, drive and energy of the Headteacher is an inspiration to the whole school community.

Excellent opportunities are provided for the staff and pupils to play an active part in the Catholic Life and Mission of the school through prayer, charitable outreach and raising awareness of those in need. The quality of Collective Worship is a priority for the school. An up to date policy is in place, which shows regular monitoring opportunities and appropriate timescales. A range of opportunities for Spiritual and Moral development are provided for all staff and pupils, including through Collective Worship.

Self-evaluation at all levels within the school is a coherent reflection of rigorous monitoring, thorough analysis and self-challenge. This results in targeted and coherent planning and actions to ensure continuous improvement in all aspects of the Catholic Life of the school. High quality of staff induction and training have ensured an awareness, understanding and commitment to the very strong Catholic ethos. Parents commented very positively on the family atmosphere that permeates the school community. The governing body is outward looking being well served by having a dedicated Religious Education link governor and a Pastoral Committee.

Leadership at all levels respects difference, values diversity and ensures equal opportunities for all. Prayer, worship and the liturgical life of the school reflect and respect the religious diversity within the school. There are positive relationships at every level leading to a welcoming, happy and caring learning environment for staff and pupils.

Parents are consulted regularly and are involved in the life of the school. Governors are well informed and discharge their responsibilities in an appropriate manner. They are effectively helping to shape the direction of the school. They are committed to the Catholic Life of the school with a number of staff and governors being actively involved in both the parish and the school community.

The Religious Education leader is an excellent role model. She is a driving force behind the development of her subject ensuring, that curriculum time is utilised efficiently and effectively. Her own view, that she has developed from a subject manager to a subject leader exemplifies a strength of character and confidence that sees Religious Education at the forefront of all the school does. She is able to articulate the position of Religious Education in the school and her subject file and documentation are of a very high order. She leads the subject effectively, in part due to her regular monitoring of teaching, book scrutinies, planning and assessment and through feedback to staff.

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

The school's self-evaluation document provides evidence of monitoring, analysis and self-challenge. It is a comprehensive document which guides the school well. The previous Section 48 Inspection suggested the school review its planning, assessment and moderation of Religious Education and review the subject leaders monitoring role. The school has made significant progress in these areas and the subject leader continues to ensure that Religious Education is at the heart of the curriculum.

The plans for improvement in the provision for Religious Education are included and prioritised in the School Improvement Plan. Regular monitoring exercises, such as through the scrutiny of Religious Education books and moderation of assessment with other schools, have helped to inform leaders of the necessary actions needed to move the school forward. The resulting action has been decisive and successful.

The approach to teaching Religious Education, shared with all staff, is a highly effective model of how to make the subject distinctive. This is a blueprint which has guided teachers in planning for Religious Education lessons which enable pupils to understand the special nature of the subject. It has also focussed strongly on giving pupils a thorough experience of, and access to, scripture as a key factor in the development of understanding. High-quality support, pastoral care and guidance, often led by effective teaching assistants, is having a positive impact on standards, building pupils' confidence in their learning and bolstering self-esteem, particularly where pupils are lacking in confidence.

Assessment is being used effectively and consistently to monitor achievement. Diocesan requirements and developments have been disseminated by the Headteacher and subject leader, so that teachers have become increasingly confident in this area.

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

Teaching seen during the inspection was never less than good. Several lessons had outstanding elements. For the most part, teachers' subject knowledge is strong. Lessons are planned with imagination so as to best engage pupils' interest, and to respond to their needs. School observation records show there is evidence of an increasing incidence of outstanding teaching.

Where teaching was at its best, there was a careful balance between exposition by the teacher and active participation by the pupils in their learning. In these instances, expectations were always high, pupils were challenged to develop their religious vocabulary and to explain their ideas in detail. Teachers' questioning was highly effective and extended pupils' learning. These teachers make good use of the school's marking policy to inform future planning and ensure all pupils make progress and enjoy their lessons.

Pupils are schooled effectively in the use of scripture to show understanding of key religious concepts and themes. Scripture readings are matched effectively to issues relevant to pupils in the present day so that they can see how the Gospel can influence their own lives. Good and imaginative use is generally made of a range of high quality resources, such as interactive whiteboards, video, bibles and religious artefacts. Learning is augmented by attractive learning environments with informative and thoughtful displays relevant to a current topic, drawing pupils into the key vocabulary and concepts. Pupil engagement is high as evidenced by a parent who commented, "This is a great school. My son comes home and prays every night. He is making good progress in school with his Religious Education studies."

One example of outstanding practice was an Early Years lesson where pupils' excitement was built up with a 'letter from Jesus' and effectively channelled by the teacher into a circle time activity involving role play. The teacher drew on the pupils' home languages and personal experiences for a reflective prayer time. Her classroom management was excellent. A second example was in an upper junior class where the teacher used a selection activity to help pupils to understand that we are all on a 'journey through life' before focussing on Mother Teresa's journey. Good vocabulary development took place throughout the lesson. A third example was in a lesson where biblical artwork was used to challenge pupils.

Where teaching was less than outstanding, teachers did not make the best use of marking and assessments in planning. In these lessons pupils were sometimes passive learners and opportunities to extend learning were missed. A book scrutiny confirmed that in some classes teachers are not making best use of assessment tools and pupils are not sufficiently challenged and engaged in their own learning.

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

The school meets the 10% requirement of the Bishops' Conference and uses the 'Come and See' scheme. Evidence from the lessons observed by inspectors, scrutiny of pupils' books across the school and discussions with pupils gave a clear insight into how enthusiastically the pupils engaged with the subject.

Key strengths of provision are the manner in which teachers plan lessons creatively, set high expectations and inspire pupils to relate learning to their own lives. Teachers use questioning skills effectively to challenge thinking.

Teachers pay due attention to keywords when introducing topics. Consequently, pupils are confident when using appropriate religious vocabulary. In most lessons, clear learning objectives are set and they are planned to accommodate wide-ranging abilities; however, differentiation is mainly by outcome. To raise all the elements of lessons to the highest levels, teachers need to address the key components. In setting challenge, there is a good process of 'Hot, Spicy and Mild' tasks reflecting levels of difficulty. To make this more effective these need to be more targeted and provide increased opportunities for self-directed learning.

The school has adopted the 'Journey in Love' scheme for the teaching of Relationship and Sex Education (RSE). The school should give priority to completing the current consultation regarding the introduction of the scheme as the school's preferred programme and embed the teaching of this through a whole school, cross-curricular approach, including Religious Education.

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

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding. It reflects the Catholic character of the school and takes into account the variety of faith backgrounds among the pupils. Collective Worship has a high profile and is central to the life of the school. It plays a key part in meeting the spiritual needs of the pupils. Opportunities are provided to enable active participation of the whole school community. Pupils are enabled to pray formally and informally using a variety of prayer methods and styles.

The school provides opportunities for staff to develop their skills in planning, leading and evaluating Collective Worship. In turn, they are providing the necessary resources and opportunities to help the pupils to develop the skills necessary to plan, lead and participate in Collective Worship and to evaluate it effectively.

Opportunities are made for parents, carers and the local and wider faith communities to participate in a variety of celebrations of the 'Come and See' programme and the Church's liturgical year.

In the assembly seen by inspectors, pupils entered the hall with reverence and sat in the round. This made good use of the central focal point that had been set up. The assembly on the topic of May as the month of Mary was led and under the direction of Year 3 pupils which served to hold the whole school's attention. The celebration was very well attended by parents.