

St Peter's Church of England (Aided) Primary School, Whetstone

Wale Road, Whetstone, Leicester, LE8 6NJ

Inspection dates 15–16 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- There have been significant improvements since the last inspection.
- Good leadership, management and teamwork among staff and governors have ensured effective checking on teaching and learning.
- An increasingly close focus on pupils' progress has brought about important improvements in both their attainment and achievement.
- Most pupils achieve well and make good progress given their individual starting points.
- The school is a harmonious community; staff and pupils show good levels of care and respect for each other.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe in school.
- Teaching is good in all classes, and some teaching and learning is outstanding.
- Teachers and their assistants have high expectations of their pupils.
- Effective approaches to assessment have been introduced. These take into account not only pupils' academic progress but also how they learn and develop as individuals.
- There is a good, consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour.
- The pupils' positive attitudes to school make an important contribution to their learning.
- The governing body is increasingly active in fact-finding about the school's life and work.
- Governors work cooperatively with the staff, to help improve pupils' quality of education.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are inconsistencies between some classes and year groups in the use of marking, and its effectiveness in promoting pupils' understanding and progress.
- Lesson planning is not always focused well enough on support for individual pupils.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics has not increased as fast as that in English.
- With the reduction in advisory support from the local authority, links with other local schools require strengthening further to ensure the very best support for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons, two of which were observed jointly with the headteacher. Most class teachers, the higher-level teaching assistant and other teaching assistants were seen.
- Inspectors heard pupils from Years 2 and 6 read. They attended assemblies and scrutinised pupils' work.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents, including: development plans; policies; self-evaluation reports; various monitoring files; development plans; safeguarding and curriculum materials; governing body documents; and information for families.
- Meetings were held with various groups of pupils, including those whose circumstances make them more vulnerable. In addition, many informal opportunities were taken to talk with pupils.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher and assistant headteachers, class teachers, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 26 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and the 152 responses to the school's own identical questionnaire which it undertook in December 2012. Inspectors also spoke individually with several parents and carers.

Inspection team

Michael Miller, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christine Young

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school serving families from its local area in Whetstone. There are nine classes, some with mixed year groups.
- A new headteacher took up the post from September 2011, shortly after the school's last inspection in the March of that year.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils by the end of Year 6.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. A few come from mixed, Asian or Asian British, and Black or Black British ethnic backgrounds.
- Most pupils speak English as their first language. The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average. None are at an early stage of English language development.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding) is above the national average.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action, school action plus, or who have a statement of special educational need, are below average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties, specific learning difficulty, hearing impairment or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- The school holds currently the Healthy School and Artsmark Silver awards.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the momentum for pupils' improving progress in mathematics and numeracy is maintained across all year groups by extending the opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills across a wider range of subjects, and through 'real-life' situations.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching, and improve pupils' achievement, by:
 - ensuring that all lesson planning takes full account of the range of individual pupils' learning styles, so that their different needs are catered for more specifically
 - ensuring the regular marking of pupils' work, and written feedback, are focused more specifically on helping them to remember and understand better what to improve
 - extending the school's work with its other educational partners to develop additional creative and innovative strategies to support the pupils' learning and progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- School data, from accurate and increasingly extensive assessments, show that most children start in the Reception class with levels of knowledge and skills which are broadly typical for their age. Most children make consistently good and sometimes rapid year-by-year progress. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach standards in national tests which are above the national average overall. This represents good achievement given their starting points.
- Discussions with disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, and those for whom the school receives the pupil premium, show they feel supported well. They appreciate the ways their teachers and teaching assistants always have time for them to help them understand and make progress. Data show that a higher than national proportion of the few pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make at least expected progress, and the attainment of those pupils with special educational needs is above similar groups nationally.
- Over the past three years, and since the last inspection, there has been an upward trend in pupils' attainment across all key stages. Improvements in achievement and progress have been feeding through steadily from the Early Years Foundation Stage. This has had slightly more impact in Key Stage 1 than Key Stage 2, and in English than in mathematics.
- The school has been quick to recognise an emerging gap between pupils' achievement in mathematics and English. It has put in place new approaches to teaching and learning which are resolving the issue. Discussions with pupils show that they enjoy the challenges set by the new approaches to mathematics, and that their success adds to their enjoyment of learning.
- Good progress in mathematics was seen in a lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6 on symmetry, where both year groups were working at above expected levels. There were high levels of concentration in order to work on, and produce, suitably complex symmetrical patterns. It was also noticeable that pupils were working together to sort out problems for themselves before asking for help.
- Pupils' achievement has also improved because staff have responded effectively to the challenges set at the last inspection to improve standards in literacy, and particularly writing. The school's success in this was recognised by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors during a subject inspection of English in June 2012.
- Improvements in reading were reflected not only in the 2012 national test results but also through above average achievement in the new Year 1 tests of pupils' skills in using letters and sounds (the Year 1 phonics screening check). This was confirmed when hearing pupils read.
- Pupils enjoy reading and are keen to demonstrate their skills; these give them the confidence to tackle work and understand information across the full range of subjects. Daily work on letters and sounds helps children in the Reception class to recognise these in their own names or story books. Older pupils naturally break down new or unfamiliar words into their different sounds and put them back together successfully to make sense of new or challenging texts.
- Pupils in Years 4 and 5 made rapid progress in an English lesson as a result of sharing their ideas for building a climax to a story. Their well-developed vocabulary enabled all groups of pupils to use a wide range of descriptive words to build tension and add dynamism to their

stories. The effective use of simile and metaphor added significant quality to their work.

The quality of teaching is good

- Since the last inspection, sustained improvements in the quality of teaching, relating to both what is taught and how it is taught, have underpinned securely the gains in pupils' progress. Teaching is now consistently good across the school. All parents and carers responding to Parent View and the school's own survey agree this is the case.
- Pupils appreciate that their teachers have much to offer them, and hold them in high regard. The ways teachers promote positive working relationships add significantly to both the school's life as a community and the pupils' attitudes to learning. All these factors make an excellent contribution to the promotion of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The development of teachers' skills in the assessment of learning during lessons has been an important element in the targets set for them to improve their work. This has been supported well through their professional development. Excellent practice was seen in a topic lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2 when pupils were exploring materials which would make the best roofing for a toy house. Probing questioning by the teacher not only checked the pupils' understanding of the task but also helped them explain their choices and their evaluation of the properties of the materials being tested. Learning was accelerated through the links being made between science, design and technology, and speaking and listening skills.
- Teachers show a professional approach to improving teaching and learning. Discussions show they are fully aware of their responsibilities to implement and maintain the qualities demanded of them through the new national Teaching Standards. There is an open approach to updating their personal skills through professional training. In order to improve teaching and learning in mathematics, one teacher has already qualified as a leading teacher in the subject and others are undertaking training.
- Pupils find the oral advice they receive from their teachers during lessons very helpful in aiding them to understand what to do next to improve their work and make better progress. Marking has clearly improved since the last inspection, but there remain inconsistencies across the school in the ways teachers' written comments reinforce their oral advice. Teachers know the pupils well and understand their individual strengths, weaknesses and learning styles. However, this is not always reflected specifically enough in day-to-day lesson planning. Active approaches and support to help remedy these issues already form part of the school's improvement planning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- During an interview with pupils in Year 6, one paused for a few seconds and said, 'This is a healthy environment, and a place where we love to learn.' This goes a long way to explaining why pupils' attitudes to learning are good throughout the school. It also illustrates pupils' reflective approach to learning, which results from the strength of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A banner in one classroom proclaims proudly and boldly, 'Together we are awesome.'
- A few pupils find it difficult to manage their own behaviour consistently well throughout the school day. Discussions with pupils show they have a mature understanding of the reasons for such behaviour; pupils show good levels of awareness of the potential impact of any anti-social behaviour. This includes the different types of bullying; a display of pupils' work in one

classroom sums up their views well in the simple statement, 'Bullying is silly.'

- Good management of pupils' behaviour by teachers ensures any disruption to learning is minimal. An instance of this was seen in one lesson where the sensitive, low-key approach of the teacher to one misbehaving pupil not only passed largely unnoticed by others but also enabled the pupil concerned to get back on track quickly and make good progress.
- Life and learning at the school are made interesting. Consequently, pupils are usually too absorbed in their work to become side-tracked. They want to come to school, and this is reflected in above-average attendance rates. Behaviour and safety are good because the pupils develop self-confidence, socialise well, and maintain good concentration levels throughout the day.

The leadership and management are good

- Since taking up his post, the headteacher has shown important success in building a team of teachers who are focused, first and foremost, on ensuring the issues from the previous inspection are tackled face on and that pupils' achievement shows an upward trend. Staff and governors alike show a determination to pursue excellence on behalf of the pupils.
- There is good partnership working, and development planning, at all leadership levels from subject coordinators through to the governing body. This has ensured thoughtful self-evaluation and practical improvement planning. This is targeted well on securing the gains made since the last inspection and providing a firm base upon which to build for the future.
- Joint observations during the inspection confirmed the accuracy of the leadership team's understanding of the quality of teaching and learning. Discussions with staff show good levels of self-evaluation and self-criticism. The approach of staff in being accountable for pupils' progress is an open one. This is underpinned well through the setting of targets for teachers to improve further their professional skills.
- There is a good working relationship between the school and the local authority. Monitoring by the local authority has been increasingly 'light touch' but effective; this includes regular reviews of the school's performance. However, as from April 2013, the local authority will no longer be employing school development advisors. Staff and the governing body are now looking to extend their partnership with the local group of schools to ensure the continuation of creative and innovative strategies to support and promote further pupils' learning and progress.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - From the start of the current academic year there have been some major changes to the governing body. Discussions with governing body representatives confirm that it is making an increasingly significant contribution to the school's everyday life and work. It is well informed, not only through the headteacher's reports but also through the regular checking of school performance data with other schools nationally.
 - A teamwork approach with subject coordinators has resulted in a new programme of visits which are enabling governors to observe, understand and appreciate the work of the school. This programme has still to be completed and its impact evaluated fully by both staff and governors. However, it is clear that this approach is enhancing the overall leadership and management of the school. The governing body also takes the safeguarding of pupils very seriously. Systems and processes for safeguarding pupils are secure.
 - The governing body checks on the impact of the targets set for teachers to enhance their expertise. Together with the senior leadership team, the governing body ensures such targets

are linked directly to the quality of teaching, accountability and salary structure. This approach is focused well on maintaining and developing further the quality of learning and ensuring pupils' progress.

- The governing body evaluates regularly the use of the pupil premium funding and produces a specific statement on the school website showing how it is spent. This funding is being used to finance a range of focused individual support and enrichment opportunities for the few pupils concerned to promote both their personal and academic development. This approach is helping to close any gap between such pupils' performance and all others at the school.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	120202
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	405917

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	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Pennick
Headteacher	Michael Bailey
Date of previous school inspection	16 March 2011
Telephone number	0116 277 5750
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