

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. PETER'S ROMAN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL Kirkmanshulme Lane Manchester M12 4WB.

Inspection date January 2010

Reporting Inspector Mr. W. Ryan

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

Type of School	Catholic Secondary
URN	131880
Age range of pupils	11-16
Number on roll	858
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of Governors	Rev. Fr. S. Ansbro
Headteacher	Mr. J. McNerney
Head of Religious Education	Mrs. M. White
Date of previous inspection	November 2006

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades 1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3 = Satisfactory 4 = Inadequate
Overall effectiveness of the school	1	
Leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school	1	
The quality of Collective Worship	2	
Achievement and standards in Religious Education	1	
The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education	2	
The quality of the Religious Education curriculum	1	
Leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education	1	
<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 and is a Specialist College for Business and Enterprise. It provides education for the pupils living in the contributory parishes of Sacred Heart, St. Anne (Ancoats), St. Anne (Fairfield), St. Augustine, St. Brigid, St. Edward, St. Francis, St. Joseph, St. Mary, St. Richard, St. Vincent and St. Willibrord. 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 858 learners on roll of whom 686 are baptised Roman Catholics. 54% of learners are eligible for free school meals. There are 269 learners identified as having special educational needs and of these 30 have a statutory statement of special educational need. The number of Catholic teachers in the school is 48 and this represents 70% of the total staff.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St. Peter's is an outstanding Catholic school. The school Mission Statement "St. Peter's R.C. High School is a community founded on mutual love and care for the individual in which the Faith of the Church underpins all our activities", is the focal point for its many and varied initiatives to enrich the lives of its learners. Every child matters here and the Catholic ethos of the school supports and develops this mantra. Governors, under the leadership of a dedicated and caring chair fulfil with skill and enthusiasm their challenge to maintain the quality and momentum of improvement in the school. The headteacher, ably assisted by an experienced and committed leadership team provides dynamic leadership to a school community which shares his vision. Prayer and worship is good and acquisition of the services of *Just Youth* to enrich the spiritual lives of the community is beginning to bear fruit. Pastoral care is outstanding, universally recognised by parents and pupils alike. This is an inclusive and diverse community where each and all are valued and where the school is proactive in meeting the needs of its members. Pupils behave well while excellent relationships reflect the impact the Mission Statement has on daily life. Achievement in Religious Education continues to improve, thanks to sound leadership, a well qualified and dedicated R.E. department and sound assessment procedures. The department's influence is felt not only in the delivery of curriculum Religious and Personal, Health and Social Education but also through its support for the spiritual life of the community.

Improvement since the last inspection

Following the last Section 48 inspection the chair has undertaken the role of link governor for Religious Education. The head of department communicates regularly with him and reports to the full governing body through the headteacher. Discussions initiated to introduce *Just Youth* to the school were led by a priest member of the governing body and the Governors are evaluating its impact. Achievement at both key stages has not only been maintained but has improved dramatically. The Religious Education department has risen in status and the vast majority of learners leave school with a qualification in Religious Education. A number of students are now taking up the subject in Further Education. All classrooms now enjoy the use of excellent information communications technology and during the inspection there was ample evidence of its use to good effect in supporting good teaching and learning.

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation is excellent. Governors, leadership and managers are actively engaged in rigorously monitoring and evaluating initiatives while supporting progress and achievement. The school is well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Add a policy on prayer and worship to its documentation.
- Develop further the impact of *Just Youth* on the community and evaluate its work.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are judged to be outstanding by the school and the inspector. St. Peter's continues to benefit from the services of an experienced and enthusiastic governing body under the leadership of a caring and dedicated chair. Challenge and "striving for excellence" as stated in the school Mission Statement drive the community forward and here governors play a major role in monitoring and evaluating initiatives and progress. School documentation reflects the importance all stakeholders attribute to its Catholic foundation. When reviewed it would be enriched by the addition of a policy on prayer and worship. The headteacher provides inspired and dynamic leadership. Supported by an experienced senior leadership team which shares his conviction on the value of Catholic education, he leads a community where Christian principles and the importance of each individual are paramount. Under this leadership the school continues to improve and since the last inspection progress has been remarkable. In-service training on aspects of Catholic education and on delivery of the school's Mission and aims is generous and reflects their importance to the governors and teaching staff alike. Learners benefit not only from markedly improved achievement but also from pastoral care which encourages learning and ensures that they feel valued and part of a caring community. Transition arrangements are excellent and the school, through the leadership of the headteacher, plays a significant role in developing the work of the Manchester Catholic Education Partnership. The pupils extend the school's links with the wider community through their support for various local and worldwide charities.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Provision for collective worship is judged by the school to be excellent. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that it is good. Prayer and worship are part of the everyday experience for learners and staff at St. Peter's. Each year group meets for an assembly during the school week. These are led by members of the senior leadership team and are supported by members of the Religious Education department. Presentation is interesting and enhanced by the use of information technology. Learners are attentive and pray with respect. Form tutors lead prayers at form time for those not involved in assemblies. Extensive information technology is available in all classrooms and although some materials are placed on the school server for use at form time it would seem that there is room to develop the use of this facility. Major liturgies following the Church year are planned by the chaplaincy group and materials for form time are provided by the Religious Education department at important seasons of the year, Advent/Christmas, Lent/ Easter and for all Holy Days. Clergy members of the governing body make a valued contribution in planning and delivering this programme. The school benefits from the use of a chapel adjacent to the Religious Education department and available for their use. A particularly impressive meeting of a prayer group was observed during the inspection. The chapel is a valuable asset and has become the focal point for the work of *Just Youth* whose services have been acquired recently to fulfil the role of chaplaincy and whose impact is beginning to be felt in the school. The senior leadership team should continue to develop and monitor this work. All learners are included and involved in collective worship and no learner is withdrawn.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are considered by the school to be good. Taken in the school context, the inspector considers these to be outstanding. Progress made since the last inspection is excellent. A number of factors have contributed to this. Overall achievement school wide at Key Stage 3 has improved, particularly through the initiative to develop literacy, while a reduction in class sizes enables better learning. The diocesan syllabus has been developed to better suit the needs of the learners while the change of syllabus provider at Key Stage 4, leading to the introduction of material more suited to the needs of the pupils, has resulted in greatly improved achievement. Members of the Religious Education department have played their part in planning, monitoring and developing resources to ensure sound delivery of the subject. Weekly department meetings enable good communication and in service training. Classroom observations within the department and by the senior leadership team have borne fruit as has the appointment of the chair as link governor. Learners work well and the mutual respect shown by and for teachers leads to very good working relationships in the classroom. Lessons learnt in the classroom are put into practice notably through the generosity of the community in recognising the needs of others and in giving generously to the school's many good causes.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The inspector agrees that the quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good. The department leads a faculty which includes among other disciplines, Personal, Health and Social Education which is delivered largely by Religious Education staff. Members of the department are well qualified and offer a variety of strengths which enable them to engage the learners effectively. Lessons are well planned and are delivered at a pace suited to the ability of the students. A variety of teaching strategies was observed during the inspection meeting with some success. All members of the department were comfortable with the use of information technology to enhance teaching while resources employed in lessons were well prepared and conducive to good learning. Regular assessment takes place informing pupils, parents and teachers of progress and enabling appropriate setting of targets. Learners are aware of their progress, know the level at which they are working and know what is required to make further progress. Marking is diagnostic and encourages good learning. Encouragement and praise are used to good effect and play a part in motivating the pupils. They, for their part, respond well. They work hard and show respect for their teachers and other adults. Behaviour in all lessons observed was at least good. Parents are well informed not only about student progress but also through the school website and its monthly newsletter of matters of interest to the community as a whole.

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The inspector agrees with the school that the Religious Education curriculum is outstanding. Learners at Key Stage 3 follow a scheme of work which has been developed in line with the Salford Diocese guidelines and are adapted to meet their needs. Well prepared resources support delivery of the work and suitable assessment takes place to evaluate progress. Pupils respond well to the content and find it relevant to their lives. The guidelines incorporate a study of other world religions and opportunities are used in lessons to promote understanding and respect for other faiths and cultures. Key Stage 4 learners now follow a course of Religious Studies which is better suited to their needs. The introduction of the short course in Religious Studies has also proved beneficial. The pupils have responded well resulting in improved achievement and motivation. The introduction of topics such as Social Harmony and The Human Community has further increased the relevance of the subject. It is pleasing to note the increase in the number of learners who now take up Religious Studies in further education. Through the intervention of *Just Youth* groups of pupils are benefiting from religious experiences that enrich the curriculum and extend it beyond the classroom. Members of the Religious Education department play a significant part in related areas of school life such as charity work and leading the bid for Eco School status. The Religious Education department is allocated 10% of curriculum time in Key Stage 3 while this rises to 12% in Key Stage 4.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The school and the inspector agree that leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education is outstanding. The head of department leads a large faculty with skill and vision. Improvements since the last inspection suggest that this has played a significant part in raising achievement. Members of the faculty work co-operatively and are engaged in raising achievement further. The Religious Education department is well organised with support from the senior leadership team. Self evaluation procedures are in place and the head of department keeps the link governor informed and involved. Lessons are observed and teaching is evaluated at both middle and senior management levels. The curriculum is kept under constant review and communication between members of the department is excellent. Religious Education is housed in adjacent rooms which are well equipped with information technology facilities the extensive use of which was observed during the inspection. Members of the department have the use of a chapel adjacent to them. It is an excellent facility which could be developed further. The Religious Education department receives generous funding while additional finance is made available to employ the services of *Just Youth*.