

SS Peter and Paul RC Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108717
Local Authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	288165
Inspection date	26 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Mary Sewell

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jim Wright
Headteacher	Mr Kenneth Devlin
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2003
School address	Olive Street Tyne Dock South Shields Tyne and Wear NE33 4RD
Telephone number	0191 4552862
Fax number	0191 4548181

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

SS Peter and Paul is an average sized Roman Catholic primary school with nursery provision. The school is situated in an area of high unemployment and deprivation close to Tyne Dock. The proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and of those taking free school meals are higher than average; the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is lower than average.

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 in which the well-being of every pupil is central to its work. The school's Christian ethos is reflected in the positive relationships which thrive in this safe and secure environment. School is central to the community and staff work well with other professionals to deal with issues which may spill over into school and hinder learning. Parents say this is a 'fantastic' school. They are overwhelmingly supportive of the headteacher, his staff and all aspects of school life. The school's high quality links with the community have resulted in extra facilities, resources and learning experiences for the pupils

Standards are average and pupils make good progress from Nursery to Year 6. By the end of Year 6 standards are in line with the expected levels in writing, reading and mathematics. Pupils are skilled in the use of information and communication technology (ICT). Current standards, as shown by inspection evidence and the school's own data, are higher than those shown by the results of the 2006 tests, because staffing is now settled and the teaching is of a consistently high quality. In addition, the school has successfully employed strategies to raise achievement; nevertheless, standards in mathematics remain lower than those in other subjects.

Pupils and staff work together in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. This is a place where all are truly valued and cared for. Pupils love coming to school; they attend regularly and their behaviour is exceptional. They are keen to take up responsibilities in their houses and on the school council and understand about fundraising and how to stay healthy and safe.

The curriculum is good and meets the needs of all pupils. The school is keen to embrace new ideas and ways in which the pupils' work may be celebrated. The pupils were keen to talk about their recent art exhibition. Pupils are very well cared for and supported. However their academic guidance is not always clear enough and pupils frequently do not understand what they need to do to improve their work.

Provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage is good and as a result pupils make good progress.

Leadership and management by the headteacher and governors are good. The school evaluates its own work accurately. It offers good value for money and is well placed to continue its good work.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in mathematics.
- Refine assessment and target setting to ensure all learners know what they need to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are average and achievement overall is good. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 were above average between 2003 and 2005 but dipped in 2006. The school took immediate action to investigate and put strategies in place to monitor the progress of all pupils and improve the teaching of mathematics. These interventions are bringing about improvements in the pupils' progress in this subject, but it is too early to judge the impact on standards and achievement as shown in national tests.

Pupils' current work and the school's tracking system show standards are average and pupils' achievement is good. This is because when pupils start school many have skills which are well below what is typical for their ages particularly in language and communication. More than a third of all children in the Foundation Stage receive support from a speech therapist. However, pupils settle to school quickly and achieve well in the Foundation Stage. By the end of the Reception year, many are on course to reach the learning goals expected of them. This represents good progress given their very low starting points on entry to the Nursery. Pupils continue to achieve well to reach standards that in the 2006 Year 2 assessments were broadly in line with the national average.

Work in lessons and pupils' books confirms that progress is maintained in Years 3 to 6. Standards are average as reflected in the 2006 test results for Year 6, although pupils perform less well in mathematics than in other subjects. Pupils are working close to the expected levels for their age, although the progress pupils make in mathematics is not as rapid as it is in English because information from assessments is not always used effectively to plan practical and investigative activities.

The school is on track to achieve its challenging targets. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress. Overall, progress from entry into school to the end of Year 6 is good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The personal development and well-being of pupils are outstanding. Behaviour is excellent as are pupils' attitudes towards their work. Their enjoyment of school is well reflected in their regular attendance. Their spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is exceptional, mainly because of their close links with the Church and the community. Pupils in Year 6 demonstrate a maturity and confidence well beyond their years and are impressive in the way they discuss staying healthy and safe. Pupils are keen to say how much they enjoy school and taking part in the School Council. They are forthright in their views especially about the benefits of play equipment and playground 'Buddies' which they have helped to develop. Pupils benefit from the close relationship of the school and the community in numerous ways, but they especially enjoy Grandparents' Days where they share pottery lessons and story-telling.

The pupils have sound basic skills and are experienced at fundraising. This, together with their awareness of the world of work, ensures they are well prepared for adult life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Common strengths lie in the effective planning and management and the warm relationships teachers have with their pupils. In the best lessons teaching and learning are a shared experience with pupils able to play an active part in lessons. A good example of this was seen in the Reception class where pupils were chatting to each other in French whilst making bread and writing postcards.

When the pupils are focused through practical activities and exciting presentations, they work hard and make rapid progress. However, there are too few opportunities for practical activities in mathematics, and learning has been slower in this subject until recently. In lessons where

pace is brisk, expectations high and the work challenging the pupils are enthusiastic and produce high quality work. Year 5 pupils were able to write persuasively to their local Member of Parliament because they had already explored their ideas through high quality discussion.

The pupils' books give clear evidence of consistently high quality teaching with good continuity; however, although the marking of work checks the extent to which the pupils have understood the lesson, it does not always show pupils what to do in order to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good, being broad and balanced and meeting statutory requirements. It has been revised to include a modern foreign language. For the most part the curriculum is carefully planned to meet the needs of all learners. Since the 2006 results, a wider range of strategies are being used to increase further the rate of progress. These are working well but more so in literacy than in numeracy. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well catered for and the school provides extra lessons and experiences for the most able pupils via its links with the local high school. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned and children make good progress as a result of a good balance of teacher led and child chosen activities. The curriculum is enriched through visits, specialist sports coaches and visiting speakers. There is a comprehensive programme for personal and social education which ensures pupils learn how to stay healthy and safe. Visiting speakers help pupils become more aware of economic issues. Pupils are given plenty of opportunity to express their feelings and emotions in the Pyramid Club.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The guidance and support pupils receive is good overall. The school takes excellent care of its pupils who say they feel safe and well cared for. Careful attention is given to supporting vulnerable pupils and those from troubled families. The school frequently provides the essential link with other professionals and is a safe haven for discussion. All procedures are in place to ensure pupils are safe at all times. Pupils' academic progress is tracked satisfactorily. Currently, learning targets are set for groups of pupils but they are not set for individuals. This means that, although teachers are able to identify pupils who might be underachieving in their classes, the information is not always used to plan challenging tasks for more able pupils. Pupils are not sure what they need to do to improve their work and parents are not always clear about how well their children are progressing. Good links with the local high school underpin the good arrangements to support pupils' transition.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Since the 2006 national test results, responsibilities have been revised. The leadership team has worked with energy and enthusiasm to get the school back on track. The headteacher provides a clear vision and determination to push the school forward. He is well supported by enthusiastic and dedicated teachers. The quality of work carried out by all support staff, including ancillary staff, is very good, and because the staffing has undergone recent turbulence all the staff are keen to support each other in their

new roles. Governors offer good support. They are articulate, knowledgeable and perceptive. They also know the families very well and are in an excellent position to give informed advice on how to move the school forward. This has helped the school make effective evaluation of its own strengths and priorities for development. The school has made good improvements to art and outdoor play for the Foundation Stage children. The improvements to the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) have been slower but the school expects the ICT suite to be ready for use soon. In the meantime they continue to use the local high school. The school offers good value for money.

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Annex A

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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
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

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
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	2
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
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
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.

Annex A

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	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

27 June 2007

Dear pupils

Inspection of SS Peter and Paul RC Voluntary Aided Primary School, South Shields, NE33 4RD

It was lovely to visit your school this week and meet you all. I was very impressed with how well behaved you all were and how you helped each other especially in the playground. Your headteacher, the governors and all his staff work very hard to give you the best education and care possible. I particularly enjoyed speaking to the School Council who were enthusiastic about the way in which they had helped improve the playground facilities.

I think your lessons are good and because you listen well and work hard you make good progress. I was able to see some good teaching where you enjoyed learning because you were involved in the lesson. You are doing well in most subjects but I have asked your headteacher and the staff to continue to watch how well you are doing in mathematics.

The teachers record how well you are making progress in each subject; I have asked them to tell you how well you are doing and what it is you need to do to improve your work.

Thank you all so much for helping me in this inspection. I wish you all the best for your future.

Kind regards

Mary Sewell

Lead inspector