

St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Lytham

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119628
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	291485
Inspection date	20 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Jennie Platt

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	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr P Rowley
Headteacher	Mrs Liz Kelly
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2002
School address	Norfolk Road Lytham Lytham St Annes Lancashire FY8 4JG
Telephone number	01253 734658
Fax number	01253 795303

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is an average sized school serving a socially and economically advantaged area. Very few pupils are entitled to free school meals. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and currently no pupils are at an early stage of speaking English. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but an above average number of pupils have formal statements of special educational need. Children enter the school with standards that are at the expected level.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school and a wonderful place to learn. The atmosphere is exciting but also caring and the school deserves its high reputation. It is very popular with parents who feel it stands out from the crowd because of the focus on every child's individual needs. They appreciate the happy, welcoming community atmosphere, which is such a strong part of the school ethos. One parent reports, 'My child skips into school every day and is made very welcome.' Pupils' personal development and well-being are excellent. Attendance is above average because pupils love their school. Pupils are friendly, kind and courteous and actively search out ways to help others. Although pupils appreciate their own culture and appreciate living conditions in other countries, they are less well informed about life in their own multicultural society. Working hard comes as the norm for these pupils who strive to do their very best and this helps them to succeed academically and socially. They speak proudly of their many achievements and leave school exceptionally well prepared for the future.

Teaching and learning are excellent and enable pupils to make exceptionally good progress. Results of national tests and assessments in Years 2 and 6 have been consistently above average and pupils leave school with very high standards in English, mathematics and science. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. As a result, children make good progress and exceed the level expected for their age. Teachers throughout the school have exceptionally high expectations of behaviour as well as academic standards. Lessons are challenging and well ordered. A key strength is the consistent approaches used so that year on year pupils know what is expected of them. Teachers have fully embraced the idea of involving pupils in their own learning. Pupils confidently check their work and appreciate the steps they need to make to improve. As a result, learning is most effective and achievement for all groups of pupils, including the most able and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is excellent.

The care, guidance and support for the pupils are exceptional and help to promote these high standards. The lighting effects in the multi-sensory room are just one example of how the school goes the extra mile to provide for the needs of pupils with learning difficulties. The achievement of several Healthy School Awards illustrates the pupils' determination to stay healthy and safe. The good curriculum plays a big part in the school's success. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is based successfully on imaginative play, but the outdoor space lacks stimulus to encourage effective learning outside. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy the special weeks and many visits and clubs, which add interest to their daily lives. The beautiful art work on display reflects the richness of the curriculum.

Leadership and management are excellent. The headteacher's enthusiasm acts as a catalyst in promoting a culture of enjoyment in learning. Her exceptional vision is supported by all staff because they all contribute to decisions about the school's future. Self-evaluation is accurate and reflects the school's constant search to drive standards even higher and to do its best for the pupils. Improvement since the last inspection is excellent. High standards have been made even higher and the school has excellent capacity to improve and provides outstanding value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the outdoor learning area for children in the Foundation Stage.
- Improve pupils' understanding of multicultural life in the United Kingdom.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils' achievement is outstanding and standards are consistently high when pupils leave school. From an average starting point, children in the Foundation Stage make good progress. The vast majority exceed the level expected for their age in all areas of learning.

This good start is built on consistently well in the rest of the school. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 show standards have been above average for several years. Last year standards in writing were not quite as high as other subjects in Year 2. This has been swiftly tackled by a whole school approach to teaching phonics and also to drafting and producing exciting writing that has captured pupils' interest. As a result, standards in writing, as seen in lessons and pupils' work, are now as strong as other subjects. Results of national tests at the end of Year 6 are impressive. Standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science. More able pupils are fully challenged and in response to the excellent teaching a high proportion of pupils reach above average levels. The school exceeds the challenging targets set.

The school deserves the good reputation it has for the provision for pupils with learning difficulties. These pupils receive excellent care and support. Many of them make outstanding progress, often overcoming major barriers to learning. There is no pattern of difference between the achievement of boys and girls.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is at the heart of the school and is outstanding. Pupils show a great eagerness to learn and to be involved in all that is on offer. They thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected in their above average attendance. Pupils are well aware of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and take on board all of the advice about how to stay fit. Their energetic participation in the daily 'wake and shake' sessions set pupils up well for the day. The school has won Healthy Schools' awards and this also teaches them to keep safe as well as healthy. Older pupils enjoy being buddies for others and Year 6 girls were very good customers in the travel agency in the Year 1 class. They look out for those who may be unhappy and operate playground stops and a friendship bench to check no one feels lonely. Pupils are adamant there is no bullying or racial harassment in their school. They become confident out-going individuals with positive attitudes to learning who are very well prepared for the future.

Their personal skills reflect outstanding provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They are polite and courteous and behaviour is exemplary. They care very much for the less fortunate and raise considerable funds to support children in Botswana. The curriculum provides excellently for pupils' own culture but, although good, less so for learning about other cultures within the United Kingdom.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are excellent. Teaching is always good and it has several outstanding features, which are consistent between classes. This consistency has an extremely positive effect on pupils' excellent progress. A key strength in lessons is the involvement of pupils in

their own learning. This leads to teachers becoming experts at pinpointing weaknesses and helping pupils to find solutions. Lessons start with a very clear explanation about the focus of the learning and so pupils recognise the purpose of the activities. A variety of approaches adds interest as pupils move into groups, share their ideas with a partner or jot down their ideas independently. Pace is brisk and teachers often set time constraints, which lead to pupils putting their heads down with a determination to complete their tasks. In the Foundation Stage, a wide variety of activities makes learning fun as children paint, make models and pretend to go on a picnic. Although Year 6 pupils were absent on a residential visit during the inspection their books revealed high expectations especially in presentation and the amount of work completed. Teaching assistants are thoroughly prepared as to their roles in the lesson and the needs of the pupils they support. This enables all pupils to be involved in lessons and to take full advantage of all that is on offer.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A good curriculum is planned carefully to provide a balance between academic, creative and physical development. Personal and social development also receives very good attention and pupils enjoy learning important messages through drama, debate and art. Pupils enjoy the themed days and this ensures that they not only acquire new knowledge but recall it later. Teachers promote literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology effectively in other subjects. The Foundation Stage is carefully planned to cover all of the expected areas of learning in the classroom and the focus is clearly on developing independence and creativity. The outside area is spacious and secure, but it lacks stimulation and resources are not available to enable this space to be fully developed as an extension to learning in the classroom. Visitors share their talents well and the amazing mosaics on the school's wall are testimony to the pupils' creativity. Parents praise the number of visits and the variety of organised activities after school, which successfully augment the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

One parent summed up the reason for the excellent care their children receive as being 'dedicated staff who really care for the children' and another makes the point that 'the quick response to any concerns stops small issues becoming big ones.' Arrangements for safeguarding pupils, child protection and risk assessments are in place and the school checks that people are carefully checked for their suitability to work with children. Pupils who start at different times during the year are settled sensitively and this contributes greatly to their self-confidence. Staff know the pupils exceptionally well. By very effective tracking of their academic progress, they provide work that is tailored to their specific needs. Prompt action is taken as soon as a pupil, whether more able or having learning difficulties, is seen to need that extra boost. A wide range of interventions in groups or as individuals enable all to progress at their own speed and achieve very well. Pupils appreciate their involvement in checking how well they are doing. They say this is most helpful and also makes work easier to understand.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The leadership and management, including governance, are excellent. The headteacher has a collaborative management style taking on board the views of all, including parents. Her strength is in drawing out the very best from teachers and in supporting their suggestions. A significant strength in management is that everyone sings from the same hymn sheet. For example, the concerted attack on the lower standards in writing was remarkable and improvement assured as everyone embraced the agreed changes. There is a constant drive to raise standards and to take on board new initiatives that keep the school at the cutting edge of changes in education. Self-evaluation is accurate because the views of all, including governors, are sought and valued. Partnership with other agencies and parents is excellent. The school has a very clear view of the way ahead. As a result, improvement since the last inspection and the school's capacity to improve are excellent.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

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

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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
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?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

21 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Lytham, Lancashire,

FY8 4JG

Thank you so much for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. Although I was only there for a day I enjoyed seeing you at work and play and appreciated the way you told me about your school. You attend an excellent school and it is an exciting and friendly community. You make exceptional progress and reach high standards. You play a part in this by your hard work and excellent behaviour. I was pleased to see how much you care for each other as well as those less fortunate than yourselves. I am sure the families in Botswana really appreciate your help. Keep it up! You know a lot about how people live there and the school is looking at teaching you more about different cultures in the United Kingdom. Relationships in school are exemplary and you told me how much you enjoy playing with your friends. It was a delight to see you being so energetic especially in the 'wake and shake' sessions. As you know keeping fit is important. You enjoy an interesting variety of activities and I thought some of your paintings on display were wonderful. The children in the Reception class have great fun, but do not have a lot of imaginative resources when they work outside.

You attend a wonderful school and I know how much your parents appreciate all that is organised for you. I was sorry not to meet Year 6 pupils, but hope you enjoyed your residential visit. I am sure it was just one of the many exciting memories you will take with you as you move to your new schools. I wish you every happiness for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J E Platt

Lead inspector