

St Peter's Church of England Primary School, Cassington

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123194
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	359387
Inspection dates	10–11 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Paul Edwards

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	78
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jan Macdonald
Headteacher	Jeanette Millward
Date of previous school inspection	4 December 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed three teaching staff while visiting nine lessons or parts of lessons. Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body, senior leaders, teaching staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation, assessment and tracking information, minutes of governing body meetings, arrangements for safeguarding and pupils' work. Staff and pupil questionnaires were also scrutinised along with 25 completed by parents and carers.

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

- The progress made by pupils in their writing and mathematics.
- How teachers' planning ensures all groups of pupils progress as well as they should.
- The pupils' awareness of people from other cultures and backgrounds.

Information about the school

St Peter's Church of England Primary School is a much smaller than average primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. Most of these pupils have mild learning difficulties, although a small number have more complex learning needs. The Early Years Foundation Stage caters for Reception age children in a mixed class with Year 1 pupils. The headteacher, a full-time teacher and a part-time teacher all joined the school in September 2010.

◆ A privately run pre-school operates on the school site each morning and is the subject of a separate 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

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

St Peter's Church of England Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. However, there are a number of good features to its work including the good pastoral support it provides and the work it has undertaken to improve the rate of pupils' attendance, which is now above that seen nationally. Links with the local community are strong and pupils play an integral part. For example, the choir performs regularly at the church, the local care home and 'Cassington Café'. Pupils behave well, they feel safe in school and they have a good moral awareness, supporting a range of charities both locally and further afield.

◆ Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children enter the Reception class with skills and abilities that are similar to those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress, but the lack of secure assessment procedures and planning, which do not always take account of the mixed age groups, results in children not always progressing as well as they should. Overall, pupils' progress is satisfactory. However, it accelerates towards the end of Key Stage 2, resulting in attainment that is above average by the end of Year 6 in both English and mathematics. A strong focus on raising attainment in English has had a good impact on pupils' achievement in this subject, particularly in boys' writing at the end of Key Stage 2.

◆ Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. There is a good rapport between staff and pupils and activities engage the pupils' interests. Teachers plan work for pupils of different abilities but, occasionally, learning objectives lack clarity and assessment information is not used sufficiently well to ensure work is pitched at the correct level for all groups of pupils. Teaching does not allow sufficient time for the pupils to carry out the tasks and to use their initiative. There is a good range of clubs, visits and visitors that support the otherwise satisfactory curriculum. Planning ensures pupils develop a satisfactory awareness of people from other cultures and backgrounds. Partnerships with a neighbouring school enable pupils to develop their musical skills, with all pupils in a year group learning to play the violin. Pupils are well looked after. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are provided with a good level of well-targeted support, enabling them to take a full part in all aspects of the curriculum.

◆ In her short time at the school, the headteacher has gathered a clear picture of its strengths and weaknesses. Teaching staff are beginning to develop their understanding of how to analyse data to determine the progress pupils make. The school's tracking and assessment procedures are in place but frequent changes to the leadership have resulted in initiatives not being followed through and too little focus on using the information to identify whether pupils are progressing as well as they should in all year groups. The

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governing body supports the school well and has provided stability during a period of several changes of leadership. A clear focus on raising pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 has had a positive impact, with a year-on-year rise in standards attained by pupils in national tests. There is a clear plan in place to promote community cohesion and the school has rightly recognised the need to evaluate more effectively the impact of its plan. Improvements since the previous inspection, the headteacher's clear self-evaluation and the drive of the governing body demonstrate there is satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is consistently good by:
 - enabling teachers to make more effective use of assessment information to ensure work is pitched at the correct level for all groups of pupils
 - ensuring learning objectives are sharper and more closely linked to the pupils' prior learning
 - ensuring that there is a better balance of the teachers' introduction to lessons and the amount of time provided for pupils to complete tasks
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills
 - planning activities that are more exciting and interesting and relevant to pupils' real-life experiences.
- Provide support and guidance to enable Early Years Foundation Stage staff to more effectively plan work and assess how well children are progressing.
- Improve the procedures by which the tracking and assessment of pupils are undertaken and how the information is used by teachers.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

In 2009, pupils' attainment in national tests was significantly above average in English and above average in mathematics. While not quite as high, provisional test results for 2010 indicate a similar picture. Classroom observations during the inspection show that pupils are making satisfactory progress overall in the key subjects of English and mathematics although reading skills improve more quickly than those of writing. The extension into Key Stage 2 of a programme to improve pupils' recognition of letter sounds and blends is helping to improve pupils' reading and spelling skills. Progress accelerates more rapidly towards the end of Key Stage 2, the result of appropriate interventions and additional support for those who need extra help. As a result, attainment is above average. Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate good speaking and listening skills, the result of effective questioning strategies by the teachers. There is no significant difference in attainment between boys and girls, and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar rates of progress to their classmates. The pupils have to share access to a small computer suite and this limits the opportunity to develop their independent research skills which are satisfactory. Creative skills develop well. For

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example, pupils' building of Greek Temples as part of their history project shows a good approach to using different materials. ♦

♦ Pupils feel safe, enjoy school and are keen to talk about the interesting activities they do, including helping with the Cassington Caf ♦ and the yearly 'Bike Night', when motor cyclists visit the village. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to eat healthily and to take plenty of exercise. A good number participates in the sporting activities on offer. Pupils are keen to take responsibility, looking after their younger schoolmates. Pupils take leading roles in village life, regularly singing for the church and at a home for senior citizens. Through their fundraising, assemblies and religious education sessions, pupils develop a good understanding of service to the community and to each other. They recognise right and wrong and how they should take care of others. They develop a satisfactory awareness of different religions and cultures both abroad and in this country. Pupils' above average basic skills and their good attendance show they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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?

Pupils' enjoyment of lessons is confirmed through lesson observations. In the best lessons, teachers question pupils well, eliciting extended responses that develop their speaking

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skills well. For example, the skills of older Key Stage 2 pupils were enhanced through discussing their writing of myths and legends and through the opportunity to assess the work of their classmates. There are examples of good marking of pupils' work although it is not consistent and pupils do not always take note of the comments. However, most teaching is satisfactory rather than good because teachers spend too long telling pupils what to do and leave too little time for them to carry out their work. Teachers' planning of lessons takes too little account of assessment of previous work, resulting in a lack of challenge for some pupils. There are missed opportunities to allow pupils to find things out for themselves through taking charge of their own investigations and to use computers for research.

◆ Pupils rightly believe the allotments where they grow a range of vegetables and fruits help their awareness of healthy foods. The opportunities to sell produce to parents and carers provide pupils with funds that they use for charitable purposes such as supporting homeless people in Oxford. A wide range of visitors and visits, including residential trips, adds to pupils' interest in school life. The curriculum is enhanced through the teaching of French to all pupils. Effective mentoring provides good guidance and support for those pupils who lack confidence or who are having learning, behavioural or emotional difficulties, enabling them to take a full part in all aspects of the curriculum. The good tracking and assessment of the needs of these pupils enable the school to put in place a wide range of support. Attendance has improved as a result of closer monitoring and effective links with parents and carers.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Self-evaluation is mostly accurate and the headteacher has a clear picture of what needs to be done to improve. The high number of staff changes that have occurred since the previous inspection, particularly to the leadership, have resulted in too many initiatives that have not always been followed through. However, the governing body and the new headteacher rightly recognise the importance of stability and have correctly identified the most important aspects that will move the school forward. Morale is good and staff are keen to improve their practice. The management of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The leadership is effective in ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils and that there is no discrimination. The governing body has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and there is a clear focus on evaluating the pupils' academic performance. Governors are regular visitors and challenge the leadership to raise standards further. Health and safety issues permeate school life. At the time of the

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inspection, safeguarding procedures were secure although a number of administrative issues needed to be addressed. The governing body has planned satisfactorily for community cohesion. As a result, pupils develop a satisfactory understanding of different religions and cultures although they lack the first-hand experiences the school would like to provide.

◆ There are good links with parents who are supportive of the school. The school is rightly exploring how its school website might be more effectively used to enhance the dialogue between home and school. Information, through reports and meetings, is well received by parents and carers, who appreciate the regular dialogue. The good links with outside agencies aid the school in providing for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school's transition arrangements with the pre-school provider and with its secondary school, to which most pupils transfer, are good.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start school with the skills expected for their age, make satisfactory progress and reach average standards by the time they enter Year 1.

◆ Children settle well, aided by the school's good partnerships with their parents. Children are polite and well behaved. They talk confidently to adults and are proud of their work. In Reception, they go about their tasks with purpose and concentrate well, whether working with staff or independently. Staff interact with them well and encourage them in their work. Overall, teaching is satisfactory. Planning occasionally lacks a clear focus on what the children will be expected to learn at various points in their development. As a result, there are missed opportunities to ensure the range of activities is sufficiently challenging for all children, particularly in a mixed-age setting. Assessment information is

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not sufficiently well developed to support the planning process and to aid transition to Key Stage 1.

◆ The curriculum provides good opportunities for children to extend their experiences outdoors. A good approach to the learning of letter sounds and blends provides the children with a secure base for their early reading and writing skills. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Since her appointment in September 2010, the headteacher has taken on responsibility for leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage. She has correctly identified the need to ensure the staff are provided with specialist guidance to enhance the provision further.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

All parents and carers responding to the inspection questionnaire felt that their children enjoyed school and that they were well looked after. A small number of parents felt that the school did not provide sufficient opportunities for the children to engage in competitive sports. The school is looking at how it might collaborate with other schools to address this issue and how it might utilise the skills of professional sports clubs to assist. Although a small number of parents and carers felt that the school did not help them to support their children's learning, the inspectors judged that links with parents and carers in this respect are good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Peter's Church of England 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 25 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 78 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	14	56	11	44	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	8	32	15	60	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	8	32	13	52	3	12	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	5	20	16	64	2	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	12	48	9	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	7	28	14	56	4	16	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	36	12	58	5	16	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)	9	36	12	48	2	8	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	48	13	52	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	3	12	13	52	3	12	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	3	12	20	80	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	9	36	14	56	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	10	40	15	60	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	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.



12 November 2010

◆ Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter's Church of England Primary School, Cassington, OX29 4DN

◆ Thank you so much for your warm welcome when we visited your school this week. We really enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and watching you learn. This letter is to tell you the outcome of the inspection and what we have asked the school to do to become even better.

- You go to a happy, welcoming school that provides a satisfactory quality of education.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep healthy, you behave well and enjoy your work.
- There is a good range of clubs, visits and visitors that add interest to the curriculum.
- Your school works well with other organisations to make the curriculum more interesting.

We have asked your headteacher and staff to do the following to improve the school:

- Improve the quality of teaching by using the information about how well you are doing more effectively, by giving you more opportunities to be more independent in your learning and by giving you more real-life activities that are really exciting and interesting.
- Provide help for staff who work in the Early Years Foundation Stage to help improve planning and how they assess your work.
- Improve the way the school tracks and monitors how well you are learning and how teachers use the information.

You can all help by making sure you take notice of the comments teachers make about your work. ◆

◆ Yours sincerely

◆ Paul Edwards

Lead inspector

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