



St Peter's CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104801
LEA St. Helens
Inspection number 277221
Inspection dates 16 January 2006 to 17 January 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Graham Martin CFBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Birley Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Newton-le-Willows
Age range of pupils	5 to 11		St Helens, Merseyside WA12 9UR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01744 678630
Number on roll	242	Fax number	01744 678633
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr G Greensmith
Date of previous inspection	8 May 2000	Headteacher	Mr D Thorpe

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized school. The majority of children are from a white British background, with few children from minority ethnic groups and very few who are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals is lower than average as is the number who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. On entry to the school children have skills that are broadly as expected for their age. The school has received a number of national awards including Investors in People and the Healthy Schools standard.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This good school provides good value for money. It is highly regarded by parents, who are overwhelmingly supportive of the education and care provided for their children. Inspectors agree with all aspects of the school's own evaluation. Its long-standing shared vision of high quality education, grounded firmly in a strong Christian ethos, has been revisited and restated under the good leadership of a new headteacher since the last inspection. The school has maintained its good provision and standards. The provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Standards are good at the end of Reception and above average in Years 2 and 6. Children achieve well but recently introduced systems for setting learning targets with children are not yet used consistently to raise achievement further. Opportunities to increase the number of children reaching the higher levels expected of them in the national tests have been identified by the school. The school works well, in partnership with others, to achieve this goal.

Children's personal development is good. Children enjoy school and their behaviour is outstanding. Attendance is good. Care, guidance and support are good, with strong emphasis on children's physical health and emotional well-being. A good curriculum engages children's interests and meets their needs well. Good steps have been taken to enrich the curriculum further with additional enrichment opportunities. Teaching and learning are good. Systems for recording assessment information are too complex, making them less useful as a result. Successful partnerships with parents and the wider community enable the school to enhance pupils' learning. Good leadership, a clear sense of purpose and direction and supportive but challenging governors give the school good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Revise assessment procedures to make them less time consuming and more useful in raising standards.
- Ensure that there is a consistent whole-school approach to setting learning targets and sharing them with children, especially to improve standards in writing.
- Develop further curriculum enrichment opportunities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average. Children achieve well. They start school with broadly average skills for their age and make good progress. By the end of the Reception year they reach the goals expected for their age, with some exceeding these levels. Children in Years 1 to 6 continue to make good progress. Broadly average results at the end of Year 2 in 2005 were lower than in previous years. Staff absence and a cohort of children with below average ability contributed to this dip. In the current Year 2 standards are good, indicating that results are likely to recover to the higher levels seen before 2005. The Year 6 2005 test results confirm that children reach standards above average in mathematics and well above average in science. Standards in reading were good but

broadly average in writing because fewer children reached the higher level expected of them. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress.

The school sets challenging targets in English and mathematics for Year 6 children and is largely successful in meeting them. Action taken to increase the number of children reaching the higher levels in writing is having an impact, as seen in the quality of writing during the inspection. However, the sharing of learning targets with children is inconsistent across the school so that not all are clear about how to improve their learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development is good. Children really enjoy school and, as a result, attendance is above average. Children's behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. They clearly understand the difference between right and wrong and value the beliefs and cultures of people from different ethnic backgrounds. Relationships among the children and between the children and adults are very good and clear expectations on behaviour are set. Children try hard in lessons and enjoy taking part in all the school has to offer them.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Safe and healthy lifestyles are strongly encouraged. Children have good opportunities to learn about the world of work, helping to improve their basic skills. Children make a positive contribution to the local community, including the church. This helps them to understand their responsibilities as young citizens. Children contribute well to school life and the oldest children help to ensure it runs smoothly. The school council gives children a voice and enables them to contribute to making decisions about how the school can be improved; they strongly agree that their views really make a difference to their school, such as when cloakroom spaces were re-organised in response to their request.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good, with some examples of outstanding practice.

At its very best teaching ensures children are really eager to learn and fully involved in exciting activities. Lessons move on at brisk pace and build well on children's previous learning. As a result children make good progress in developing new skills. Teachers use a good range of methods to interest and motivate the children; in the very best instances challenging activities make learning great fun. Children benefit greatly in their learning from very good relationships with all adults and from effective deployment of support staff. This is especially so for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Teachers usually make it clear to the children what they are to learn in lessons but this is not always the case. Very occasionally, where teaching has some shortcomings, questions are too difficult for children to answer.

Teachers use their knowledge of the children well to plan further work. They regularly assess how well children are doing. Assessment records are thorough but over complicated. Their complexity does not help teachers to easily pinpoint what children have learned and what they need to do next. Targets are set to help children improve their work, but these are not always clearly explained. Some children know their targets but others do not. Teachers' marking has many positive comments, but it does not always help children to understand how to meet their targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is well planned to meet the children's needs and to build consistently on their skills and knowledge. All subjects are carefully planned to provide children with a good range of relevant learning experiences. The school rightly focuses on the teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills and this helps to raise children's achievement in all subjects.

There are good opportunities to extend the children's experiences through, for example, enrichment afternoons. These experiences motivate learning, raising children's achievement by giving them self-esteem and confidence. Plans to further develop enrichment opportunities are clearly outlined in the school improvement plan. Provision for health education, including substance misuse, is covered very well across the curriculum. The programme of activities outside the school day is satisfactory.

Provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. The children's individual education plans have clear targets for learning and the adults who work with them provide good support, consequently these children achieve well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The adults who work in the school are very skilled in supporting and caring for the children. Child protection procedures are secure and children who are at risk, for any reason, are quickly identified and supported. There are good links with outside agencies to provide a range of help to the children. Children say they feel safe and happy and are free from bullying and any forms of discrimination. They trust the adults who work with them and know who to turn to for help. There are good arrangements for health, safety and individual welfare needs, consequently children are happy to come to school.

Parents and carers feel welcome in school. They have positive relationships with the teachers and this benefits their children's education. Teachers know how well children are progressing in their learning but there is more to be done to show them how to improve their work and learning still further.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that leadership and management are good. The headteacher leads the school well. By sharing his vision with the whole school community he has sustained the school's strong Christian ethos and sense of purpose. Clear definition of responsibilities means that all staff know how they can best use their skills to contribute to school development and they are well aware of the action they need to take to secure improvements.

The school's self-evaluation is accurate, clearly identifying the priorities for improvement and how they will be achieved. Regular questionnaires to children and parents provide the school with valuable information about its provision and how well it is regarded. The school's reply to concerns is very effective. For example, the planning of lessons was reviewed because a survey of children's views showed that some of them felt lessons occasionally repeated things they had already learned.

The headteacher has a clear knowledge of the school's needs. By developing the skills of all staff, he has ensured that they all know the part they play in checking on, and contributing to, the school's effectiveness. Governors also contribute well to this process. Their clear understanding of the school's work and their support for the headteacher's high aspirations enables them to guide and challenge the school very effectively.

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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	2	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	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	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?	2	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

We were very pleased to meet you during our recent visit to St. Peter's C.E. Primary School. Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming and for telling us about the good things that you do at school.

There are many good things to be proud of in St. Peter's school. Here are some that we liked the most.

- Mr Thorpe and everyone in the school look after you very well.
- You learn well because your teachers give you good and sometimes excellent lessons and because you try hard with your work.
- Your school is doing a good job in helping you to learn to be healthy.
- Your school works well with your families to make sure that you all learn.

This is what we have asked your school to do now so that it will be even better.

- Use simpler ways of recording what you have learned.
- Share with you, and help you understand, the targets that are set for your learning, especially to improve your writing.
- Help you to learn even better by making your lessons and other activities even more exciting and interesting.

You probably guessed that we enjoyed our two days in your school. Please carry on trying your best and enjoying learning.