



St Peter's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134928
Local Authority Gloucestershire
Inspection number 294223
Inspection dates 6–7 March 2007
Reporting inspector Paul Sadler

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Horton Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Gloucester
Age range of pupils	4–11		GL1 3PY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01452 524792
Number on roll (school)	505	Fax number	01452 524792
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Colm Robinson
		Headteacher	Hugh Bradley
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school opened in September 2005 following the amalgamation of infant and junior schools. This was its first inspection. The school mainly serves the Catholic communities of Gloucester and the surrounding area, although children of other faiths or none are welcomed. Some pupils travel a considerable distance to school.

The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is broadly average, as are the proportions from ethnic minority groups. The number who speak a language other than English at home has increased of late and is broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Much has been achieved since it opened in 2005. Children start school with broadly average skills and abilities. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, they attain above-average standards in national tests, especially in English, where standards are well above average. In the Reception year and in Years 1 and 2, they make satisfactory progress and in Years 3 to 6 they make very good progress. This represents good achievement. Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. They behave well and report that, although bullying still occurs, it is less widespread than in the past. Pupils' attendance is average. They know how to keep safe and healthy. Their adoption of a healthy lifestyle is satisfactory, although there is room for improvement in the healthiness of the meals provided and in opportunities for sport.

Teaching is good, especially in Years 3 to 6, where teachers have very high expectations of their pupils. They have a very good knowledge of how well pupils are doing, which enables them to set work that stretches them appropriately. Older pupils have a very good knowledge of what they need to do to improve their work. Teaching of pupils in the Reception year and in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and on some occasions is good. Good features evident in Years 3 to 6 are being introduced in Years 1 and 2 but are currently less well developed. The curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils are taught what is required and the material is adapted to meet their individual needs. There are shortcomings in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT), and for music. Pupils have limited opportunities to pursue additional activities outside the school day. Care, guidance and support are good. The academic guidance that older pupils receive is very good indeed. Pupils with learning difficulties or who are in the early stages of learning English get good quality support and hence achieve well.

Leadership and management are good. The excellent governors identified the need for change and have driven it through with determination and flair. They have received very good support from the local authority. Challenging targets are met. The governors have set a target for the school to achieve excellence by 2010. This is ambitious but attainable, given the progress made to date. Leaders and managers have rightly and successfully focused their work on raising standards and improving teaching. The school's evaluation of its work is satisfactory but there is a need to make it more rigorous in order to ensure that all aspects of the school's work are of consistently high quality. Senior leaders are effective but the quality of subject leadership is variable. One of the key achievements has been the development of a positive team spirit among all staff, hence the school is in a good position to make further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the curriculum, especially for ICT and music, and link subjects to make them relevant to pupils' lives. Increase the range of additional activities available to pupils.
- Through improved evaluation, identify and rectify inconsistencies in the school's provision, such as in the impact of marking and assessment on pupils' progress.

- Ensure that the food offered to pupils meets current nutritional guidelines.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter the school with broadly average skills and knowledge. Their communication skills are above average, although some have limited social skills. They make satisfactory progress in the Reception year, by the end of which most have attained the goals set for children of their age. In Years 1 and 2, progress continues to be satisfactory and pupils attain average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Pupils with learning difficulties or who are in the early stages of learning English make good progress at each stage of their education, but the more able could make greater progress in these early years. In Years 3 to 6, the progress of all pupils is very good. Above-average standards are attained in national tests at the end of Year 6. In English, progress is very good indeed. Well-above-average standards are reached. Pupils write at length, with fluency and originality. Pupils' achievement throughout the school is good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school's ethos leads to good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assemblies and displays celebrate the Catholic faith and the range of cultures present in the school but opportunities for pupils to learn to appreciate music are limited. Pupils' behaviour is good and has improved significantly in the recent past. There are a few occasions when bullying occurs but parents and pupils report that it is dealt with effectively.

Pupils enjoy school and their attendance is in line with primary school averages. They know how to keep safe and are aware, for instance, of the dangers of traffic. They understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and recognise that some of the food provided by the school canteen is high in fats and sugars. They make a good contribution to the community by taking responsibilities, such as school council membership or as playground monitors. There is good development of the skills they will need in adult life, especially literacy, numeracy, teamwork and collaboration.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

In Years 3 to 6, teaching is very good. Teachers know their pupils well and adapt the material to meet their needs. In doing this, all teachers in the school are supported very well by those with expertise in teaching pupils with learning difficulties, or who are at the early stages of learning English. Teachers have very high expectations of

their pupils, for instance, correctly expecting that less-able Year 6 pupils could write a lengthy piece using complex sentences. Marking is good, with useful comments designed to help pupils improve their work. As a result of these strategies, pupils behave well and make rapid progress. In the Reception year and Years 1 and 2, these features are less evident but are being introduced effectively. Work is not always adapted to meet the needs of the most able pupils and the quality of marking is more variable. Teaching in these years is satisfactory. In all classes, teaching assistants and other support staff make a good contribution to pupils' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Pupils are taught what the law requires and in most cases the material is suitably adapted to meet their needs. Good use is made of educational visits, for instance, to a Viking Centre and a chocolate factory. There are weaknesses in the curriculum for ICT and music, owing to limited expertise within the school. With the exception of religious education, the school has yet to develop links between subjects that increase their relevance to pupils' lives. The youngest children are taught through a satisfactory variety of indoor and outdoor activities. As parents and pupils recognise, there are limited opportunities for activities, such as sports, outside the school day.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are cared for well. Requirements to protect children are in place and the school pays good attention to pupils' safety and security. Pupils feel there is an adult they can trust if they have problems. Older pupils, and those with learning difficulties or who are in the early stages of learning English, receive very good academic guidance and support. Pupils are set targets which they understand and by which their progress is monitored and this makes an important contribution to their good achievement. These features are being introduced for younger pupils but their use, and hence the impact on their progress, is less consistent than for older pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leaders and managers faced major challenges when the school opened, to raise standards and improve teaching, especially for younger pupils. These have been tackled decisively and the impact of changes has led to improved provision for the Reception year, which is now satisfactory, and for Years 1 and 2. Success has been achieved in motivating staff and in creating a positive, unified ethos appropriate for a primary school. There is now a need to undertake detailed evaluation of all aspects of the school's work in order to identify and rectify inconsistencies, such as in the quality of marking and academic guidance. Most parents rightly believe the school is led well and that communication with them is good but a small minority feel that their individual concerns have not been adequately addressed.

The governors have made an outstanding contribution to the vision and drive needed to amalgamate two schools successfully. They monitor progress and provide excellent support, while challenging staff to achieve even greater success. They and senior leaders work to ensure that all members of the school community understand their role in improving it, such as by increasing the skills of subject leaders, and hence there is good potential for further improvement.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

We very much enjoyed talking and listening to you and seeing your work when we visited your school recently. We want to thank those of you who took time talking to us. We especially enjoyed attending your lessons and seeing your work around the school.

We agree with you and your parents that your school is a good one. These are some of the best things about it:

- You make good progress and Year 6 pupils do well in the national tests (SATs), especially in English.
- You behave well, get on well together and help each other. You tell us that, although some bullying still happens, the staff deal with it well.
- You are taught well. Teachers know what you need to learn and all the staff are very good at helping those of you who are finding some of the work difficult, or who are learning to speak English.
- You are well cared for by the staff and feel you can talk to them about problems. Older pupils are given targets you understand and which help you to improve your work.
- The headteacher, the other staff and the governors lead the school well. They have been very successful in getting the new school off to a good start.

We have asked the school to improve a few things. We have asked that you get more opportunities to learn ICT and music and that you are taught how the things you learn at school are useful in your lives. We have asked that there are more clubs and activities outside the school day, especially in sport, and we have asked that the food served in school is made healthier. You can help by sensibly telling the head and teachers what you think about these things, perhaps at the school council meetings.