

SS Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124375
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	380877
Inspection dates	26–27 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Doris Bell

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	113
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Louis Walmsley (Acting)
Headteacher	Teresa Cotter
Date of previous school inspection	15 June 2009
School address	Dimbles Hill Lichfield WS13 7NH
Telephone number	01543 510748
Fax number	01543 510748
Email address	headteacher@st-peter-st-paul.staffs.sch.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They visited 13 lessons, taught by seven teachers. They met with parents and carers, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including teachers' planning, the school improvement plan, assessment, monitoring and evaluation records, records for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and safeguarding policies and procedures. Inspectors also analysed the responses to the questionnaires for pupils and staff, and the 56 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- What is being done to improve mathematics in Years 3 to 6, while sustaining the improvement in writing and is the improvement in Year 2 sustainable?
- How well does the curriculum support the teaching of basic skills, and is there enough emphasis on improving mathematics, especially in Years 3 to 6?
- What steps have leaders and managers taken to ensure that the upward trend evident in Year 2 is being built upon in Years 3 to 6?

Information about the school

This is a small school where most pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic, mainly Polish, backgrounds is above average, as is the proportion of these pupils who are at the early stages of learning to speak English. Because of the small numbers in each year group, all of that varies from year to year. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school in different year groups has risen since the previous inspection and is now above average. The school has achieved national Healthy Schools status. The on-site private Nursery, which currently caters for 11 three- to four-year-olds, is managed by the governing body, as are the before- and after-school clubs.

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

This is a good school where pupils achieve well. The good support provided for pupils who find learning difficult, for whatever reason, ensures that all progress equally well. Teaching is good and the well-planned curriculum includes many opportunities for pupils to use and extend their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in different subjects. Those strengths are underpinned by the excellent care, guidance and support that is at the heart of the school's work. Parents and carers recognise that; they are very appreciative of what the school does for their children.

The senior leadership team, supported by the governing body and staff, is passionate about securing the best possible outcomes for the pupils, personally and academically. The well-constructed school improvement plan points the way forward, with a clear vision for improvement that is built on accurate self-evaluation. The rigorous evaluation of teaching and learning highlights areas for improvement, which are followed up robustly. Because the staff work closely as a team, they share information and expertise readily and help each other to improve. All of that has resulted in good improvement since the previous inspection and demonstrates the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

Children start school with skills levels below those expected for their age, especially in literacy and numeracy. They make good progress overall, but assessment procedures are not as rigorous in the Nursery as in the Reception Year, to ensure that learning is continuous across the two years. Attainment is average in Year 6, although it is better than that in writing. The upward trend in attainment in Year 2 is continuing and is now influencing pupils' work in Years 3 to 6. In Year 6, attainment in English is also continuing to rise, but attainment in mathematics remains static at broadly average. That is because pupils' mental mathematical skills, although good in Years 1, 2 and 3, are underdeveloped in Years 4, 5 and 6. The older pupils' preference for written methods of calculation slows the pace of their learning. That was evident when pupils responded to a challenge to use their mental skills to subtract two numbers and at least half did so incorrectly. The school recognises the weakness and has started to tackle it.

Pupils are reflective and caring. They enjoy school and behave well. That supports their learning and helps get it back on track should it falter, whatever the reason. The pupils say they feel very safe at school and they have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe. That view is echoed by all parents

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and carers who returned the questionnaire and by those to whom inspectors spoke. The school is vigilant in ensuring pupils' safety and security at all times and it does its best to support them and their families through any traumas they might face. Pupils have a good understanding of why it is important to follow a healthy lifestyle and they make a good contribution to the school and wider community. A good range of visits, visitors and well-attended extra-curricular activities contributes effectively to pupils' learning and personal development.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sharpen pupils' mental ability to recall number facts quickly and accurately in order to speed up learning in mathematics in Years 4, 5 and 6.
- Improve the way children's progress is assessed and recorded in the Nursery and use the information to ensure learning is continuous across the Nursery and Reception Year.

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

Pupils' attainment in writing is above average in Years 2 and 6. By Year 6, the pupils write well in a good range of styles, for different purposes, and with a good sense of audience. A wealth of writing takes place across different subjects and pupils use their writing skills effectively in all of these situations. In a history-led topic, for example, the pupils engaged in discussion and debated using persuasive writing techniques, and wrote chronological reports and character descriptions. Pupils use their mathematical skills well in different topics and to solve problems related to everyday life. They set their work out well mostly, preferring written to mental calculations for accuracy. That is evident particularly in Years 4, 5 and 6. The focus on improving mathematics in Years 1 and 2 is paying off; as a result, pupils now in Year 3 demonstrated good mental calculation skills. Pupils use their good information and communication technology skills regularly to enhance their learning across the curriculum.

The step-by-step approach to learning used throughout the school enables pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to make good progress. That, combined with gentle-but-firm guidance from skilled support staff, enabled pupils in one class, some of whom usually wrote very little, to write at length as they identified and summarised key information from a text. The use of translators and good links with the community give pupils who come to the school with little or no English the opportunity to access learning in their first language while learning to speak their new language. Those pupils make good progress also. All pupils are involved well in assessment and target setting. They speak proudly of how, with assistance, they help to set their own targets. They appreciate the weekly sessions when they do it, having reflected on their work and the marking comments in it.

Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong and an exceptionally well-developed

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understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They report that bullying happens occasionally, but they are confident it would always be resolved quickly and effectively. They take responsibility well, for example, as school councillors, and they have a strong voice in the school. They stated proudly that they had ‘won a Healthy Schools Award’ because they knew the importance of eating healthily and taking regular exercise. They demonstrate this very well with their healthy choices at lunchtime, their healthy lunchboxes, and the good level of participation in physical education and sporting activities. Their visit to the local council brought an understanding of local democracy as they explored how the council spends public money. Pupils work well together and on their own and they have a good understanding of different cultures at home and abroad. Attendance is satisfactory. It is affected by, for example, pupils being kept on roll because the school has not received confirmation that they have registered elsewhere and the unavoidable absence of a small number of pupils with medical conditions. The school does everything possible to encourage good attendance and to support pupils who have to be absent. Overall, pupils leave the school well prepared for the future.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

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

The school goes the extra mile to support pupils and their families, including those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. It does much to keep parents and carers fully informed about their children’s progress. The pupils’ ‘starbooks’, their target books, and workshops, such as those for literacy, mathematics and science, are some of the ways in which that is done. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is tailored carefully to suit each individual and skilled support staff help the pupils to make good progress towards their targets. The school secures as much help and support as possible for pupils who arrive with little or no English. Well-organised before- and after-school clubs provide pupils with a good start to the day and with worthwhile activities at the end of the day as they wait for their parents and carers to collect them. The lunchtime club provides additional support for pupils who feel the need to socialise in smaller groups. Effective arrangements ease transition between different classes within the school, and onto high school.

The curriculum brings subjects together well. Pupils understand that what they learn in one subject can help them in another. That is because teachers explain learning objectives clearly, along with the success criteria that provide the small steps by which they and the pupils can assess progress towards them. For example, in a Year 1 and 2 literacy lesson, pupils learned how to write a character description by researching and writing about Florence Nightingale and checking their work against the success criteria. Good marking contributes because it shows pupils what they need to do to improve and pupils are given time to respond to it.

Teaching is usually planned well to meet the different ages and stages of learning in each class. It builds effectively on what pupils have done previously and learning is often adapted skilfully during lessons to take account of pupils’ different rates of learning. Occasionally, time spent as a whole class at the start of a lesson limits the time for pupils to complete independent tasks and, therefore, the amount of progress they can show. Whole-class sessions at the ends of lessons are mostly used well to assess learning and prepare pupils for what will come next. For example, assured by what Year 3 pupils showed they knew about multiplication facts, the teacher introduced, ready for the next lesson, the concept of using division to check the accuracy of multiplication. That fired pupils’ enthusiasm to learn more.

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

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How effective are leadership and management?

The drive to improve further is embedded deeply in all of the school’s work. The senior leadership team has established it by building effective teamwork through joint monitoring with members of staff and the local authority. Senior leaders discuss pupils’ progress with staff regularly and with the pupils themselves. They hold staff to account well for their pupils’ progress.

Governance is good. The governing body uses its good understanding of data to challenge the school, for example, to accelerate pupils’ progress in mathematics. Safeguarding procedures, including those for child protection, are good. All training is up to date, the school site is very secure, and regular checks ensure that any slight default is addressed quickly. The school is vigilant in ensuring that all pupils are safe and secure within its warm, welcoming, family atmosphere.

The school works hard to ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils. Its excellent partnerships with external agencies, including volunteer bilingual support, ensure each pupil has the same opportunity to succeed. Also, it engenders in pupils the importance of respecting others and not to discriminating against them for any reason. The good promotion of community cohesion contributes to that. The school has a good understanding of its own and the local community. It teaches pupils successfully about the different faiths, cultures and backgrounds in the United Kingdom and beyond. The pupils’ much-enjoyed visit to different places of worship in Derby, for example, resulted in their greater understanding of the similarities and differences between the major world religions and how they affect the way people live.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Good leadership and management have secured good provision in this age group. Effective induction systems and good links with parents and carers prepare children well for school life. Children new to the Nursery are already familiar with established routines and Reception Year children, who are taught alongside pupils in Year 1, know the routines well. Children’s understanding of personal hygiene is good and their health, safety and welfare are given due attention at all times. Childcare is good in the Nursery and Reception Year.

Reception Year children show good levels of independence when selecting from the range of stimulating activities planned for them, indoors and out. They play and learn equally well on their own, with an adult, or with each other. The activities take good account of the children’s own interests and ideas and usually staff intervene well to increase learning. The small numbers of children ensure that each one receives individual attention. That is instrumental in ensuring their good learning and personal development and, especially, their language and social skills, which are weak when they start school.

Children’s progress is assessed and recorded well in the Reception Year, providing a good basis for their work in Year 1. While provision is good in the Nursery, assessment procedures are not as meticulous as in the Reception Year. Assessment information is not collated well enough over the year, for example, in learning journeys or in the Foundation Stage Profile, to provide the same good information for the start of the Reception Year. The school recognises that is an area for improvement.

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

All parents and carers spoken to were very pleased with the school. They appreciate the close working relationship between home and school and the accessibility of staff so that they can discuss concerns as they arise. In the questionnaire responses, parents and carers praised the school for the high quality of care it provides for all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those with medical conditions, and those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. They wrote about the ‘very positive ethos’, saying that staff are ‘professional’ and

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'dedicated to the children they have in their care'. Most say also that their children make good progress. Their comment that 'staff are approachable and kind' echoes what their children said. Inspection findings support these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 56 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 113 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	59	22	39	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	36	64	20	36	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	24	43	28	50	4	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	32	34	61	4	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	24	43	31	55	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	33	59	20	36	3	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	46	28	50	1	2	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	39	31	55	3	5	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	21	38	32	57	3	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	27	36	64	3	5	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	46	27	48	1	2	2	4
The school is led and managed effectively	23	41	31	55	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	27	48	26	46	2	4	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.



28 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School, Lichfield, WS13 7NH

Thank you for welcoming us so warmly to your school and for talking with us about what you do there. You are rightly very proud of your school and it was good to see how hard you work in lessons. You told us that you 'just love learning' and that 'the teachers are the best thing about the school' because they are 'very kind and caring'. You are right. We found that you go to a good school where all adults care very deeply for each one of you. The adults' excellent guidance and support help you to make good progress and contribute to your good behaviour and desire to do well. We could see that, as a result, you are reaching ever higher standards in your work. Those of you who find learning difficult, for whatever reason, get a great deal of help, enabling you to make the same good progress as other pupils.

Those responsible for leading and managing are always looking at ways to improve your school. They keep a very close eye on every aspect of your learning and personal development. Also, they ensure you are kept safe and know how to keep yourselves safe at all times. You showed that you have an excellent understanding of how to do that and also of how to keep yourselves fit and healthy. We have asked your school to do the following to help you make even better progress:

- help those of you in Years 4, 5 and 6 to recall number facts quickly and accurately in order to speed up your learning in mathematics
- improve the way your progress is assessed and recorded in the Nursery, so that learning becomes continuous across the Nursery and Reception Year.

You can help by continuing to work hard and, particularly, by learning your multiplication tables and a range of number facts, and the different strategies you can use to call them to mind quickly. We hope you will enjoy learning as much in the future as you do now.

Yours sincerely

Doris Bell
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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