

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. PETER'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Swinton

LEA area: Salford

Unique reference number: 105948

Headteacher: Mrs R Walker

Reporting inspector: Lynne Read
21199

Dates of inspection: 12 - 13 March 2001

Inspection number: 192017

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 3-11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Vicarage Road
Swinton
Manchester

Postcode: M27 0WA

Telephone number: 0161 794 2616

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Councillor J Dawson

Date of previous inspection: 17 - 21 February 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Peter's Primary School is situated close to the town centre of Swinton. The single storey building dates from the early 1900's but has been substantially re-furbished to provide accommodation for children under five, ten classrooms, hall space and a library. Nursery children are offered full time and half day places and are taught in a dedicated Early Years area. Reception children and pupils from Years 1 and 2 are taught in 4 classes, 2 of which are mixed age. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are accommodated in 6 classes, 2 of which contain mixed ages. In order to keep tuition groups small and to cater for individual needs, the school operates a system of grouping pupils from Years 3 to 6 for their lessons in English and mathematics based on prior attainment. There are adequate play areas, including one used solely for the nursery and reception children, together with games facilities on the adjoining fields. A hall built next to the school is rented to provide additional indoor facilities for physical education and for dining.

There is a total of 314 pupils on roll, making St Peter's a larger than average school and projected figures indicate that numbers will remain at this level. The majority of pupils come from the nearby council housing and the mainly terraced, private properties. Most families are supportive and make a conscious choice to have their children educated within the Christian ethos of a church school. A significant minority of pupils come from homes where there are social or economic difficulties and where education is not a high priority. The proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is below the national average at 11 per cent and includes the 4 pupils who have a formal statement of special needs. A total of 9 per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language, and this is higher than the national average. Altogether, 25 per cent of families claim their entitlement to free school meals, which is higher than that found nationally. Attainment on entry varies widely but overall, is below average in the areas of communication, language and literacy and in mathematical understanding.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school where the many significant strengths outweigh the areas identified for improvement. Teaching is of a high standard and pupils aged eleven achieve results in English, mathematics and science that are well above average when compared to similar schools. Leadership and management are focused on improvement and St Peter's provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English and mathematics are as good as the national expectation by the time pupils are eleven. They are above average in science. When compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, attainment in the three subjects is well above average by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is never less than satisfactory, the majority being good or better. Specialist subject teaching in Years 3 to 6 results in good standards of achievement.
- Rigorous assessment, target setting and carefully planned work ensure very good progress for the pupils in Years 5 and 6. The system of grouping pupils on the basis of prior attainment for English and mathematics is very successful in driving standards upwards.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to school; they are well behaved and work hard.
- The rich curriculum provides a good range of learning opportunities for the entire age range.
- Provision for pupils' social development is good and for moral development it is very good.
- Parents support the school well and are very satisfied with the standard of education it provides. There are good, established links between home and school.

What could be improved

- Attainment in mathematics and science in Years 1 and 2 is not as good as it could be for those pupils capable of higher achievement.
- The development of formal procedures is needed to ensure the continued health, safety and well-being of the pupils.
- The work of the governing body is not effective in evaluating school development planning and expenditure.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress in tackling the issues from the last inspection in February 1997. The quality of teaching has improved and in Years 3 to 6, is now mainly very good and excellent. Standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science for pupils aged eleven have risen, largely due to the very good progress made in Years 5 and 6. Teachers of these older juniors use assessments to set measurable targets for improvement and plan all work carefully to ensure that pupils work hard and learn rapidly. The role of the curriculum co-ordinators has been developed to include the monitoring of teaching, planning and pupils' work. They are currently updating schemes of work in line with the requirements of the new National Curriculum and the learning goals for younger children. Homework is now very effectively used to support learning.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	C	C	A
Mathematics	B	B	C	A
Science	B	D	B	A

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Children make good progress in the nursery and reception classes and most are achieving what their teachers expect by the time they start in Year 1. At age seven, the proportion of pupils who attain the expected level 2 in reading is above average, and for writing, mathematics and science it is average. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level 3 is average in reading and above average in writing. For mathematics the percentage of pupils at the higher level is below average and for science it is well below. When compared to similar schools, attainment is above average for reading and average for the other subjects. These results are not as comparatively good as those for older pupils because a lower percentage of pupils attain the higher level 3 in mathematics and science. Inspection findings indicate that a similar picture will emerge in this year's tests. In those two subjects, pupils capable of higher attainment in Year 2 are not achieving as well as they could be. At age eleven, the proportion of pupils who attain the expected level 4 in English, mathematics and science is close to the average. The percentage attaining the higher level 5 in English is average, for mathematics it is above average and for science it is well above average. When the overall results of pupils aged eleven are compared to similar schools, attainment in English, mathematics and science is well above average, largely because of the good percentage of pupils at the higher level. Observations during the inspection indicate that pupils are on target to sustain the good standards.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy coming to school and have very good attitudes to learning. They are well motivated and work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is consistently good, in lessons and on the playground. Pupils show respect for the feelings of others and are willing to share resources and ideas.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good and contribute to the secure, orderly atmosphere. Many pupils take responsibility for jobs around school and this contributes to their developing maturity.

Attendance	Rates are below average, despite the school's active procedures to promote better attendance. Most pupils attend regularly and arrive on time. There is a small minority of pupils who do not follow this pattern and are largely responsible for the relatively low attendance figure.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good with a substantial proportion of very good teaching	Mainly satisfactory with an almost equal amount of good teaching	Mostly very good and excellent teaching

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Teaching is never less than satisfactory throughout the school. In 23 per cent of lessons, it is excellent and in a further 23 per cent it is very good. Twenty seven per cent of teaching is good and another 27 per cent is satisfactory. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. The best teaching is in Years 5 and 6 and, as a result, the older pupils make very good progress, especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Teachers in the Foundation Stage provide a good range of learning opportunities to meet the needs of all children and to ensure good progress. In Years 1 and 2 teaching was good in almost half of the lessons seen but, in some cases, pupils capable of higher attainment in mathematics and science are not sufficiently challenged. Literacy and numeracy are taught well throughout the junior years with some excellent practice in Years 5 and 6. In Years 1 and 2 teachers have a sound level of subject knowledge in literacy and some good lessons were seen. They are less confident in the teaching of numeracy and rely too heavily on routine tasks from commercial schemes when planning group work. Throughout school, pupils who have special educational needs are well catered for. Those pupils for whom English is an additional language have appropriate support in class to enable full access to the curriculum.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad range of interesting learning opportunities with a suitable emphasis on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. A weakness lies in Years 1 and 2 in planning work to challenge those pupils capable of higher levels of attainment in mathematics and science.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is good provision for pupils who have special educational needs. They have individual programmes of learning that are regularly reviewed to ensure that learning progresses well. All pupils have full and equal access to the curriculum and all aspects of school life.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school makes satisfactory provision. A small amount of specialist teaching for pupils who are just beginning to learn English is provided by the Local Education Authority.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for social development is good and for moral development it is very good. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong. They show consideration and courtesy. Provision for spiritual and cultural education is satisfactory but there is scope to develop these further.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Established day-to-day practice maintains pupils' health, safety and welfare. Positive strategies to promote good behaviour are very effective and staff know their pupils very well. However the school does not have sufficient formal procedures in place to ensure continued good practice for the future. Rigorous assessment of academic progress in Years 5 and 6 leads to the setting of appropriate targets and ensures that lessons build successfully on prior learning. Systems in place for Years 1 to 4 are not as effective and do not ensure that all pupils are achieving their best.
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A varied range of extra-curricular activities enhances the curriculum and extends opportunities for social development. Visits to places of interest, residential holidays and visiting speakers all add an extra dimension to learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides active, purposeful leadership and is instrumental in maintaining the school's caring ethos. She is ably assisted by the deputy headteacher and together, they strive for high standards. Curriculum co-ordinators have begun to monitor provision in their subjects by evaluating teaching and by checking planning and pupils' work.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors discharge their responsibilities conscientiously and are supportive of the school. They are developing an overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses through headteacher reports, written reports submitted by the curriculum co-ordinators and through the working of the sub-committees. They are not fully active in school improvement or long-term strategic planning.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school, under the direction of the new headteacher is developing procedures to monitor and evaluate teaching. In Years 5 and 6, staff carefully analyse test data to check pupil progress and attainment. The headteacher and deputy headteacher maintain a sound, overall view of performance. The governors, however, are not so well informed and do not have systems in place to evaluate the success of school development planning.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are generally well used to support the school's priorities for development. The principles of best value are applied when ordering but governors do not actively evaluate expenditure in terms of improved provision, teaching and learning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children enjoy coming to school. • Children make good progress. • Behaviour is good. • The quality of teaching is good. • Staff are approachable. • The school expects children to work hard. • The school is well led and managed. • The school helps children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More information about how children are getting on. • More information on how to help children at home, especially with mathematics homework. • More out-of-school activities.

The inspection team endorses parents' positive views of the school. Inspectors found that the school offers a good range of clubs, before school, at lunchtimes and after school of a social, sporting and academic nature. The information presented to parents about how their child is getting on is useful but the quality of reports varies between classes. Information available to parents of the pupils in Years 5 and 6 is very good but less so in some other year groups. Parents' evenings are held regularly and staff are readily available to discuss issues that may arise. Some parents were unsure about how they should support their children with homework. The school has held curriculum evenings that were well attended and offered an insight into the methods used in the new literacy and numeracy strategies. However, the school could usefully consider providing more homework advice for parents and ensuring that the quality of reporting is consistent throughout the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards in English and mathematics are as good as the national expectation by the time pupils are eleven. They are above average in science. When compared to other schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, attainment in the three subjects is well above average by the end of Year 6.

1. Overall, pupils in Years 3 and 4 make at least satisfactory progress in all areas. In Years 5 and 6, progress is rapid, especially for those pupils capable of higher attainment in mathematics and science. Teachers are currently focused on improving progress and attainment at the higher level in writing and are seeing some promising results. As they progress through Years 3 to 6, pupils' reading becomes more fluent and expressive. They read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction genres, and tackle play scripts with confidence. In one lesson, pupils compared a narrative version with the playscript, identifying different features. They successfully explained why playscripts need stage directions and linked them to descriptions in the original text. Pupils begin to write in more detail, showing a developing awareness of vocabulary and grammar. By the end of Year 6 pupils understand sophisticated story structures and use a range of writing techniques and styles to improve their own work. For the higher attaining pupils, writing is lively and often has a mature feel. All pupils have a good command of grammar with some having the knowledge and confidence to experiment with subordinate clauses and the full range of punctuation to create the desired effect. In one lesson, pupils were developing their characterisation by clever use of the semicolon, mimicking the style of a favourite author. Reading and writing skills are effectively used across the curriculum. For example, pupils use an explanatory format to write about geographical phenomena. They recount events in history using appropriate style and language and write instructions for making objects in design and technology. In mathematics pupils extend their knowledge and understanding. Skills in mental computation and agility develop well and most pupils are confident in pen and paper methods when working out problems involving all four rules of number. By the end of the Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of shape, space, data handling and measures. In one lesson, older pupils were adding and subtracting mentally to 3 decimal places, enjoying the fast pace and the opportunity to improve their techniques. Higher attaining pupils clearly explain their reasoning and methods, using appropriate mathematical terminology. All pupils use their mathematical skills very effectively to enhance learning in other subjects; for example, when producing graphs in science, when measuring and making in design and technology or when writing sequences of instructions on the computer to generate shapes. In science, knowledge and skills of enquiry, investigation and fair testing develop well from Year 3 to 6 with most progress seen in the older age groups. Pupils, by the end of Year 6, design and carry out their own experiments, paying very good attention to the effects of variables. They work collaboratively, sharing and discussing ideas and using evidence from previous work. They have a good understanding of the properties of different materials and of physical processes. They develop hypotheses and design experiments to test their theories.
2. Pupils who have special educational needs progress well throughout school in all subject areas. Positive action begins early with an assessment of skill development. Work is then planned through an individual targeted programme. This enables pupils to maintain a good rate of learning and achieve a high level of self confidence. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make at least sound progress. They have support to help them with precise English words associated with subject studies; for example, some of the comparative terms used in mathematics or specific scientific terminology. Those who are in the early stages of English language acquisition have additional support from visiting staff to support their learning.
3. The school has made very good improvements in attainment for pupils in Years 3 to 6 since the last inspection, especially in mathematics and science. Pupils capable of higher achievements are very well challenged and work confidently at advanced levels for their age. Attainment in science has seen exceptional improvement. At the last inspection, it was low but is now above the national average with the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level 5 at well above average. Standards in Years 1 and 2 for mathematics and science have remained the same and are around the average mark. The relatively low numbers of pupils reaching the higher level in mathematics and science was a weakness identified in the last report. This has not been resolved and remains a key issue in this inspection.

Teaching is never less than satisfactory, the majority being good or better. Specialist subject teaching in Years 3 to 6 results in good standards of achievement.

4. In this inspection, there were no unsatisfactory lessons and almost a half of the teaching in school was very good and excellent. This represents a significant improvement since the inspection of 1997 when teaching was unsatisfactory in just over 12 per cent of lessons. The weaknesses identified then have been largely resolved. The pace of learning in lessons has risen, and there is good attention to achieving a balance between whole class and group work. One issue remains partly addressed. There is still evidence of undemanding tasks set in mathematics and science for those pupils who are capable of higher attainment in Years 1 and 2. Overall the quality of teaching is now a major strength of the school and results in good rates of learning, especially in Years 5 and 6.
5. The Foundation Stage is more commonly referred to as the nursery and reception classes. Teaching for this age group is mainly good with a third of lessons being very good. Teachers and support staff work closely together as a team to help children achieve the learning targets set for them. Pupils of differing abilities and prior experiences are well catered for through the setting of purposeful tasks. Teachers have a very secure knowledge of how young children learn. There is a good balance between activities directed by adults and those that the children choose themselves. Planned learning opportunities are very well organised and include some direct instruction, exploration, investigation and play. All staff put an appropriate emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills and this is reflected in the good progress made by the children. Teachers pay great attention to establishing routines and to developing independence in their pupils. They have high expectations of attitudes and behaviour. This creates a calm, industrious atmosphere and sets a firm foundation for later learning.
6. Teaching for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is mainly satisfactory with an almost equal amount of good practice. Classrooms are well organised, with all equipment and materials ready to hand.
7. There is a suitable emphasis on teaching the basic skills, including phonics. In English and mathematics lessons, there is a lively, whole class introduction using a good selection of resources and often directly involving the pupils in an interactive way. Questioning is searching and helps pupils to extend their thinking. Group work is not so well planned and does not fully challenge those pupils who are capable of higher attainment. Sometimes, pupils have to complete routine work that is too easy for them before they move onto more appropriate tasks. There is too much emphasis on basic workbook activities that simply involve filling in a word or number and bear no relation to the introductory part of the lesson. Too many worksheets involve pupils in colouring and cutting out activities that waste valuable learning time.
8. Teaching for pupils in Years 3 to 6 varies from satisfactory to excellent. In detail, 19 per cent of teaching was satisfactory, a further 13 per cent was good, 31 per cent was very good with another 37 per cent being of an excellent standard. The majority of the best teaching was seen in Years 5 and 6 where 88 per cent of lessons were judged as very good and excellent. The high quality of teaching has a direct and positive impact on pupils' progress. Throughout the key stage, teachers use good questioning techniques to involve all pupils. Oral contributions are valued and handled sensitively. Good use is made of direct instruction and demonstration to introduce new work and concepts. All teachers explain the targets of the lesson and use the final session to check learning and sort out any misconceptions. Commendable features of the teaching in Years 5 and 6 include the challenging pace of lessons, the meticulous matching of work to build on prior learning and the development of mental agility. In one science lesson, pupils collaborated on an experiment, identifying variables and eliminating them. They worked quickly and accurately, taking measurements, recording them and looking for trends in their findings. In order to ensure good pace to the lesson the teacher set the recording tasks at different levels of difficulty. Some pupils had to design their own table, others had to take re-readings and find an average, all within strict deadlines. The next stage involved drawing a graph to show results and using this to predict the effect of changing one variable. The rate of learning and concentration in this lesson was exceptionally high. The pupils thoroughly enjoyed the challenges and remained well motivated. In one mathematics lesson, some innovative approaches ensured that all the pupils could achieve success. One group had a series of quick tasks to complete, others had practice work using the

computers, whilst some had a range of computations to work through. The class teacher worked tirelessly, ensuring good support for all and setting new challenges where appropriate. The plenary session was organised in a novel way with pupils volunteering to demonstrate their computation skills with great confidence and much fun. Very good emphasis is given to developing English, mathematical and computer skills through the full range of the curriculum for the junior pupils.

9. Some subjects in Years 3 to 6 are taught by specialist teachers who have very good expertise, personal talents and who dedicate much time and effort to providing stimulating lessons and interesting learning opportunities. Their enthusiasm is transmitted to the pupils who thoroughly enjoy the experiences they are offered and make good progress. Some work of high quality was seen in design and technology and in musical composition and performance. Teachers have good subject knowledge of information and communications technology and use the facilities of the computer suite effectively to develop their pupils' skills across all the programmes of study. Staff take great care to provide meaningful experiences for the pupils and make very good use of school visits and invited expert speakers to enhance learning.
10. Teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is consistently good. Individual programmes of learning are devised and all staff know what targets have been set. The school is committed to ensuring full access to all pupils and provides additional, specialist resources where they are needed. Those pupils who are learning English as an additional language are suitably supported within the classroom and some additional tuition is provided for those in the early stages of English language acquisition to ensure full access to the curriculum.
11. The quality of planning varies across the school from satisfactory to excellent. The best practice is seen in Years 5 and 6 where learning objectives and activities are set to meet the needs of the different groups within the class and to build precisely on prior attainments. All pupils' books are marked regularly and some teachers include very useful comments to support future learning but this is not consistent across the school. Homework is very well used throughout school. Younger pupils have regular reading tasks and parents are very appreciative of teachers' commitment to this area. Older pupils are set relevant tasks that include personal research, practice tasks or extension activities, mainly for English, mathematics or science. There is a useful homework diary to help communication between school and home and to ensure that expectations are clear and timescales are adhered to. Parents speak highly of the success of the homework policy. They feel that it is a valuable resource in consolidating learning and gives them an indication of their child's progress. A homework reward system provides good motivation and encourages pupils to complete assignments on time.

Rigorous assessment, target setting and carefully planned work ensures very good progress for the pupils in Years 5 and 6. The system of grouping pupils on the basis of prior attainment for English and mathematics for Years 5 and 6 is very successful in driving standards upwards.

12. Very good improvements have taken place since the last report in assessment, target setting and teachers' planning of work to build effectively on prior attainment in Years 5 and 6. Results of the national tests for Year 6 pupils in English, mathematics and science are thoroughly analysed to provide information about the success of the curriculum and for future planning. The end-of-year optional tests and scrutiny of completed work are used to track pupil progress and to discover what the pupil knows and what needs to be taught next. A rigorous target setting programme based on the information gathered then ensures that planning and teaching accurately meets individual, group and class needs. As a result, progress is very good; pupils with special educational needs are well catered for and higher achievers are suitably challenged. Analysis by gender and ethnicity is also carried out to identify any trend that may be arising and to enable quick action.
13. In English and mathematics lessons, pupils are grouped according to prior attainment and this is another factor in the good rates of progress and attainment. The higher attaining group work at a very fast pace and those pupils who need more support have increased levels of direct engagement with the teacher who provides targeted help to overcome problems. One group is working on a planned programme to boost confidence and competence. A system of mentoring is very successful in supporting pupils' attainment. This allows for one-to-one help and advice for

specific pupils who are in need of extra work to secure their skills, knowledge and understanding. Curriculum co-ordination is very good in the two top year groups and very firmly focused on high achievement.

Pupils have very positive attitudes to school; they are well behaved and work hard.

14. The pupils' attitudes are very good and contribute to the positive learning environment that exists. During lessons, they are well motivated, work hard and respond very positively to encouragement. In returned questionnaires, 99 per cent of parents agreed that their child enjoys coming to school and 100 per cent agreed that children are expected to work hard. At the meeting, many parents said that behaviour is good, with 95 per cent endorsing this statement in the questionnaires. The headteacher and staff often receive commendations on the comportment and responsibility of pupils when on school visits. Behaviour is especially good in the rather cramped cloakrooms where pupils are mindful of potential problems and are safety conscious. Pupils' attitudes were praised in the last report and have improved further since then.
15. The pupils know that they are in school to learn. They settle down quickly at the start of school and after breaks and are keen to start work. Pupils in Years 1 and 2, enter the classroom in the mornings, organise their belongings independently and busy themselves with a suitable task until school starts. The older juniors show very mature attitudes. They quickly and efficiently get ready for the day, complete registration and make their way to their groups with a minimum of prompting from teachers. In the nursery and reception classes, children listen attentively to instructions and respond sensibly. They follow the well established routines and need little support from adults.
16. Staff know their pupils very well and celebrate the strengths and idiosyncrasies of each individual. Pupils respond well, demonstrating a healthy respect for other people's opinions and personal space. Pupils have a strong identity with the school and treat the building and resources with care. They tidy away willingly and sensibly after lessons. Relationships amongst members of the school community, regardless of social or ethnic background, are consistently good. No bullying or other inappropriate behaviour was observed. There have been no exclusions in the last year and this is a further indicator of the good level of behaviour.
17. Pupils enjoy the challenges that are set for them in lessons and show good levels of sustained concentration. From the earliest days in the nursery, children maintain interest in their tasks, and complete them to the best of their abilities. By the time pupils reach the final years at the school, they are working at a very good pace, giving of their best and usually completing tasks within the exacting, but realistic timescales set by their teachers. This generates a great deal of personal satisfaction and self esteem. It also helps to build levels of confidence that are seen in the pupils' willingness to 'have a go' when presented with something new. Overall, the pupils' attitudes and behaviour are a credit to the work of their parents and their teachers.

The rich curriculum provides a good range of learning opportunities for the entire age range.

18. The school provides a broad and balanced range of learning opportunities for all its pupils.
19. The curriculum for the children in the nursery and reception classes covers all the nationally recognised areas of learning for this age group. As a result, children transfer smoothly into the National Curriculum programmes of study when they enter Year 1. Planning is based around providing relevant experiences and often follows a theme to allow for practice and reinforcement of skills. For example, in one afternoon session, children were learning about food. They were presented with an interesting range of creative, exploratory and investigative activities. They made toast with their teacher, discussing changes to the bread, sampling the end product and giving an opinion on the taste. Some created their favourite meal using dough and then talked about it, focusing on healthy eating issues. Others used their developing physical skills to cut out and make a 'jelly collage'. In the plenary session, all the children discussed the results of their class food experiment and planned an additional investigation.

20. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully introduced from Year 1 to Year 6 and lessons cover the full range of objectives. Reading and writing opportunities are planned to give a broad range of experience and are extended into other areas of the curriculum. There is a good emphasis on mental and oral work in numeracy lessons and whole class sessions provide opportunities for investigative activities. However, in Years 1 and 2 there are limited activities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical understanding in group sessions or to engage in problem solving work. An over-reliance on the commercial scheme of work restricts the setting of relevant and meaningful activities for learning.
21. Pupils enjoy an interesting range of science activities in Years 3 to 6, with the older ones having open-ended tasks that allow them to explore, experiment and investigate. Opportunities for scientific enquiry are limited, however, in Years 1 and 2 where too much work is planned around the basic acquisition of knowledge.
22. Throughout the school, there is a good emphasis on creative development with pupils studying art and music from their own and other cultures. Extra-curricular opportunities enhance the curriculum with pupils engaging in the performing arts, singing in the choir and playing in recorder groups. The school's productions are highly regarded by governors and parents and are very well attended. Physical education has a good profile in the curriculum supplemented by a variety of out-of-school clubs and an annual outdoor pursuits weekend. The curriculum for design and technology allows pupils to develop their own projects from earliest designs to finished product and standards are good. Studies in geography and history allow pupils to understand the local cultural heritage, often through first-hand experience, and to learn about different societies around the world. Pupils have very good access to computers. Lessons in the computer suite enable the youngest to quickly gain a good level of competence. Throughout school, skills in information and communications technology are systematically taught and a rich variety of experiences is provided for pupils to use their knowledge and understanding in other areas of the curriculum. For example, some pupils use computer generated programs to design their models in technology, or they use desk top publishing facilities to present their written work in different and interesting ways. Extra-curricular activities in both these subjects provide an additional dimension to learning. Some modern foreign language teaching is offered as an out-of-school club and is another example of the school's commitment to providing an interesting, exciting curriculum that allows pupils to pursue personal interests and to extend their talents. Many opportunities are also offered for pupils to take responsibility for jobs around school. These include organising resources, checking books returned to the library and helping with routine administration, all out of regular school hours. The commitment required and standard of work expected contribute very well to pupils' personal development and maturity. The newly formed breakfast club provides a welcome social venue and opportunities for informal chats between staff and pupils.

Provision for pupils' social development is good and for moral development it is very good.

23. The school promotes social development well. It permeates all areas of the curriculum and results in a pleasant working and learning environment. Social awareness is fostered in lessons, at playtimes and in extra-curricular activities. Adults act as good role models in developing a strong sense of community and belonging. There is an emphasis on building and maintaining good relationships throughout school at every level. Pupils are encouraged to share resources and ideas, to work collaboratively and to take account of each other's views. They are sensitive to the needs of others and are always willing to offer help. Children as young as those in reception class readily share resources and space when engaged in their practical activities. Awareness of the wider community is enhanced through visits within the local area and when speakers are invited into school. Pupils begin to learn the important virtues of citizenship by collecting for charities and considering those less fortunate than themselves. They offer a warm welcome to known visitors, and are cheerful. The annual residential holiday provides further, valuable opportunities for pupils to explore and extend their social skills.
24. The ethos of the school provides strong moral guidance for the pupils. Within the well ordered community, everyone is respected and there is a good sense of personal worth. There is a positive approach to good behaviour with rewards and sanctions clearly understood by all. The discipline policy has a high profile in the day-to-day life of the school. The simple and minimal list

of rules enables pupils to develop a well defined sense of right and wrong. At all times staff actively promote a sense of responsibility, honesty and fair play amongst their pupils.

Parents support the school well and are very satisfied with the standard of education it provides. There are good, established links between home and school.

25. Almost a third of questionnaires were returned and there was an overwhelmingly positive response to the questions asked. The judgements made during the inspection agree with these positive views. Parents especially appreciate the approachability of the staff and have every confidence in their commitment to sorting out issues quickly and fairly. Some parents recounted how issues had been tackled quickly and fairly. Parents expressed great confidence in the level of care at the school. There was almost unanimous agreement that children enjoy coming to school, that they are expected to work hard and that they make good progress. In returned questionnaires, 95 per cent of parents said that behaviour is good. There was much praise for the management of the school and for the quality of teaching. Parents gave examples of how their child had been sensitively supported when experiencing some difficulty and of how pupils are stretched in their learning, without undue pressure. The specialist teaching, especially in English, music and design and technology was singled out as a strength of the school. Parents feel that a good level of homework is set from the younger classes where reading tasks are challenging to the older juniors where activities vary from the more formal to research projects. It is widely recognised that the style and regular amount of homework prepares pupils well for secondary school.
26. There are several other schools in the area and many parents actively choose St. Peter's because of its caring approach and its links to the church. Several parents help in classes and on trips, as do some church members, and they provide a valuable resource for learning. Parents and carers of children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in Years 1 and 2 are invited into school at the start of the morning session. Teachers are readily available to chat informally or to listen to concerns. This ensures that any issues, no matter how small, can be addressed quickly. Another very good feature of this system is seen when pupils and parents celebrate good work together. Parents also speak highly of the school's commitment to the care and supervision of younger pupils at the end of the day when they are 'handed over' to a recognised person.
27. There is recognition that many parents like to keep up-to-date with developments in education in order to help children at home. The curriculum evenings that the school arranged for parents were well received and the regular newsletters inform parents of topics that their children will study during the term. However, some parents are unsure of how to best help with mathematics homework and would appreciate more guidance. Parents' evenings are very well attended and teachers make contact with any parent who cannot come in order to offer alternative arrangements. The headteacher and staff place great emphasis on maintaining good relationships with parents and make themselves readily available before and after school to discuss issues. The home-school agreement has been signed by all families and helps to provide a consistent approach for the pupils.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Attainment in mathematics and science in Years 1 and 2 is not as good as it could be for those pupils capable of higher achievements.

28. A scrutiny of pupils' work and observations made during the inspection in Years 1 and 2 provide evidence of higher attainment at level 3 in reading and writing but not in mathematics and science. This trend is seen in the results of the national tests for seven year olds where the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level 3 is below average in mathematics and well below average in science.
29. In mathematics, pupils have a sound understanding of addition and subtraction and are beginning to understand the concept of multiplication. They are not, however, confident in the relationships between number operations and therefore are restricted in taking their problem solving and investigative skills to a higher level. For example, pupils add two numbers together but cannot use the inverse relationship to make a subtraction sum. They group equal sets of numbers to obtain a multiplication total as they are shown, but do not experiment with repeated addition to explore the mathematical relationship. In workbook tasks, one pupil had discovered a strategy of her own when adding numbers to twenty but this was not shared with others and she had no opportunity for problem solving work to extend her knowledge and understanding. Pupils have a sound knowledge of shape, space and measures but do not apply their skills through investigations. This limits their learning at the higher level. The school has recently introduced a commercial scheme for mathematics. At present, this scheme is dominating much of the curriculum offered. Oral and mental starters to lessons are well targeted at different levels of prior learning with questions set at differing levels of challenge but in the group work sessions, pupils too often are given the same workbook task. Pupils who successfully finish are then given further tasks but too often, these are also from a workbook and have no link with the introductory session. There is a lack of opportunity for pupils to investigate, find alternative strategies or to experiment with ways of recording. Assessment information is not effectively used to set challenging targets for pupils capable of higher attainment or to move their learning forward at a good pace.
30. In science, there are weaknesses in pupils' skills of scientific enquiry and this restricts attainment of pupils capable of the higher standards. Learning is planned on a two year rolling cycle so that pupils cover all the programmes of study. However, there is very little difference in the challenge of the work set for the two year groups and a scrutiny of pupils' books shows that too often the same worksheet or task has been completed by Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. Much of the work planned is aimed solely at the level 2 standard and does not include sufficient opportunities for practical investigation, experimentation and the presentation of evidence. There is insufficient emphasis on assessment of pupil progress and of using that information to plan teaching at the higher level for those who are ready for the challenge.
31. A strength of the school lies in the very good systems of assessment, target setting and planning for Years 5 and 6 that ensures good challenges for all pupils, and leads to high standards of achievement. These techniques could usefully be extended to Years 1 and 2.

The development of formal procedures is needed to ensure the continued health, safety and well-being of the pupils.

32. The caring ethos of the school is seen in its everyday routines and interactions between staff and pupils. Teaching and non-teaching staff are watchful and respond well to individual needs. Supervision is good at all times and the school has well established day-to-day routines to maintain the well-being of the pupils. Health and safety checks are carried out by staff and governors on occasions but a more formal approach is needed to ensure that roles and responsibilities are clear and that checks are scheduled according to an appropriate timetable. Child protection procedures are in need of review and update. There is a designated senior member of staff who is the responsible person but very little training has taken place for management and staff, both teaching and non-teaching. Not all staff are sure of the arrangements for child protection and it is some time since these have been checked with the procedures of the local Area Child Protection Committee. There is no named governor for this area. Action to rectify this situation is urgently needed.

The work of the governing body is not effective in evaluating school development planning and expenditure

33. The governors have a good range of expertise and are committed to achieving a high standard of provision for all the pupils. They discharge their responsibilities conscientiously and are supportive of the school's work. The committees are well organised and the proceedings of the governing body are efficiently conducted. Some governors visit school to watch lessons and experience teaching and learning at first-hand. However, not all governors are so well informed of the day-to-day running of the school. They are kept up-to-date with developments through headteacher and curriculum co-ordinator reports and have a developing overview of the school's strengths. However, most information comes through written reports and there is little opportunity for interaction between teachers and governors during meetings that would allow governors to explore issues fully and to develop a more active approach to the management of the school. The finance committee meets regularly and effectively monitors the budget and expenditure, ensuring that good value is sought. Governors have informal methods to check the effectiveness of spending in terms of improved provision but do not actively evaluate expenditure in terms of improved teaching and learning. For example, they are aware of improved resourcing for information and communications technology but do not have a clear view of the impact on teaching and learning in the subject. Governors are involved, to some extent, in the implementation of the school development plan but have no clear systems for monitoring its success or for the evaluation of its overall effectiveness. They have a vision for future developments at the school but this is not translated into strategic action planning for the longer term.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- **Improve attainment in mathematics and science for pupils capable of higher achievement in Years 1 and 2 by extending the rigorous systems of assessment, target setting and planning that are established in the upper part of the school. (paragraphs 30,31,32,33)**
- **Develop formal procedures to ensure the continued health, safety and welfare of pupils by:**
 - providing updated training for the responsible, named person for child protection;
 - providing training for all staff who have contact with pupils, both teaching and non-teaching to raise awareness of child protection issues and ensure uniformity of approach;
 - checking that procedures in school are fully in line with the local Area Child Protection Committee guidelines;
 - developing a programme of routine health and safety checks in school, detailing roles and responsibilities.
(paragraph 34)
- **Extend the work of the governing body in evaluating school effectiveness by:**
 - developing an active role in management and in the evaluation of school development planning;
 - developing systems to evaluate expenditure in terms of improved teaching and learning.
(paragraph 35)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	26
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
23%	23%	27%	27%	nil	nil	nil

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	35	280
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	11	65

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	nil	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	nil	34

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	19

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	92.3
National comparative data	94.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	16	22	38

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	13	14
	Girls	21	20	22
	Total	35	33	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (81)	87 (81)	95 (83)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	14	15
	Girls	21	20	20
	Total	36	34	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (83)	89 (98)	92 (95)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	22	18	40

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	17	20
	Girls	12	13	14
	Total	30	30	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (69)	75 (74)	85 (74)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	15	16
	Girls	12	13	12
	Total	28	28	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (67)	70 (74)	70 (79)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	19
Chinese	0
White	254
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.3:1
Average class size	24.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	103

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	35

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	63.75

Number of pupils per FTE adult	11.3:1
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	516729
Total expenditure	527884
Expenditure per pupil	1655
Balance brought forward from previous year	22461
Balance carried forward to next year	11306 (2.2%)

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	314
Number of questionnaires returned	95

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	37	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	42	54	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	49	2	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	54	12	3	1
The teaching is good.	58	36	6	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	48	17	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	37	6	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	43	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	32	52	14	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	40	54	4	2	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	54	4	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	43	9	2	7

Other issues raised by parents

Some concerns about:

- information given to parents to help them support their child with homework tasks (especially mathematics)
- information about how children are getting on
- parents asked to pay for specialist music lessons taken by peripatetic teachers
- lunchtime arrangements and some inappropriate behaviour on the playground
- the availability of extra-curricular opportunities offered to pupils.

The school has held curriculum evenings that were well attended and offered an insight into the methods used in the new literacy and numeracy strategies. However, the school could usefully consider providing more homework advice for parents, especially about methods of computation and the recording of work in mathematics. Parents evenings are held regularly and are very well attended. Written reports are sent out annually and there are further opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress on request. The quality of the annual report to parents varies across the school from excellent to satisfactory. A more uniform approach aimed at the highest standards would be useful. The provision of peripatetic

music lessons is an optional extra that is offered at St Peter's. A small charge is made for this service that the school cannot afford from its budget and therefore has to pass on to parents. However, governors have made provision for the instruments to be borrowed free of charge and are always willing to discuss any difficulties that may arise as a result of their charging policy. The school has made some changes to the lunchtime arrangements to cut down waiting time that have been well received by pupils. There was no evidence of inappropriate behaviour during the inspection and the supervision of pupils was good at all times. Inspectors found that the school offers a very good range of clubs out of school hours of a social, academic and a sporting nature. These activities provide additional learning opportunities and enhance the curriculum very well.