

# St Peter's Catholic Primary School

St Peter's Way, Prenton, Birkenhead, Merseyside, CH43 9QR

**Inspection dates** 25–26 February 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Since the previous inspection, the standards reached by pupils have risen because the quality of leadership and teaching has continued to improve.
- From their starting points, pupils make good progress due to good teaching. They reach average standards in reading and writing and just below average standards in mathematics.
- Pupils with special educational needs are given excellent support, both in class and in the additional tuition they receive away from the main classroom.
- Provision in the early years is good. Children acquire learning habits that prepare them well for learning in later years.
- The school's systems for helping pupils to manage their behaviour are effective. Consequently, behaviour has improved over time and is usually good.
- Staff are very attentive to safety matters. Careful routines are in place and pupils feel safe and well cared for in school.
- Strong leadership, purposeful teamwork and good morale have created a welcoming and effective place of learning.
- The headteacher and other leaders have an accurate view of the school's performance. They demonstrate a proven ability to bring about school improvement and inspire trust from others.
- Pupils who have faced difficulties in their lives do well at St Peter's. Everyone is treated fairly, no-one is left out and all are given the firm encouragement and direction they need. Pupils are helped to develop attitudes and skills that will serve them well in the future.
- Governors do a good job. They are well informed about the school's work, are proud of its successes and work hard to make sure pupils are given every opportunity to do their very best.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is not as strong as that seen in reading and writing.
- Some pupils miss too much school or arrive late too often and this limits their progress.
- The quality of teaching is good rather than outstanding. Sometimes, pupils are not given the work or the explanations they need in order to make faster progress.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in every class and made several short visits to classrooms and to small groups of pupils receiving support and tuition away from the main classrooms. Some observations of teaching were carried out jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspectors listened to pupils read.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour. They reviewed the school's procedures, at the beginning and end of the school day, at the breakfast club, lunch and break times, and when pupils were moving about the school or taking part in clubs.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, school leaders, governors and a visiting educational psychologist. Telephone conversations with a local authority officer and an external consultant also took place.
- By the end of the inspection, there were 31 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. The inspectors looked at these, talked to some parents at school, and considered the responses the school's own survey of parental views. Staff responses to Ofsted's questionnaire were also taken into account.
- A number of school documents were examined. These included information about the work of the governing body, school improvement plans, the school's own analysis of its performance, and records of pupils' progress. The work in pupils' books and on display, and documents relating to the quality of teaching, staff performance management, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding were also scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Martin Pye, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Halford

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St Peter's Catholic Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most of the pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is larger than the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils at the school is larger the national average. The term disadvantaged pupils is used to describe those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority. These pupils receive additional support from the pupil premium funding.
- The school runs a breakfast club from 8.00 am each day and this was checked as part of this inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school offers full-time provision for reception-age children
- A privately run playgroup operates on the school site and offers part-time provision for nursery age children. This is subject to a separate inspection at a different time.
- Some of the staff provide advice to other schools.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve teaching in order to lift standards to higher levels, particularly in mathematics, by making sure teachers always:
  - check how well pupils understand their work and then make it harder or easier if necessary
  - focus carefully on the key teaching and learning points rather than overloading pupils with unnecessary tasks that do not help their learning
  - use mathematical vocabulary with precision.
- Work with parents and agencies to improve the attendance and punctuality of the group of pupils who miss too much school or are late too often.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher leads the school team with purposeful direction and demonstrates supportive concern for all in the school community while expecting everyone to do their best. Praise and credit are given where they are due, and challenge is provided where it is needed. The headteacher is authoritative but approachable and inspires trust from others. Her leadership has created a team that has already proved its ability to bring about school improvement.
- School leaders' own view of the school's current performance is spot on and priorities for further improvement are well informed and appropriate. Regular checks on teachers' work, thorough and intelligent analysis of school data, and careful records of pupils' progress give leaders and staff the information they need in order to learn from successes and target support and training where it is needed.
- The deputy headteacher brings infectious enthusiasm and ability to her leadership role. Similarly, other key leaders have a good understanding of their responsibilities, put in a lot of work, and know what needs to be done in order to build upon the school's current good performance.
- Subject and middle leaders are effective. They are trusted to do their jobs and are expected to deliver results. Pupils' achievements in a range of subjects are testimony to their work in ensuring an effective curriculum. The primary school sport funding, for example, has been used to recruit some specialist teaching. The amount of sport on offer during the school day and in after-school clubs has increased, and the quality of dance at the school, as seen during this inspection, is excellent.
- Other subjects, such as history, geography and religious education are enriched by visitors and trips. At regular intervals, the school organises themed weeks: 'fitness fortnight' or 'aspiration week', for example, in order to focus on certain topics and activities that help to equip pupils with life-skills that will serve them well in the future.
- The school's rules and values are communicated clearly, so that all understand the difference between right and wrong, and the importance of respect for others. Pupils learn about the beliefs and customs of different groups of people and how these influence the way they live. All have equal opportunity to participate and achieve, and funds such as the pupil premium are used wisely, and successfully, to ensure that this happens. Across the school, relationships are good; everyone is treated fairly and no-one is made to feel left out. With the 2015 general election approaching, school leaders are considering ways to help pupils improve their understanding of democracy and life in Britain and the wider world.
- The school provides a lot of information and support for parents, and for pupils' learning after school hours. Homework clubs for pupils and workshops and drop-in sessions for parents help to build a learning partnership between home and school, and many parents express positive views about the school's work. Even so, through their responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, a few parents express discontent with aspects of the school's work. Leaders are aware of this and are considering how to build further on the many positive links the school has with parents and the local community.
- The local authority has confidence in the school leadership and currently provides a low level of support. It recognises that other schools may benefit from seeing some aspects of the school's work and also makes use of staff from St Peter's to provide advice in other settings.
- Safeguarding procedures meet current requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors play a full and active part in school life and are positive ambassadors for the school. They are frequent visitors and ask plenty of questions in order to find out what is happening. They work hard to make sure the school is doing all it can to provide pupils with the support and teaching they need in order for them to make the most of their education and future lives.
  - The governing body presents itself as an open and objective group that takes steps to make sure it understands the information it gets. Governors have received training about the analysis of data and can speak in an informed way about the progress of different groups of pupils and the quality of teaching in different parts of the school. They know that standards in English have risen to be in line with the national average and also know that more needs to be done to boost standards in mathematics.
  - Individual governors take on specific responsibilities, such as for pupil premium or literacy, and keep up to date with requirements. They check the school's effectiveness in these areas, meet with school staff and report back to other governors.
  - Governors actively seek, and act upon, advice to help them make decisions. They ensure that systems to check on teachers' work, and for rewarding effective teaching and providing support when needed, are in place.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good****Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. School leaders and staff make their expectations clear and the routines for managing pupils' behaviour work well. Pupils know that good behaviour will be praised and that any poor behaviour will be challenged and stopped.
- In lessons, most pupils are attentive and want to learn. When moving around the school or playing outside, pupils usually follow the rules and are considerate towards others. From time to time, there is some rough play at break times and pupils do fall out with one another. However, staff respond promptly and most upsets are resolved quickly. Lunchtime in the hall is busy but orderly and pleasant.
- The school is particularly successful at helping pupils who have experienced difficulties in their lives. Staff are remarkably skilful at supporting pupils, and their families, to face and overcome problems and to make the most of the opportunities that school and education offers. Pupils who find it difficult to manage their emotions and behaviour get expert advice and support at Peter's. They are nurtured and helped to grow into calmer individuals who feel good about themselves and what they can achieve.
- In recent times, the school leadership has done more to emphasise the importance of regular and punctual school attendance. Systems to encourage good attendance, such as the attendance league, are in place and bringing about some improvements. Nevertheless, some pupils miss too much school or arrive late for no good reason and this limits their academic progress.

**Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Staff are very attentive to safety matters; the school site is kept secure, supervision arrangements are good and procedures for managing risk are sensible and effective. Pupils are taught how to stay safe in different situations and the school's e-safety guidance is thorough and helpful.
- Pupils are taught about the features of different types of bullying and know what to do if they think it is happening. They say bullying is rare and are confident that pupils and adults at school would not accept it and would stop it, should it happen. Pupils also understand that bullying is not the same as the day-to-day disagreements or rough play that can happen, for example, over playground games or between friends.
- The pupils who attend the breakfast club and those who stay for after-school activities are properly supervised by suitably qualified staff. School records and registers are kept correctly, and pupils report that they feel safe at school.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- All pupils at St Peter's Catholic Primary benefit from good teaching and, consequently, their achievement in many different subjects, including English and mathematics, is good and has strengthened since the previous inspection. Some teaching, particularly in the oldest and youngest year groups, is particularly strong. The teaching of reading, including early phonic skills, (recognising letters and the sounds they make) is skilful and highly effective and results in some impressive achievements by pupils.
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide firm encouragement, which sets high expectations and gives pupils direction, purpose and pride in their work and achievements. Pupils learn to value learning, aim to do their best and are keen to succeed.
- All classrooms are organised well. They are kept tidy with displays that celebrate pupils' achievements or support their learning. Pupils report that their teachers work hard to make learning enjoyable and to make them feel good about their capabilities and what they can achieve. In class, there is a 'ponder, pair, share, square' routine that prompts pupils to think hard; to test out what they know, to explain their thinking to others and to apply their existing skills to new situations.
- Teachers mark pupils' work with regular and thorough attention. The 'pink for think, green for good' system is applied with effective consistency and pupils talk with informed enthusiasm about how the guidance they get helps them to improve their work and learn more.
- Most staff provide careful, patient and well-informed explanations that help pupils to acquire knowledge and learn new skills. Some superb examples of this were seen during this inspection and are also evident in the work seen in pupils' books. However, in just a few cases, staff do not use mathematical language with the necessary precision so pupils' mathematical understanding does not move forwards with the same efficiency and purposeful briskness seen in reading and writing.
- Teaching staff keep a close check on pupils' progress through the records that they keep. On a day-to-day basis, teachers usually make careful observations, ask well-chosen questions and refine tasks so that

pupils are supported step by step in their learning. Occasionally, some teachers do not check carefully enough on how well pupils understand during lessons, or they ask them to complete unnecessary tasks that do not assist their learning. This means some pupils find aspects of their work too easy, while others get confused or distracted.

- The teaching provided in the group sessions that take place within, and outside, the main classrooms is effective because it gives pupils the opportunity and support they need in order to concentrate and make progress.

### **The achievement of pupils is good**

- Most pupils start school with levels of knowledge and skill below those typical for their age. They make good progress and, by the time they leave at the end of Year 6, reach average standards in writing, just above average standards in reading, and just below average standards in mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have risen steadily. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have also improved with achievement in reading and writing being particularly strong. Achievement in mathematics is also good and standards are rising, but standards do not yet match those reached in English.
- Standards in reading are at least good for all groups of pupils and some pupils make exceptional progress. The proportion of pupils that reached the expected level in the 2014 Year 1 national screening check on phonics was just above the national figure. This is a considerable achievement given many pupils' starting points.
- The most able pupils are pushed to do their best, with their greatest successes being seen in the standard of their reading, spelling and punctuation. In class, they are usually provided with suitably challenging work but, in line with other groups in the school, mathematics is the key area where they could be spurred on to reach even higher standards.
- A large proportion of pupils are disadvantaged. In the Year 6 class that left in 2014, for instance, 80% of pupils were receiving support from the pupil premium. Recent test results show that this group of pupils are doing well but, like other pupils at the school, they do better in English than in mathematics.
- In reading, disadvantaged pupils at St Peter's did as well as non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. In writing, they were just over a term behind non-disadvantaged pupils nationally, while in mathematics the gap was wider with disadvantaged pupils from St Peter's being more than two terms behind their non-disadvantaged peers in other schools. The size of the in-school attainment gaps between the two different groups of pupils in reading and mathematics were similar to those just described in both subjects, but there was a wider gap in writing. This is because, at St Peter's in 2014, non-disadvantaged pupils did extremely well in this subject and reached well above average standards. -
- Pupils with special educational needs benefit from good provision. They get plenty of extra help, both in lessons and through carefully targeted support and teaching outside of the main classroom. In addition, the school works closely with visiting specialists to make sure pupils, and their families, get the help, advice and support that they need. Much of the support provided is excellent and, consequently, pupils make good progress, grow and confidence and make the most of school.

### **The early years provision is good**

- The majority of children enter the Reception class with levels of knowledge and skill below those typical for their age. In a significant minority of cases, about 25% of the current intake for instance, children start with skills that are significantly below those typically seen, most noticeably in their language and social skills.
- Children settle in quickly because good communication between the on-site private Nursery and the school provides the early years team with plenty of information about the new starters. Consequently, as soon as they start, children get the teaching and support they need and make good progress.
- Over the past two years, the early years provision at school has undergone significant developments. The learning environment has been improved and assessment and teamwork has strengthened. Effective routines, attentive and kindly supervision, and interesting activities mean children acquire good learning habits, behave well and feel safe and secure at school.
- Teaching is consistently good and staff make purposeful use of the available space. Children have many opportunities to explore and extend their capabilities. Simple devices, such as the regular 'challenge cards', prompt the children to try new things and test out what they know and can do.

- The improvements seen in the early years provision have been brought about by good leadership. The results can be seen in the increasing proportions of children reaching a good level of development each year. From a figure that was well below the national figure in 2013, the proportion that reached a good level of development at the end of Reception in 2014 was 50%, just 10% below that seen nationally. This upward trend indicates that, as a result of good quality early years provision, children are increasingly ready for the work and learning they will cover in Year 1.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	105069
<b>Local authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	456144

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	157
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	H Robinson
<b>Headteacher</b>	J Farrelly
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 September 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 677 8438
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