



# St Peter's Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 118617  
**LEA** Kent  
**Inspection number** 280356  
**Inspection dates** 14 June 2006 to 14 June 2006  
**Reporting inspector** George Logan AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Mount Pleasant
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Aylesford
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Kent ME20 7BE
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01622 717335
<b>Number on roll</b>	103	<b>Fax number</b>	01622 717235
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr David Stokes
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 December 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Simon Temple

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 14 June 2006 - 14 June 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 280356
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

St Peter's serves the village of Aylesford, with some pupils coming from further afield. Most pupils are White British, with a very small number of Asian pupils. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average for the children's age. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is about the same as in most primary schools. There is a voluntary sector pre-school on the school site which most Reception children have attended. The current headteacher joined the school in 2003. The school experienced a high level of staff turnover until the summer of 2005.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

The overall effectiveness of the school is inadequate as is the value for money provided. The school judges its own effectiveness as good, but the inspection finds that there is some work to do before it can demonstrate this. Instability in staffing has significantly affected the consistency of pupils' learning and contributed to a legacy of underperformance. Reduced staff turnover is leading to a noticeable improvement, but there is still unevenness in pupils' progress and the school is not yet as effective as it needs to be.

There are emerging strengths. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed and children now enter Year 1 with secure basic skills. Aspects of care and support are good. Pupils' personal development is good. Teaching is satisfactory overall and, particularly for the older pupils, is now raising achievement so that standards are much closer to where they should be. However, there is not yet enough consistently good teaching through the school. Expectations of pupils' recorded work are not high enough and this constrains the development of basic skills. Whilst leadership and management are satisfactory overall, senior managers are not sufficiently rigorous in monitoring pupils' work. The use of assessment information is not fully embedded.

Although progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory, governors do not hold senior managers to account for standards sufficiently. Currently, the school takes an over-optimistic view of the strength of teaching and of overall effectiveness. That said, it has begun to tackle the key weakness of pupils' achievement with some success, although there is more to be done, especially in relation to higher-attaining pupils. There is reasonable capacity to move forward. However, in accordance with section 13 of the Education Act, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than, in all the circumstances, could reasonably be expected. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' achievement in Years 2 to 4, particularly in writing, and to the quality of pupils' written work across the school.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Build upon recent improvements in pupils' achievement by ensuring that weaknesses in writing and the inconsistent progress in Years 2 to 4 are tackled rigorously
- Further develop teachers' use of assessment data and their marking of pupils' work.
- Ensure senior managers check pupils' work more rigorously to ensure that a consistently good pace of learning is sustained
- Develop the roles of governors so that they more effectively hold the school to account.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

Standards are broadly average; achievement, though improved, is inconsistent and, for a significant proportion of pupils in the middle years, inadequate. Children enter school with skills similar to most children of their age. In Reception, they make steady progress, with almost all achieving the expected goals by the time they enter Year 1. Children now leave Reception with better basic skills than in the recent past.

In Year 2, standards have been below average for the last five years, with few pupils attaining the higher Level 3. Over this period, progress made in Years 1 and 2 has been inadequate, reflecting a high level of staff instability and low expectations. More stable staffing recently has contributed to some improvement. Standards in reading and mathematics are now broadly average. Standards in writing have, however, declined and pupils' writing skills are weak.

High staff turnover also contributed to inconsistent progress in Years 3 to 6, although by 2005, standards in Year 6 had started to recover. Currently, standards are broadly average, although challenging targets may not be met in mathematics. Pupils are achieving satisfactorily in Years 5 and 6. Achievement is, however, unsatisfactory in Year 3 and progress is patchy between Years 2 and 4. This is partly a reflection of teaching quality and is evident in the low expectations of the quality of pupils' written work. There is insufficient focus on the needs of able pupils in Years 2 to 4.

Pupils with learning difficulties receive satisfactory support and most make satisfactory progress. The progress of those few pupils with English as an additional language follows the same inconsistent, but improving, pattern to that of the other pupils.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Children's personal development and well-being are good. The school is calm and children feel safe. They learn to deal with any risks they might encounter. Younger children settle in quickly and are well looked after by the older ones. They are happy and well behaved. They build confidence by displaying work in assembly, as when older pupils ably used their computer skills to teach the school about Serbia and Montenegro and their World Cup teams. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a good understanding of right and wrong, and support many national charities. However, awareness of other cultures and traditions is less strongly developed.

Through the active school council, children have a voice. They have selected new playground equipment and organised the budget, so supporting the development of their financial skills. Children enjoy coming to school and attendance is now satisfactory. Older pupils are increasingly positive about school and the quality of lessons. In recent surveys, parents agree with this.

Children are clear about healthy lifestyles. Opportunities for sport and physical activities have improved. Children deliberately choose healthy options at lunchtime. The

after-school cookery club is well-supported. There are good links to the local community through the annual fete and the Summer Carnival.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teaching in Reception is satisfactory. Staff understand well how young children learn and provide a good range of motivating activities which effectively promote the development of basic skills. High staff turnover has been a crucial factor in the fragmented learning of many pupils. Greater stability this year has helped to ensure that teaching is now at least satisfactory. Older pupils experience generally good teaching. However, in the middle years, teaching quality is more often satisfactory than good and the impact on learning is more variable. The challenge now is to ensure greater consistency of expectation, so that improving achievement is effectively sustained and standards rise further and faster.

Not all staff have sufficient understanding of the use of assessment information in planning the next stages of learning. Marking of work is not always linked to pupils' progress targets. Senior managers are not sufficiently rigorous in setting appropriate expectations of the quality of written work, so directly affecting the rate of pupils' progress.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. The Foundation Stage curriculum has improved and is now good, with an enhanced outdoor programme and a stronger focus on basic skills. In Years 1 to 6, the curriculum has been revised into topics, to engage pupils' interest more effectively. Provision for personal, social and health education is good and has a positive effect on pupils' self-esteem. As a result, they are confident communicators. The school develops pupils' awareness of how to stay safe effectively. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties, and for those with English as an additional language, is satisfactory.

Too often, opportunities are missed for pupils to develop writing skills in other subjects. There is better access to good quality information and communication technology (ICT) facilities. The extra-curricular programme is good overall, offering sporting opportunities, a good range of visits and a number of clubs. A high proportion of pupils take instrumental music lessons.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. The care and support are good. Pupils confidently turn to adults if they are upset and know their problem will be

sorted out. Child protection and health and safety procedures are effective. The school works closely with other professionals to find the right support for needy and vulnerable pupils. It has used a range of strategies to achieve broadly satisfactory attendance this year.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupil tracking systems are in place, with clear targets set to help pupils achieve better in mathematics. However, this system is not yet fully in place in other subjects and marking is inconsistent. There is insufficient focus on challenging more able pupils because of lack of incisiveness in assessment. Pupils with learning difficulties and those who do not speak English at home are supported satisfactorily. However, targets in individual education plans are not always incorporated into teachers' planning. Behaviour management is good because school rules are simple and applied consistently.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall because capacity for improvement is being demonstrated. With settled staffing now, indications are that it can rectify its weaknesses. The leadership team has achieved significant improvement in the learning environment and has used available financial resources effectively. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Senior managers work well together. They share with staff a clear vision for inclusion which effectively engages pupils. The school's work with a range of partners to promote pupils' well-being is good.

Leaders monitor pupils' personal development well. However, the focus on improving pupils' progress has been less thorough, particularly in Years 2 to 4, and identified weaknesses are not always acted upon with sufficient rigour. For example, with more timely intervention, writing would not be at such a low level. Where there is sharper monitoring of progress, such as setting clear targets in mathematics, pupils achieve better.

Some judgements in the self-evaluation are too generous because the remaining, but significant, weaknesses in pupils' progress are not sufficiently taken into account.

Governors are very supportive of the school but could be more rigorous in setting challenges for senior staff and monitoring how well the school is doing.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</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>	4	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	4	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	4	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	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	3	NA

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	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	3	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

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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**

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. It was good to spend time with you and to have the chance to meet some of you – especially the school council who talked to us so openly. It was really useful to listen to what you had to say about the things you enjoy.

We found that your school does several things well, but needs to improve others to help you to learn better. Like you, we feel that some things have come on well. The accommodation for the Reception class has improved. All of the adults look after you well and this helps you to feel safe. You trust the adults around you. Your teachers help you to understand how to keep healthy. You play well together and look after other children who may feel lonely. Many of you are working harder and reaching higher standards. You like the changes which have been made, with lots more opportunities in sport and music - and the new computer suite is very impressive.

We have asked the headteacher to work with the teachers to make sure that the teaching is equally good right across the school and that the quality of your written work and the way you present it is better. The headteacher will keep a closer eye on your work to make sure that you really are doing your best. We have asked the governors also to ask lots of questions to make sure that you are reaching the high standards many of you are capable of.

We hope that you will all work together to make sure that the school builds on the progress it has made and improves further.