

St Peter's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124315
Local authority	Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number	380857
Inspection dates	19–20 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Denise Shields

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	241
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	K Daley
Headteacher	Dianne Mason
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 14 lessons or part-lessons and these included the observation of 10 teachers. Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a range of documentation, including pupils' past and present work, assessment and tracking information, monitoring and evaluation records, and additional evidence of the support for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Inspectors also looked at whether the school meets statutory requirements with regard to safeguarding. A representative sample of questionnaires returned by pupils, staff and the 57 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were scrutinised.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Inspectors explored whether pupils' attainment is high enough in reading.
- The team considered the extent to which more-able pupils are challenged.
- Inspectors evaluated the rigour of arrangements to monitor and secure improvements in levels of attendance.
- The team evaluated the impact of the collaboration with a nearby primary school on securing improvements in provision and pupil outcomes.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, with the largest represented groups being Pakistani and Bangladeshi. The vast majority of pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. A much higher than average proportion of pupils are assessed as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. In all year groups, an exceptionally high proportion of pupils join or leave the school at times other than the start of the school year.

The school is part of a federation with a nearby Catholic primary school, with the headteacher providing leadership for both schools.

The school holds Healthy School status and has achieved the Activemark award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

St Peter's is an outstanding school. The inclusion of all pupils, whatever their background or particular need, is given very high priority and is central to the school's work. As a result, the school is an exceptionally harmonious community where pupils value each other's different traditions and beliefs. Expressing the views of many, a pupil said, 'Everyone is different, but it doesn't matter because everyone in our school is special.'

The curriculum is vibrant and the excellent range of activities beyond lessons is greatly enjoyed by pupils and adds depth and richness to their learning. High-quality care, guidance and support and outstanding arrangements to safeguard pupils ensure that many aspects of pupils' personal development are outstanding. As a result, from the nursery onwards, pupils feel extremely safe, happy and behave exceptionally well. They grow in confidence and self-esteem, develop excellent life skills and a genuine enjoyment of learning and are well-prepared for their next stage of education. Systems to welcome and support pupils who join the school throughout the year, and who are often at a very early stage of learning English, are excellent. Consequently, pupils settle swiftly, make new friends and are quickly engaged in learning. Attendance is average. Rigorous arrangements to monitor and promote attendance have resulted in a significant reduction in absenteeism.

Value for money is outstanding as outcomes are first class. When children start in the nursery their skills are exceptionally low compared to expectations for their age. They get a superb start to their education as their achievement is outstanding and this lays a very firm foundation for their future learning. The overall quality of teaching is outstanding. The work pupils are given is carefully tailored to their varied needs, including the more-able. The development of pupils' basic skills, particularly language, is a real strength. However, sometimes opportunities are missed to boost pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills even further. For example, pupils do not have enough chances to practise their numeracy skills across different subjects, and there is a lack of variety in the range of books they can read independently. Nevertheless, taking account of each individual pupil's need, ability, the point at which they joined the school and their various stages of learning English, progress for all groups is outstanding. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is average. This represents good achievement.

Leaders and managers are highly effective. This is a major factor in the success of the school. There is regular, close co-operation between the federated schools which has a very positive impact on many aspects of provision at St Peter's. This excellent partnership, and those with external agencies and the parish, help to raise pupils' aspirations and the quality of their learning. Self-evaluation is exemplary and links with and drives sharply-focused development planning. Since the previous inspection, almost every aspect of the school's work has improved and the areas identified for improvement have been tackled successfully. As a result, the school demonstrates an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills further by ensuring that:
 - pupils are provided with more opportunities to use their mathematical skills in a range of contexts
 - there are more chances for pupils to read independently from a range of exciting, quality books
 - there is a whole-school approach to teaching and improving pupils' handwriting skills.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

The large majority of pupils work enthusiastically with a partner or in groups and this is helping them to become confident and mature learners. Most try their best at all times, concentrate very well and are keen to succeed. Pupils really enjoy learning, especially when activities are practical or based on real-life experiences. Almost all say their lessons are fun and they learn a lot. Most pupils, even the very youngest, are keen to help and support each other. This has a positive impact on their excellent learning and progress. Pupils say that marking and particularly the oral feedback from their teachers help them to understand how well they are doing and how to improve their work.

Pupils, including those at an early stage of learning English, the more-able, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, often make impressive progress. This is because in all classes, teachers and teaching assistants are very adept at developing pupils' basic skills. However, there are not always enough opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills beyond their numeracy lessons or for them to read independently so that they can raise the level of these skills still further. A small minority of pupils struggle with correct letter formation and pencil control; this holds back their ability to write more rapidly. Nevertheless, by Year 6, taking account of their varied starting points when they join school, the achievement of all groups of pupils is good.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is outstanding. All pupils are keen to support new arrivals in their class. As one commented, 'Everyone needs at least one good friend'. Overwhelmingly, pupils help and encourage each other. They understand and accept the need for rules and enjoy the praise they receive from their teachers and other adults. As a consequence, their behaviour is outstanding.

This has a positive impact on their excellent learning and progress. Pupils have an impressive understanding how to live safe and healthy lifestyles. For example, older pupils explain clearly that an unhealthy diet can lead to obesity or diabetes.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

In almost all lessons, the interactive whiteboard is used very effectively to involve pupils and enhance their learning. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to work in pairs and small groups; this successfully promotes speaking, listening and co-operation. Almost all lessons are lively and adults use praise well to build pupils' confidence and esteem. In all classes, teaching assistants guide the learning of individuals or groups of pupils very effectively. When teachers use imaginative or visual resources this totally captures pupils' attention and there is a real 'buzz' in the classroom because learning is rapid. At its very best, skilful questioning engages pupils' interest and extends their knowledge and skills quickly.

The school has a precise knowledge of individual pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics and the progress they make from their varied entry points to the school. This information is used very well to identify those pupils who need extra help with their work or to provide extra challenge for the more-able. Teachers' planning also makes extremely effective use of high-quality day-to-day assessments of pupils' learning. This ensures that in all classes the needs and abilities of all groups are met and is a key reason why pupils' learning and progress is frequently rapid.

The curriculum is stimulating and very carefully organised to suit the learning and emotional needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are at an early stage of learning English. Role-play is used well in almost all classes; this has a positive impact on pupils' speaking and listening skills and develops their self-confidence very well. Opportunities to gain first-hand

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

experience, for example, through educational visits and visitors, are diverse and very effectively integrated with pupils' work; this has a significant impact on broadening their horizons. There is an excellent personal, social, emotional and health programme. This is a major factor in helping pupils to keep safe and stay healthy and in promoting their excellent life skills.

Relationships are extremely strong. Consequently, pupils have complete confidence that there is an adult to turn to if they are sad or troubled. Overwhelmingly, pupils say adults will always listen and try to help them. There is excellent help for individuals, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. This has led to impressive improvements in their attendance, learning, behaviour and self-esteem. The school works exceptionally hard to encourage parents and carers to ensure their children attend school regularly. This relentless focus has brought about steady improvement. Arrangements to help pupils settle into school life, move from year group to year group and then on to secondary school are excellent.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides inspirational and innovative leadership and management. She has an extraordinarily clear-sighted vision for the school. Senior and middle leaders and managers are extremely capable and very effective. As a result of the collaboration between the federated schools, both staff teams work together very successfully to secure improvement. Systems to monitor and evaluate the school's work and to track pupils' progress are extremely detailed and robust. Consequently, everyone has a very clear picture of the school's performance and what needs to be done to drive improvement and ensure pupils are able to make the most of their time at St Peter's. The governing body works closely with the school. Members provide effective support and are fully involved in shaping the future direction of the school. They monitor the quality of provision well. The school's procedures for safeguarding pupils are outstanding and all documentation is exemplary. A notable strength is the day-to-day arrangements for health, safety and security of the site, staff and pupils.

Provision for equality of opportunity is exceedingly good. Discrimination is not tolerated. Consequently the school is a friendly place in which to work and learn. The very many positive views expressed by staff, pupils and their parents and carers confirm this. Community cohesion has strengths in pupils' involvement in the immediate area and the wider global communities. Opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of national communities are increasing. The collaboration between the federated schools, immediate community and religious groups, as well as external

organisations, help to provide a greater range of experiences for pupils and support their learning and well-being exceptionally well.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage is led exceptionally well and teamwork is extremely strong. Notable strengths of the provision which significantly aid children's learning are:

- a very wide variety of purposeful activities that children can choose from both inside and outdoors
- the continuous use of the outdoor area whatever the weather
- the significant emphasis that all adults place on developing children's early language, communication and personal and social skills
- very detailed, regular assessment of children's achievements that is used very carefully to plan the next steps in children's learning
- the seamless transition into Year 1, because the curriculum is equally well-planned there.

Almost all children are at an early stage of learning English when they enter the nursery. Very effective induction arrangements and exceptionally good care ensure that children settle quickly and follow routines. Teaching is good and often outstanding so that children make rapid progress. Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, guidance and support are tailored very well to individual needs. As a result, children have trusting relationships with adults, play happily together, behave extremely well and enjoy learning immensely.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	1
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Inspectors received a below-average response to the inspection questionnaire. Overwhelmingly the parents and carers indicate a positive view about all aspects of the school's work. Inspection findings support these positive views. A few parents and carers consider that the school does not help their children to lead a healthy lifestyle and does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Through their extensive review of the school's records, observations, and discussions with pupils and staff, the inspectors found the school has excellent arrangements to promote pupils' healthy lifestyles and very effective procedures for managing pupils' behaviour.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Peter's Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 57 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 241 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	58	24	42	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	39	68	18	32	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	34	60	23	40	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	27	47	30	53	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	32	56	24	42	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	46	30	53	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	47	27	47	1	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well-prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	21	37	35	61	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	42	33	58	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	46	28	49	2	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	32	39	68	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	23	40	33	58	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	53	27	47	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and is consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add up exactly to 100. Sixth-form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school



21 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent, ST6 3HL

Thank you for all being so friendly and helpful with the inspection of your school. The inspectors enjoyed their two days with you and came to the judgement that your school is outstanding. These are some of the things with which we were really impressed.

- You all behave extremely well and are helpful and friendly. You all look after each other, especially when a new pupil joins your class.
- You all try really hard in your lessons and enjoy learning new things.
- We agree with all of you who told us that your teachers make lessons interesting and great fun and the work they give you is just right for you.
- You say you enjoy the activities, visits and visitors and that you like sharing these with the children from the other local school. We agree that the close work between the two schools benefits your learning.
- Your headteacher, other staff and governors know the school very well and they are excellent at finding ways to make your school even better.
- You told us that all the adults care for you tremendously well and this helps you to feel extremely safe and happy at school.
- Children get a 'flying start' to their education in the Nursery and Reception classes; they have many activities to choose from and learn lots of new things.
- Those of you who are learning to speak English have lots of good support and help and you told us how this helps you to understand your lessons.

By the end of Year 6 you reach average skills in reading, writing and mathematics. To help you to raise the level of these skills, we have asked your school to give you more chances to practise your mathematics in lots of different ways; to ensure you have lots of chances to read books on your own and to find ways to help you write more quickly. You can help too by continuing to try your very best in your lessons.

Thank you once again for making us so welcome, and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Denise Shields
Lead Inspector

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