

St Peter's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108385
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	377746
Inspection dates	15–16 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Frank Cain

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	J Quinn
Headteacher	Lisa Stokoe
Date of previous school inspection	13 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 10 lessons taught by eight different teachers, and looked at pupils' work. Discussions took place with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors looked at documents, including policies relating to safeguarding, the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation records, minutes of governing body meetings and the school's own assessment data. The inspectors analysed questionnaires from pupils and staff as well as those from 98 parents and carers.

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

- How well are pupils making progress in school?
- How is the school's provision, including teaching, the curriculum and the care it gives to pupils accelerating pupils' progress?
- How have the school's leaders and managers improved since the previous inspection?
- Why is attainment in mathematics so high?
- How much progress do children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage?

Information about the school

St Peter's is a smaller than average sized primary school, with a lower proportion of girls than found nationally. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are both well below average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A small percentage is from a minority ethnic group. The school has been awarded Eco Schools Green Flag and is a Centre of Excellence for the Young Enterprise scheme. Since the previous inspection, several new staff have joined the school.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school. Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of development that are below those typical for their age. Good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage gives children a very firm foundation for future learning. In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils make good progress and by the end of Year 6 attainment is high. At times, especially in the latter part of Key Stage 2, progress is outstanding, particularly in mathematics. There are still some inconsistencies between the progress of boys and that of girls and the picture of progress in some lessons is not quite as strong. All the pupils' personal development outcomes are outstanding. Pupil's behaviour is exemplary. Pupils show very good respect for themselves and others and follow the excellent example set by adults in caring for others. Older pupils enjoy the opportunity to look after younger ones. Pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is underpinned by the school's strong religious ethos. Pupils feel very safe and the view of one pupil reflected that of many, when she declared that the school is 'perfect'.

High quality care, guidance and support enable all pupils to make good progress and underpin their excellent personal development. The school's tracking of pupils as they move through the school makes sure that every pupil is well nurtured. This is one of the reasons for the high rates of attendance. The excellent curriculum motivates pupils with many exciting activities and visits. It is imaginative, especially in choosing interesting topics to study, such as 'wonders of the world'. Teaching is good overall and at times better. The teachers' excellent subject knowledge makes lessons fun by devising absorbing and well-resourced tasks for pupils. While pupils work very well together, occasionally the balance of teacher input and pupils' activity prevents them from having enough opportunity to work independently and find things out for themselves. Similarly, this also occasionally prevents teachers from gaining the maximum feedback on exactly how well pupils are progressing

The impact of leaders and managers, including governance, on the school is outstanding. The headteacher's drive and vision have inspired staff, the governing body and pupils to work unstintingly to improve the school. This excellent teamwork results in outstanding outcomes for pupils and ensures that the school gives excellent value for money. Partnerships with others, engagement with parents and carers and outstanding levels of safeguarding benefit pupils and promote learning. The governing body is extremely well informed, and challenge, as well as support the school. The school's strong track record of improvement since the previous

inspection together with rigorous procedures for school self-evaluation, demonstrates an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve further the quality of teaching and assessment so that more lessons are outstanding and pupils' learning and their progress improve even further by:
 - ensuring the balance of teacher input and pupils' activity consistently gives pupils scope to learn independently and achieve things by themselves
 - using more opportunities to assess how well pupils are progressing during lessons.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Outstanding achievement and a high degree of pupils' enjoyment have helped create a very successful school. In lessons pupils are keen and work well because they are happy, secure and confident. They are very well supported by teachers, and pupils' enthusiasm for learning could not be stronger. They talk excitedly as they work with their 'talking partners' and try to meet the challenges set by their teachers. Their high attendance is a testimony to their love of school. For example, one pupil said that he enjoys getting up in the morning knowing that that he is going to school.

All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress overall; it is improving strongly across all key stages. Progress at Key Stage 2 in mathematics in particular is extremely rapid and it is rightly a very popular subject for pupils. Pupils' attainment by the time they leave the school is significantly higher than the national average. High attainment is also true for the very small number of pupils of minority ethnic heritage and also for the very small percentage of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.

Pupils' excellent behaviour is a key factor in making sure that time in class is always efficiently used and pupils are considerate and helpful to others. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to their own and the local community. They act as monitors, prefects, house captains and as 'buddies' for younger children. They are prolific fundraisers and their 'young apprentice' scheme for Year 6, which involves making and selling, is immensely popular with pupils. They are acutely aware of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and a very high proportion engages in after-school sports.

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

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

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good across the school and outstanding in some classes. In all lessons, the learning objectives are made very clear and generally most pupils are well aware of their targets. Planning is meticulous and, despite small classrooms, imaginative tasks are devised. In one lesson, a mock 'campsite' was erected with a mystery set up for pupils to solve. A strong feature of all lessons was the work pupils did in pairs and in small groups, working together to solve problems. The balance of teacher input and pupils' activity, however, does not always give enough opportunity for pupils to work independently, so that pupils develop their research skills and even more self-reliance. This would also allow teachers to judge pupils' progress and understanding as a lesson progresses and inform where to give additional support when necessary.

The curriculum is extremely well planned. Detailed curricular plans make sure that topics cover different skills, including information and communication technology, numeracy and literacy. Parents and carers are given information on the topics and pupils are given an opportunity to, not only choose areas of study, but to also reshape the curriculum through their views given in feedback sessions. The school has enhanced its curriculum with a wide range of after-school activities and provides music and Spanish lessons for pupils. In Years 4, 5 and 6, all pupils learn to play the violin, and younger children were observed counting and singing with gusto in Spanish, despite only being at the early stage of learning the language after having had a few lessons.

The caring Christian ethos of the school is reflected in extremely positive relationships between adults and pupils and the outstanding personal development outcomes shown by the overwhelming majority of pupils. The school was able to present examples where they had made a significant impact on the attendance and achievement of potentially vulnerable pupils, because of excellent care, guidance and support systems. There is a welcoming environment for parents and carers. The school identifies pupils who are underperforming and quickly puts in place excellent intervention strategies to support them and this helps them get back on track. The school has very effective procedures to ensure that as pupils move into, and through the school, they do so smoothly and successfully.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account:	2
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The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is an outstanding leader who makes sure that the talents of all staff are recognised and developed for the benefit of pupils. There are highly effective systems for monitoring the school's work, including teaching and learning, and professional development is targeted to make further improvements. Tracking of pupils is highly sophisticated and informs teachers' planning very well. Governance is outstanding. Members of the governing body are highly visible in school. They visit lessons and many are linked to specific classes. Excellent quality assurance procedures are in place for monitoring the policies and work of the school. These give members of the governing body a first-rate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, which enables them to challenge the work of the school, as well as help to shape its educational direction.

Safeguarding procedures are outstanding. Quality assurance of safeguarding is very robust and there is a dedicated committee on the governing body for monitoring its effectiveness. Parents and carers are consulted in surveys about safeguarding, and pupils are given opportunities to discuss and make suggestions about procedures to teachers. The school is good at tackling discrimination by ensuring that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities have equal opportunities. Differences between the progress of boys and girls are being successfully tackled and any gaps in the performance of boys relative to girls are now reducing rapidly.

Community cohesion is good, particularly so within the school itself and in the immediate community, including a close link with a local school with a very different pupil intake. Pupils study and come into contact with people from different religious backgrounds; the views of others are recognised and celebrated which is effective in widening the pupils' understanding of the cultural richness and diversity of modern society. Excellent partnerships with other establishments are used very effectively to widen the curriculum. The benefits of such partnerships is particularly evident in enhancing sports and music tuition, in the widening opportunities for staff in improving their classroom skills and in improving the pupils' outcomes in safety through close links with the fire service and road safety initiatives.

The school has extremely positive relationships with parents and carers. A very large majority expressed the view that they are well informed about their children's progress and how to support their learning. They get accurate and up-to-date information on topics studied, as well as on pupils' targets. Pupils' progress evenings attract a very high percentage of parents and carers and their views are gathered using questionnaires. The school has a very good website which can be accessed by parents and carers to view policies and keep up to date with what is happening in school.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the school in the Reception class from different educational backgrounds. Some have attended nursery provision while others have not. Children settle quickly, confidently and happily in the warm, caring environment the setting provides. From below typical starting points, many make significant gains in their learning so that by the time children start Year 1 most have made outstanding progress. Children’s behaviour is very good and they quickly develop confidence. Some children, for example, were keen to sing out loud in a music lesson and play percussion instruments to their peers. One parent wrote about how the school had uncovered musical and linguistic talents in her child. The school is well aware that their outdoor provision needs some further development but the children are exceptionally well supported when learning outside. Information from observations and assessments are used very well to meet the needs of all children. There are highly effective partnerships with parents and carers, as well as outside agencies, to ensure that individual children’s needs are met well. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is excellent. Children make excellent progress and they are well cared for and nurtured. Risk assessments are comprehensive and robust.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	1
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Nearly half the parents and carers of pupils on roll responded to the inspection questionnaire. They were overwhelming in their support for the school and all thought their children enjoyed school and were safe there. The view of one parent reflected the general feeling in writing that the school provides ‘a very caring and nurturing environment’ with dedicated staff. Overall, parents and carers were happy that teaching and progress was at least good or even better. Very few parents or carers thought there were some behavioural issues. There were no significant

numbers of negative responses from parents and carers. All individual comments were investigated and the findings are in the report. Overall almost all the parents and carers were happy with their children's experience.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Peter's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided 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 98 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	73	74	23	23	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	67	68	31	32	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	50	51	43	44	3	3	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	56	57	38	39	2	2	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	56	57	40	41	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	53	54	42	43	1	1	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	55	56	43	44	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	56	57	38	39	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	59	60	35	36	1	1	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	47	45	46	3	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	44	45	44	45	5	5	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	63	64	31	32	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	72	73	24	24	1	1	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.



17 November 2011

**Inspection of St Peter's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School,
Gateshead, NE9 5TU**

Dear Pupils,

I want to thank all of you for the extremely friendly welcome that you gave the team when we inspected your school. We found the time we spent talking to you, your teachers and other adults extremely enjoyable and rewarding. Your school is outstanding. We were impressed by your excellent behaviour and your keenness to learn. You make good progress and reach high standards because you work hard, and so you are very well prepared for the future.

Your school is extremely well led and managed and all staff do all they can to support your learning. Most children feel very safe and secure and think the school's curriculum gives you exciting learning experiences. Almost all of you said that the teachers help you to understand how well you are doing. You play an important part in making the school better, such as by your eco-activities and doing so many good things in the community. A very small number of you in the questionnaire did say you were concerned about behaviour, but we found that behaviour was excellent in lessons and around the school.

In order to help you make even better progress and to improve the school further, we have asked the school's leaders, teachers and governors to:

- give you more opportunities to work independently and achieve things for yourself
- ensure teachers spend more time seeing how well you are progressing during lessons.

I am sure you will all want to help make your school better by working hard and playing together well.

Yours sincerely,
Frank Cain
Lead inspector

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