



St Peter's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124315
LEA Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number 281688
Inspection dates 10 May 2006 to 11 May 2006
Reporting inspector Lois Furness AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Waterloo Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Cobridge
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST6 3HL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01782 235040
Number on roll	233	Fax number	01782 236415
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Kevin Daley
Date of previous inspection	22 November 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Dianne Mason

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Peter's Catholic Primary School is an average size primary school. It serves an area of high social deprivation. The majority of pupils are of Bangladeshi or Pakistani heritage and approximately four fifths of pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. Children start Nursery with levels of skill well below that expected for their age. A significant proportion of pupils join the school in Years 3 to 6. Since the previous inspection, the school has had a new headteacher and deputy headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that provides good value for money. The school has an accurate view of its effectiveness. Morale is high and all staff are working hard to bring about sustained improvement and halt the decline in standards that occurred in the recent past. The tightening up of assessment procedures has tackled this well, through sharply focused target-setting. Consequently, pupils are now making good progress, and achievement is good. However, standards need to be higher in reading, writing and mathematics. The school has accurately identified weaknesses in pupils' 'reading for meaning' skills which are affecting standards in English and in the problem solving aspect of mathematics. Handwriting and the correct use of punctuation are weaknesses that influence standards in writing. Pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities to write independently in other subjects. The quality of education and standards overall are good in the Foundation Stage. However, learning opportunities are much better in the Reception than in the Nursery. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They feel safe and very clearly understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle. The curriculum is interesting and matches pupils' needs effectively. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides clear direction and self-evaluation is good. Issues from the previous inspection have been dealt with well and improvement has been good. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses and this, combined with the vision and drive of the senior managers, staff and governors, shows that it has good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' 'reading for meaning' skills to raise standards in reading and to improve pupils' problem solving skills in mathematics.
- Develop pupils' handwriting and punctuation skills and provide more opportunities for independent writing in different subjects.
- Share the good practice in Reception more effectively in order to improve learning in the Nursery.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good overall. Children make satisfactory progress in the Nursery and very good progress in Reception because of more effective teaching. By the end of Reception, the majority of children attain close to the level expected for their age in all six areas of learning. This shows good achievement from their low level of skill on entry to the school. Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, standards are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. More able pupils are challenged well and a significant number attain above what is normally expected. Achievement is good.

In Years 3 to 6, despite the fact that many pupils take extended visits abroad and a significant number of pupils join the school in this key stage, good progress continues. This is because of the effective use of assessment information and a thorough and

rigorous system of setting targets. In 2005, in the National Curriculum tests, pupils' performance was broadly average which showed an improving trend from 2003 and 2004, when standards declined. The work of the pupils currently in Year 6 shows that although standards will not be as high as in 2005, achievement is good. The challenging targets in mathematics will be met, but it is unlikely the English target will be achieved. Weaknesses in accuracy of punctuation and the lack of a confident joined handwriting style are affecting standards in writing. Also, as so many pupils are at an early stage of learning English, their skills of 'reading for meaning' negatively influence not only reading standards, but pupils' ability to solve problems in mathematics.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive good targeted support resulting in good achievement. Pupils who are at an early stage of learning English are also supported well and their achievement is good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. This is reflected in their enthusiasm for all aspects of school life. Attendance is improving and is now satisfactory, and punctuality is good. They are very willing to take on responsibilities such as organising the set up of mobile computers in classrooms. Pupils have positive attitudes and think that learning is fun. Behaviour is good. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a high level of self-confidence and relationships between adults and pupils are good. This promotes pupils' good self-esteem. They know they always have someone to talk to if worried or concerned and one child said that, 'We all act like a community that is more like a family'.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lives which is shown by their sensible choices of food and high level of physical activity. They know how to keep themselves safe. They make a good contribution to the community through the active school council, visits to the elderly, environmental work and caring for younger pupils. Pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), although improving, need to be of a higher standard to help them to achieve good economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teaching is good overall in the Foundation Stage although better in Reception than in Nursery. In Reception, a wide range of stimulating activities are planned, resulting in children making very good progress in their learning. However, in Nursery, although satisfactory, activities are not sufficiently focused on what children will learn and resources used are not always appropriate. In Years 1 to 6, the majority of teaching is at least good. Strengths include the use of assessment information to plan relevant and interesting activities that meet effectively the learning

needs of pupils. Teaching assistants are deployed well to support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Pupils at an early stage of learning English also receive good support. Pupils are well motivated and take an eager part in lessons. However, not all teachers use a range of strategies to ensure that all pupils take part in class question and answer sessions. This does occasionally result in pupils losing interest. Pupils are very involved in knowing about how well they are doing in their work. They know their learning targets and in most classes, good quality marking identifies good features of their work and how they might improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and enables pupils to make good progress. Good links are made between subjects and the content is carefully planned to be relevant to pupils' different cultural backgrounds. However, there are not always sufficient planned opportunities for pupils to write independently in the different subject areas. Pupils with learning difficulties, disabilities and those who are at an early stage of learning English are included well because of the good support programmes that are in place. The good creative approach in Reception and Years 1 and 2 enables pupils to enjoy learning. Even though the curriculum is good in Years 3 to 6, to make it even better, more practical approaches to learning are being introduced. The curriculum in the Nursery is satisfactory but it lacks the creativity of that in the Reception.

A comprehensive personal, social and health education programme helps pupils to understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle. There is a good range of enrichment activities including visits and visitors to the school. The links with the local high school's performing arts group and regular teaching by a specialist music teacher provide the pupils with good quality creative experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, guidance and support for pupils. Child protection and health and safety procedures are rigorous and understood by all staff. Risk assessments are carried out carefully and the school is a safe place to be. There are very good systems in place to identify the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who are at an early stage of learning English. Careful planning and effective ways of assessing pupils, alongside frequent reviews, ensure these pupils make good progress.

The use of assessment information and tracking of progress is thorough and rigorous. Pupils and parents are very clear about the 'must, should, and could' targets in literacy and numeracy and how they will be achieved. Assessment is thorough in both Nursery and Reception. However, the Nursery staff do not have the same secure understanding of what children are expected to do in order to achieve key learning targets, as the staff in Reception.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. School improvement, including rigorous and effective self-evaluation, has been an important focus since the appointment of the existing headteacher. As a result, pupils' achievement is improving. The headteacher and staff work together effectively and the clearly focused school improvement plan is instrumental in moving the school forwards. Developing how the Nursery is managed is an area for further consideration.

Pupils' performance is regularly and carefully checked. Governors are very supportive and closely involved through regular visits and informative reports from the headteacher and the subject leaders. They are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and areas for development, and fulfill all of their statutory duties well.

The good links with outside agencies including the local authority, the education welfare officer, social services and the local church support the school with its efforts to ensure all pupils are helped to succeed. Parents are very pleased with the school and they say that it is very open to any suggestions or concerns that they may have.

Improvements since the last inspection have been good. All key issues have been successfully addressed and the school has a strong capacity to move forward.

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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	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	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

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

Dear Pupils

Thank you all so much for welcoming us to your school and for being so polite and friendly. We enjoyed our visit very much and want to tell you why we judged St Peter's to be a good school.

Here are some of the highlights

- Your headteacher, staff and governors are making your school a good place to learn in. You obviously agree, telling us how much you enjoy coming to school.
- Because many of you know your targets and are trying hard to achieve them, your learning is good. You know this will help you to become even better in your work.
- Your teachers care for you and they try hard to make sure that you know how to live a healthy life. Many of you say how safe you feel in school.

What we have asked your school to do now

- We have asked your teachers to help you to make better sense of what you read, not only when you read books, but when you are trying to read and understand problems in mathematics.
- We have also asked your teachers to help you to improve your handwriting and to use punctuation better when you write. We think you need to have lots of opportunities to do different types of writing when you are working in different subjects.
- There are lots of very good things going on in the Reception class and it would be even better if the same could go on in the Nursery. We have asked your headteacher to let the two teachers work together to make this happen.

With best wishes

Mrs L Furness Lead Inspector