

# St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Bloxwich

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	104234
<b>Local authority</b>	Walsall
<b>Inspection number</b>	377044
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 February 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Rodney Braithwaite

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	200
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sheila Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mary Green
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 June– 1 July 2009
<b>School address</b>	Lichfield Road Bloxwich Walsall WS3 3LY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01922 710872
<b>Fax number</b>	01922 493153
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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	2–3 February 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	377044



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Rodney Braithwaite

Additional inspector

Linda Reilly

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 15 lessons or part lessons taught by nine teachers. Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher, teachers, and representatives of the governing body and local authority children's services. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, and looked at safeguarding arrangements as well as other information including school development planning, procedures, policies, external evaluations and a range of pupils' work. A total of 97 questionnaires from parents and carers were scrutinised, together with questionnaires received from staff and a representative sample of pupils.

## Information about the school

St Peter's is smaller than the average primary school. Most pupils are White British, the remainder representing a range of other ethnicities. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly lower than the national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below that seen nationally. The school meets the current floor standard. There have been a number of changes of staff since the previous inspection. The school provides extended provision both before and after school.

Among its awards the school has the Dyslexia Friendly Quality Award, and the Committed to ICT accreditation, Phase 1, Award.

## 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>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. The headteacher and her staff provide good care and welfare for all pupils, who are kept in a safe and welcoming environment. Middle managers have been effective in improving achievement, especially in literacy and numeracy, but do not have sufficient non-contact time from classroom responsibilities for the strategic planning of their subject provision.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, including the Nursery, settle quickly into school and make good progress, especially in their personal and social development. Nearly all pupils in Years 1 to 6, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Consequently, most pupils are reaching the standards expected for their age in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Although attainment rose in mathematics in the last year, improvement is not well embedded in all year groups. Many pupils achieve well in reading and notably gain real pleasure from books.
- Pupils have maintained their good behaviour, both in and out of lessons. They are well motivated, have good attitudes to learning and work hard. Their attendance is above average and they are routinely punctual; they enjoy taking responsibilities and offering suggestions to improve the school. They say they feel safe.
- Teaching is satisfactory. Some teaching is good but this is not consistent across the school. Planning and assessment strategies have improved, although teachers sometimes do not have ready access to data to get an immediate picture of pupils' progress to use in their planning.
- A sizeable majority of parents and carers have a positive view of the school. However, the inspection team agrees with a significant minority who feel that the school could do more to respond to their concerns, and keep them better informed of their children's progress and learning.

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

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

- Ensure that pupils make consistently good progress in mathematics to maintain at least average attainment by:
  - developing further pupils' understanding and interpretation of problem-solving
  - providing opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their mathematical skills in meaningful contexts across the curriculum
  - ensuring that teachers maintain consistently high expectations of the progress of pupils.
  
- Strengthen and develop the existing partnership with parents and carers by:
  - helping all parents and carers to understand how they can access and use school strategies to support their children's learning
  - taking measures to ensure that parents and carers are fully informed of their children's progress, and know procedures to be followed when they have a concern.
  
- Ensure that leaders and managers are effective at all levels by:
  - enabling middle leaders and managers to have sufficient time to develop their subjects over the medium and long term
  - giving managers increased opportunities to work together in teams.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Children enter Nursery with skills below those expected for their age. They make good progress and achieve well in their learning in the Nursery and Reception classes, especially in their personal and social development. Most then make good progress in their reading and mathematics in Years 1 and 2 so that they are reaching average attainment at the end of Year 2. Although progress slows in writing, recent strategies are beginning to lift writing standards nearer to those expected at this age. For some years, attainment in English has been average by the end of Year 6. From pupils' below average starting points, this reflects consistently good progress. However, progress in mathematics has been markedly slower and pupils have rarely reached average standards. Better teaching and new initiatives by the school leadership this year have led to more rapid progress, so that most Year 6 pupils are now reaching average standards. Lesson observations, scrutiny of work and the school's own tracking show that this improvement in mathematics is not embedded in all year groups. In some classes, pupils' problem-solving skills and mental strategies are underdeveloped. Overall, all groups of pupils, including those from different ethnic groups, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Similarly, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and more-able pupils, make satisfactory progress.

Pupils achieve noticeably well in reading to attain average standards by the end of

both Year 2 and Year 6. This is because the school has used successful reading methods for some time, and ensured that pupils have resources tailored to all needs. In discussion, pupils explained how they had been taught letter sounds from an early age and so knew 'how to break words down'. A number stressed their pleasure in reading, one boy saying he would 'much rather sit on the settee and read than watch television'. A very large majority of parents and carers believe that their children make good progress and are developing basic skills successfully. Inspectors found that progress was rapid in English but satisfactory overall.

### **Quality of teaching**

Although the quality of teaching over time is satisfactory, there is some good teaching throughout the school. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, for example, careful individual tracking of children's attainment, the good progress seen in workbooks, and children's application of key skills clearly indicate good achievement by children facilitated by good teaching over time. Since the last inspection, in Years 1 to 6, there has been a marked improvement in the consistency of teachers' planning to make effective use of the planned curriculum; more attention is now paid to the particular needs of individuals and groups of pupils. This was seen to good effect in all classes in Key Stage 2; pupils were simultaneously involved in a 'Big Write' on various subjects such as suspense stories in the style of Charles Dickens, and a modern day version of 'The Prodigal Son'. All teaching had appropriate challenge, set tight time targets, and resulted in good writing outcomes and secure promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Learning is helped in all year groups by the useful contributions of teaching assistants, especially when involved in interventions with disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.

High staff turnover since the previous inspection has hampered continuity of learning for pupils. New staff did not always have a good knowledge of their pupils' prior attainment and this led to low expectations of what pupils could achieve. The staffing is now more stable. Better strategies, for example, in marking, are used in all classes and have improved the guidance and support given to pupils by teachers. While more frequent and accurate assessments of progress are now made and better understood, the data produced centrally are sometimes not available quickly enough, and teachers are consequently sometimes slow to use it in their provision for individual needs. Learning targets are clearly laid out in pupils' books, and widely displayed in classrooms, and most pupils have a reasonable understanding of their learning levels, and what they must improve. While teachers give pupils regular opportunities to develop their literacy skills across the curriculum, these opportunities are not consistent enough to enhance pupils' numeracy skills. Almost all pupils who completed questionnaires indicated that teaching in the school helps them develop their skills, that they learn a lot in lessons, and that adults explain to them how to improve. Most parents and carers also agree with the views of their children, one parent typically commenting, 'The school has improved over the last year because teachers are enabling the children to be involved in more fun and engaging activities.'

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Almost all parents and carers, and pupils and staff, in their responses to questionnaires indicated very positive views about behaviour and safety in the school. This confirms that pupils' good behaviour has been maintained for a number of years. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage quickly become used to what is expected of them, settle well to behaviour routines and feel safe in their surroundings. In the next six years in school their behaviour remains consistently good. In all classes during the inspection behaviour was good and often better. This enhances the equal opportunities to all pupils to learn in a calm and safe environment. Pupils have a clear understanding of the school's strategies for managing behaviour, and they and school records indicate very little misbehaviour or disruption over a long time. Pupils expressed forcibly that there is very little bullying of any kind; one said, 'Hardly ever, because we're all friends and we connect here'. Older pupils, especially, are involved in playground monitoring and feel that any incidents are dealt with quickly and fairly by all staff. Pupils are polite and respectful and have good relationships with adults. They have a good knowledge of safe practices and follow them in their daily activities. The school has good links with external agencies which help to meet the needs of those pupils whose circumstances make them the most vulnerable or potentially disruptive.

Attendance is consistently above the national average. Rigorous action by senior leaders has ensured that pupils are punctual in arriving at school, and also when going to lessons.

## **Leadership and management**

In the past, planned improvement for the school has occasionally faltered because of frequent changes in staffing, or absence due to long-term ill health. During the last year there has been a full leadership team and more stability in the school. This has helped the headteacher and governing body to focus more strongly on raising standards. Consequently, there have been some significant improvements although leaders realise there is still more to do. The weakness in attainment in mathematics is being effectively addressed and pupils' achievement has risen, particularly in reading. This is because, as in English, the coordinator for mathematics has carefully audited provision in the subject and has taken on a number of initiatives which have led to improvement. Although subject leaders are showing considerable potential, they have very little non-contact time to manage their responsibilities or to work together as a team. The school leadership has maintained existing strengths in the management of the Early Years Foundation Stage, and the management of the good behaviour of all pupils.

Teaching and learning are monitored regularly by senior leaders, who have benefited from undertaking joint classroom observations with advisors from the local authority. This has led to more rigorous evaluations of learning, and better linkage to the needs of staff in their professional development. The curriculum has become more interesting for pupils. They now enjoy, for example, opportunities to learn French and play musical instruments, as well as regularly improving their information and communication technology skills. The curriculum is having a positive impact on the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school

promotes equal opportunities securely and is fully inclusive. There is no evidence of discrimination. The school provides well-managed and well-attended breakfast and after-school clubs. Although weaknesses remain, the improvements made by the school indicate it has clear capacity to continue to improve.

The governing body is fully involved in the drive for school improvement. Governors are now challenging school leaders more than in the past and have a clearer picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The governing body ensures that arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements. School leaders are keen to engage parents and carers in partnership. This has not been entirely successful although many parents and carers have positive views of the school. A significant minority feel that the school does not give enough guidance on how their children can be supported in their learning at home. The school leadership accepts this, and the fact that some parents and carers do not feel the school deals with their occasional concerns effectively. Inspectors endorse the views of the parents and carers.



## 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.**



6 February 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Bloxwich, WS3 3LY**

We would like to thank you all for being so helpful and welcoming to us when we visited you recently. You were so friendly and we enjoyed hearing about all the interesting things you do in school. We thought that you were very well behaved in your classes and on the playground, and were pleased to hear that you are always well behaved when you go out on visits. You go to a satisfactory school, where you are reaching the levels expected for your age by the end of Year 6. While those of you in Key Stage 2 have always been quite good at writing and especially reading, you have not achieved so well in mathematics, so we were pleased to see that you are now improving. The same goes for those of you in Key Stage 1 where your writing is beginning to improve. The children in Nursery and Reception have a really good start to their education. You are all well looked after and the school keeps you very safe. Your attendance is better than in most schools, and we are pleased that nearly all of you are punctual. It was also good to hear from many of you that there is hardly any bullying in your school, and that the staff would soon stop it if there was.

Although the school has improved in some things, there is still more to do. We would like your teachers to make sure that your improvement in mathematics continues in the next few years. Most of your parents and carers think that you have a good start to your education in your school, but some feel that they do not know well enough how you are doing, and how they can help you, and would like the school leaders to give this more attention. We have asked your school leaders to do this. We have also asked your school to give some of the teachers with responsibilities more time to make plans to help you all improve even faster.

We offer our good wishes to you all for the future and hope that you continue to enjoy your time at St Peter's.

Yours sincerely

Rodney Braithwaite  
Lead inspector

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