

St Peter's CofE Primary School

Oxford Street, Ashton-Under-Lyne, Lancashire, OL7 0NB

Inspection dates 6–7 March 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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils are proud of their school. They get on exceptionally well together and they are keen to learn. They feel very safe in the supportive school environment.
- There was an exceptionally strong rise in standards in 2012. The progress made by Year 6 pupils compared very favourably with that in schools nationally: it was in the top 14%.
- Standards are rising rapidly throughout the school and pupils' underachievement from the past is being attended to effectively. Pupils of all backgrounds and abilities are doing well.
- Children enter the nursery with skills and abilities well below what is normal for their age. They now make good progress and by the end of the reception year most children are approaching normal standards.
- Mathematics is strong throughout the school.
- Teaching is good. Several lessons seen had outstanding teaching. Teaching is rarely less than good. No inadequate teaching was seen.
- Since her recent appointment, the headteacher has put in hand extremely fast improvement in pupils' achievement and teaching. She has the vigorous support of staff at all levels; there is a shared commitment to the pursuit of excellence. Procedures for the management of teachers' work are robust.
- The school manages resources well. Pupil premium funding is spent wisely and to good effect.
- The school is supported well by the local authority and the governing body.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- While impressive, improvements have been evident for but a short time. The school recognises the need for consolidation and refinement of recent changes.
- Teaching is not yet consistently outstanding.
- Standards in reading and writing could be better, especially for more-able pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 14 lessons, and teaching was seen in all classrooms. Two lessons had shared observations with the headteacher. In addition, brief visits were made to several classrooms.
- Meetings were held with three members of the governing body and with a consultant who is engaged on behalf of the local authority. A telephone conversation took place with the school's local authority adviser. The inspectors also held meetings with the headteacher, middle leaders and a group of pupils.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents. These included pupils' work in the current year, data on pupils' achievements in national assessments, information on pupils' progress, the school's evaluation of its strengths and areas for development. Records on provision for those pupils who need additional support, safeguarding procedures, behaviour and attendance were also examined.
- The 18 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were considered and an inspector spoke with several parents. There were 27 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Jim Bennetts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Adrian Martin

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- Almost two thirds of the pupils are of minority ethnic heritage and for most of these pupils English is not the language of the home. However, very few are at an early stage of learning English.
- Half the pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding, double the national proportion. (Pupil premium is additional funding allocated for pupils in the care of the local authority, or known to be eligible for free school meals or whose families are in the armed forces.) The school has a very small number of pupils in the care of the local authority, none from armed services families and a large number who are eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils whose learning needs are supported at the level known as 'school action' is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at 'school action plus', or with a statement of special educational needs, is average.
- Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are taught in single-age classes; nursery and reception children sometimes work together and sometimes separately. For literacy and numeracy, pupils in Years 3 and 4 and in Years 5 and 6 are grouped in sets by ability.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher joined the school fifteen months ago.
- The school has a before-school care club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in English, particularly for more-able pupils, by:
 - taking further the detailed marking of pupils' writing to ensure that they build on advice with spelling, punctuation and creative use of language
 - making more of guided reading to boost pupils' fluency and command of vocabulary.
- Develop further the recent improvements in teaching by:
 - extending coaching and peer mentoring so that strong classroom practice is shared and weaknesses are identified and attended to.
- Strengthen leadership and management further by:
 - consolidating the new improvement strategies and the sharing of responsibilities for aspects of the school's work
 - ensuring that individual pupils' underachievement from the past is pinpointed precisely so that support can be deployed with maximum efficiency.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' achievement has improved rapidly and is now good. This is due to the determined leadership of the headteacher, the commitment of staff to the drive for improvement, and the eagerness of pupils to learn.
- In 2011 Year 2 pupils' standards were well below average; in 2012 they rose to average. Year 6 pupils in 2011 had standards in national tests that were well behind what is normal. In 2012, Year 6 pupils had standards that were above average in mathematics and slightly below in English.
- Standards in the past were variable from year to year but generally low. The school is enabling pupils across the age range to catch up. Current Year 6 pupils have made very strong progress. The position is much the same across the age range and for pupils of all abilities and backgrounds.
- Children starting in nursery have skills generally well below average, particularly in speaking and listening. Progress in the nursery and reception classes is now good and most pupils enter Year 1 with normal standards for their age.
- Standards are high in mathematics. Last year nearly half the Year 6 pupils reached above the expected standard, two achieved an exceptional level. Results this year are expected to be similarly strong. There are fewer high outcomes in reading and writing.
- Pupils make good progress in English from low starting points. Across the age range, standards in reading and writing are generally a little below what is normal. Pupils' understanding of how groups of letters make sounds is enabling them to say correctly words that are new to them. However, for some, fluency in reading is underdeveloped. They grasp the gist of a story, but are sometimes unsure of the meaning of uncommon words. They are keen to embellish their writing and make sentences more interesting, but need more discernment in deciding whether more words make writing more effective. Spelling and punctuation are of a reasonable standard but some more-able pupils could benefit from more advice to improve precision.
- In some years boys are doing better than girls, sometimes girls are ahead: overall they do equally well. In the main, minority ethnic pupils reach higher standards than those of White British background. Pupils with disabilities and special educational needs do as well as others because of the high quality of care and support they receive. Data show that those entitled to pupil premium funding do slightly less well than others in the school, but better than similar pupils nationally.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good. Some lessons have outstanding teaching. Little teaching requires improvement and none is inadequate. Teaching has improved greatly because staff have strong motivation to develop their skills. They have benefited from clear guidance.
- Pupils' excellent attitudes to school life and eagerness for success have facilitated rapid improvement in learning.
- Lessons are well-planned, with activities that pupils enjoy. On World Book Day, Years 3 and 4 pupils used their reading books in a stimulating mathematics lesson to make tally charts of words beginning with each vowel; 'a' came tops with all the books. Determination and excitement were palpable.
- Teachers' explanations are usually succinct and pupils rarely have to wait overlong before getting on with their own work. There are usually suitably different activities for pupils of different abilities. For the most part, teachers and teaching assistants get around a class quickly to provide encouragement and steer progress.
- Where two classes are re-arranged into three sets by ability for literacy and for numeracy, productivity is very good. Teachers are able to tailor work to pupils' needs with precision within

these groups.

- Teaching assistants are often highly effective in the work they do within classrooms or with groups that are withdrawn from the main class.
- A system of additional support enables pupils in different year groups make up for lost time in earlier years. This is effective, but efficiency could be improved if specific underachievement were more closely pinpointed.
- Teachers value advice from the headteacher and other colleagues. Where there are weaknesses in teaching, they are minor. There is scope for more coaching and peer mentoring to point out simple weaknesses – sometimes as simple as a nudge to move chairs further apart to enable adults to circulate more easily.
- Pupils' books are well-kept. Presentation is neat, although handwriting is variable in consistency. 'Magpie Books' enable pupils to make a note of new words that could be useful. Marking is painstaking. Teachers mark up writing with comments such as 'preposition', or 'extend', but some pupils could benefit from structured strategies to take such prompts forward with re-drafting. While marking for creativity is often the focus, strategies should also be found to address weaknesses in spelling and punctuation.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils relish school life. A contagious enthusiasm for learning pervades the school. Boys and girls of all backgrounds get on exceptionally well. What endeavour went into the fancy dress for World Book Day, and what fun was had! Musketeers cavorted with princesses; the mad hatter trumped the terrifying vampire teacher.
- The school's vibrant ethos and pupils' excellent attitudes reflect the care that the school provides. The positive atmosphere has been nurtured over many years. It has been a key element in recent rapid improvement. The school's welfare provision is excellent for those who find it difficult to learn and those whose progress is vulnerable due to their circumstances.
- Pupils are insistent in saying that they feel safe and happy. They understand that there can be minor peevishness or unkind words between friends. They know of the many forms that bullying might take and are confident that adult help is to hand should a problem arise. Records show that inappropriate behaviour is exceptionally rare.
- In lessons pupils are attentive and diligent. About the school they are polite and courteous. In an assembly about Mothering Sunday pupils were full of interest and all joined in with the spirit of the occasion. During a necessary but prolonged wait on a cold playground, while fire officers checked a fire alarm fault, they were the quintessence of patience and understood the need for safety checks.
- Pupils are keen to help one another, for instance when older pupils act as mentors to younger ones. They value opportunities to give opinions on developments and are particularly impressed by the new rewards and targets systems. They are proud to be pupils at St Peter's and are admirable ambassadors for the school. Attendance is consistently high.

The leadership and management are good

- Since joining the school, the headteacher has established many new systems and procedures. There has been a clear insistence that nothing but the best will do. Expectations are clearly spelt out and targets are set for staff members. Pupils' progress is assessed frequently and reliably. Intervention to retrieve underachievement is extensive and generally efficient. Consequently, improvement in teaching has been extremely rapid, so too has achievement.
- The headteacher monitors teaching closely and provides perceptive feedback to teachers. Staff, including teaching assistants, value opportunities to observe one another and share insights. This approach has been a key lever in raising the quality of teaching.
- All this has been accomplished while maintaining exceptionally high staff morale. Leadership is

being distributed increasingly widely so that all have some responsibility for continuing improvement.

- With a large pupil premium funding allocation, careful thought has gone into how best to benefit pupils. The progress of pupils eligible for the funding is checked scrupulously.
- The school knows that the new systems and procedures, and new leadership responsibilities, need consolidation and refinement.
- The curriculum throughout the age range gives firm attention to maximising opportunities in literacy and numeracy. Other subjects are addressed sufficiently. There is good specialist provision for PE and music. All older pupils are offered opportunity to play an instrument. There is a wealth of enrichment activities within school. After-school clubs and trips out add significantly to pupils' experience. St Peter's sets great store by its mission to promote all aspects of pupils' personal development. All have equal opportunities for success and all are the best of friends. Parents greatly appreciate what the school does for pupils.
- The school has been supported well over a sustained period by the local authority and its consultant.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has recently been strengthened by the addition of a former local authority officer. Governors have an earnest commitment to the school's improvement. They are suitably trained and understand data on the school's performance. They have proper procedures for management of financial and other business. This includes the setting of the headteacher's objectives and arrangements for staff pay progression in relation to appraisal of their work. They ensure that pupil premium is spent properly and check on the progress that eligible pupils make. Safeguarding meets all requirements.

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	106245
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	400832

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	224
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Moria Wilson
Headteacher	Karen Burns
Date of previous school inspection	2 February 2010
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