

St Peter and St Paul Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121029
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	358907
Inspection dates	13–14 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Norma Ball

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	187
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Don Saunders
Headteacher	Susan Youngs
Date of previous school inspection	30 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons as well as small teaching groups out of class. Inspectors observed 8 teachers. They met parents and carers informally on the first day of the inspection, and held meetings with the headteacher, teaching staff, members of the governing body and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised samples of pupils' work, the school's systems for tracking pupils' progress, management and curriculum documentation, teachers' planning and safeguarding documents. In addition, inspectors took account of questionnaire responses from 24 parents and carers, 10 staff and 87 pupils.

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

- What steps are being taken to improve attainment in English throughout the school, especially in writing?
- How well do teachers use assessment information to set appropriate challenge for all groups of pupils and what effect is this having on improving progress, especially for boys, for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils of higher ability?
- To what extent does the curriculum meet pupils' needs and contribute to improved outcomes for pupils?
- How well do leaders and managers at all levels monitor the work of the school, particularly subject leaders, and what impact is this having on improving achievement for all pupils?

Information about the school

St Peter and St Paul's is smaller than other primary schools and serves the local village community and surrounding area. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A small number of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and a few of these pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is greater than found nationally but the number of pupils with a statement of special educational need is similar to the national average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is similar to that found nationally. The number of pupils who leave or join the school at different times is higher than usual and has been increased by new housing development in the village. The school holds the Healthy School award.

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 and St Paul is a satisfactory school. A particular strength is the good care, guidance and support provided for pupils and their families. Pupils enjoy coming to school because they have positive attitudes to learning and relationships at every level are good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school and are caring and supportive of each other. Their social, moral and spiritual development is promoted well and their cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils fully understand what they need to do to have a healthy lifestyle and recognise the importance of being fit and safe. The large majority of parents are pleased with the school, and one said, 'A very friendly school, treats children as individuals.'

Children settle quickly in Reception and develop confidence and independence. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and their attainment is broadly average. Attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 has declined recently and is below average. There has been a significant increase in the number of pupils who join the school at different stages, especially in Years 4 to 6, which has affected attainment for older pupils. Some new pupils lag behind in their learning and require additional support to catch up with their classmates and a higher number of pupils with special educational needs have been admitted to the school in Years 5 and 6. The support they receive is good and they settle quickly and make good progress. The headteacher has taken sound action to improve the progress made by pupils in Key Stage 2, especially in literacy, through the careful selection of a range of initiatives including selecting themes which will be of interest to boys and inspire their writing. Although progress in writing, and particularly boys' progress, is improving, expectations of what pupils of higher ability can attain in their written work are not high enough in some classes. There are early signs that the progress pupils make in both literacy and numeracy is improving as a result of the schools new initiatives to raise attainment. However, these initiatives are not yet rigorously monitored to ensure any weaknesses are tackled quickly.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory and there are examples of good teaching, especially in Years 1 and 2. However, teaching and learning are not monitored sufficiently frequently, nor is good practice shared regularly, to accelerate the improvement in the quality of teaching. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully across the school, but the information gained from this process is not used consistently to plan tasks in all lessons which are sufficiently challenging, especially for more able pupils. Targets are set for pupils to identify the next steps in their learning but pupils are not fully involved in this process and are sometimes vague about the next steps in their learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their individual starting points because their needs are accurately assessed and the good support provided for them is planned carefully to address the gaps in their learning. The curriculum meets pupils' needs appropriately and links between subjects are beginning to

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develop to make learning more interesting and to provide pupils with more opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills.

The headteacher works in a close and complementary partnership with two deputy headteachers and together they have united staff in a committed drive to raise achievement for all pupils. The governing body are knowledgeable and provide good challenge to leaders and managers. The effectiveness of the school has been soundly evaluated resulting in a clear idea of necessary improvements. The progress made so far shows the school has a satisfactory capacity to sustain improvement.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' attainment and accelerate progress, particularly in writing, by
 - ensuring lessons challenge and encourage pupils in their learning, especially boys and pupils of higher ability
 - raising expectations of the quality of pupils' written work, including handwriting and presentation.
- Improve the proportion of good or better teaching by:
 - using assessment consistently to plan lessons that structure work to meet the needs of all pupils
 - ensuring pupils understand what they need to learn next and involve them in setting challenging targets.
 - Monitor and evaluate teaching and learning, and the impact of curriculum innovation, more regularly and take swift action to improve areas of weakness.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils show a positive desire to learn and to do well. They listen attentively, join in class discussions enthusiastically and exchange ideas with their talking partner. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language also join in discussions well. In a numeracy lesson in Year 2, pupils revised the use of remainder figures. They made good progress because the questions they were given captured their interest and were matched well to their ability. In a Year 6 literacy lesson pupils took a very mature approach to evaluating bias in newspaper articles. They summarised their work well in a lively discussion at the end of the lesson. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those falling behind in their learning receive good support in class and in a range of flexible small-group and individual sessions. As a result of this support, they make good progress.

Pupils make a good start to their learning in the Reception but, nevertheless, enter Year 1 with skills and abilities below those expected nationally especially in communication, language and literacy. Progress is good in Year 1 and 2 and pupils attain standards that are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the pace of progress in Years 3 to 6 tends to slow, especially in writing. The attainment of pupils who have been in school throughout Key Stage 2 is better than that of pupils who join the school at a later time. Increased mobility has meant up to a quarter of all pupils in Year 6 had only

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two years or less in Key Stage 2. For pupils with learning difficulties rapid identification of their needs and good support ensures they make good progress. However, for pupils of higher ability more challenge is required to ensure the work they are given meets their needs. Pupils of higher ability often get work that is similar to other groups and no extension task is provided for them, limiting the progress they make. Current assessment information and inspection evidence indicates that pupils now make satisfactory progress through the school.

Pupils love their school. One said, 'We rate it as ten out of ten and I never want to leave here.' Another said, 'Our teachers are really nice. They are always there for you if you need them.' Pupils carry out their responsibilities as school councillors with pride and older pupils regularly help and support younger pupils. However, the behaviour of a few boys sometimes deteriorates when they are not closely supervised, for example at lunch time. Pupils are keen to support a range of charities and are sensitive to the needs of others, especially those less fortunate than themselves. The school is at the heart of its village community and takes an active role in village life. Pupils are helped to develop a good awareness of how to stay safe and a good example of this was the walk through the country as part of a Year 2 science lesson. Pupils have a good understanding of all the elements of following a healthy lifestyle and the Healthy School status indicates the importance placed on this aspect of pupils' development. The satisfactory achievement of pupils and their good personal development ensures they are soundly placed 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	3
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	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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
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

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How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory, although better in Key Stage 1 than Key Stage 2. Teachers are using new strategies to improve pupils' skills in literacy and also numeracy with growing confidence. Targets, based on the national curriculum levels for literacy and numeracy are set for pupils. Some pupils find them helpful but others, especially younger pupils, do not feel they are special to them. Teachers show good subject knowledge and invariably explain what pupils are to learn in lessons. However, the pace of some lessons is too slow and the interest and challenge of the lesson is lost. Teachers are focusing on improving their questioning skills to ensure all pupils are involved in class discussions, especially pupils with special educational needs and/ or disabilities. Pupils' work is marked regularly, but the quality of marking is variable. Marking is better in literacy than in numeracy.

The curriculum provides a broad range of learning activities. In literacy, the selection of themes and topics that capture the imagination of pupils, especially boys, is inspiring them to extend their writing skills. Similarly improving pupils spelling and range of vocabulary is also contributing to improving writing. A sound range of extra-curricular clubs, visits and visitors extend learning beyond the classroom and provide additional opportunities for personal development. Valuable links are established with other schools, playgroups and a range of agencies to extend the good care provided in school. Careful planning ensures a smooth transition for pupils and good guidance for their parents and carers at whatever stage they join or leave the school.

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 provides clear and ambitious leadership for the school and works in a close and effective partnership with two deputy headteachers. Pupils' progress is now tracked soundly through the school and senior leaders and subject leaders are united in the drive to raise pupils' achievement. However, insufficient time is given to monitoring teaching and learning or evaluating new subject initiatives by senior staff. Lesson plans and pupils' work is monitored by subject leaders but they do not participate in a programme of lesson observations. As a result the strategies to improve attainment in literacy especially, and in numeracy, are not evaluated so that any problems are identified quickly and corrected. Good practice in teaching is also not regularly identified and shared with all staff to raise the overall quality of teaching more rapidly. The effectiveness with which leaders promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination is satisfactory but nevertheless some boys and pupils of higher ability are not always stretched.

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Parents and carers are kept well informed of their child's progress and developments in the school. Good efforts have been made to ensure that new parents are welcomed and involved. The safeguarding of pupils' welfare is satisfactory. Policies and procedures are securely integrated into the school but some require revision and updating. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory, and pupils are helped to develop an appreciation of their own local community. However, the headteacher and governing body are aware that not enough work has been done to provide pupils with a full appreciation of their role as future national and global citizens. The governing body shares the drive and ambition now apparent in the school. There is an efficient committee structure and the governing body offer both good support and challenge to leaders and managers. There is a perceptive understanding of the strengths and areas for development within the school.

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 quickly develop a positive approach to school and learning because they receive good care. They enter Reception with a range of skills and abilities, but they are below expectations for their age, especially in elements of language and numeracy. Children settle quickly, gain in confidence and learn to be independent so they make good progress in their emotional and physical development. There is a focus on improving children's writing and reading skills by developing their understanding of words by learning to blend the letter sounds. Nevertheless, some areas of literacy, although improving, remain weak. Teacher led learning sessions are well planned and provide stimulus for children and develop their skills well. Staff are skilled at joining in children's games to subtly help them develop their ideas and extend their speaking skills. However, when children select their own games and activities opportunities are lost to extend writing skills. This is because children are not routinely tempted with a range of prepared interesting literacy tasks to capture their interest.

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Children mix well and learn to share. As a result, they follow routines well, learn to tidy things away sensibly and to put on warm or waterproof clothes to use the outside learning area. They also play well together, for example, in the Arctic role play area they dressed warmly and loved to touch and move the small ice block provided on a tray nearby to make a home for the polar bears. Leadership and management are satisfactory, and the leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage is enthusiastic to develop the learning environment further. Resources are good and deployed soundly to cover all six areas of learning. Children's development is monitored regularly. Good links are forged with parents and carers on a daily basis and they are kept soundly informed about the progress their children are making.

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

A smaller proportion of parents and carers than is usual returned the questionnaire. Most of these parents and carers, and those who spoke to inspectors, are pleased with all aspects of the school. They value the fact that their children enjoy school and are safe. Parents are happy with their children's experience of school. A very few parents expressed concerns about the progress their child was making and how well informed they were about this progress. The inspection found progress is good in Key Stage 1 and improving in Key Stage 2. The school works well to forge links with parents, particularly new parents, and to keep them well informed about how well their child is doing.

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 Church of England Voluntary Controlled 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 24 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	17	71	7	29	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	19	79	3	13	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	13	54	8	33	2	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	11	46	10	42	2	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	14	58	9	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	54	9	38	2	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	8	33	15	63	1	4	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	38	12	50	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	7	29	14	58	2	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	5	21	15	63	1	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	33	13	54	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	15	63	8	33	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	71	5	21	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	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.



17 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter and St Paul Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Thetford, IP25 6SW

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We were very impressed with your good behaviour and how much you enjoy your lessons. You told us that you feel safe in school and you know a lot about how to keep healthy. We think your teachers and all the other staff take good care of you and this is another reason why you enjoy coming to school. Your headteacher, other staff and the governing body are working hard to help you do the best you can. We think that St Peter and St Paul is a satisfactory school. This means it does some things well, but also needs to make some things better.

We have asked your teachers to:

- help all of you, but especially boys and those of you who find learning easier, make better progress, especially in writing, and to produce the very best work you can with good handwriting
- use what they know about how well you are learning to plan lessons that always give you work that is a good match to your ability, and to involve you in setting your targets in literacy and numeracy.

We have also asked your headteacher and those teachers responsible for the different subjects you learn to keep a close check on your lessons to make sure that they are as good as they can be and you are learning more and more. So, they will be coming to look at your lessons more often in future.

You can help by working hard and always doing your best. We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Norma Ball

Lead inspector

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