



# St Peter's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 110473  
**Local Authority** Buckinghamshire  
**Inspection number** 278440  
**Inspection date** 20 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** John Earish

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Prospect Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Marlow
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11		SL7 2PJ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01628 472116
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	202	<b>Fax number</b>	01628 488123
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr A Temple
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss A McCluskey (Acting)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 June 2000		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is an average sized school. It serves families from a variety of social backgrounds, with many pupils from relatively advantaged homes. It is oversubscribed. Almost all are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. When children start school, their skills and abilities are above those expected of four year olds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities [LDD] is similar to that found nationally. The headteacher has recently retired.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Peter's is a good school, with a number of outstanding features. It is working with determination to become an outstanding school in all respects. One of the oldest pupils commented, 'We are very lucky to be at this school... the teachers make the work fun and really help us do our very best'. The school takes excellent care of its pupils, and their personal development is outstanding. Consequently, pupils are very happy and enthusiastic learners who enjoy all that the school offers, and their behaviour is exemplary. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive. One commented, 'We are delighted with the children's progress. Another said, 'I feel privileged and very lucky that my children attend this school'.

Achievement is good and standards are consistently well above average. Pupils make a good start to their learning in the Foundation Stage and exceed the expected goals by the time they move to Year 1. This good progress continues in Years 1 to 6 because pupils are well taught and eager to learn. Standards are significantly above average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. High standards have been sustained for several years, and boys and girls of all backgrounds and abilities achieve well. In information and communication technology (ICT) standards have improved since the last inspection but they are quite not as high as those achieved in literacy, numeracy and science.

The school keeps a very close check on pupils' all-round development and pupils receive excellent support whatever their ability. Procedures to secure the health, safety and welfare of pupils are robust. As a result, pupils report that they feel very safe and find the staff very approachable. There are very good systems to track pupils' academic progress. The information gathered is used very well to plan appropriate work and ensure that pupils have challenging targets to meet. This is best in mathematics and English. The school provides a good curriculum that contributes to pupils' high levels of enjoyment. Good links are made between subjects to make the learning more meaningful, but sometimes there are missed opportunities to use ICT to support learning.

Senior staff and governors evaluate the school's performance rigorously. All staff have high expectations of themselves, and their pupils. They know what is working well and what needs to improve. Some staff have new subject responsibilities. Their roles are developing well, but the school rightly recognises the need to increase their influence on teaching and learning in their subjects.

Given the good progress made since the last inspection and the accurate, if modest, self-evaluation, there is good capacity to secure further improvement.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in ICT by giving pupils more opportunities to extend their skills.
- Increase the influence of subject coordinators on teaching and learning.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children make good progress in all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum. There are a wealth of opportunities for children to develop their curiosity, creativity and imagination.

The school's performance in the national tests at the end of Year 6 is well above the national averages. Throughout the school, most pupils make good progress and are sustaining high levels of performance. This occurs because they are taught well, they are given challenging targets to achieve, and their rates of progress in meeting these targets are rigorously checked.

All groups of pupils are achieving well, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Although standards in ICT have improved since the last inspection, they are not quite as high as those achieved in English, mathematics and science. Standards in singing are very good.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils are extremely enthusiastic about school and their attendance is consistently above the national average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They show a very clear understanding of peoples' different backgrounds, customs, and faiths. Pupils have gained an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy diets and taking regular exercise. The pupils contribute extremely well to community decisions through the school council and are adamant that they make a difference. They are aware of how important it is to help others both in school and the wider community and raise money for national charities, help elderly residents of the Sir Aubrey Ward residential home, and make regular visits to Meadowside Old People's Home. Older pupils willingly take on additional responsibilities such as road safety officers, and help educate younger pupils about the dangers of using the road and staying safe. Pupils acquire literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills [ICT] that will equip them well for later life and learning.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good, and this ensures that pupils make good progress. Teachers keep a close check on pupils' understanding during lessons. Questioning is brisk and challenging and any misconceptions are quickly dealt with. Consequently pupils gain confidence and make good gains in their learning. This is a strong feature in all classes and was seen to particularly good effect in an outstanding mathematics lesson in Year 6. Lessons are interesting and enjoyable, and the work planned meets

pupils' individual needs. This means that those who need extra help or harder work get it. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the progress made by pupils, particularly those who find learning difficult. Pupils appreciate the help they get. Good quality marking means that pupils of all abilities have a clear understanding of how they can improve. However, pupils are not yet sufficiently involved in assessing their own work and there are appropriate plans to improve this.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a good curriculum that motivates the pupils and promotes their enjoyment of learning. Basic skills are taught effectively. Teachers plan tasks and activities that build on previous work and enable pupils to make good progress. The quality and range of the planned activities in the Foundation Stage are good, with a good balance between the work chosen by the teacher and activities selected by the children.

Throughout the school, pupils make use of ICT across the curriculum, but there is scope to create more opportunities to extend their skills and raise standards further to match those achieved in English, mathematics and science.

The school ensures that all pupils have the opportunity to participate and enjoy a good range of enrichment activities and school clubs. Such experiences, together with learning in personal, social and health education, and the emphasis on staying safe and healthy, teach skills that contribute to their future economic well-being.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school provides excellent care, guidance and welfare for its pupils. A close check is kept on pupils' well-being and they are taught how to take care of themselves and how to make healthy and safe choices. Health and safety and child protection procedures are effective and are reviewed regularly. As one parent offered, 'Both my children love school and feel happy, safe and secure'. Pupils appreciate this, too, and said they would not hesitate to approach an adult if they had concerns or place a note in the 'Worry Box'. A very close check is kept on pupils' all-round development. Regular assessments of pupils' academic progress mean that teachers have an extremely good understanding of how well their pupils are doing, and take immediate action to address any underachievement. This information is very well used to guide pupils in the next steps in their learning and to set challenging targets for improvement. This is especially well developed in English and mathematics. The very high standard of care is a significant factor in pupils' enjoyment of school, their sense of well-being and the progress they make.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The acting headteacher is enabling the effective senior management team to sustain its drive to become an outstanding school. Together, they keep a very close check on the school's performance and have a clear idea of what is working well and what needs to improve. For example, the recent initiative for pupils to be even more involved in assessing their own work stems from this monitoring. This has been instrumental in ensuring that high standards are maintained. Finances are well managed. Throughout the school there is a strong sense of teamwork amongst teachers and support staff and this contributes to pupils' good progress and well-being. However, there are weaknesses. Some staff have recently taken on new subject responsibilities and do not yet have sufficient influence over the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility. The governors steer the work of the school effectively. They work successfully with the headteacher to continually seek improvements, and have significantly enhanced the provision in music and ICT. Statutory requirements are fully met.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

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

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Following my visit to your school I would like to tell you what I think about how well you are getting on and how well your school is helping you to learn.

There are lots of things that I like about your school. Some of them are:

- you make good progress and achieve good standards
- your school is friendly and welcoming; you behave really well and are friendly towards each other
- you listen carefully to what your teachers have to say and learn a lot in lessons
- you are taught well, and you are given the right sort of help to improve your work
- the school is good at organising lots of extra things for you to do
- all of the adults in your school make sure that you are well looked after.

I think that you go to a good school. To make it even better, however, I am asking teachers to give you even more opportunities to improve your computers skills. Your headteacher also wants them to keep an even closer check on how well you are learning in their subjects and I agree that it is important that they do this.

Yours sincerely,

John Earish

Lead Inspector