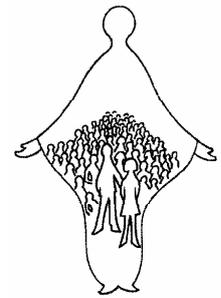


**SALFORD DIOCESE
INSPECTION REPORT**



**ST. PETER'S
ROMAN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL
MANCHESTER**

Inspection date November 2006

Reporting Inspector Mr. W. Ryan

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

Type of School	Catholic Secondary
Age range of pupils	11-16
Number on roll	896
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of Governors	Fr. S. Ansbro
Headteacher	Mr. J. McNerney
Head of Religious Education	Mrs. M. White
Date of previous inspection	April 2001

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades 1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3 = Satisfactory 4 = Inadequate
Overall effectiveness of the school	2	
Leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school	1	
The quality of Collective Worship	2	
Achievement and standards in Religious Education	2	
The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education	2	
The quality of the Religious Education curriculum	2	
Leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education	2	
<i>The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements</i>		

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Peter's is an 11-16 voluntary aided Roman Catholic co-educational comprehensive school. It provides education for the pupils living in the contributory parishes of Sacred Heart, St. Anne, St Brigid, St. Augustine, St. Edward, St. Francis, St. Joseph, St. Mary, St. Richard and St. Willibrord. St. Peter's serves central and east Manchester and moved into a new building three and a half years ago. Contextual information on socio-economic data indicates significant levels of deprivation in the school environment. Key wards serving the school are Longsight, Gorton, Beswick and Clayton. The indicative admission number is 180 and there are currently 896 learners on roll of whom 85 % are baptised Roman Catholics. 53 % of learners are eligible for free school meals. There are 229 learners identified as having special educational needs and of these 24 have a statutory statement of special educational need. The number of Catholic teachers in the school is 45 and this represents 73 % of the total staff.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Peter's is a good Catholic school with some outstanding features. School documentation has its starting point in the Mission and Gospel values are at the heart of its service, not only to the whole school community, but also to the wider world beyond its gates. The school Mission is referred to constantly and its spirit is shared by those who work and learn here. Leadership of the school is outstanding with valued input from the governing body whose members, enthusiastically led by the chair, play an active part in promoting high standards academically, spiritually and pastorally. The headteacher is committed to raising standards and enriching the lives of the learners. He pursues these goals with great enthusiasm and energy. In this he is supported by an experienced senior management team which shares his determination to drive the school forward. Prayer and worship play an important part in school life. The emphasis is on encouraging personal commitment through which staff and learners play their parts in giving witness to the Faith. Learners pray collectively at assemblies and in class and play an active part in whole school liturgies. Led by the chaplaincy group they also have the opportunity to pray privately using the school chapel and they put their faith into practice through the numerous charities which the school supports. The inclusive nature of the school fosters a spirit of positive encouragement and reward and supports this with an excellent programme of pastoral care. Links with associated primary schools are excellent and arrangements are in place to ensure that the school and sixth form colleges are mutually supportive. Learners behave well in school and they value the rewards they receive for good behaviour and achievement. This has proved particularly successful in encouraging good attendance. Learners like their school. They are proud of its multi-cultural nature and its achievements. They feel secure, value the work of the teachers and feel that they have ownership of the school through the school council which plays a prominent part in expressing their views. Standards and achievement in Religious Education are good and the Religious Education department continues to enrich the lives of the pupils. It also plays a major role in promoting the liturgical life of the whole community. Members of the department are well qualified and there is a good mixture of experience and youth. Funding for Religious Education is in line with that of other major departments and time allocation at Key Stage 3 is 10% while at Key Stage 4 it rises to 12%.

Improvement since the last inspection

Since the last inspection class based acts of prayer and worship have been supported by the Religious Education department and monitored by senior management. Numerous strategies have been introduced to improve the quality of learning and standards in curriculum Religious Education.

Capacity to improve

The school's capacity to evaluate itself and improve is good. School leadership continues to be committed to raising achievement and enriching the lives of the learners. The Religious Education department, encouraged by recent success in raising achievement at Key Stage 3, is seeking to extend that success into Key Stage 4.

What the school should do to improve further

- Appoint a link Governor for the Religious Education Department.
- Maintain the progress made in raising achievement at Key Stage 3 and continue to develop strategies to improve achievement at Key Stage 4.
- Extend the provision and use of information communication technology facilities within the Religious Education department.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The school and the inspector agree that the leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are outstanding. The governing body benefits from the expertise of a number of its members who have experience in Catholic education and the committee structure ensures that all governors play a significant part in monitoring the daily life of the school. The chair leads with great dedication and commitment. Nominated governors work as links to key areas of the school such as numeracy and literacy and members of the clergy play a major role in enriching the spiritual lives of the learners. The Religious Education department would benefit from the nomination of a link governor to improve communication and further enhance the standing of the department. The headteacher provides inspired leadership. His commitment to, and enthusiasm for, the school Mission is commendable and with the enthusiastic support of his senior management team he determinedly pursues a range of initiatives to enrich the lives of the learners. The school has made significant progress since the last inspection. Attendance has reached record levels. Pupil care is outstanding and transition arrangements are comprehensive. The role of the form tutor is central to pupil care and the school council provides learners with a voice in the school. The school tracking system keeps parents and guardians well informed of learners' progress. Catholic related in-service training for staff is very good with at least one full day per year allocated to this area. The link with the Manchester Catholic Education Partnership ensures some sharing of training and expertise with other Catholic high schools and the partner sixth form colleges.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The inspector agrees with the school's judgement that the quality of collective worship is good. A programme rich in variety of opportunities for prayer and worship is planned annually by the school. Holy Days are celebrated in school with voluntary, well attended Masses which are celebrated by local clergy who give generously of their time. Assemblies are planned to parallel the Church liturgical year. All the major seasons and events such as Advent, Christmas, Lent, Holy Week and the school feast of St. Peter and St Paul are celebrated appropriately along with major national, international and charity events. Prayer is built around year assemblies and form time. The assembly observed during the inspection was well prepared and made good use of audio-visual support. Learners were attentive and respectful, playing their part through readings and public prayer. At form time prayer is led by the form tutor and the Religious Education department, under the guidance of the assistant headteacher with responsibility in this area, provides support material such as prayer cards. The school's commitment to developing prayer and worship has resulted in the creation of a chapel and the search for a chaplain. The former is a base for the school chaplaincy group which is a voluntary body led by the assistant headteacher and supported by other staff but composed mainly of learners who lead prayer meetings at break and lunchtime. The chapel is also an important resource at the disposal of the Religious Education department. The school contributes to, and has links with, a variety of charities thereby enabling the learners to express their faith in a practical way.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The school considers achievement and standards in Religious Education to be good and the inspector concurs. Since the last inspection a number of measures have been put in place to raise achievement. At Key Stage 3 the syllabus has been adapted to better suit the needs of the learners with their progress being tracked and reported to parents. Monitoring both by senior management and within the department has been extended. Consequently achievement has improved markedly at this key stage. Assessment takes place termly and learners are able to identify the levels at which they are working. They set themselves targets to maintain progress. Learners at Key Stage 4 are working on a new and more appropriate syllabus to which they are responding well with some improvement in achievement. However this still falls short of average progress school-wide and initiatives introduced by the department to raise achievement at this key stage should be maintained and extended. Learners' work at both key stages is good and they clearly take pride in it. Lessons are planned using the school-wide format and quality checking and support through lesson observation maintains the drive to raise standards and achievement. Learners work well and enjoy their work. They behave well in class and the school ethos of respect can be seen in the classroom and in other areas of school life. Relationships are good in the school and reward and encouragement are well used to motivate learners. Form and year tutors play a significant part in raising standards and achievement.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The school and the inspector agree that the quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good. The department is currently well staffed, benefiting from a good mixture of experience and youth. All members of the department are well qualified. In the lessons observed during inspection teaching was good with a variety of styles evident and with some good use of information communication technology. An increase in provision and more extensive use of this would benefit learners and improve teaching. In a few lessons teaching was outstanding. Teaching was pitched at the ability of the learners and the work was generally challenging. Regular assessments ensure that parents, learners and teachers are kept informed of progress and targets. Most learners responded well to questioning and were eager to share information and opinions. They behaved well and showed respect for their teachers and for the subject. The school does much to encourage good relationships and these play a part in promoting good learning. The quality of written work is good and exercise books are marked well, particularly at Key Stage 4. Schemes of work are in place and have been adapted to the needs of the learners and lessons are planned using the school-wide format. The department is suited in well appointed rooms with a range of excellent facilities, including interactive whiteboards, projectors, and a variety of audio-visual equipment.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The inspector agrees with the school that the quality of the Religious Education curriculum is good with learners in Religious Education receiving 10% of curriculum time in Key Stage 3 and 12 % in Key Stage 4. The school scheme of work for Key Stage 3 is in place. It broadly follows the diocesan guidelines and has been adapted to meet the needs of the learners. It is well supported with appropriate texts and teaching materials and incorporates the use of some information communication technology. Following a review of the Key Stage 4 syllabus the school has taken on a new examination board syllabus. Having raised achievement at Key Stage 3 the department is now concentrating on Key Stage 4. Some improvement in examination results has occurred and a number of strategies have been put in place to continue to raise achievement. These efforts should be encouraged and further developed. Monitoring both within the department and by senior management is leading to rising standards and raising learners' expectations. The curriculum is further enriched by opportunities for personal development through the chaplaincy group and through the school's collective prayer life.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The inspector supports the school's judgement that leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education are good. The Religious Education department is led by an experienced and dedicated curriculum leader. The work of the department is supported and monitored by senior management who in turn report to the governing body. Schemes of work are in place and the department evaluates the performance of its members through lesson observation and regular assessment of learners' work. Communication, aided by the suited location of the departmental rooms, is good and members meet weekly to review curriculum, assessment and target setting. The department is improving and is working to ensure that success at Key Stage 3 will lead to further improvement at Key Stage 4. The department makes a considerable contribution to enriching the lives of the learners through its contributions to liturgies, assemblies and prayer. Its members support and work with the assistant headteacher with responsibility for liturgy in the school. Members of the department are also members of the chaplaincy group and as such lead by example. The department is housed in suited rooms with good facilities and benefits from funding that is on a par with other major curriculum areas with additional funding available to promote the school's liturgical life.