

St Peter's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134928
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	360658
Inspection dates	2–3 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Jane Neech HMI

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	410
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	James Evans
Headteacher	Carol Baron
Date of previous school inspection	9 December 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The team observed 22 lessons and 14 teachers and carried out four learning walks. Eight lesson observations and one learning walk were completed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, teachers, pupils, governors, and a group of parents and carers. A telephone discussion was held with the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors studied a range of school documentation, including policies, data on pupils progress and safeguarding procedures. They looked at 137 questionnaires received from parents and carers, 14 from staff and 78 from pupils.

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

The current quality of teaching and learning and how well teachers use assessment, targets and marking to ensure that pupils know how to improve their work, especially in writing.

How well do curriculum opportunities support pupils learning so that all groups achieve as well as they can?

The effectiveness of tracking systems, including those relating to attendance, to ensure all groups and individuals make good progress.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels and their impact on raising standards.

The impact of the schools work in relation to community cohesion.

Information about the school

St Peters Catholic Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school and serves four catholic parishes in the Gloucester area. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Approximately two thirds of pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is rising. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. There is an independently run breakfast club on site which is available to pupils. A new school building is under construction next to the existing school.

When the school was inspected in December 2009 it was judged to require a notice to improve. The schools progress was monitored in July 2010 and judged to have made good progress in addressing the issues for improvement.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. St Peter's has improved significantly since the last inspection and now provides a good quality education. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher has focused sharply on improving teaching and learning, which are now good. A minority of the teaching is outstanding. The excellent pastoral care afforded to pupils means that they feel extremely safe and happy in school. This is demonstrated by the positive attitudes they display towards their work and play. Parents and carers are pleased with the changes since the last inspection, and report that their children make good progress.

Since the last inspection, the improvement in pupils' current work is impressive, particularly in writing and mathematics. Pupils' work is of a good and at times high standard. School and national data show that the progress of the oldest pupils in particular has accelerated. These improvements can be attributed to the good teaching, productive relationships and an exciting curriculum. The school has good capacity to make the improvements necessary to raise standards further because of:

the exceptional ambition, drive and commitment of school leaders and staff in leading improvements to teaching and learning

the good governance

the rigorous systems in place to track and evaluate pupils' progress

the school's close monitoring of strengths and weaknesses, leading to accurate self-evaluation

the good progress and achievement of all groups of pupils

pupils' good behaviour and excellent understanding of the school's core values

the outstanding care, guidance and support given to pupils

the close partnerships with parents, carers and professionals.

Since the last inspection, the school has focused on improving pupils' attitudes to learning, and in this they have been particularly successful. The youngest children in Reception now talk about their learning with ease and ask questions such as; 'Is this good learning?' Pupils are polite, friendly and confident to try out new skills in lessons, such as in a mathematics lesson where older pupils used different methods to find lines of symmetry. Pupils benefit from good links with a broad range of partners and professionals. Links with the local high school for the teaching of science support the good progress pupils make. Although attendance remains average, the school's tracking system shows that it is rising because of measures put in place through the effective pastoral system to support families. The

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spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of the schools work are outstanding. The schools core values, such as respect underpin all areas of its work. Through the good curriculum, pupils develop a good understanding of the national and international dimensions of community cohesion. While the exciting curriculum engages pupils well, it lacks a coordinated approach to ensuring that pupils skills are systematically developed year on year during their time at school, and this is an area for development. Added to this, the opportunity for pupils to use information and communication technology (ICT) in all subject areas requires further development.

The improvements in teaching are the result of the schools sharp focus on changing the content of the curriculum, and the consistent use of assessment. This has been a key factor in raising standards. Consequently, the gap in performance between groups of pupils is narrowing, such as between boys and girls in mathematics. The marking of pupils work is consistently good and at times exemplary. Pupils receive guidance on how to improve their work. This means that they have the opportunity to respond to the challenging targets they are set and to improve their work.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Establish a more detailed and strategic approach to the curriculum by:
 - planning the systematic development of pupils skills
 - responding more effectively to the interests of the pupils.
- Ensure that teachers plan for and evaluate the use of ICT across all areas of the curriculum for all groups of pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Since the last inspection, there has been a change in the skills, knowledge and understanding with which the youngest children begin school. School data show that attainment on entry is below the levels expected in early literacy and is variable across other areas of learning. By the time the oldest pupils leave school at the end of Key Stage 2, their performance in National Curriculum tests is significantly above average in mathematics and average in English. From pupils starting points, this represents good progress overall. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities outperform their counterparts nationally in mathematics, representing good progress. For all groups, performance in writing is weaker. However, school initiatives are a strength and pupils report they enjoy being writers. For example, in poems displayed on the subject of slavery, older pupils reflected their feelings with mature sensitivity. One pupil wrote, My heart was shattered like glass. Pupils reported that their interpretation about slavery gives them a really good idea of what it was like. Another pupil wrote, As I was thinking of my motherland tears hugged my cheeks. The youngest children in Reception are keen to develop their literacy skills. Their efforts are celebrated in the very effective recall sessions in lessons which focus on what has been learnt. During the inspection, one youngster was observed enthusiastically retelling the story of the Three Little Pigs from his own story plan. His use of expression and different voices was appreciated by the rest of the class, who listened in awe! The school is aware of the need for a constant focus on improving pupils literacy skills, and the attention paid to speaking skills throughout the school means that pupils can apply their good communication skills in a range of contexts.

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School data show that the legacy of underachievement has been halted so that older pupils are now catching up to where they should be in English, and in some cases exceeding expectations in mathematics. Pupils know their targets well and are clear about how to improve their work. Parents and carers appreciate the regular information given to them about their children's targets.

The school council and pupils enjoy the responsibility given to them and play an active part in the school. Representatives from the pupils visited another school to find out about their behaviour policy. Pupils reported back to school leaders, who incorporated their thoughts into the new behaviour policy. This has been particularly effective in improving pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Pupils have a good understanding of staying healthy through diet and exercise, and this is reflected in the Healthy Schools award. While pupils have responsibilities within school they report they would like more responsibility. The school recognises this is an area for development, such as youngsters further promoting healthy lifestyles by helping others to live healthily.

Pupils reflect on moral, spiritual, social and cultural issues through all aspects of their learning. In an outstanding assembly for older pupils, pupils were invited to reflect on words being weapons. Pupils repeated unkind words during an impromptu drama, resulting in a powerful thought-provoking atmosphere. In this way, pupils demonstrate their understanding of right and wrong. The good community links have supported pupils' understanding of the world of work through watching the progress of the new school building. The school has plans to extend links with the local community when the new building is completed.

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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	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers methodical approach to planning lessons is a strength, as is the clear attention given to meeting the needs of all groups of pupils. Consequently, pupils fully understand what they are learning and persist at their work so that they can achieve their challenging targets. The exciting curriculum means that the school is a vibrant learning environment. Displays effectively balance the promotion of key skills and the celebration of pupils achievements. The focus given to writing and mark making is evident through all aspects of the good curriculum. Pupils carefully draw writing patterns to represent stonework on their pictures of Gloucester Cathedral as part of their work on the local area. Evaluations of creative work, such as the making of African masks, are routinely written up by pupils. In these innovative ways, the skills of writing are being constantly developed.

Good use is made of strategies to assess pupils learning. Learning Champion Certificates are clearly linked to the curriculum, such as praising pupils understanding of play script. In lessons, the good use of questioning and use of talk partners ensure that learning is consolidated well. The effective support pupils receive from teaching assistants is clearly focused on making progress within a warm, caring relationship. Teachers effective, and at times exemplary, marking makes a significant contribution to pupils learning and the extra challenges help pupils to achieve higher standards of work.

The good and often outstanding teaching is exemplified by teachers excellent subject knowledge and very effective use of assessment. Lessons move at a brisk pace and

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teachers high expectations ensure that all groups achieve well. Steps to success are used very well by pupils in assessing their own work.

The innovative curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils knowledge and awareness of other faiths and cultures. It is enhanced by a range of enriching experiences such as drumming workshops, dance and drama, but opportunities through the use of ICT are more limited. There are good links with local schools through sports partnerships. The school acknowledges that an important step in its quest to continue to improve standards is the development of a whole-school curriculum plan identifying more clearly the progression of learning.

The schools excellent care, guidance and support for individuals means that pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable make the most of the opportunities it offers. An excellent example of how the school responds to pupils needs is the planning of visits out of school. These are carefully tailored to meet the needs of the individual youngsters. The care pupils receive in the school and the strong partnerships with other providers have had a significant impact on the welfare of all groups and individuals. Parents and carers praise the care and attention to pupils safety during work for the new school building as being second to none.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers are extremely ambitious to ensure all groups have an equal chance to achieve as well as they can. They have promoted equality of opportunity by building a culture which balances professional trust with high expectations. In this way, leaders and managers have turned around historically low performance. The creation of core subject teams means teachers are well versed in analysing performance data and highly accountable for raising standards. Consequently, systems for improving pupils learning are managed and used very effectively. A particular strength is the quality of leadership by middle managers. Their contribution to rigorous monitoring and feedback has dramatically improved the quality of teaching and consequently pupils progress. Families, especially those new to the country, praise the work of the school in supporting their childrens early literacy and learning at home.

The governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. Since the last inspection the governors support for improving all aspects of the schools work is a testament to their commitment. They have fully supported the leadership of the school in taking decisive action to tackle underperformance and, as a result, standards are rising. The governing body reviews its own effectiveness and is linked to the core subject teams,

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leading to a clear understanding of how the school is performing. Child protection responsibilities are clear and safeguarding arrangements are good, particularly in working with other professionals and agencies. The school tracks the attendance of those pupils who may be vulnerable, but how this links with their on-going progress is not yet embedded.

Leaders and managers ensure that resources are well deployed in school, such as the emphasis put on providing for the high quality pastoral care of the pupils. Community cohesion is promoted in an exciting way, for example in international work. Pupils changed classrooms into different countries, advertising key features to encourage others to visit. By developing pupils knowledge in a practical way, discrimination against any group or individual is avoided at all times. Governors acknowledge that work related to pupils understanding of the local community is not as strong but have well-developed plans to address this.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding an 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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in Reception enjoy the variety of learning tasks provided for them. Adults plan activities carefully, responding to children's individual needs, such as those children whose first language is not English, and this makes a good contribution to increasing children's progress. A particular favourite is the sparkly story-telling tent. The whole-school focus on literacy skills can be seen in children's ability to tell stories. During the inspection, a young story teller, dressed in a shiny red cloak, captured the imagination of adults and children alike with an individual rendition of his own story. The good teaching and questioning challenges children, seen in the effective recall sessions where observations of children's learning are noted by adults to inform next steps in planning activities.

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The careful induction, good relationships and well-organised routines enable children to feel safe. They are encouraged to take responsibility. For example, children are regularly involved in the daily risk assessment of outside resources to ensure all is safe. A group of youngsters were observed planning their own assembly and acting out a play using their developing speaking and presentation skills well. Children are able to select their own activities inside and outdoors. The school acknowledges that occasionally there are limited opportunities for children to experience their knowledge and understanding of the world through practical activities such as gardening. Leaders acknowledge the large grassed space offers opportunities for further development.

Adults in Reception are a cohesive and well-led team. The Early Years Foundation Stage Leader has a clear understanding of how to interpret and use data to ensure all children make good progress. There is a two-way dialogue between the school and the pre-school setting which means that weaknesses in childrens skills are quickly identified and actions put in place, for example the correct position for holding a pencil. Self-evaluation is good and the Reception staff are well trained, particularly relating to childrens welfare.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of questionnaire responses returned was nearly one third, and of these, an overwhelmingly majority of parents and carers are happy with all aspects of their childrens education at school. They speak with pride about their children joining with other schools for sporting and music opportunities. They express the view that the school supports a smooth transition to the next stage in education. A very small minority commented on concerns about the organisation of homework. Other parents and carers praised the introduction of homeschool diaries for keeping them informed. The inspection team considers that the new system for homework, particularly feedback to parents and carers, has not yet been fully established with all families.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Peters 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 137 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 410 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	90	66	43	31	4	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	80	58	56	41	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	55	40	77	56	5	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	64	47	69	50	3	2	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	66	48	66	48	4	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	60	44	67	49	8	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	54	39	79	58	3	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)	40	29	84	61	2	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	55	40	70	51	2	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	34	75	55	8	6	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	45	33	83	61	4	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	67	49	65	47	1	1	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	83	61	48	35	3	2	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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 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.



4 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peters Catholic Primary School, Gloucester GL1 3PY

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team on our recent visit. Quite a few of you told us how you enjoyed your learning at school. Your parents and carers told us how pleased they were with the progress you make. We were impressed with how safe you feel in school and your good behaviour. We were interested to hear your views and these helped us to make our judgements. We are pleased to tell you that your school has improved from a school that needed a notice to improve at the last inspection to a good school. This letter is to tell you what we found.

The headteacher leads your school exceptionally well.

The governing body and staff make sure you all achieve as well as you can.

The good and sometimes outstanding teaching means all of you make good progress.

The way you are cared for is outstanding.

You have an excellent understanding of other religions and cultures.

You show high levels of respect for each other and are very responsible for your own actions.

You know how to be healthy and enjoy taking part in sports.

You enjoy writing and many of you complete work of a high standard.

Many of you are good mathematicians.

Those of you who are new, especially those of you who are at the early stages of speaking English as an additional language, settle quickly in school.

I have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to work on some areas to improve your work. I have asked the leaders and managers to plan the curriculum to ensure you make better progress in your skills and to take more account of your interests. We have also asked your teachers to plan opportunities for you to use ICT across all areas of your work. I am confident you will do all you can to help by working hard.

I wish you every success in the future in your new school building.

Yours sincerely

Jane Neech

Her Majesty's Inspector

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