

# St Peter's RC Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113492
<b>Local Authority</b>	Plymouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	289651
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 April 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Clifton

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	196
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dawn Potterson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kevin Norris
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 March 2001
<b>School address</b>	Brentford Avenue Whitleigh Plymouth PL5 4HD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01752 217010
<b>Fax number</b>	01752 217009

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is slightly smaller than average. It is situated on the northern side of Plymouth. It draws its pupils from an unusually wide area owing to its Catholic nature and nearly all are of White British heritage. The school has recently experienced a significant fall in numbers of pupils and has been re-organised into seven classes. Pupils come into the school with a wide range of skills and abilities, which taken collectively are broadly at the level expected for their age.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

St Peter's Catholic Primary is a satisfactory school. A strength is in the good behaviour and mature attitudes of the pupils, who have a strong sense of right and wrong and express their views very confidently. Christian values are central to the work of the school and are successfully fostered by all staff. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good and their attendance is above average. Parents strongly support the school and recognise its strengths. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The school cares for the pupils well and provides satisfactory academic support and guidance.

Pupils' achievement and progress are satisfactory and standards are broadly average. Overall provision in Reception is satisfactory and standards are in line with those expected. Children settle quickly into school and make good progress in their social development. Pupils make satisfactory gains to reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 2. Standards in mathematics are not as strong as those in reading and writing. In Year 6, pupils reached broadly average standards in the most recent national tests. However, pupils' current progress across Years 3 to 6 is uneven. Their progress in English and science is better than that in mathematics.

The weakness in mathematics is caused by inconsistencies in provision mainly, but not entirely, in Years 3 to 6. In most classes there are sufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their skills and understanding; in others these are sparse. Consequently pupils are not extending their mathematical understanding consistently. Teachers are not always using information about how well pupils are doing to plan the next steps of learning sufficiently well. This results in pupils repeating work they did some time ago and not making enough progress.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Pupils are well managed and teaching assistants are on hand to provide additional help if it is required. Across the school pupils are usually keen, responsive and hard working. However their attention wanders when tasks are insufficiently challenging. Although teachers usually plan and provide separate tasks for groups of pupils of differing abilities, these do not consistently provide enough challenge for higher-attaining pupils. As a result, those pupils who are capable of working at the higher levels do not always reach them. The curriculum is satisfactory and many pupils particularly enjoy the after-school clubs, which are well attended. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has clearly identified the main areas for improvement but has not yet developed sufficiently detailed strategies for addressing these priorities effectively and evaluating outcomes. An example of this is the monitoring of teaching. The school's systems for checking and analysing the progress made by pupils have been recently improved. The school has set up special arrangements to boost the progress made by some targeted pupils. These arrangements are working well and the standards these pupils are reaching are improving quickly.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' progress in mathematics by matching work more closely to the needs of pupils and providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their skills and understanding.
- Ensure higher-attaining pupils have more consistent challenge, especially in mathematics.
- Improve the systems for checking how well the school is working, especially the quality of teaching, in order to target weaknesses more robustly and ensure consistency from class to class.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils make satisfactory progress to reach average standards. Whilst children come into the school with skills and abilities broadly expected for their age, there has been a measurable decline in their communication and language and literacy skills in recent years. They make good progress in developing their personal and social skills and reach standards broadly in line with those expected across the areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. The results of the Year 2 national tests have been falling over the past five years and are now broadly average. In 2006, the results were average in reading, writing and mathematics, with writing being the stronger and mathematics the weaker area. Pupils in Year 2 are currently making satisfactory progress, although there are too few pupils reaching the higher Level 3 in reading and mathematics.

In Year 6, standards in national tests have been broadly average for the past four years. Mathematics results have been slipping because of inconsistent provision, and higher-attaining pupils have not done well enough. Science results have improved because the school's links with its partner secondary school have proved beneficial in extending the experiences of pupils in Years 5 and 6. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve satisfactorily overall and those with behavioural issues are dealt with sensitively and are well integrated in classes.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils say that they generally like their lessons and they feel safe in school. They enjoy coming to school and most want to do well. Relationships throughout the school are good and pupils grow considerably in confidence and maturity as they move through the school. Pupils comment that 'We all get on well together'. Their behaviour in lessons is good but occasionally pupils get fidgety when lessons do not capture their imagination or interest. Pupils say that occasional incidents of inappropriate behaviour are usually dealt with effectively by staff.

Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their cultural development is the weaker area. Spiritual development is particularly strong; pupils consider the needs of others and recognise these through prayer. There are good opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility and contribute to the school community. Pupils do this willingly; for example, older ones are involved in looking after younger children. Pupils have a good understanding of the consequences of lack of exercise and of an unhealthy diet. They regularly drink water and eat healthy snacks at lunchtimes. Participation in extra sporting opportunities provided after school is good and many particularly enjoy football. Overall, taking into account their satisfactory academic achievement, pupils are satisfactorily equipped for their next stage of learning.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Satisfactory teaching underpins pupils' steady progress. Across the school, teachers manage pupils effectively. Pupils respond well to questions and many use their good speaking skills to explain their thinking. In most classes, teachers provide plenty of time for the pupils to gather their thoughts and provide extended answers. Relationships in the Reception class are particularly

good and as a result children develop in confidence quickly. In Year 6, targeted teaching is helping several pupils make good progress which is being carefully tracked. Teachers' expectations about what can be achieved by the pupils are too variable. In most classes, teachers set work which requires pupils to think hard and draw on previous learning. However, there are occasions when repetitive work is given, such as in mathematics, to no obvious benefit. Whilst this particularly inhibits the progress of the higher-attaining pupils, it also limits all pupils' independence in learning.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good and is linked well to the school's focus on developing life skills through its religious education programme. Provision in the Reception class is limited by an over-dependence on adult-led activities, which reduces children's opportunities to make choices and engage in practical and investigative activities

The quality of curriculum provision varies between classes. In some year groups, planning does not challenge and extend pupils well enough, particularly the more able. In mathematics, pupils are not given enough opportunities to apply their number skills in solving problems. The recent introduction of interactive whiteboards is extending opportunities for learning, although not enough use is made of pupils' information and communication technology skills in other subjects.

Pupils enjoy the many clubs and activities offered, although they say they would still like to have more! Links with local schools, colleges and other organisations extend the curriculum and provide a good range of sporting activities which promote pupils' healthy lifestyles.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The school's good ethos and Christian values result in pupils feeling valued and safe. The good support for pupils' personal development enables them to become confident and articulate members of society. Effective arrangements for safeguarding children are in place. The high expectations of behaviour and good relationships throughout the school enable pupils to work and play together without fear of harassment.

The school's procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are improving as a result of new tracking and target-setting procedures. Most of the older pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve, particularly in literacy, where teachers' marking also provides good guidance in some classes. However, these new procedures have been introduced very recently and there are currently too many inconsistencies in the use teachers make of agreed procedures.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The head provides good pastoral leadership and has supported and nurtured staff through a period of change caused by falling rolls and financial constraints. He is developing subject leadership to promote school improvement. The senior management team is growing in confidence, although not all members currently fulfil some of their key management responsibilities well enough.

The school development plan and subject action plans correctly identify the main areas for improvement but are not specific enough. The good range of performance information and monitoring opportunities is not being used as well as it could be, for example weaknesses in teaching are not always sufficiently well identified. As a result, change for improvement is steady and the capacity for improvement satisfactory.

The governing body makes a good contribution to the pastoral work of the school. Governors are knowledgeable and have provided satisfactory challenge about the recent areas of under-achievement. There are regular consultations with parents and pupils but pupils often feel that not enough account is taken of their views.

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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	<b>School Overall</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>	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	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

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

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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

23 April 2007

Dear Pupils

St Peter's Catholic Primary, Brentord Avenue, Plymouth, Devon PL5 4HD

Thank you for our very warm welcome to your school. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons and during your playtimes and were very impressed with how friendly you were. You gave us a lot of valuable information and this was a great help to us. We think your school gives you a satisfactory quality of education which enables you to reach average standards and make satisfactory progress. We found that the teaching, curriculum and the care, guidance and support which you are given are all satisfactory.

What we most liked about your school:

- You are kept safe at school.
- You have positive attitudes to learning and you behave well.
- You learn and develop your skills well at the after-school clubs.
- You have a good understanding about how to stay healthy.
- You express your views about what you like and dislike confidently and with consideration for others.
- Your attendance is good.

We found that improvements are needed and have asked your headteacher and others to:

- Improve your mathematics lessons by making sure that work is not too difficult or easy and give you more opportunities to apply your skills and understanding.
- Make sure that as many of you as possible do even better by giving you consistently challenging work.
- Check how well the school is doing more carefully, especially the teaching in different classes, so that any necessary improvements can be made quickly.

We hope your school continues to improve.

Yours faithfully

Peter Clifton Lead Inspector