



St Peter's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105069
LEA Wirral
Inspection number 277286
Inspection dates 5 June 2006 to 6 June 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Mark Madeley CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	St Peter's Way
School category	Voluntary aided		Noctorum
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Prenton, Merseyside CH43 9QR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0151 6778438
Number on roll	145	Fax number	0151 6778438
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr P Gordon
Date of previous inspection	31 January 2000	Headteacher	Mr P Sherry

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 5 June 2006 - 6 June 2006	Inspection number 277286
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized school. Children mainly live in the nearby estate of predominantly rented accommodation which has a higher than average incidence of unemployment. The vast majority of children are of White British heritage. More than half of them are eligible for free school meals which is much higher than average. Over one quarter of the children have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, some of these joining the school during Key Stage 2. The school has a higher than average percentage of children who have a statement of special educational need.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspection agrees with the school's self evaluation, which is accurate in most respects, that it is a good school that meets the needs of all children well. The school provides good value for money. Effective management has ensured that children achieve well, are happy and feel safe at school. Standards vary from year to year because of small numbers in year groups. In Year 2 and Year 6, they are below average but children make good progress because teaching and learning remain as effective as at the last inspection. Children's language skills are weak, especially their use of spoken English. Recent initiatives to improve children's writing skills have raised standards, especially in Key Stage 1. The Reading Recovery programme is outstanding and significantly improves the reading skills of the poorest readers. Management has the ability to improve the school further.

The school makes effective use of its many partners, especially those who support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Courses for parents give them a greater understanding of how to assist their child's schooling.

This is a very caring school. Children like their school and have very positive relationships with each other and staff. However, this is not reflected in their attendance which is below average. Recent measures to improve attendance have had only a short-term impact. Children like the excellent range of after school activities which encourage teamwork and a healthy lifestyle.

The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are good. Teaching challenges children and they make good progress. They only make satisfactory progress in their physical development because the outdoor area is not used well.

What the school should do to improve further

Improve the quality of children's spoken English and encourage them to make greater use of subject related vocabulary.

Make greater use of the outdoor area in the Foundation Stage to improve children's physical development.

Improve the attendance of children whose current attendance is below average.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children achieve well throughout the school because good teaching steadily improves their basic skills. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are below average when compared to all schools but this represents good progress from the children's very low starting points. Across the school, children's spoken language and use of subject related vocabulary are weak. Standards in writing, particularly at Key Stage 1, have improved markedly in 2006 because of recent initiatives.

Many year groups are small which can lead to wide variations in standards and progress measures. Overall, there is little difference in the achievement of different groups of children. Children's standards on entry are very low. They are taught well in Foundation Stage and make good progress. However, few reach the standards for their age before joining Year 1. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 are below average. The 2006 assessments are an improvement on previous years and the school has halted the recent decline in standards in this age group. The Reading Recovery programme has helped the weakest children to improve their skills considerably. Standards in English, mathematics and science in Year 6 are below average but better than last year. Children achieve satisfactorily in Key Stage 2. The school sets itself challenging targets. Though they were not achieved in 2005, the school is likely to meet them this year. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress, against their individual targets, particularly in reading.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development and well-being are good. They make a very positive contribution to the school and the wider Catholic community through masses, performances and charity fundraising. They willingly take on responsibilities, such as playing with the infants at lunchtime. They also take responsibility for their learning by behaving well and cooperating sensibly in pairs and in group work. Children feel safe in school. They have very positive relationships with each other and with staff. They indicate that there is little bad behaviour and know what to do if they see any. Children have a good understanding of simple ways to stay safe. New children are warmly welcomed into school. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Children and parents love their school. A girl indicated that she would rather be in school at the weekend! Most know how to stay fit and healthy but do not use much scientific vocabulary to describe what they know. Attendance is below average. The children with the poorest attendance have been identified and supported, but not enough is done to encourage others. Also, too many parents take children out of school for holidays in term time. Children are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage in their learning. They make good progress in their basic skills but a few have an unsatisfactory attitude to attendance.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good and promotes the children's achievement well. There are examples of outstanding teaching and no lesson observed was inadequate. A strong feature of the provision is the valuable contribution that one-to-one strategies make in helping children to master reading skills. These children make rapid progress in both reading skills and their self-esteem. Teaching assistants help small groups of lower-attaining children and those with learning difficulties and/or

disabilities to do well. Children understand how their learning targets, which are based on good assessment procedures, help them improve further. Teachers' effective marking supports this. In the Foundation Stage, staff focus well on improving the children's poor speaking and listening skills. However, in some lessons for older children, teachers do not use questioning well enough to improve the children's spoken English and use of subject-related language. In a few lessons, the objectives for learning are neither well written nor fully understood by children and this holds their learning back.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good rather than the school's evaluation of outstanding. It meets National Curriculum requirements and the needs of the children well. There is a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy, but children rarely get planned opportunities to use these skills in other subjects, such as history and geography. The Foundation Stage curriculum follows the national guidance, but access to the outdoor area is limited and this inhibits children's physical development. A well planned programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education encourages children to behave well and to understand their responsibilities. The provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very good and enables these children to make good progress in relation to their capabilities.

The school organises an excellent range of well attended after-school clubs, some linked to the Children's University. All children, but particularly those identified as gifted and/or talented, benefit greatly from these activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Provision for the care, guidance and support of children is good. This judgement disagrees with the school's judgement of outstanding, because there is not enough rigour in how the school encourages better attendance from a sizeable minority of children. Policies to promote equal opportunities, good behaviour and to discourage bullying are effective. The great majority of parents say, for example, that they feel the school welcomes all children and does its best to make them feel valued and respected. Child protection procedures are in place. Induction to the Foundation Stage and for older children entering the school is arranged with care and sensitivity. There are good supervision arrangements at all times of the school day. The school has good systems to identify how much progress the children, including the most vulnerable, are making and to give them targets to improve further.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good and support the good achievement and personal development of the children. This disagrees with the school's judgement of outstanding. All children are treated equally well and there is good encouragement

for them to take part in the activities the school offers. There is a good range of expertise among the senior management team. They have worked successfully since the last inspection to improve and use procedures to track children's progress. This has resulted in sharper improvement targets that are helping to eliminate weaknesses and gaps in children's learning. However, the school's self-evaluation is not totally accurate because management has overestimated some aspects of its work. This self-evaluation process is satisfactory overall, but governors, though they carry out their roles satisfactorily and are very supportive of the school, are not fully involved in the process and do not challenge the senior managers robustly enough. Management is listening to parents' views through the recently established parents' forum and is starting to involve them in the process of school self-evaluation. Monitoring of teaching has been good in mathematics, but has not been as effective in identifying weaknesses in teaching to promote the speaking skills of children. School improvement planning is satisfactory but there are too many parts to the plan and this reduces its overall impact. Overall, the school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and the leadership has the capacity to improve standards and provision further.

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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	3	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	3	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	2	NA
The attendance of learners	4	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	3	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	3	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	3	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	3	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 hear your views of your school when we visited recently and agree with you that it is a good school. We think that the teachers work hard, help you to learn and really care for all of you. You respond very well by caring for each other, behaving sensibly and being attentive in lessons. We were delighted that you felt safe in school and that you understood about healthy lifestyles. However, we think that some of you find it hard to resist the sugary and fatty foods sometimes.

You make good progress in your learning because teaching is good. We feel that teachers could encourage you to give longer and more detailed answers to their questions. Children get a good start to their schooling in the Foundation Stage but greater use could be made of the outdoor area. The standards children reach in tests in Year 2 and Year 6 have improved recently but remain below average. We also like the way you are encouraged to say how much you have learned in lessons. We agree with you that the after-school clubs are really good in your school. We feel that the productions you do are amazing, even an opera written and composed by some of you!

Even good schools need to continue to improve. These are the things we have asked the school to do to make it a better place for you to learn:

- encourage you to use a wider vocabulary
- make greater use of the outdoor play area in the Foundation Stage
- improve your attendance.

You can help your school by answering questions in full sentences and by always trying to do your best in every lesson.

Thank you for all your help with our inspection, your views were important to us. We wish you and the school well for the future.