



St Peter's Catholic Comprehensive School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113908
LEA Bournemouth
Inspection number 279279
Inspection dates 30 November 2005 to 1 December 2005
Reporting inspector Anne Looney HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	St Catherine's Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Bournemouth
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		Dorset BH6 4AH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01202 421141
Number on roll	1550	Fax number	01202 437208
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Jan Wyatt
Date of previous inspection	18 September 2000	Headteacher	Mr Anthony McCaffrey

Age group 11 to 18	Inspection dates 30 November 2005 - 1 December 2005	Inspection number 279279
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors.

Description of the school

St Peter's is a very large oversubscribed voluntary aided Catholic comprehensive school serving Bournemouth, Poole, East Dorset and South West Hampshire. It is housed on a split site in buildings some considerable distance apart. The school has achieved specialist school status in expressive and performing arts and in sports. The level of deprivation in the area served is generally low as is the percentage of learners eligible for free school meals. Few learners are believed to have English as an additional language and the percentage of learners with learning difficulties or disabilities is low. The school has a large sixth form which attracts learners from neighbouring schools. Attainment on entry is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspectors agree with the school's judgment that its overall effectiveness is good. All learners make good progress. Over the last three years, the overall improvement made by the school in its GCSE results has been better than that made by schools nationally. The school has a good understanding of why achievement was not as good in 2004 and has successfully employed a range of strategies to bring about improvement. Although much of the formal self-review process is descriptive rather than evaluative at the moment, examination results are analysed carefully. The senior leadership team and the staff have a shared understanding, even when not explicit in documentation, of the school's strengths and areas for development. The school has good capacity to improve, as is shown by its effective action on key issues from the last inspection.

The contribution the school makes to the learners' personal development is outstanding and learners are encouraged to have, and display, an admirable consideration of others.

Classroom teaching is good but the quality of assessment is not as consistent as it might be in helping learners to see exactly how they might improve their work. The senior leaders are monitoring teaching and have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses but the scope of the programme could be improved by the greater involvement of the heads of subject in the process. The curriculum is broad and well balanced. It is now designed much better than it was to meet the needs of all learners. However, the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is still underdeveloped. There is a good range of activities outside the classroom which allow learners to develop more widely. The school cares for its learners well although ongoing tracking of progress has weaknesses, and targets that learners are given are not always specific enough to provide good guidance.

The impact of the specialist school status on the life of the school as a whole has been impressive, particularly in the expressive and performing arts. It provides good value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The school judges the effectiveness of its sixth form to be good and the inspectors agree with this judgement. Standards are above average and achievement in the sixth form is good. Provision is good, with the school meeting the needs of all of its learners, who have a wide range of abilities. Learners make good progress through a broad range of subjects and expanding vocational provision and retention rates are good. They enjoy several opportunities for independent learning. Sixth formers develop very good leadership qualities and contribute significantly to school-life and the wider community. Learners are expertly guided about future studies and employment. The sixth form is popular, recruiting from other schools; it is well run and provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

• Improve the provision for ICT. • Improve the quality of school self-review in order to improve and inform future development planning. • Track the progress of learners more effectively so that learners know how well they are doing and how to improve, and so that the school has a clearer view of the achievement of different groups.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Learners enter school with above average standards. They make good progress and improve more than would be expected even though standards remain within the 'above average' band. They also achieve well in the sixth form.

Though 2004 results dipped for both Year 9 and Year 11, there was good improvement in 2005 in national tests for Key Stage 3 and GCSE for Key Stage 4. In Year 9, mathematics and science results remain better than English, although all have improved. The school understands the reasons why there has been less progress made in English between Years 7 and 9, and has implemented more focused teaching to bring about improved standards. Progress in ICT by the end of Year 9 is less than satisfactory as learners are still catching up work missed in Years 7 and 8.

GCSE results in 2004 for 16-year-olds were above average and learners made broadly satisfactory progress. Learners progressed better in English than in other subjects. Girls' comparative underachievement against national figures in 2004 has been successfully tackled, especially for those girls who started at lower levels in Year 7. Provisional figures for 2005 indicate improvements across all subjects, with learners making good progress by the end of Year 11 given their starting points. The school was much closer to reaching its very challenging targets in 2005. Taking the last three years together, learners' progress has been higher than expected and the improvement made by the school is better than that made by schools nationally. The school analyses results carefully and has introduced changes to help learners do better in the future. For example, they have reduced the number of subjects studied by learners and introduced new courses which better match learners' needs. Learners with learning difficulties or disabilities make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The contribution this school makes to learners' personal development is outstanding. They feel safe, welcomed and cared for from the start. There is a very strong emphasis on spiritual development, evident in assemblies and in learners' tolerance and understanding towards others, both in school and in the wider community. Learners are keen to protect those who are vulnerable and to befriend new arrivals. A strong moral code runs through most elements of the school's teaching and as a result, learners consider the effect of their actions. Learners take increasing responsibility and work together successfully on many projects, for example in organising fund-raising events

for charity. Their involvement in such activities is outstanding. The members of the School Council serve their peers well. Learners have extensive opportunities to compare and contrast their own religion and culture with others around the world, for example in the rich multicultural work done in music, art and dance.

There are good opportunities to develop leadership skills through Sports Leaders' Awards. Learners overall enjoy their time at school and are proud to belong to the school community. This is shown by the high rate of attendance, the take-up in clubs and trips, and the number of learners who stay on into the sixth form. Behaviour around the school is very good, but a small minority of learners misbehave in the occasional lesson. Exclusions, although high, are mostly only for a day or two and act as a deterrent. The school has very supportive systems for helping learners when they come back and so has a low 're-offending rate'. Bullying is infrequent as learners are taught to respect the dignity of others and any forms of discrimination are very actively discouraged. Learners are developing a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. They build a solid foundation in literacy and numeracy which stands them in good stead when they leave.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good overall throughout the school, with a small minority of lessons being either outstanding or inadequate. Teachers have good command of their subjects and form very strong relationships with learners, helping them to achieve well. The needs of learners with learning difficulties or disabilities are well identified and good support from teaching assistants enables them to achieve as well as their peers. Learners display good attitudes and behaviour so that in most lessons, there is a positive environment in which they enjoy their work. However, in a very small minority of lessons, behaviour is not managed well and the attitude of some lower-attaining learners has a negative impact on their progress. Lessons move at a good pace and teachers use questions well to extend learning and provide suitable challenges. Learners make particularly good progress in lessons where teachers have a good understanding of their needs. For example, in an outstanding Year 11 geography lesson, learners analysed exemplar examination answers and identified very well how to improve their own work. However, the use of assessment to support learning is inconsistent and, as a result, learners do not know how well they are doing and how to improve in all subjects. There is good practice in the core subjects, especially in English, but this is not effectively shared with other faculties.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has a good range of appropriate courses and enhancement activities which are matched well to learners' needs and which enrich their lives. Improvements in the

curriculum and timetable have led to a more appropriate programme of subjects being studied in Years 10 and 11. ICT is still underdeveloped in Key Stage 3, but the school is aware of this and is implementing changes. These have not yet had time to have an impact on learners' skills. Flexible learning programmes are available for a few learners who combine school work with courses in other colleges. Work-related learning is satisfactory and includes work experience and mock interviews. The sixth form curriculum is also developing well, with an increasing choice of academic and vocational courses. The school's specialist status in performing arts and sports is celebrated in the popularity of these subjects. Links between the performing arts faculty and the other areas of the curriculum are good and this has resulted in the development of learners' communication and presentation skills across the school. Curricular provision in the arts has improved and, as a result, learners are achieving well. Many learners in drama productions are from lower-attaining groups. They enjoy these performance opportunities and develop good social and technical skills that they can use later in the workplace.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The school gives good care, guidance and support to its learners in Years 7 to 11 and outstanding support in the sixth form. The support of vulnerable learners is good, exploiting well the links with specialist agencies. Strong support is also provided for those with emotional and behavioural needs and those with learning difficulties. The school's chaplain and pastoral worker effectively support others who need help. Child protection procedures and practice are robust. Considerable support is given to learners new to the school and at critical transition points to ensure that they settle in quickly and easily. Learners are guided well in choosing subjects and courses, in preparing for studies beyond school and for future employment. There is an established academic counselling programme in place where learners receive one-to-one guidance. Learners have targets but these are not consistently explicit enough for learners in the main school to help them know exactly how to improve. In the sixth form, these targets are monitored more regularly and the system is, as a result, more effective.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. There are good systems in place to ensure efficient management on a day-to-day basis and the school manages the difficulties of running a split site and some unsatisfactory accommodation well. The leadership, supported by an effective governing body, gives a clear direction to the promotion of the personal development of the learners and the outcomes are outstanding. The improvement planning for raising standards is not sufficiently detailed in all subjects, outside the core, to ensure that the school is consistently focused on how to raise achievement for different groups of learners. The school community has good

confidence in the leadership of the school. A large number of parents and carers expressed a high level of satisfaction with the school although a very small minority expressed concern about the behaviour of learners. The senior leadership team plays a significant role in monitoring the quality of teaching and has a clear overview of the strengths and weaknesses. The extent of the monitoring programme is, however, constrained by the lack of full involvement of some subject leaders. Provision for ICT is not yet well managed by the school. There is a lack of ICT resources in the classroom for teachers' use and the unreliability of the network has meant that learners' access to ICT has been erratic. The school has managed the specialist school status well to forge very good links with the community and, in particular, with the feeder schools.

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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	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
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	2	

The quality of provision

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

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	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, through quality assurance and self-review	3	
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 are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

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	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

St Peter's Catholic Comprehensive School St Catherine's Road Bournemouth Dorset BH6 4AH

5 December 2005

Dear Pupils,

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to let you know the judgements we made about your school. Thanks for making us so welcome and giving us your time.

•We believe that your school is a good school. •The headteacher and other teachers with responsibility make decisions with your best interests in mind and you can share in the decision-making through the school council. •The school helps you make good progress by teaching you well and by planning for a range of different courses to suit everyone. •You say you are proud of your school and tell us that you achieve well when the lessons are well managed and challenge you. •The school looks after you very well and you feel well supported. •You show real consideration for, and support of, other people both in your school and in other countries. •The fact that your school is a specialist college has given you plenty of opportunities to develop in drama and sports. You tell us that you really appreciate those chances. •You behave in a mature and considerate way around the school and in nearly all of the lessons.

Your school needs to:

•improve your ICT skills •help you set more specific targets that make it really clear what you have to do to improve your work •review all its work more carefully and plan in more detail how it will help you all to make even better progress.

With best wishes,

Anne Looney HMI Lead Inspector