



St Peter's Church of England Aided Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112921
Local Authority City of Derby
Inspection number 289464
Inspection dates 30–31 January 2007
Reporting inspector Marina Gough

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

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|---|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Type of school | Junior | School address | Thornhill Road |
| School category | Voluntary aided | | Littleover, Littleover |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 | | Derby, Derbyshire DE23 6FZ |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01332 767 158 |
| Number on roll (school) | 257 | Fax number | 01332 768825 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Mrs Ann Dean |
| | | Headteacher | Mrs Alison Woodhouse |
| Date of previous school inspection | 29 April 2002 | | |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is situated on the outskirts of Derby. Although it is a church school, it welcomes pupils from many different faiths and cultural backgrounds. About half of the pupils are of white ethnicity; the remainder come from a variety of minority ethnic groups. Attainment when pupils start at this school is generally above average. The school has an average number of pupils who have learning difficulties and a small number have statements of special educational need. The school has a Basic Skills Quality Mark, Investors in People, Artsmark Silver and is working towards Healthy Schools Status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school that is emerging from a very difficult period. Leadership and management are satisfactory and have brought about sound but uneven improvement since the last inspection. Over the last two years there has been a succession of acting headteachers. Although new initiatives have been introduced, some have not reached fruition and others are not yet sufficiently well embedded to be having their maximum impact.

The current acting headteacher, who has been at the school for less than one year, has provided very good interim leadership of the school. She has been particularly successful in keeping staff morale high and has worked effectively with the leadership team and governing body to raise standards, improve teaching, and set higher standards for pupils' behaviour.

By the end of Year 6, standards are comfortably above the national average in English and mathematics, and just above average in science. Pupils of all ages and abilities achieve satisfactorily and make steady progress, but pupils who have English as an additional language could do even better with additional support.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Some good and outstanding examples of teaching were seen during the inspection. Teaching has improved in recent years, but there are still some inconsistencies within and between year groups. Teaching is at its best in English, mathematics and science, but weaker in other subjects where planning is less secure. The school has already identified this area for development and has recently undertaken some training to improve this area. Assessment information is used effectively to help teachers to plan activities that are well matched to pupils' needs. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning.

Pupils' personal development is sound and their behaviour is satisfactory. Levels of care, support and guidance are sound. Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel confident that staff will deal with any concerns they may have.

Over recent years the school has justifiably put a lot of emphasis on the teaching of English and mathematics. Whilst this has served to push standards up in these areas, the curriculum is now unbalanced, with English and mathematics receiving the lion's share of the available teaching time. The curriculum is satisfactory but could be even better if the school made more imaginative use of the long, morning session.

The school is now showing real signs of improvement across many aspects of its work, and provides satisfactory value for money. Although its capacity for continued and further development is satisfactory it is somewhat limited by the lack of a permanent headteacher who can provide the school with the stability it needs.

What the school should do to improve further

In line with its own priorities for development the school should:-

- Establish at all levels, especially from the headteacher, stable leadership that is underpinned by robust management systems.

- Use the long, morning sessions in more imaginative ways so that the pupils receive an exciting and well balanced curriculum.
- Ensure greater consistency in teaching.
- Develop the use of specialist support for pupils who speak English as an additional language.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are comfortably above the national average in English, mathematics and science when pupils leave school at the age of eleven. Pupils achieve soundly. They make good progress in some literacy and numeracy lessons, in which teaching is at its best and where assessment information is used extremely well to ensure that activities are well matched to pupils' abilities. Additional booster classes in literacy and numeracy support the learning of lower attaining pupils and allow them to have the opportunity to catch up in areas where they are falling behind. In science, pupils make steady progress but could do even better if teaching was more consistent throughout the school and within year groups. Pupils with English as an additional language do not receive sufficient additional specialist support. Although this group of pupils makes steady progress, some of these pupils are very capable and could be doing even better. Pupils with learning difficulties receive good levels of additional support in class and make similar progress to their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. In class, pupils behave well. They are responsive and keen to learn, especially when they take part in practical lessons such as science. At break times, there are some minor incidents of misbehaviour. These occur mainly as the result of pupils who have little self-discipline becoming overexcited. The school is working hard to improve behaviour at lunchtimes by training midday supervisors to be more effective, and through the introduction of games and activities in which the pupils can become involved. The school now operates a good system of rewards which pupils really like.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is satisfactory, although more could be done to enhance their cultural development by maximising the opportunities presented by the wide mix of ethnic backgrounds within the school population. As a community the school functions well. Whole-school gatherings such as assemblies are pleasant, well organised occasions.

The school has made a good start in encouraging pupils to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Pupils eat fruit at break times and are fully aware of the positive impact of exercise on their bodies and the negative impact of drugs such as nicotine and alcohol. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education. They are confident about working together, in pairs and small groups, and understand the need for

negotiation. The school council, which was recently reconvened, provides pupils with good opportunities for expressing their views and contributing to the whole-school improvement plan. Attendance is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Some good and outstanding lessons were observed during the inspection, especially in English, mathematics and science on which the school has focused much of its efforts over recent months. In the past there have been weaknesses in teaching which led to a dip in standards. These weaknesses have been successfully resolved through a process of rigorous monitoring and by the staff's own commitment and determination to improve their practice. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support individual pupils and small groups and to deliver the many booster activities that the school provides.

Planning is very good in English and mathematics; it shows clearly the next steps in pupils' learning for all ability and age groups. The planning for other subjects is satisfactory, but the way in which the plans are implemented in parallel classes within the same year group is inconsistent and leads to variation in the rate of progress that pupils make.

The newly implemented assessment systems in English and mathematics are very good. They enable teachers to closely monitor the progress of individual pupils. The termly 'STAR' weeks provide an excellent opportunity for pupils to discuss their learning with their teachers and to set new targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory but unbalanced. All subjects are covered but the time allocated to English and mathematics is disproportionately high, reducing the amount of teaching time that is available for other subjects. The school benefits from having a long, morning session but does not make full and imaginative use of this teaching time. The provision for information and communication technology, judged inadequate at the last inspection, is now much improved and is satisfactory. The school provides a satisfactory range of out-of-school activities.

Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is satisfactory. These pupils are well supported by their teachers and teaching assistants. As yet the school does not have a clear policy on the provision of those pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. Whilst this group of pupils makes satisfactory progress, some of the pupils could do even better with enhanced provision.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

This is a caring school where staff work hard to do the best for the pupils. The pupils say they feel safe in school. First aid arrangements, and the available accommodation for those who are unwell have improved. The school has a good system for keeping parents informed about the work pupils are doing and how parents can help at home. Arrangements for ensuring pupils' safety in school meet requirements. Health and safety issues are dealt with appropriately and improvements have been made to the buildings where necessary. The school has recently introduced a new behaviour management policy which has had a positive impact. Pupils are responding more effectively to the regular rewards for good and improved behaviour. They understand the few sanctions that are used when necessary. Particularly good provision is made for individual pupils who have difficulty in managing their behaviour.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has encountered some very difficult circumstances over the last two years. A succession of different acting headteachers has made it difficult for any changes to be sustained and for any long-term development to be achieved. Links with parents are satisfactory but have suffered to some extent. Although many are very supportive and recognise how hard it has been for the school, others are critical of what they see as a lack of communication. The school is slowly but surely starting to rebuild bridges, but knows there is still a long way to go.

The leadership team provides a very good steer to the school's work, although many of the initiatives it has implemented are still too new to show their maximum impact. The current acting headteacher has provided a very good lead for staff and has worked extremely hard to deal with the most pressing issues of keeping staff morale high and ensuring that standards continue to rise. Subject leaders are in place for all subjects, but their role is as yet underdeveloped.

The governors are a loyal and hard-working group who have dealt well with the leadership issues in the past and who are committed to ensuring more stable leadership at all levels, starting with the appointment of a permanent headteacher. Governors know the school well and have a realistic appreciation of its relative strengths and weaknesses. The school's self-evaluation closely matches inspection findings. Although there is still much to be done, a good start has been made in recent months.

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Inspection judgements

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| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|-----------------------|

Overall effectiveness

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| 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? | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 3 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |

Achievement and standards

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

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|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 3 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 3 |
| The behaviour of learners | 3 |
| The attendance of learners | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 3 |
| 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? | 3 |

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

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 3 |
| 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

31 January 2007

Dear Pupils,

St Peter's CofE Voluntary Aided Junior School, Thornhill Road, Littleover, Derby, DE23 6FZ

I am writing to thank you for making the inspectors feel so welcome when we visited your school a short time ago. We really enjoyed talking to you and finding out what you thought about school. You told us that you like coming to school and that you feel safe. You know that you can go to teachers with any problems you have and that they will help you. Most of you are satisfactorily behaved. In lessons, we were pleased to see how keen you were to answer questions and how well you worked with your "response partners". Although the school council has only recently started up again, it is doing a good job in letting the headteacher know what pupils would like to see improved.

By the time you leave school at the end of Year 6, you are doing well in English, mathematics and science. However, you spend a great deal of time in English and mathematics lessons and this leaves only a small amount of time for other subjects. We have asked your teachers to look at ways of reorganising the school day so that you have more variety and more time to spend on subjects you really like, such as PE and art. You make steady progress, but those of you who are learning English as a second language need more support so that you can do even better. Your teachers try hard to make your lessons interesting; we were very pleased with the way they work with you to set targets so you can see how to improve your work further. We especially like the "STAR" weeks you have, and know that you like the chance to talk with your teachers about how well you are doing. When we were watching lessons we noticed that teaching is often good or better in English, mathematics and science, but not always quite as effective in some of the other subjects. We have asked the headteacher and staff to work together to make sure that teaching is good all the time.

Your acting headteacher has done a very good job in running the school over the past few months. However, there have been a lot of acting headteachers over the last two years, and we think it is really important that the governors now make sure that they appoint a permanent headteacher who can take the school forward.

Best wishes,

Marina Gough

Lead Inspector