

St Peter's Smithills Dean CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105228
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	377206
Inspection dates	17–18 October 2011
Reporting inspector	John Heap

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	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend P Hardingham
Headteacher	Christine Lancashire
Date of previous school inspection	11 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors who observed seven teachers in 10 lessons. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at school and teachers' planning; documentation relating to quality assurance, monitoring and self-evaluation; examples of governors' documents; policies regarding the protection and safeguarding of pupils and the minutes of school council meetings. The number of parental questionnaires returned was 88.

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

- In Key Stages 1 and 2, is teaching challenging in mathematics and writing for higher-attaining pupils.
- Whether improvements in the quality and use of assessment are the main reason for the improvements in pupils' achievement.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, exploring the link between the provision and the impact on children's achievement.
- Whether monitoring and evaluation processes provide a sharp and accurate picture of the school's performance.

Information about the school

This broadly average-sized primary school is situated on the outskirts of the Bolton. The vast majority of pupils are of White British background and a very small proportion is from other heritages. There are no pupils learning English as an additional language. Very few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, including those with a statement of special educational needs.

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. It has continued to improve well since the previous inspection because of the good leadership of the senior team and the governing body. Their deep commitment to the school is recognised by pupils and parents and carers alike and one parent's comment reflects many: 'St Peter's is a wonderful school. Our son is happy in school and comes home filled with enthusiasm.' Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with particular strengths in moral and social development. Consequently, pupils have a good sense of right and wrong and they collaborate well with each other.

Inspectors agree with pupils, and their parents and carers, who judge this to be a happy, very safe and secure school. Pupils want to come to school and attendance is high. Adults know the pupils and their families well. This leads to good, sensitive support for pupils whose circumstances have made them more vulnerable as well as those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. All groups of pupils progress well.

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. They make good progress in their academic and personal development. These strengths are promoted by good teaching, a good curriculum and effective care, guidance and support. Children join the school with slightly above average starting points. By the end of Year 6, attainment is high. The school is working hard to make sure that progress is consistently good across subjects and year groups. Consequently, leaders are right to focus on improving the writing skills of higher-attaining pupils. This group of pupils is not always provided with enough opportunities to write at length in other subjects. Also, teachers do not use marking effectively to identify pupils' achievement of writing targets and the aspects they need to work on next to improve their work.

Even though the capacity for improvement has been good for some time, this has not stopped the senior leaders from further tightening its procedures and practices. Self-evaluation is accurate and critical and, in most areas the school knows itself very well. Less effective teaching is being challenged and wide-ranging procedures are in place to check the quality of teaching and learning. However, the focus is on teaching, without an equal focus on checking precisely the quality of learning and what it leads to in lessons. While governance is good, the governing body does not have an accurate view of how pupils are performing in lessons.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise the attainment of pupils in writing, by:
 - providing many more opportunities for higher-attaining pupils to write at length in other subjects
 - using marking more effectively to show pupils when they have achieved their learning/progress targets and their areas for improvement.

- Strengthen and sharpen the good leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the focus for monitoring lessons and pupils' work is mainly on the progress/learning that the pupils are making
 - ensuring the governing body has a more accurate view about pupils' learning and progress in lessons.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

As children leave the Early Years Foundation Stage, attainment is above the expected levels. By the end of Key Stage 1, attainment is above average and pupils do best in reading and mathematics, although the progress of higher-attaining pupils in writing is not as good as that of their peers.

Pupils make good progress in lessons and their overall achievement is outstanding. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons and that they are made to think. Outstanding teaching in an English lesson resulted in excellent learning. The teacher made very clear demands on the pupils which were understood by all. Collaborative work with 'talk partners' and effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) meant that pupils' diary writing became increasingly detailed, accurate and interesting for the reader. Throughout the school, teaching assistants work extremely well alongside pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and these pupils progress well. In the better lessons, the management of pupils and the good use of rewards fostered a calm and highly stimulating learning environment. Good learning was seen in two Key Stage 1 mathematics lessons. Pupils knew about their learning targets and got a real 'buzz' when they achieved them. In both lessons pupils' confidence grew because of the strong expectations and sensitive support they received. This was particularly noticeable in Year 2, where they were beginning to use their basic number knowledge in simple problems.

Pupils behave well and this contributes to their good progress. They conduct themselves sensibly and safely. Older pupils contribute to this through the work they do during the school day, such as acting as 'pals' in the playground. They also make a significant contribution to the wider community through fund-raising. This extends to supporting a school in Africa and also means that this mainly monocultural community has very good opportunities to learn about a very different culture.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Overall, the key strengths in teaching are: strong direction for support staff; mostly effective marking that helps the majority of pupils to move forward in their learning and good subject knowledge. Where teaching is stronger, teachers use assessment effectively to provide appropriate support for the lower attainers while challenging those of higher ability. Where teaching is not quite as strong, there are slight inconsistencies in practice, such as pupils spending too much time listening when they should be writing.

The effective curriculum provides pupils with a broad range of relevant experiences which make a good contribution to pupils' strong development and well-being. For example, ICT is used well to enhance learning. The use and development of basic skills in other subjects is developing. The curriculum is modified well for those that have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils appreciate the extra activities put on by the school and outside agencies. Attendance at these sessions is good. Currently, the school is in the process of expanding the range of activities.

Pastoral care is good and supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff work sensitively with pupils and their families to tackle any barriers to learning they are facing. Pupils are confident that adults are on hand to help with any problems they may have. The school liaises well with outside agencies to promote pupils' progress, health and well-being. Monitoring of attendance and behaviour is rigorous. Consequently, attendance is high and behaviour is good. Transition arrangements are effective and ensure that pupils and their parents and carers have few worries as they progress through the school.

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

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, senior team and members of the governing body are ambitious and determined to move the school on further. For instance, there is a commitment to improving pupils' writing skills. The school improvement plan has measurable criteria for success and also identifies those staff responsible for bringing about improvement. The collaborative approach is appreciated by staff and parents and carers and this means that proposed change is supported. There is an increasing range of partnerships which enrich and enhance learning for pupils and stimulate senior leaders' thinking. For example, joint work with 'cluster' schools, some of which are in more culturally diverse areas, and the link with a school in Kenya. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of community cohesion is supported and promoted well in this context. The school is also keenly aware of its local community and its needs. The school has continued to improve well since the previous inspection, with particular gains in pupils' knowledge and understanding of how to be healthy. Improved procedures for assessment have played a significant part in raising academic standards at the end of Key Stage 2. Members of the governing body are well-informed about the work of the school and hold the school to good account. They demonstrate a good level of insight regarding current levels of attainment, although they do not have a clear enough picture of the progress pupils make in lessons. They ensure procedures to safeguard and protect pupils are good and this is readily recognised by pupils, parents and carers. Staff are committed to promoting equality of opportunity. Systems to monitor and ensure equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination are successful in ensuring that students are safe and free from racial harassment.

These are the grades for the 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	2
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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children have a good start to their education in the Reception class. Induction arrangements are effective and the children settle quickly to classroom routines. Attainment on entry fluctuates year-on-year, but is generally a little above what is typical for children of this age. By the time children leave the Reception class most have progressed well and achieved the nationally recognised typical standards for their age. Some go beyond this level. Children’s skills and abilities are particularly strong in personal, social and emotional development, physical and creative learning. Staff cater well for the range of ability in the classes. The quality of teaching is good. Practitioners are keen to embed secure basic skills, such as the recognition of sounds and letters. There is also an emphasis on developing collaborative and reasoning skills. For example, in one lesson observed about Little Red Riding Hood, the children were asked how they could make it ‘tricky’ for the wolf to get to Grandma’s house. To maintain the children's interest, there is a good balance between activities directed by adults and those which are chosen by the children. This enables children to practise key skills and develops their social skills effectively.

The curriculum meets the children's needs effectively and the good outdoor area is used well to extend learning. Children use the outdoor area extensively and continuously even when, as happened during the inspection, the weather is poor. There are lots of activities outside that stimulate the children in, for example, writing, mathematics and art. Care and support for children is very strong and adults show a good understanding of individual needs. This is all much appreciated by parents and carers and one put it this way, ‘St Peter’s is a fantastic school and my children thoroughly enjoy coming here’.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

More than a third of parents and carers returned questionnaires. The majority of respondents are highly supportive of the school’s work and appreciate the progress made by their children and the school itself. They are particularly happy with: their child’s experience of school and the good progress they make; strong teaching; the way the school keeps their children safe; the good preparation for the future and their children’s enjoyment of school. All of the returns agree that the school is led and managed well. A very small minority of respondents suggest that: the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour; their child’s particular needs are not met and not enough progress is being made and they would like more out-of-school activities. Inspectors raised these issues with the school without compromising the confidentiality of the respondents. Inspection evidence shows that the school does much to address these issues although inspectors found that there is a need to raise standards for the higher-attaining pupils in writing.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Peter's Smithills Dean CofE 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 88 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 210 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	63	72	25	28	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	63	72	24	27	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	52	59	33	38	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	54	61	34	39	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	68	77	20	23	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	53	60	32	36	3	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	57	65	29	33	2	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)	48	55	33	38	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	51	58	34	39	1	1	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	43	49	39	44	3	3	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	43	49	43	49	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	70	80	17	19	0	0	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	69	78	19	22	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	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 is 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.



19 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter's Smithills Dean CofE Primary School, Bolton, BL1 6LA

On behalf of the inspection team may I thank you very much for the help, courtesy and kindness that you showed us when we recently came to look at the work of your school. We found lots of interesting things going on in your good school.

Here are some of the things that we judged to be particularly good:

- in the Reception class, you get a good start to your learning
- you make good progress in your work and your overall attainment is high
- your behaviour is good, attendance is high and you show mature attitudes to school and work
- you make a good contribution to day-to-day life in the school through the school council, for instance, and the pupils who take on roles at lunchtime
- you also make a valuable contribution to the local community and, pleasingly, far away in the Mamole School in Kenya
- teaching is good and the staff support you well and this means that you thoroughly enjoy school
- the headteacher, staff and the governing body are always striving for ways to make improvements so that school can be an even better place for you.

We have asked the school to:

- provide more opportunities for you to write and to set you more demanding work
- mark your work and give you a clear picture of the targets you have met and what you need to do to improve your work.

We have also asked those who help lead the school to be even more vigilant when checking on your learning and progress, particularly when you are in lessons. It was a real pleasure to visit your school. Keep on working hard at your learning and, most importantly, keep on enjoying it.

Yours sincerely,
John Heap
Lead Inspector

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