

St Peter's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113485
Local Authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	357367
Inspection dates	6–7 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Paul Garvey

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	161
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Sam Philpott
Headteacher	Jan Digweed
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2008
School address	Rendle Street Plymouth PL1 1TP
Telephone number	01752 667724
Fax number	0175 2267976
Email address	st.peters.ce.primary.school@plymouth.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They saw 10 lessons and observed seven teachers. A number of shorter visits were made to classrooms to look at pupils' work. The inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, groups of pupils, staff, the Chair of Governors and other members of the governing body, the director of the Excellence Cluster of which the school is a member, and the parent support advisor. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books and tracking data showing pupils' attainment and the progress they are making. They also looked at a wide variety of documentation, including teachers' planning, School Improvement Partner reports and the school improvement plan and curriculum portfolios. They also considered 45 responses to the questionnaire received from parents and carers as well as those from pupils and staff.

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

- Whether the rate of progress seen in recent years has continued to accelerate for all pupils.
- Whether the quality of teaching and the breadth of the curriculum are of sufficient quality to support rapid progress.
- Whether leaders and managers at all levels have sufficient capacity to drive the school forward.

Information about the school

St Peter's Church of England Primary School is smaller than the average sized primary school. Its number on roll is growing. There are six classes, some of mixed-age pupils from Year 2 upwards. The Nursery class which is attended by 46 pupils, split between morning and afternoon sessions. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national figure. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average, and highest amongst the older pupils. They have a range of needs, foremost being behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, speech language and communication needs and specific learning needs. Most pupils are of White British heritage but the proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds and/or who speak English as an additional language is rising. Since the last inspection there have been changes in the senior leadership team, including a new headteacher who was appointed as interim headteacher in September 2008 and was made substantive headteacher in March 2010. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools status.

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's is a good school with a caring ethos which promotes good progress from all groups of pupils. It has significant strengths which are centred on the outstanding care, guidance and support that it gives to its pupils, especially those with complex needs. This care extends to the families of the pupils, and the highly effective relationships that the school has built with its parents and carers are a cornerstone of the school's work. This was well summed up by one parental comment, typifying the views of others, 'The staff are very supportive, caring and kind, not just for the children, but parents too.' Hand-in-hand with this outstanding care is similarly outstanding safeguarding of children. All staff and the governing body set very high standards in keeping the pupils safe and the school's work is being used as exemplary practice by neighbouring schools. Pupils and their parents and carers feel that it is an extremely safe school with one parental statement describing it as an 'oasis' for the pupils. Pupils have a keen sense of their personal safety and know that the school will listen to their concerns and act upon them quickly.

Pupils' attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6, although it is rising steadily. Teaching and assessment are both good, which enables pupils to make good progress from below average starting points. However, in a few lessons, teachers' planning, marking and individual target setting are not sufficiently detailed to challenge all groups of pupils and this slows progress. The introduction of a thematic curriculum is increasing pupils' engagement in their learning. It is allowing more opportunities for pupils to be creative, although this approach is not yet consistent throughout the school. The outside play areas are not as stimulating for learning as the indoor areas, where display work is innovative and aids learning.

Many aspects of pupils' personal development and well-being are strong. They behave well and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils develop an excellent sense of spirituality through daily worship and opportunities in lessons for reflection. The work of the school in making effective links with its varied ethnic communities and also in working with children in families facing challenging circumstances is resulting in some individual examples of very rapid progress. The school has employed a range of measures, such as text messaging, which have been effective in improving attendance to an average level. Its work, in partnership with other adults, has been particularly effective in reducing the absence of the poorest attenders. Nevertheless, for some pupils, lower attendance has an impact on their learning.

The school is extremely well led by a headteacher who binds together this cohesive community and sets the pace of improvement to drive the school forward. A parent spoke of her having a 'door which is always open'. Since her appointment, the school's expectations of the capabilities of its pupils have been raised and staff are now more

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accountable for the progress of all pupils in the school. As a result, the school knows its pupils and its context very well and self-evaluation is accurate. The school has consolidated and built upon the results of its last inspection and is well placed to continue these improvements. Consequently, the capacity for further improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment at Key Stage 2 by July 2012 by:
 - including pupils more fully in their learning, by encouraging pupils to respond to the teachers' marking, by setting them challenging individual targets and through teachers planning lessons which allow pupils to take a more active part in their own assessment, so that all groups of pupils can progress outstandingly well
 - making the curriculum more creative, so that all pupils are fully engaged in their lessons and improve the outdoor play areas so that all pupils are fully stimulated to learn during their play
 - work with parents and carers to ensure that all groups of pupils attend well.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children joining the school in the Nursery display very limited social and early language skills and start with skills and understanding which are lower than those typical of their age. By the time they enter Year 1, all children have made good progress towards the expected skill levels for their age, but remain below average. This good progress for all groups of children continues as pupils move up through the school. They cooperate well and respond enthusiastically to the task they are given. For example, in a combined Year 4/5 class, pupils were fully engaged in, and were excited about, playwriting and this was encouraging them to use a wider range of vocabulary and to explore the use of more complex sentences.

Pupils feel assured enough to explore their own spirituality and adopt excellent moral standpoints. At playtime, two pupils were observed helping their friend who had fallen over and helping their adult supervisors by taking her to her class teacher, and this is typical of the good relationships between children in the school. Pupils from a range of ethnic origins play and learn harmoniously and pupils new to the school quickly make friends and become valued members of the community; the different lifestyles and cultural experiences that they bring are celebrated in displays in all classrooms. Effective behaviour management and support from other adults ensure that pupils with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties cope well and enjoy their learning.

The large number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are warmly nurtured and, as a result, they make progress equal to that of their peers. In some cases, pupils with speech, language and communication needs, together with some pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, make exceptional progress due to well-targeted interventions and support from adults. Similarly, the increasing numbers of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are well integrated and make as much progress as their peers.

All groups of pupils are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles, bringing in healthy lunchboxes and taking part in a good programme of healthy activities. The school council

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is an effective body which makes decisions which pupils say are acted upon quickly by staff. An example of the way that pupils have contributed to the wider community was seen in the partnership work with the school's twin school in Uganda. Following a visit from the Ugandan headteacher, the children were shocked to learn that the Ugandan pupils had to walk for two hours to fetch water before school. As a result, they decided to walk for two hours around Plymouth, not only collecting sponsorship money to raise funds for new guttering at their twin school, but also declining to stop for lunch on the way, to show solidarity with their Ugandan counterparts who did not eat until they returned from their daily walk.

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	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are planned and delivered well. This is assisted by good assessment procedures and good marking, but neither of these is yet consistent enough to fully maximise progress. Pupils are included in their own assessment only to a limited degree. Target walls in class and good quality display work help to stimulate and engage the pupils, but a few lessons lack the spark that will fully engage the pupils at all times.

A good range of visits effectively enhances the curriculum, as does a good range of extra-curricular activities. After a recent whole-school visit to a zoo, Reception children were seen discussing animals in a story by making links to the animals they had seen there and they could apply simple labels to their pictures of them. Pupils in a combined Year 3/4

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class used the visit to produce imaginative fantasy writing for a display and some pupils with low literacy skills in a Year 1 class used their experience to enable them to draw pictures and add descriptions with more advanced vocabulary around an underwater theme. Whenever lessons were as creative as this, they promoted rapid progress through improved attainment. Pupils testified to their enjoyment of enhanced and extra-curricular activities during discussions.

Care, guidance and support for all pupils are outstanding, including for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Staff have a high degree of knowledge about their pupils' backgrounds and they are able to use this to meet their pastoral needs extremely well. The safety of the pupils is a high priority for all adults in the school and the school's work with families and a range of agencies to support individual pupils facing very challenging circumstances is exemplary, as confirmed by comments received from a range of partner agencies. The school could point to many cases where its support had enabled such pupils to make good and, in some cases, exceptional progress.

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?

Under the guidance of the highly effective headteacher, the school has made substantial improvements since the last inspection, so that, for example, a previous unevenness in pupils' achievement in different subjects has been ironed out. The drive for improvement by leaders and managers at all levels is good. This is also true of the governing body. The experienced Chair of Governors and his team have showed astuteness in their management of the transition period before the appointment of the present headteacher, eventually making a wise choice that has allowed the school to progress rapidly. Progress for all groups of pupils is good, providing equal opportunities for all, and the excellent understanding that pupils have of other cultures means that all abilities, cultures and races are embraced within the school, leading to an absence of discrimination.

Safeguarding is given a high priority, leading to a very safe environment for all pupils, through outstanding application of policies and outstanding practice. The school has worked outstandingly well with parents and carers to foster effective relationships with all and its work with the diverse ethnic groups within the local community is excellent. Its links with its twin school in Uganda and the links it has with a school in Mexico lead to effective learning. The school's links to other schools to help pupils to a better understanding of other cultures in the United Kingdom, especially in more affluent areas, is still developing.

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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	1
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	1
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

From a very low base, children make good progress before joining main school. This is due to good teaching, good provision and good leadership and management, in Nursery and in Reception. In Nursery, effective teamwork allows staff to build up a clear picture of each child's needs and good planning leads to appropriate provision for them, supporting and extending their learning so that children make rapid gains. Accurate assessments are made of children's progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage, again allowing for precise identification of individual needs, leading to appropriate interventions where necessary. There is a high proportion of children with English as an additional language in Reception and their needs are very well met through excellent and skilled support from teachers and other adults. Several parents and carers commented to inspectors on how grateful they were for this. Parents and carers of children in both Nursery and in Reception were overwhelmingly supportive of the school and the care given to their children and of the good progress that they make. The tracking of this progress is not well integrated, however, and this can lead to some difficulties in quickly extracting relevant information and in acquiring an accurate overview of patterns of children's progress. The quality of leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage is effective and based on good communication and knowledgeable staff who work well together as a team.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

The number of questionnaires that was returned was a little below average for a primary school. Every parent or carer who returned a questionnaire was happy with their children's experience at St Peter's and most said that their children enjoyed school. The views of parents and carers about the school were hugely positive and very few concerns were expressed about any aspect of the school's work. The school will do all it can to respond to the concerns that were raised. There was a 100% positive response rate to many of the questions in the questionnaire, for example about whether the school kept their children safe and whether the school is led and managed effectively. This reflects what inspectors found about the outstanding relationship between parents, carers and the school, which is a significant strength.

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 45 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 161 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	53	19	42	2	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	27	60	18	40	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	23	51	22	49	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	23	51	22	49	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	26	58	18	40	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	60	17	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	49	20	44	3	1	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)	22	49	19	42	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	44	25	56	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	60	17	38	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	58	17	38	2	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	44	25	56	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	49	23	51	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



8th July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter's C of E Primary School, Plymouth PL1 1TP

Thank you for welcoming us in such a friendly way when we visited your school recently. We all enjoyed our visit and seeing you learning and playing so well together. I also hope that the Year 5/6 class that we missed because you were on a residential trip to Torquay enjoyed their visit. I am writing to tell you what we have found out about your school.

St Peter's is a good school. The care you receive is outstanding and you, your parents and carers feel that the school keeps you completely safe. You behave well and you know right from wrong. You enjoy spiritual activities such as the assembly that we watched where you learned about the story of 'Blessed is the peacemaker' and you gain valuable moral lessons from the Bible stories you hear. We thought your walk to raise money for your partner school in Uganda so that the children there would not have to walk so many times for water on a morning was a wonderful idea of yours. It shows how well you embrace different cultures, both in your school and immediate community and globally, but you are less knowledgeable about life in other areas of the United Kingdom. We feel you could also attain higher, so to raise your attainment, we have asked your teachers and leaders to:

- ask you to be more involved in marking your own work by saying when you have achieved what your teachers have asked you to achieve
- we have also asked them to keep you more aware of your targets and your progress towards them during your lessons to allow you to achieve even better
- make your curriculum more exciting and improve the outdoor play areas so that you learn more while playing
- work with all of your families to improve attendance, as some pupils are missing out on learning by not attending as well as their friends do.

You can help them by attending school well, working hard and asking your teachers about how well you are progressing in class.

Yours sincerely

Paul Garvey

Lead inspector

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