



St Peter's CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106245
Local Authority Tameside
Inspection number 287456
Inspection dates 4–5 October 2006
Reporting inspector Roger Gill

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Oxford Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Ashton-under-Lyne
Age range of pupils	4–11		Lancashire OL7 0NB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 3301691
Number on roll (school)	230	Fax number	0161 3428352
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	
		Headteacher	Mrs Linda Bardsley
Date of previous school inspection	17 September 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is situated in an area of marked economic disadvantage. Most children are of a White British background. A sizeable minority are from a range of minority ethnic groups, a small group of which is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The number of children who are looked after in public care is greater than usual. A few children are refugees or asylum seekers. The school started to admit nursery age children in September 2006. Since the time of the last inspection, in 2001, the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the vast majority of teaching staff and many other staff have been appointed. The amount of movement in and out of school by pupils who start or leave school at other than the usual times is well above average. The school has a Healthy School Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The way that the headteacher and deputy headteacher have steered the school through major disruptions to staffing in the last four years has been first-rate. Children's behaviour deteriorated due to a massive turnover in staff, there was a large amount of movement by pupils, joining and leaving the school, and achievement fell dramatically owing to these disruptions. St Peter's is now a satisfactory school in the face of great odds. Much of this success is down to the strength of school leadership.

Parents, governors and children are all positive about the way that things have revived. Good leadership and management have made education enjoyable once again. There is now a settled and enthusiastic team of staff who ensure that children take a delight in the social and academic opportunities provided. Many children find school a safe haven because it gives them such a good level of care. Children want to be healthy. They love, for example, the chance to eat fruit regularly because they know it is good for them. Older pupils, in particular, display great pride when wearing the caps and badges that denote their role in helping others at playtimes. Life in school is not without its challenges. Some children still have difficulty controlling their behaviour, but this is managed well; a calm, positive atmosphere is fast becoming the norm.

The work of the entire staff team, including the teaching assistants, learning mentor, sports and fitness coaches and specialist music teacher, has contributed well to the changes. As a result, the community's perception of the school has been turned around. This was summed up neatly by one parent who, when thinking about the advances that the school has made of late, wrote, 'I would just like to say, "Thank you" to all concerned.' One of the biggest successes of the school's regeneration is the way in which children's personal development has been raised to a good level from a troubled position in recent years. Children speak eloquently about the way in which they are all encouraged to learn and grow together.

Standards are now broadly average by the end of Year 6. This represents satisfactory achievement, which is a real step forward for the school, because in 2004 and 2005 children's progress was unsatisfactory. Despite being satisfactory by the end of Year 6, achievement is not yet consistent across the school. Progress in reading and writing is not consistent because methods used to teach vary in their quality and children are not involved enough in thinking about how well they are getting on. Children's progress in the Foundation Stage is good, even though the new Nursery and Reception unit has just opened, because the school is skilfully building on the good practice that existed in the former Reception class.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. It has been improved gradually as the staffing situation has become more stable. There is now some good and even on occasions outstanding teaching taking place. Children capable of higher attainment do not progress quickly enough in some lessons, because the work is aimed at the average and lower attainers.

The curriculum is effective in helping children to make satisfactory achievement in the basics. Enrichment through sport and music is especially effective because it has

such a powerful effect on children's personal development. They display a level of confidence in physical education, coupled with a spiritual joy in singing, which justifies the efforts that have gone into providing expert tuition in these subjects.

There has been strong progress since the school was last inspected given that there was an enormous dip in achievement in between. St Peter's knows itself well, but self-evaluation in the respect of analysing and presenting information from the assessment of children's learning does not yet provide all teachers with detailed advice about how to raise attainment. Teaching and learning in lessons are checked regularly and teachers receive useful advice to a point, but not enough emphasis is given to how fast children are progressing in order to improve achievement from satisfactory to good. The capacity to improve even further is good owing to the highly effective work carried out by leadership and management to date and the way that the senior leadership is poised to expand its influence throughout the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make effective use of data gained from assessing children's learning to point out aspects of teaching to be improved.
- Involve children more closely in assessing their own learning to improve standards in reading and writing.
- Check teaching in greater depth to ensure that all children make good progress, particularly the higher attainers.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

In 2006 standards were average by the end of Year 6, and inspection evidence confirms that this is so for the current year. The school's results have been below average for a number of years. Despite the below average attainment levels that children have when they start school and the good progress they make in the Foundation Stage, pupils' achievement has been falling to the point that it was well below that expected nationally in 2005. Achievement is now satisfactory but it could still be better. Some groups of children who receive additional support, such as those who find learning difficult or are learning English as an additional language, make consistently satisfactory progress. The achievement of those capable of higher attainment fluctuates between classes. The rate of progress made in mathematics is more consistent than that in reading and writing owing to the specialist advice available to teachers from within school in that subject.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children enjoy school much more now that behaviour has improved. Attendance is satisfactory. It has risen sharply in the last few years. The good personal development, fuelled by better attendance, has influenced academic achievement positively. Spiritual,

social, moral and cultural development is good. The school's locally renowned choir symbolises success in these areas. Children's singing and the social aspect of working together is a source of continual pride. The emphasis on a healthy lifestyle, from breakfast club to the fitness sessions after school, is appreciated by pupils. The school council and the various responsibilities undertaken by older children make sure they are involved in running the school. Younger children could be more involved beyond the school council, but this does not stop their personal development being good overall.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The satisfactory quality of teaching and learning ensures that children make steady progress. Most learn what is required in an atmosphere of calm and good order. Those who need extra help such as those who find learning difficult are given extra help, which is beneficial. Learning is only satisfactory, in most lessons, because higher attainers are not always stretched enough and children are not always asked to think about how well they have done and in what they could have done better. The good and occasionally outstanding lessons in the Foundation Stage, Year 5 and Year 6 are characterised by clearly explained goals, work pitched at the right level for all pupils, imaginative activities and helpful discussion about success. Children in Year 6 are excited about learning because teaching shows great skill, particularly in mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The satisfactory curriculum, which is systematic in its provision of English, mathematics and science, contributes to the satisfactory academic progress made by children. There is a good range of well attended extra-curricular activities, school clubs, and local and residential visits. This, coupled with a well planned programme of personal, social and health education and citizenship, and augmented successfully by the learning mentor, has helped to make children's personal development good. The use of specialist staff for music and physical education is also beneficial. The school does everything it can to raise children's aspirations. For example, older children love science since they did experiments in chemistry with a university lecturer. The curriculum is not good because basic skills in reading, writing and arithmetic across all subjects are not planned well enough.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care and support provided for children are strengths of the school and underpin the recent improvements. Child protection procedures and risk assessments are in place and working well. A listening ear is always available for any child with difficulties.

Positive relationships ensure that the good guidance about keeping fit, healthy and safe is absorbed. Children's levels of attainment are carefully assessed, but the guidance given about how to improve work varies from class to class. In Years 5 and 6 it is incisive, but elsewhere it lacks precision in marking and during lessons. This is an important factor, but it does not detract from the massive support for individuals, many of whom possess significant barriers to learning. The school works effectively with many others, such as the education welfare officer, to influence children's personal development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of all those concerned, including governors, have successfully halted the school's decline. The school is correct in judging its effectiveness to be satisfactory but is modest about how this was achieved. Leadership and management are good and not satisfactory because so much has been done to revive achievement. Subject leaders, teaching assistants, the learning mentor and sports coaches have all played their part well. The school gives good value for money despite the high cost of educating the children. What has been achieved in turning this school around is money well spent. The satisfactory academic achievement is directly related to the improvements in teaching brought about by clear sighted and steadfast leadership.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
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

Thank you for your help when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit because everyone was so welcoming and friendly. It is a satisfactory and improving school and we would like to share with you what we thought.

These are some of the things that we found to be good about your school.

- We loved your new Foundation Stage building. Nursery and Reception children enjoy learning in it.
- The Lunch Bunch and Peer Pals are right to wear their caps with pride.
- You feel safe and know a lot about keeping healthy.
- Your headteacher and staff make sure that you enjoy being at school.
- The musical and sporting activities are very good for you; the choir is wonderful.

We know everyone wants to do even better and we have suggested three things that we think will help.

- Your senior teachers should study your test results even more closely and then suggest how lessons could be better.
- We would like you all to be fully involved in thinking about how well you have done and what you could do to improve your reading and writing.
- Your headteacher and teachers need to make sure that lessons always contain the right ingredients, particularly for those of you who can do harder work.

You can all help by keeping up your good behaviour and trying hard to improve your reading and writing. We know you can do it.