

St Peter's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	103469
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	376915
Inspection dates	12–13 January 2012
Lead inspector	Derek Watts

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pamela Williams
Headteacher	Alison Pickin
Date of previous school inspection	29 June 2009
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Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	12–13 January 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Derek Watts

Additional inspector

Gillian Bosschaert

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 18 lessons or part lessons, taught by eight different teachers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and examined the school's policies, assessment information, pupils' work, teachers' plans and school improvement planning. They held discussions with the headteacher, the staff, members of the governing body, parents and carers and pupils. Pupils were heard to read in Years 1 and 2. The inspectors analysed 65 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, 108 from Key Stage 2 pupils and 20 from staff.

Information about the school

St Peter's Catholic is a smaller than average primary school. About two thirds of the pupil population are of a White British heritage. Other pupils come from a wide range of ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and with disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also above average. The headteacher took up the post in September 2010. The school has met government floor standards during the past three years.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- St Peter's Catholic Primary is a good school. Through strong leadership and teamwork, it has made good improvements since the previous inspection. Parents and carers hold positive views about the school.
- Children make good progress often from low starting points in the Early Years Foundation Stage and good progress continues through Key Stages 1 and 2. Attainment is above average by Year 6. Pupils write for a range of purposes and effective steps have been taken to raise the achievement of boys in writing. Pupils apply communication, literacy and numeracy skills well to support their learning. In subjects such as science, learning can be overly directed and pupils have insufficient opportunities to plan and organise their work.
- Teaching is good overall, although there are minor inconsistencies in practice. Teachers' convey clear expectations. Explanations, instructions and questioning promote learning and engage pupils well. Assessment is usually used effectively to plan teaching and to match tasks to pupils' abilities. Occasionally, learning can decline to satisfactory rather than good levels when lessons lack pace and pupils are not sufficiently active in their learning. On rare occasions, tasks are not sufficiently demanding for the most able.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and have positive attitudes to learning. Attendance is average and improving. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils are courteous and show considerable respect for others. They know how to keep themselves safe.
- The headteacher is focused firmly on providing good teaching and raising achievement for all pupils. She is supported well by senior leaders and staff. Through accurate self evaluation, the school knows its strengths and takes effective action to bring about improvements where needed. Since the previous inspection, pupils' achievement and teaching have improved from satisfactory to good. The school demonstrates a good capacity for improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Remove inconsistencies in teaching and learning by ensuring that in all lessons:
 - learning proceeds at a brisk pace and pupils are actively involved in their learning.
 - tasks are matched very closely to pupils' needs, particularly for the most able.
- Extend opportunities for pupils to plan and organise their work and decide how best to present their findings, especially in science.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with attainment below that expected for their age. Communication, language and literacy skills are often low. Children make good progress in all areas of learning. Very effective action has been taken to raise achievement in communication, language and literacy.

Pupils make good progress in reading because of the school's discrete and regular approach to the teaching of reading. Attainment in reading is average by the end of Year 2 and above average by Year 6. Pupils make rapid progress in speaking and listening because of the good opportunities for them to discuss their work in pairs and small groups. Pupils with special educational needs and those with disabilities make good progress because of well targeted and specific guidance and support provided. A wide range of effective steps is being taken to close the gap between boys' and girls' attainment, particularly in writing. Drama, role play and topics which appeal to boys are contributing well to this drive. In a successful Year 6 lesson, pupils in the role of a World War I soldier made outstanding progress in writing a letter home to mum. Their writing included powerful vocabulary and 'flash backs' were used to great effect. Pupils showed considerable empathy for life in the trenches. Their writing was well presented, with accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling.

In the mathematics lessons seen, pupils made good progress because tasks were interesting and matched to needs well. Pupils applied their numeracy skills well to solve mathematical problems. In science in Years 5 and 6, work is sometimes overly directed and opportunities are missed for pupils to decide how best to organise and present their data. Pupils use information and communication technology confidently to support their learning. For example, pupils in Year 4 used word processing effectively to draft and edit a newspaper report.

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Quality of teaching

Most teaching promotes good learning for pupils successfully. Nearly all of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire thought that their children were taught well. These views are reflected in the inspection findings. There are examples of outstanding practice. In those lessons, the teacher's strong subject knowledge, high expectations and challenging activities led to exceptional gains in pupils' learning. Pupils were given very good opportunities to review their own and others' learning.

Lessons have a clear purpose and so pupils know what they are expected to learn. Teachers create a positive learning atmosphere and their own enthusiasm engages and motivates the pupils. The teaching of basic skills such as letter sounds is effective. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 made good progress in consolidating letter sounds and learning new spelling rules. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning in pairs and to work collaboratively to solve problems. For example, in Year 6 mathematics, pupils in the main hall used model paving slabs of card to design and cost a patio. They calculated accurately the number of different sized slabs required for their design and how much the patio would cost.

Teachers use questioning skilfully to challenge pupils' thinking and to check their understanding of new learning. Assessment has improved and teachers use this information well to plan teaching and to match tasks to pupils' different abilities and needs. Teaching and the curriculum promote pupils' application of communication, literacy and numeracy skills well. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and make good contributions to pupils' learning, particularly for those who need additional help. In just a few lessons, the pace of learning slowed with over-long introductions and pupils were not sufficiently engaged in their learning. The marking of pupils' work is helpful, constructive and guides pupils' future learning well.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. In a number of lessons, particularly in upper Key Stage 2, pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour were exemplary. Pupils' rights and responsibilities are promoted successfully. Staff establish good relationships with pupils and consistently convey high expectations of behaviour. The school's behaviour policy and procedures have recently been reviewed and these are implemented consistently by all staff.

All parents and carers who completed the questionnaire believe that their children feel safe at school and that they are well looked after. Pupils hold similar views. The very vast majority of parents and carers believe that the school sets high standards of behaviour and that lessons are rarely disrupted by poor conduct. Incidents of bullying and inappropriate behaviour are rare, but, if these do occur, the school has effective strategies for dealing with them. There have been no fixed-term or permanent exclusions in recent years.

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Effective action has been taken to raise attendance from below average to average levels. Pupils say, 'school is fun' and arrive on time.

Leadership and management

The headteacher brings good experience and enthusiasm to the school. Under her leadership, roles and responsibilities of other leaders have been clarified and strengthened. Leaders of English, mathematics, special educational needs and the Early Years Foundation Stage are all involved effectively in monitoring performance and improving their areas of responsibility.

There are good procedures for the monitoring and development of teaching. They have contributed to improvements in practice and senior leaders are working on removing minor inconsistencies in teaching. Joint lesson observations with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and inspectors reveal that senior staff have a very clear overview of teaching. Leaders have worked hard to provide an interesting curriculum which promotes good academic achievement and positive personal outcomes for pupils. Improvements to provision in reading and writing are having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. The school demonstrates a good capacity for improvement. Good links between subjects add meaning and relevance to learning. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength. Within the school's very positive ethos, pupils show considerable respect and support for others. They demonstrate excitement for different subjects and a clear understanding of different cultures and faiths.

The school engages with parents and carers successfully. The survey indicates that parents and carers are pleased with the care and education provided for their children. They are very pleased with safety, how well their children are looked after and the quality of teaching. Parents and carers appreciate the courses and workshops provided to help them support their children's learning.

The governing body is better informed about the school's performance than at the time of the previous inspection. It shows a good understanding of the school's strengths and development areas and this enables it to provide support and constructive challenge to senior leaders. Good attention is given to safeguarding and there are effective policies and procedures to protect pupils. The monitoring and evaluation of these procedures are robust and thorough. Safe practices for pupils are promoted successfully through the school's teaching and curriculum. All pupils have full access to the wide range of learning activities provided and staff strive to ensure that pupils progress as well as they can. Equality of opportunity is promoted well and discrimination is tackled effectively.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



16 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Birmingham, B32 3QD

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school, giving us your views and showing us your work. We enjoyed our visit. St Peter's is a good school. It has made good improvements since the last inspection. The main strengths are:

- you enjoy school and have positive attitudes to learning
- children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start
- you are making good progress because of the strong teaching you receive
- you get on well with others and your behaviour is good
- you say you feel safe at school because teachers and other adults take care of you
- the school is led and managed well
- parents and carers are pleased with the school, particularly care, safety and teaching.

We have given your school a few points for improvement.

- In a few classes, the lessons could move along more quickly and you could be more involved in your learning. We have also asked teachers to ensure that tasks are always challenging, especially for those who find learning easy.
- In subjects like science, teachers should give more opportunities for you to plan and organise your work and decide how best to present your results.

Yours sincerely

Derek Watts

Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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