



St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Bloxwich

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104234
LEA Walsall
Inspection number 277109
Inspection dates 11 July 2006 to 12 July 2006
Reporting inspector David Driscoll AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Lichfield Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Bloxwich
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Walsall, West Midlands WS3 3LY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01922 710872
Number on roll	234	Fax number	01922 710872
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Lisa Cooper
Date of previous inspection	30 October 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Mary Green

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Peter's is an average-sized primary school that serves a relatively disadvantaged area. Few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, although several are learning English for the first time. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average, as is the proportion with a statement of special educational needs.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good education and good value for money. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, and standards are currently above average. The children settle in quickly and develop good attitudes to work, but do not make enough progress in their writing in the Reception class. Satisfactory progress continues in Year 1, where the work is not always matched to the pupils' ability. From Year 2 onwards, the pupils blossom. Their standards rise quickly because the teaching is good, so they leave having made good progress, regardless of their starting points. Progress in English and science is particularly good, but the most able pupils' mental skills let them down in mathematics. Some of the activities used to improve their mental arithmetic focus more on remembering, rather than working things out. Pupils' attitudes continue to improve as they move through the school. They develop excellent manners and their behaviour is outstanding. They appreciate the good care and guidance they receive.

The school has been improving rapidly in recent years as a result of strong leadership. Standards are improving quickly because the school's managers have a clear idea of its weaknesses and what to do about them. Their evaluation of the school's performance is accurate, and leads to the school being well placed to continue the good progress made since the last inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the progress made by children in Reception and Year 1 by providing more opportunities for children to write independently in the Reception class and matching the work more closely to the pupils' ability in Year 1.
- Ensure all activities that are used to improve pupils' mental arithmetic make them think and work things out in their head.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress at the school, regardless of their background or whether or not they have learning difficulties. Pupils in Year 6 joined the school with average standards and are leaving with standards that are above average. Progress in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children are now starting Nursery with above average standards. Their personal development is good, but they do not make as much progress in their writing in the Reception class. The few children who are learning to speak English for the first time are making very good progress.

The satisfactory progress continues through Year 1, and then pupils start to make rapid improvements in their standards. Progress in Years 2 to 6 is very good. Results have been improving since 2003 and this year's results continued the rising trend at an even greater rate. Progress in English and science is particularly good. However, the most able pupils could still do better in mathematics, where they tend to make

mistakes in their mental arithmetic. As a result, the school fell slightly short of its very challenging target for mathematics this year, but met those for English and science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. Their social and moral development is outstanding and reflected in their excellent manners and behaviour. Spiritual development is good, but pupils' limited understanding of the multicultural society in which they live means their cultural development is only satisfactory. The school is a harmonious community where pupils share mutual respect for each other. Very good relationships between all adults and pupils are clearly evident. Pupils feel safe and valued because teachers work hard to understand each individual. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good, particularly when teachers make learning fun. They thoroughly enjoy their lessons, especially when solving problems. Pupils' attendance, although satisfactory, is not as good as their attitudes would warrant, mostly because some parents take them on holiday during term time.

The school has a happy, caring atmosphere where pupils flourish. 'Everyone is welcome here', said the school council. Pupils are proud to be members of the school council and talk enthusiastically of the role they play in shaping the school: for example, in planning the refurbishment of the toilets. They understand well the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Pupils are well prepared for growing up and make a good contribution to the community through strong links with the church and activities such as entertaining older residents. Charities are well supported, helping pupils to realise that many are not as fortunate as them.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good, so pupils make good progress in their learning. The best teaching is in Years 2 to 6. In these years, teachers demand a great deal of their pupils, both in terms of their academic standards and their attitudes to work. Pupils are often encouraged to 'have a go' at solving problems, which they thoroughly enjoy, using their own methods. This helps them to become confident and not afraid of getting a wrong answer.

In the Foundation Stage, children quickly come to understand the importance of rules and good behaviour. However, they spend too much time copying in Reception, rather than learning to write things for themselves. In Year 1, the work is not matched well enough to the differing needs of the pupils, so some become bored. The school has acted on recent test results by insisting that more time is spent on mental arithmetic in all years. This is clearly improving standards in most classes, but in some the tasks are more about remembering than calculating. Doing a 'countdown' type of activity where pupils have to make a given number using four other random numbers works

well, for example. However, activities such as naming a time from a clock face do not reinforce mental arithmetic.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage adequately covers all areas of learning but provides very few opportunities for children to write independently. Pupils receive high quality music lessons, taught by a visiting specialist. However, there is not enough teaching about other cultures represented in Britain. There is a satisfactory range of extra clubs, although staff provide a good variety of sporting activities. Pupils get lots of opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school is a happy, friendly place where care, guidance and support are good. As a consequence, pupils know they are safe and feel confident they can ask for help and advice quickly whenever needed.

The good quality of care is evident from the way staff know the pupils well and the high level of commitment they have to ensure the school site is a safe, secure and well maintained environment. Child protection procedures are securely in place and all staff are aware of the guidelines. Risk assessments are carried out but those undertaken for visits lack rigour and detail.

Assessment procedures are comprehensive and individuals know their targets. Older pupils can confidently explain their progress towards these targets, and what they need to do in order to improve their work still further. The process of tracking pupils' progress is good in Years 3 to 6, but is not yet used to identify emerging underperformance in Years 1 and 2.

Parents are very supportive of the school, illustrated by the good turnout for a class assembly and the positive response to parental questionnaires.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good at all levels, including the governors who are clear about the way forward for the school. Standards are improving rapidly under the determined leadership of the headteacher and deputy, who ensure that the school is well on course to continue its improvement. The school has good systems for checking its own effectiveness, particularly by analysing data on pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6 and through the response of parents to an annual questionnaire. Changes such as improving supervision at lunchtime are made in response to parents' concerns, even when there are few such requests. Monitoring of teaching is thorough, but more emphasis could be given to evaluating the overall quality of lessons. The school has

identified the most important areas to improve, but the way these are presented through the school improvement plan makes it difficult to keep a close eye on progress towards the priorities.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

As you know, we came to see you at work recently and check on how well you are doing.

We had a great time talking to you and watching you at work. We were very impressed by your manners and behaviour. The school council members were really grown up and are doing really well at organising things in school. You told us that you like coming to school and that it is very easy to make new friends here.

Your teachers take good care of you and make sure that you learn lots of new things. You like lessons best when you have to think hard and solve problems, and we have asked the school to make sure this happens more in Year 1. Some of you still make mistakes when you work out sums in your head. We know you can do them, but just need more practice. We really liked looking at the writing done by the children in the Reception class, and have asked the grown ups who run the school to let you do more on your own.

The school is getting better and better every year, because Mrs Green and the other grown ups are working very hard to sort out even the smallest problems.

Thank you for helping us with our work and for being so kind to us.