

# Inspection of St Peter's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Dryden Road, Low Fell, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear NE9 5TU

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Inspection dates: 11–12 February 2020

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The previous 'outstanding' judgement reflected the school's overall effectiveness in December 2011 under the relevant inspection framework at that time.

The new judgement of 'good' reflects the current inspection framework as well as any changes at the school since the last inspection.

The school has not been inspected for nine years, which is longer than the five-year maximum interval between inspections. Changes in school effectiveness may have happened at any point in that period. The long time between inspections is because the law changed in 2011; it made outstanding schools exempt from routine inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Christian values are central to the ethos and learning at St Peter's. Pupils show their understanding of these values in their words and actions. They say that they feel safe, valued and happy. Pupils are proud of their school and wear their uniform with pride.

Staff expect pupils to do their best in everything they do and to behave well. In turn, pupils set, and meet, those high expectations for themselves.

Pupils talk with enthusiasm about their roles and responsibilities. They enjoy being school councillors, eco warriors or part of the sports crew. Older pupils look after the younger pupils with genuine empathy.

Pupils enjoy educational visits, which enhance their learning and develop their independence. These include residential trips to Holy Island or an outdoor adventure centre. Pupils in St Peter's choir have performed at the Royal Albert Hall and have won several competitions. Pupils enjoy singing and dancing with the residents at the local care home. Community links are strong. Pupils are welcoming to visitors. They are confident and friendly in conversation.

Parents and carers who gave their views are happy with their children's quality of education. They hold the school in high regard. They say that pupils' behaviour is exceptional, and we agree. Pupils recognise the signs of different types of bullying. They could not recall any bullying taking place. Logs to record behavioural incidents show that these are rare. When there is a concern, leaders take swift and appropriate action.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders and governors aim high for all pupils. They have created an inclusive climate for learning. Leaders have redesigned the curriculum. Some subjects, including science, geography and physical education (PE), are further developed than others. Leaders' subject knowledge is strong, particularly in geography and science. Leaders plan these subjects around knowledge, skills and vocabulary. Leaders have planned what to teach, and in which order. Curriculum plans in other subjects are under review. Leaders have chosen to develop the subjects through a rolling programme. As a result, some subjects are not as well developed as others. This includes computing and design and technology.

The teaching of reading has a high priority. It begins as soon as children enter Reception. In Year 1, pupils receive high-quality phonics teaching. Over time, almost all pupils enter Year 2 with the expected phonics skills. In 2019, this proportion declined to be below average. However, pupils made strong progress from their starting points. Pupils in the earliest stages of reading have books that match the sounds they have learned. This helps them to read with confidence.

Pupils achieve well in mathematics. They use problem-solving skills to apply the mathematics they learn. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. Work set for pupils of all ages is demanding. Pupils tackle challenges with ease because they have secure mathematical knowledge and skills. At the end of every key stage, pupils have high attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.

In science, teachers make learning memorable. Pupils investigate and experiment. They work with scientists. Pupils use subject-specific vocabulary. They achieve well. In geography, lessons build on previous learning. Pupils use their knowledge of Europe to understand about importing and exporting.

Leaders provide a wide range of activities to extend pupils' personal development. Charity work, sports events and musical tuition all enhance the curriculum offer. Some pupils talk about the importance of rules, fairness, laws and democracy. Pupils are not as knowledgeable about some aspects of the wider world. For example, they have a limited understanding of other cultures. Pupils are not confident to talk about what they know or have learned about different cultures.

In early years, children get off to a rapid start in learning their basic skills. They count, add, subtract and calculate in mathematics. They write for a purpose. Children write their letters in the correct way. They apply their phonics knowledge when spelling words. They access exciting ways to read, for example in the reading loft. Sometimes, physical barriers exist within the learning environment, indoors and outside. This restricts the opportunities for children to indulge in play-based learning. Children have limited chances to explore and develop their curiosity. As a result, the curriculum offer is sometimes narrowed.

The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is small. These pupils achieve well in English and mathematics by the end of each key stage. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do well. Teaching assistants use pupils' support plans to provide focused intervention. Teaching assistants have high-quality relationships with pupils.

Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils are mature and thoughtful and follow the rules. They are considerate and polite to each other and to adults. Pupils love school and are eager to attend. Pupils' attendance rates have been above average over time.

The headteacher is well respected by staff and parents and carers. Staff and governors share her clear vision of continuous school improvement. Governors are supportive and they know their accountabilities. They have a range of skills to challenge school leaders. Staff say that the headteacher supports them to manage their workload. Parents are very positive about the education and care their children receive.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders focus on keeping children safe. They have created a positive culture of safeguarding across the school.

Leaders, governors and staff attend up-to-date training related to safeguarding. This enables them to identify pupils at risk. Everyone recognises that safeguarding is their responsibility.

Pupils say that school is a safe place to be. All adults follow clear procedures to keep pupils safe. The curriculum includes lessons to raise pupils' awareness about safeguarding. This includes online safety sessions.

Governors receive regular updates on safeguarding. They understand their role in ensuring that safeguarding is effective.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced in some subjects. This is not the case for all subjects. Therefore, the transition statements have been applied to this inspection. However, it is clear from the actions that leaders have already taken to plan parts of the curriculum and train staff in how to deliver it that they are in the process of bringing this about.
- In early years, there are limited opportunities for children to thoroughly explore their learning environment and be curious. This means that their curriculum offer in early years is narrowed. Leaders should further develop the learning environment, indoors and out, so that the curriculum supports children's development in these areas.
- Leaders do not ensure that the curriculum promotes a wide range of opportunities for pupils to understand different cultures. Pupils cannot share their learning or knowledge in this area. As a result, pupils have a limited understanding of life in modern Britain. Leaders should further develop the opportunities within the curriculum, including visits, for pupils to develop this knowledge.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## **Further information**

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	108385
<b>Local authority</b>	Gateshead
<b>Inspection number</b>	10121897
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	215
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing</b>	Lynne Hudson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lisa Stokoe
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stpetersrcprimary.org/">www.stpetersrcprimary.org/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15–16 November 2011

## Information about this school

- The school is designated as having a religious character and received a section 48 inspection on 18–19 May 2017.
- A new chair of governors has been appointed since the last inspection.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

- We met with the headteacher, deputy headteachers and members of the senior leadership team. We met with five governors, including the chair of the governing body. We spoke with the school improvement partner from the local authority and had a telephone conversation with an officer from the Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.
- We considered reading, science and geography in detail as part of this inspection. We met with curriculum leaders and visited lessons with them. We looked at pupils' work and spoke to them about their learning. We met with the teachers

and teaching assistants from the lessons we visited. We reviewed the curriculum planning for these subjects.

- We listened to pupils read. We met with pupils formally and at breaktimes and lunchtime to listen to their views about the school.
- We scrutinised the school's recruitment checks on staff and volunteers. We spoke with staff about the school's systems for keeping children safe. We scrutinised the school's safeguarding documents, including the safeguarding policy and behaviour logs. This included looking at related documents on the school's website.
- We gathered the views of staff and parents during the inspection. We scrutinised the school's own parent questionnaires.

### **Inspection team**

Alison Aitchison, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Olie Flitcroft

Ofsted Inspector

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