

# St Peter's Catholic First School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	116872
<b>Local authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	379319
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 February 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Fiona Arnison

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	289
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gary Macpherson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Catherine Clubley (Acting)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 October 2006
<b>School address</b>	Rock Hill Bromsgrove B61 7LH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01527 831872
<b>Fax number</b>	01527 874629
<b>Email address</b>	office@st-petersrc.worcs.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	4–9
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	1–2 February 2012
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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Fiona Arnison	Additional inspector
Tracey Kneale	Additional inspector
Philip Winch	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed a total of 18 lessons taught by 12 teachers, including one higher-level teaching assistant. Two of these lessons were observed jointly with the acting headteacher. In addition, inspectors visited a number of lessons accompanied by members of the school's leadership team to observe the quality and consistency of work undertaken by teaching assistants. Meetings were held with pupils, teachers and leaders of the school, and members of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at key documentation including improvement plans, analysis of attainment and progress of pupils currently at the school and records related to the behaviour and safety of pupils. They analysed staff and pupil questionnaires and 163 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for parents and carers.

## Information about the school

This first school is larger than the average primary school. The majority of pupils are of White British backgrounds. Very few are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. Fewer pupils than average are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and pupils with disabilities is below the national average. The school works in partnership with Newman University College, Birmingham to provide placements for trainee teachers. Recently, the school has achieved a Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA).

There have been significant staffing changes since the last inspection, including a change of headteacher. The deputy headteacher has been appointed as acting headteacher, leading the school since September 2011, while the governing body works to secure a permanent appointment.

There are onsite childcare facilities, St Peter's pre-school and Castle Kid's After School Club, but these are not managed by the school and did not form part of this inspection.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school that looks after its pupils well. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and some pupils with special educational needs and pupils with disabilities make good progress, but progress is inconsistent across the school and satisfactory overall.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Some is good, but not enough to ensure that all groups of pupils make consistently good progress. In some lessons, teachers talk for too long and pupils, especially the most able, are not set work that challenges them.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are satisfactory. Pupils are polite and courteous, and very welcoming to visitors. Parents and carers have confidence in the school. 'My daughter just loves going to school', one parent wrote; 'A very supportive staff with lots of fun learning,' wrote another. Pupils' spiritual, moral, spiritual and cultural development is particularly well supported.
- The acting headteacher has a clear understanding of how to improve the school. Despite changes to staffing since the previous inspection, improvements to the curriculum and in the way assessment information is used by teachers have resulted in rising achievement, especially at Key Stage 2.
- The school's systems for tracking and analysing information about the achievement of groups of pupils, are cumbersome. This means that information cannot easily be analysed by the school's leaders and used to fine-tune the improvement of outcomes. The recording systems also make it hard for leaders to analyse and quickly address any patterns of poor behaviour or attendance that may occur.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit from an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that the large majority is good or better, by ensuring that:
  - all lessons proceed at a swift pace
  - work is matched precisely to pupils' differing starting points, especially for the most able pupils
  - consistent marking and feedback strategies are used by teachers to help pupils to improve their work
  - teachers' whole-class explanations are succinct but clear.
- Improve systems for tracking and monitoring, so that:
  - leaders at all levels can account for the progress of pupils, by class and by group, and focus and monitor interventions appropriately
  - fluctuations in attendance can be responded to more rapidly
  - systematic and consistent recording of behaviour enables more rigorous analysis and actions by the school's leaders.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Pupils start and leave school with standards that are broadly in line with those expected nationally, though reading standards are above average by the end of Year 4. Overall, this represents satisfactory achievement. Children make good progress during the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly in reading. By the end of Key Stage 1 their attainment in reading is above that found nationally. This is because early reading skills, for example the sounds in words, are taught systematically, especially in the Reception Year. By the time they reach the end of Year 2, most pupils read confidently and expressively, with great enjoyment. Progress in reading is less consistent, but satisfactory, in Key Stage 2.

Some groups of pupils make good progress in writing. For example, in the Reception Year, all children were able to write the different sounds that they could hear within words, and some were able to write words and sentences accurately. In a Year 4 literacy lesson, pupils used similes and exaggeration to write a description of a rhinoceros. The teacher encouraged a group of pupils to transfer the inference and deduction skills they had learnt in reading, in order to make highly effective improvements to their writing. 'His skin is as wrinkly as an orange shrivelled dry by the hot, midday sun in Africa,' one child suggested. However, progress is less rapid in lessons where the task is not precisely matched to pupils' starting points, and does not take adequate account of their prior learning. Here, pupils are less well motivated to work hard.

Pupils make the best progress when they take an active part in their lessons. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, pupils enjoyed using money and items from the

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classroom shop to calculate giving change. The calculations were reinforced using practical apparatus, such as number lines and counting beads. The pace at which different groups worked enabled all pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, to make good progress. Effective use was made of computer software to encourage pupils to practise and apply the mathematical skills that they had learnt. Where lessons are less engaging, pupils become restless and their progress slows.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, measures taken by the school have ensured that focused support enables every child to make good progress. Here lower attaining pupils are catching up on others nationally. In all year groups, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities often make good or better progress. However, progress for some groups of pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable is inconsistent. The school's leaders do not yet have systems that let them quickly identify where and why there are differences. Most parents and carers are positive about the progress that their child is making. Parents and carers of children with disabilities rightly praise the way in which the school integrates their child and supports their progress.

### **Quality of teaching**

Most parents and carers believe their children are taught well. In the best lessons, there is certainly a buzz of excitement as pupils learn. This is partly a result of the recent improvements to the curriculum. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the focus teachers give to topics such as the Rainforest and the Second World War, visiting the theatre and learning about other cultures. It is also because the best lessons are carefully planned to challenge pupils at just the right level. For instance, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson, the pupils worked enthusiastically to weigh different materials. The lesson was carefully crafted to link the practical activity to producing a graph. The teacher challenged pupils through pertinent questions and well-modelled vocabulary which extended the pupils' learning, for example to understand x and y axes on the graph. The teaching assistant made sure that no pupil was left behind during the fast-paced lesson. As a result, all pupils made good progress. However, not enough lessons are so well paced and challenging. In too many lessons, pupils sit on the carpet for too long, listening to their teachers talking. Some lessons do not take account of pupils' differing starting points, and on occasions the tasks set for the most able pupils lack challenge.

Good relationships are evident in all classrooms and pupils warmly respect their teachers because they take good care of them. As one pupil explained, 'If ever I need help, I know my teacher will look after me.' Pupils themselves work collaboratively and productively, for example with their talk partners. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the care of all pupils. They usually enhance pupils' achievement in lessons, although occasional gaps in their subject knowledge result in some confusion, for example in using letter names in place of sounds. Spirituality pervades the school day: teachers give frequent opportunities for reflection as prayers are said at appropriate intervals.

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Pupils say that they learn a lot in lessons; however, they are less sure what they need to do to improve their work. This is because teachers' marking is not always sufficiently well focused on the next steps in a child's learning. Some marking is perfunctory. Systems to feed back to pupils are not consistently implemented across the school. Pupils are becoming adept at assessing their own work against success criteria, but the targets that teachers set for them are not always challenging enough to improve their achievement in lessons.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school. Most feel confident that when issues arise, teachers will deal with them quickly. Pupils and most parents and carers say that behaviour in lessons is usually good. Inspectors found that behaviour is typically satisfactory, although it improves during lessons where the activities are exciting and engaging. Some pupils said that during less structured times, such as playtimes, behaviour can become overly boisterous. Inspectors agree. Whole-school systems to promote positive behaviour, and sanctions for poor behaviour, are not applied consistently during time away from the classroom environment.

Nevertheless, the school has been effective in enabling individuals to improve their challenging behaviour.

A very small minority of parents and carers raised concerns about the way in which the school addresses bullying. Inspectors looked into this in detail. They found that the very few incidents of bullying are usually well addressed, but the school systems to record and analyse the frequency and perpetrators of incidents are not well coordinated. Pupils understand about the different types of bullying and the school's anti-bullying procedures. They are confident that any problems are dealt with; 'The headteacher always sorts it out,' one girl said. Pupils have a realistic understanding of risk and know how to keep themselves safe, for instance when on the internet.

Recent actions taken by the school's leaders have brought about an improvement in attendance, which is now broadly average. These include first-day absence calls to parents and carers, and a closer working relationship with education welfare officers to address persistent absenteeism. However, the school does not analyse attendance data thoroughly enough to target resources for improvement with precision.

## **Leadership and management**

The acting headteacher has correctly identified the school's main strengths and priorities for improvement, demonstrating accurate and astute self-evaluation. Challenging targets and rigorous and robust actions have raised achievement. There have been improvements since the last inspection, for example in the sharing of assessment information to maximise pupils' progress, the development of a vibrant and exciting curriculum, and in the level of challenge given to the school by the governing body. These things demonstrate that the school has the capacity to improve. The rate of improvement of teaching has been limited by significant staffing

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changes. Systems for monitoring teaching and providing appropriate professional development to teachers are secure.

The school has a good relationship with most of its parents and carers, as identified in a recent award. A 'Parent Voice' group meets to bring about improvements, for example to the school gates so that all children can be dropped off safely in the mornings. The curriculum has been revised to better meet pupils' needs, interests and aptitudes. It includes many opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Safeguarding procedures are robust and rigorous. Leaders and managers promote equality and tackle discrimination adequately. They analyse data by different groups, but the process is time consuming and inefficient. The governing body has worked to consolidate areas for its own improvement identified in the previous inspection. It is now confident to hold the school's leaders to account for the progress that pupils make.



## 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](http://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.**



3 February 2012

Dear Children

**Inspection of St Peter's Catholic First School, Bromsgrove, B61 7LH**

Thank you for welcoming us to your school recently. We enjoyed meeting and speaking to many of you. We particularly enjoyed listening to your lovely singing. Thank you to those pupils who filled in questionnaires and spoke to us during our visit. You told us that you mostly enjoy school and we agree that the adults look after you well.

You go to a satisfactory school. This means that it does some things well, but there are things that we have asked your teachers and headteacher to do better. We would like you all to make good progress in your lessons. Sometimes we think that you have to sit and listen to your teachers for too long. We have asked your teachers to make their explanations as short as possible. All of you can help by listening very carefully so that your teachers do not need to explain things several times. We have also asked teachers to make sure work is not too easy or too hard, and to tell you what you need to do to improve. You can help here by reading carefully any comments that your teachers write in your books, and taking note of how to improve your work.

We want your school's leaders to make careful use of all of the information they have about how well you are doing. This is so that they can spot very quickly if you are falling behind with your work, attendance or behaviour, and help you to do something about it.

With very best wishes to you all at St Peter's Catholic First School.

Yours sincerely

Fiona Arnison  
Lead inspector

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