

St Peter and St Paul Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104810
Local Authority	St. Helens
Inspection number	355635
Inspection dates	6–7 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Jane Millward 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	187
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr Kevin O'Brien
Headteacher	Mr Kevin Reid
Date of previous school inspection	19 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Inspectors observed seven teachers in 13 lessons or parts of lessons. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, pupils and members of staff. Inspectors examined the school's improvement planning, policy documents, pupils' work, pupils' tracking data, plans for the curriculum, notes of visits by the School Improvement Partner, minutes of meetings held by the governing body and attendance data. Inspectors also scrutinised questionnaires from pupils, staff and from 80 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- How the school has improved outcomes in English, mathematics and science and how the school ensures that no pupils fall behind.
- The impact of leaders and managers in maintaining and improving provision.
- How leaders and managers evaluate the impact of their actions on the outcomes achieved by all pupils.
- The effectiveness of the support to promote pupils' personal development.

Information about the school

St Peter and St Paul's is smaller than the average sized primary school. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and none are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than the national average. The school has Healthy School status.

There is a breakfast club run by the governing body.

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

St Peter and St Paul's is a good school. Pupils are happy, enjoy school, have positive attitudes and make good progress. They are well behaved and take responsibility for their own actions from an early age. Parents and carers are very satisfied with the quality of education the school provides. Attendance is above average and pupils arrive at school punctually. Children enter the Reception class with skills below those expected for their age, especially so in personal and communication aspects. During the Early Years Foundation Stage, they make good progress and the majority of pupils enter Year 1 in line with national expectations. Good progress continues throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, so by the time they leave the school in Year 6, attainment in English, mathematics and science is in line with national expectations. This represents good achievement. Improved rates of progress, as evidenced through the school's tracking data and the scrutiny of pupils' books, demonstrate rising attainment. Improvements in pupils' attainment in English are due to a sustained focus on developing writing skills.

Pupils make good progress because the majority of teaching is good. Staff meet the needs of learners as they know pupils well and plan interesting and relevant activities. Teachers effectively use detailed and accurate assessment procedures to check pupils' progress. Effective deployment of adults contributes to the good quality of provision. A recent review of the teaching staff has led to the majority of teachers being new to the age groups they are now teaching. Marking of pupils' books acknowledges the efforts pupils make and the best effectively guides pupils in how to improve their work; this is especially so in the marking of writing. However, this practice is inconsistent across the school and across subjects.

Improvements made to the curriculum have resulted in an appropriate and relevant range of activities, which provide memorable experiences for the pupils. The linking of subjects together has led to planned activities which are meaningful and enjoyable, for example, the school's involvement in 'Black Culture Week'. However, the school recognises that pupils' understanding of different countries and other cultures could be deeper.

Senior leaders and managers have focused on raising attainment by implementing rigorous tracking systems in school. This has provided teachers with detailed information on the attainment of all pupils in English and mathematics. Monitoring of teaching and learning involves leaders at all levels, but there is scope for subject leaders to further develop this role. Members of the governing body are involved in all aspects of school life and have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas to develop. However, there are not enough opportunities for governors to receive more information directly from subject leaders to further hold the school to account for its decisions.

The school takes into account the views of parents and carers and acts decisively upon them. Parents and carers feel well supported by the school and very positive relationships

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exist. Effective links with external agencies ensure vulnerable learners' needs are met very well.

Through perceptive self-evaluation the school has an accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses. As a result, it has prioritised raising pupils' attainment. Leaders and managers have focused keenly on improving systems and procedures to check pupils' academic progress and personal development. This has led to rising attainment, especially in English, accelerated rates of progress and better attendance. The school is well placed to sustain and develop its success and has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English, mathematics and science in both key stages, by:
 - - ensuring that pupils always know what they must do to improve
 - - sharing good quality teaching and assessment practice throughout the school.
- Improve leadership, management and governance, by:
 - - ensuring that monitoring by subject leaders is rigorous and sharply focuses on pupils' learning and that findings are translated into actions to bring about further improvements
 - - ensuring that the governing body holds subject leaders to account for the progress of all pupils.
- Improve pupils' global awareness so that they develop their interest and understanding of the diversity of the way communities and societies function.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils are very positive about school. They achieve well, have good attitudes and enjoy their learning. Pupils listen carefully to teachers' instructions, behave well and are keen to work as hard as they can. Pupils talk about the work they do in school but are less confident when asked about what targets they have in order to improve their work. All groups of pupils make good progress, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is because pupils who fall behind in their learning are quickly identified through the system for tracking pupils' progress and appropriate support is given. Pupils say they feel safe and enjoy school. They know who to turn to if they have a problem and know issues will be resolved by a caring and responsive team of school staff. Behaviour around school and in lessons is good. Pupils are exceptionally polite and courteous which supports the warm and inviting atmosphere which permeates throughout the school. They have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and they participate actively in a range of sporting activities, including the 'wake and shake' event before school. Pupils understand the benefits of exercise and show an awareness of the factors which affect their health.

Pupils' good spiritual, moral and cultural development is underpinned by the school's mission statement. Pupils have a shared and united view of important values and know the difference between right and wrong. They respond enthusiastically to the school's culture weeks and talk eagerly about the activities that inform them about other cultures and beliefs. While pupils enjoy these activities, the school recognises that there is an

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opportunity for these experiences to be extended throughout the year and embedded more deeply into the curriculum. Pupils are keen to take on roles and responsibilities in the school community, for example, as school councillors and house captains. Pupils talk enthusiastically about raising money for worthwhile causes and enjoy supporting both the local and wider community, for example, the Willowbrook Hospice. Their improved progress, leading to rising attainment, above average attendance and their maturing attitudes, mean that pupils are well placed for the next stage of their education and talk confidently about their aspirations for the future.

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	3
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	2
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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?

Teaching and learning are good overall across the school. Teachers consistently use the information on pupils' progress to plan activities which meet the needs of all learners. Good use of behaviour management techniques generates a positive environment for learning. In the most effective lessons, teachers use questioning techniques to inspire pupils to think about their learning. Pupils are given opportunities to reflect on advice given by their teachers. Effective use is made of adults in lessons to support individuals and groups of pupils. For example, an outstanding feature in a Year 3 mathematics lesson was the team approach to a practical task which ensured that all pupils had equal access to the activity. Where lessons are less successful, too little is expected of pupils in thinking for themselves about how to move their learning forward, and they depend too much on

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the staff. Marking of pupils' work affirms the efforts of pupils. In the best examples, this marking is rigorous and highly supportive in guiding pupils in how to improve their work. This is especially so in writing. However, this is inconsistent and pupils are not always clear about how they can improve their work.

Staff have reviewed the planning and teaching of most subjects leading to a comprehensive, well organised curriculum, which takes account of the school's context. The successful improvements in the reorganisation of the English curriculum have ensured improved progress by pupils, especially in writing. This good approach was used recently to review the mathematics curriculum. Activities, such as using a webcam to talk to Irish pupils during Irish culture week, extend the curriculum and are highly regarded by pupils. They talk excitedly of the residential trip that supports well their personal development.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding and remain a high priority for the school. For example, pupils' well-being and personal development are checked against the Every Child Matters agenda and the findings are acted upon and incorporated into the curriculum. The support given to pupils is extremely well targeted and members of staff know the pupils and their families very well. Support for vulnerable pupils is highly effective and links with outside agencies ensure a combined approach to contribute to pupils' personal development and achievement. The breakfast club provides a safe and enjoyable start to the day for the few pupils who attend.

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?

The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, provides a strong sense of purpose for the school. The vision to raise the achievement of all groups of pupils, while embracing families and the community, is shared by staff. As a team they work together to fulfil these goals and focus on agreed ambitious aims. The headteacher has implemented effective systems to provide detailed information on the progress of individuals and groups of pupils. As a result, there is a quicker identification of pupils who may fall behind in their work and successful programmes are used to accelerate progress. Teaching and learning are monitored through lesson observations carried out by senior and subject leaders. While this strategy is established across the school, there are missed opportunities for leaders to identify the characteristics of more effective lessons and to share these more systematically in order to further improve practice.

The governing body is committed and contributes well to improvements in outcomes for all groups of pupils. The Chair of the Governing Body and vice-chair have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Through governing body

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meetings, all members are kept informed of the work of the school. Individual governors bring a wide range of expertise to the school. The governing body supports and challenges the decisions of senior leaders. Currently, however, it does not rigorously hold subject leaders to account for their work. Arrangements to ensure the safeguarding and protection of pupils are robust and fulfil all statutory requirements. St Peter and St Paul's is a very inclusive school and there is a harmonious atmosphere which enables pupils to work and play very well together. The school promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination well. Leaders and managers at all levels promote community cohesion effectively. Links with external agencies effectively support pupils' well-being and learning and the school engages well with a wide range of community groups outside the school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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 join the Early Years Foundation Stage from a variety of pre-school settings. What children know and can do varies, but is typically below expectations for their age. Staff devote much time to establishing effective and positive relationships so that children feel safe and quickly settle into school life. Through this emphasis on developing essential personal and social skills, children get off to a good start and make good progress in most aspects of their learning. Children behave well and learn to share, take turns and take responsibility. For example, a group of five boys were happily working as a team to find worms in the soil. Staff use children's interests to develop exciting activities and regular assessments inform future planning. This leads to a good range of activities indoors and outside, providing a stimulating and welcoming environment, which inspires pupils to explore and learn. The outdoor environment has been improved since the last inspection and is having a positive impact on the development of learning for all children. Adult-led activities are followed up with opportunities for children to explore and further their learning. All welfare requirements are firmly in place. There are strong partnerships in

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place with parents and carers, leading to good communication. The effective Early Years Foundation Stage leader has developed a team approach. She is proactive in taking account of the views of parents and carers, and evaluates provision robustly.

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

There was a larger than average proportion of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are very happy with the school. Almost all consider that the school keeps their children safe and enable them to enjoy school. One written comment summarised the view of many parents and carers, 'Fantastic school. Brilliant communication from staff. Teachers happy to help and work together with parents and carers to help children.' Parents and carers who spoke to inspectors said they were kept well informed and were regularly updated on the progress of their children. They felt that the headteacher was very approachable and that any issues were quickly resolved.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Peter and St Paul 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 80 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 187 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	63	79	16	20	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	68	85	12	15	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	53	66	26	33	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	61	76	19	24	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	65	81	15	19	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	53	66	26	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	57	71	21	26	2	3	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)	52	65	24	30	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	57	71	22	28	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	57	71	21	26	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	50	63	28	35	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	69	86	11	14	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	71	89	9	11	0	0	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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.



8 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter and St Paul Catholic Primary School St. Helens, WA11 9AT

On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you for the very friendly welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently. As you know we came to see how well you were doing and what you said helped us with our findings.

Yours is a good school. You achieve well, have good attitudes and enjoy your learning. You listen carefully to teachers' instructions and are keen to work as hard as you can. You have improved your work in English, especially your writing skills. I was very impressed with your good behaviour and how friendly you are to visitors. You are very proud of your school and enjoy the many activities that make your school a busy and interesting place to be. All the school staff take very good care of you. They know each and every one of you very well and they are able to support you with your work and any worries you have. You told me how your headteacher is always ready to help and sorts problems out quickly.

Almost all of your parents and carers are happy that you attend St Peter and St Paul's School and we can see why!

It is my job to find out how schools can do even better. I agree with your headteacher that you can reach even higher standards than you do already, so I have asked all the staff to help you to do this. I have asked your teachers to mark your work so that you always know what to do to improve it. I also think you could know more about other cultures and issues around the world, so I have asked your teachers to teach you more about these interesting issues in lessons.

Thank you again for your very warm welcome and enjoy your learning.

Yours sincerely

Jane Millward

Her Majesty's Inspector

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