

St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Devizes

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126401
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	360075
Inspection dates	18–19 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Stephen Lake

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	70
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Amber Frost
Headteacher	Catherine Davis
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed 11 lessons or parts of lessons and 3 teachers. Inspectors held meetings with representatives of the governing body, members of staff, the local authority and pupils; they also spoke to a number of parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at the school self-evaluation form, the school development plan, the governing body minutes, the school's assessments of pupils' attainment and progress, the records held on pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, school policies; and reports from the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors analysed questionnaires received from pupils, staff and 18 parents and carers.

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

- achievement in reading and writing in Key Stage 1 and mathematics in Key Stage 2 to determine whether teaching is sufficiently challenging and based on accurate assessment
- provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to determine if pupils' needs are being met
- effectiveness of middle managers and the governing body and their involvement in whole-school self-evaluation
- provision for promoting community cohesion
- the curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage, including outdoor learning.

Information about the school

St Peter's is a smaller-than-average primary school serving mainly its immediate surrounding area. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and no pupils are at an early stage of speaking English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The majority of these pupils have specific or moderate learning difficulties and some have emotional or behavioural difficulties. There have been many changes of staff and the school roll has fallen since the previous inspection. A new headteacher has been in post since September 2009 and some members of the governing body are relatively new to their roles.

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?**4****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****3**

Main findings

In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' attainment in mathematics and English, and in particular, reading in Key Stage 1.

Low attainment and underachievement have been features of the school in recent years. This has been halted by the work of the capable headteacher who took up her appointment in September 2009 and is supported well by the local authority. As a result of actions taken, attainment in writing and mathematics has risen. In reading, attainment is improving rapidly, but is still low because the successful systems for teaching reading in Key Stage 1 have only been in place for a short period. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and improving well, especially in Years 5 and 6 where it is now often good. However, the more-able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently and the pace of learning in some lessons is not fast enough to ensure that all pupils make consistently good progress. Nevertheless, from starting points typical for their age in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils are now making satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the good quality provision that ensures their needs are met well.

The curriculum is now more closely matched to the needs of pupils and the learning environment is much improved. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is also improved, but the school recognises the need to provide more structured opportunities for learning indoors and outdoors, and to encourage children to choose activities independently. Pupils clearly enjoy school. Attendance has improved significantly and is now above average. Pupils are looked after well and the good quality care, support and guidance they receive enable them to have a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and local community, although inadequate provision for promoting community cohesion limits their understanding of the range of cultures in Britain and other countries. The impact of new assessment procedures can be seen in the improved learning and progress across the whole school, especially in Years 5 and 6. However, in some lessons, assessment information is not used well enough to ensure that activities really challenge pupils, especially the more-able, in their learning. The new procedures for assessing children when they start school are not fully embedded. This means that progress cannot be judged accurately and activities are not always closely matched to the needs of children.

The strong leadership of the headteacher has brought a transparency to leadership and management and has united the staff into a cohesive team, with a clear ambition to drive

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forward improvement and raise attainment. Senior leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in the school and use this information well to identify areas for improvement. Subject leaders are starting to ensure more consistency throughout the school and to improve pupils' attainment but are not yet fully effective in their roles. The governing body has improved its effectiveness and takes an active role in evaluating the school and holding it to account. Inspectors found substantial evidence to show that clear improvement has taken place, notably in the quality of teaching which is leading to improved progress for pupils. This indicates that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Consolidate the improvements made to the quality of teaching to raise attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 and reading in Key Stage 1, in particular by:
 - embedding firmly the new systems for teaching reading
 - ensuring that information on pupils' attainment and progress is used effectively to plan challenging work, especially for the more-able
 - ensuring that all lessons are well paced to encourage more effective learning.
- Embed the improvements to provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring that the improved assessment procedures are used rigorously to enable an accurate picture of children's skills when they start school
 - providing more structured opportunities for children to choose their own learning activities and move freely between indoor and outdoor activities.
- Improve the provision for promoting community cohesion and cultural understanding by:
 - providing better opportunities for pupils to learn about different cultures found both in the United Kingdom and other countries
 - developing systems to evaluate the effectiveness of strategies to promote community cohesion.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Realistic attainment targets have recently been set for pupils to achieve by the end of Year 6 and pupils are well on their way to achieving these. Current progress is particularly good in Years 5 and 6, but Year 6 pupils have too much ground to make up in such a short time and their attainment remains low. Pupils in Year 5 are on track to achieve more demanding targets by the time they reach the end of Year 6. Teachers challenge most pupils to reach higher levels. For instance, in an English lesson, pupils were encouraged to write journalistic accounts of Queen Victoria's death. They were continually challenged to improve their writing by using better opening sentences that would capture the interest of the reader. Nevertheless, more-able pupils do not achieve as well as they could be because the work set for them is not always challenging enough. Good support for pupils with additional learning needs helps them to make good progress and for some to raise

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their attainment to match that of other pupils. Pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are average.

The vast majority of pupils are polite, friendly and confident when talking to visitors. Pupils say that behaviour has improved and there is no bullying and that they trust adults to deal effectively with any that might occur. A range of responsibilities, such as older pupils helping younger ones at play, or taking responsibility for preparing the hall for assemblies, enable pupils to make a good contribution to the school community. Pupils contribute well to events at the local church such as the Harvest Festival. Within the local community, they participate eagerly in the lantern parade and demonstrate their skills in events such as taking part in an Elizabethan costume drama with other members of the community to raise money for Save the Children. Activities such as these help pupils gain social skills to prepare them for their future lives, but their low levels of literacy and numeracy mean that they are insufficiently prepared for transition to the next phase of their education. Pupils clearly know right from wrong and show respect for themselves and others. They know about their local culture and have some understanding of other cultures through visitors to the school and their work in geography and religious education. Nonetheless, their understanding of different cultural traditions is a weakness.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
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	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
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	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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

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How effective is the provision?

Robust action by the headteacher has strengthened the teaching team. Good quality support and training in conjunction with the local authority is helping to improve teaching rapidly. Teachers are focusing more clearly on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills but the use of these skills across all subjects, although improving, is not fully embedded. In many lessons, the good use of 'talk partners' helps pupils to assess how well they are doing and improve their own performance. Good oral feedback helps pupils to improve their learning. Regular marking, with helpful comments, further guides pupils on how to improve their work, but does not always set sufficiently challenging short-term targets especially for more-able pupils. Teaching assistants are well briefed by teachers on what they need to do to support pupils during a lesson. Teachers use ICT satisfactorily to motivate and stimulate pupils' learning. High expectations of behaviour are effective in providing clear support for the large number of pupils who experience difficulty with self-control. Inspectors observed some good use of questioning, although sometimes questions are too focused upon individual pupils which limits the participation of others..

The balance of the curriculum has improved this year. Links across subjects offer a broad range of activities that support learning appropriately. The curriculum contributes well to most aspects of pupils' personal development, especially through visitors and visits, including residential visits. New schemes of work for teaching reading are leading to improvements in progress although it is too early to see the full impact on pupils' attainment, particularly at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils particularly enjoy the opportunity to learn French and are motivated by the opportunity to perform their nativity play in French this year. The many after-school clubs are popular and well attended. Links with local schools provide ample opportunities for competitive sports and for extending those pupils identified as gifted and talented. Senior leaders have correctly identified that there are too few activities designed to develop community cohesion or pupils' understanding of other cultures. Plans are underway to link with a school in London to help address this.

Pastoral care, especially for pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable and those with additional needs, is a strength of the school. Child protection procedures are robust and good partnerships with outside agencies ensure support for vulnerable pupils. Good quality support and concerted efforts by the school working with the local authority have improved attendance significantly. New and robust systems for tracking and recording pupils' attainment and progress at very regular intervals have been introduced. These enable the headteacher to identify easily where support is needed. The procedures for identification of pupils with special educational needs are effective. These new systems are a key factor in promoting the improvements in pupils' attainment.

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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?

The headteacher is very effective at motivating others and has, in a short time, developed a strong team spirit. Parents and carers, pupils and staff all speak highly of way the school is united because of the headteacher's clear vision and leadership style. Subject leaders are developing a new and improved understanding of their roles, but freely admit that they still have more to learn before they are fully effective. Already, they feel empowered to suggest change and have a developing view of what needs improving. Nevertheless, subject leaders do not yet have a sufficiently sophisticated understanding of the strategic use of data to enable them to set sufficiently challenging and accurate whole-school targets in their subjects.

Revised procedures for monitoring the progress of all groups are used to ensure equality of opportunity, and the school is vigilant to prevent discrimination. Safeguarding procedures are robust and effective. The governing body monitors their implementation well. Partnerships with appropriate agencies are used effectively to ensure child protection. The senior staff recognise that more needs to be done to develop community cohesion beyond the school and local community or evaluate the effectiveness of such strategies as are in place. The governing body supports the school satisfactorily and is developing suitable strategies to enable it to improve. Governors have good informal systems to seek the views of parents and carers and pupils and are working to obtain their views in a more systematic and rigorous manner.

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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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	4
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Well-established routines help children make a secure start to their education. The school has developed strong links with parents and carers, especially through home visits to all children before they start school. The strong teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that the welfare and needs of children are met well. Teachers and other adults usually ensure a good balance between direct teaching and opportunities for children to learn through purposeful play. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has identified that systems for checking on the way children choose independent learning opportunities, linked closely to the main lesson focus, are not effective enough.

Children make good use of the outdoor area, but activities outside are not always closely enough linked to those inside to provide opportunities for making independent choices on where to learn. Suitable systems for checking on children's progress have been introduced, but these are not used consistently enough to ensure an accurate identification of attainment when children start school. The provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved considerably recently and children learn more effectively due to the improved leadership and management.

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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

Parents and carers are overwhelming supportive of the school. Many made written comments and a number spoke with the lead inspector to express how pleased they are with the changes that have taken place. The comments are unanimous in praising the way the school has improved under the leadership of the comparatively new headteacher. Typical of the comments was, 'The school has vastly improved recently, direction, drive and sense of purpose.' Inspectors' findings endorse the positive comments of parents and carers.

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 18 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 70 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	14	78	4	22	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	16	89	2	11	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	11	61	7	39	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	9	50	9	50	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	11	61	7	39	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	61	7	39	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	56	8	44	0	0	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)	7	39	10	56	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	67	5	28	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	7	39	11	61	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	67	5	28	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	14	78	4	22	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	13	72	5	28	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.



20 November 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of St Peter's Church of England Primary School, Devizes, SN10 2AP

Thank you for making us welcome when we came to visit your school.

You were very polite and we enjoyed speaking with you. Although your school is improving, it is not doing as well as it should be. We have given the school a notice to improve. This means the school will need to make some more improvements to help you do better in your work.

We like the way your headteacher is already helping the school improve. She has helped you to improve your attendance and this is helping you learn better. In fact, all of you are learning satisfactorily now and your attainment is getting better, but it is still not as good as in most other schools. Your teachers are making learning more enjoyable and interesting. We were very impressed with how many of you were taking part in preparing the French nativity play. Those of you who need extra help get good support which is helping you to learn alongside all the other pupils. You can help by telling your teachers if you think that some work is too easy for you.

To complete the remaining improvements inspectors have asked your headteacher and governors to:

- find ways to make teaching even better, by planning work that helps all of you, especially those who are more-able, to achieve your best so that you do at least as well in English and mathematics as pupils in most other schools
- improve the way they check on how well you are doing when you start school in Reception and providing more opportunities for those of you in Reception to choose to work in the indoor or outdoor areas
- give you more opportunities to learn about the different cultures to be found in the United Kingdom and in other countries, and check on how well this helps you get on with people from other cultures and faiths.

Another inspector will visit again soon to see how much the school has improved.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Lake

Lead inspector

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