

# St Peter's RC Middle School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122368
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	292385
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Hancock HMI

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>	Middle deemed secondary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9–13
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	135
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev Father Richard Harriott
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Felicity Penny
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 September 2002
<b>School address</b>	Northumbrian Road Cramlington Northumberland NE23 6DB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01670 716343
<b>Fax number</b>	01670 716343

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

## Description of the school

St Peter's is a small voluntary aided middle school located in an industrial area of Northumberland. The school is subject to reorganisation proposals. It is federated with St Paul's First School and St Benet Biscop High School. The first school and St Peter's operate with one headteacher and legally they are two separate schools. The number of pupils at the middle school has fallen to 135 compared with 170 in 2004 because of the reorganisation. A significant proportion of pupils are from Traveller Communities. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average and nearly all pupils have English as their first language.

## 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 continues to be an effective school at a time when significant change is taking place. Inspection evidence confirms it is moving in the right direction as a result of the federation. The performance of St Peter's started to fall after the previous inspection in 2002. Leaders and managers recognised that change was needed and took decisive action to make improvements. The impact is now being seen; for instance, achievement and standards are rising and the quality of teaching is improving.

All pupils, including those from the Traveller community, make satisfactory progress and achieve well. Personal development is good because the school has children at the heart of its work. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory and pupils enjoy learning. Standards are average overall and evidence from recent mock tests shows they are improving. Achievement in mathematics is not as high as it is in English and science. The quality of teaching and learning has improved in the last year as a result of the federation and the school's drive for improvement. The school recognises there is not enough good teaching to consistently challenge all pupils to achieve more highly. Assessment systems are working effectively. Procedures which help the school to understand more fully the progress pupils can make are improving, although data are not sufficiently well analysed to speed up progress.

Behaviour is good and healthy lifestyles are promoted. The school has a satisfactory and improving curriculum. The overall quality of leadership, management and governance is satisfactory and senior managers are steering the school well. The school is right to think capacity to improve is satisfactory and improving. Resources and accommodation are effectively deployed to achieve satisfactory value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement and standards in mathematics.
- Improve the proportion of good teaching.
- Analyse and use data on pupils' performance to raise standards.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Pupils start at the school with average attainment and make satisfactory progress. National data show they reach at least average and better standards by the time they leave. English test results in 2006 at Key Stage 2 were just above average, average in science, and below average in mathematics.

Evidence from mock tests in 2007 shows results are improving. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress, as do children from Travelling communities.

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

### **Grade: 2**

The school accurately evaluates personal development and well being as good. Spiritual and moral development is a particularly strong feature and pupils successfully lead daily acts of worship. In discussion, they show a good ability to reflect on their views, reactions and beliefs.

Social and cultural development is good. Pupils work very well together in lessons and in support of each other. They have a good awareness of other cultures and what is required to live a healthy and safe lifestyle. Charity work and a good contribution to the local community are strong features.

Behaviour is good. Pupils act responsibly and concentrate well in lessons. Attendance has changed from above to below average in the last three years. This is the result of changes in the recording of Traveller attendance nationally, and the high number of absences due to parents taking children out of school during term time. The school is doing all it can to raise attendance.

Pupils communicate clearly and know how to keep themselves safe. Future economic well-being is developed well through role play and enterprise activities. For example, pupils successfully designed and manufactured products, such as bags during a recent visit by the business enterprise team.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are well judged by the school to be satisfactory overall.

There is good teaching and the school knows there is not enough. The quality of teaching has improved in the last year as a result of the federation and teachers are working more effectively across the three schools.

Assessment procedures are working but they do not always help the school to understand more fully the progress pupils can make. This is because data are not sufficiently well analysed and used to set challenging targets.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The satisfactory curriculum promotes inclusive practice and out of school visits are a feature. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are talented are well integrated and supported. The curriculum is adapted according to pupils' needs. A good example is the differentiated work for Traveller children when they return to the school.

The school knows the present curriculum is too limited because it has not yet met their aspirations towards raising standards. Strategies introduced through the federation are starting to make an impact and the curriculum is moving in the right direction.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory and contribute positively to pupils' progress, enjoyment and well-being. This is especially evident through the open door policy for pupils and parents to raise concerns.

Pupils benefit from the practical advice they are given on how to improve their work. However, assessment systems are not sufficiently robust to provide a coherent approach to data analysis which results in challenging target setting. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to help meet pupils' learning needs. Careful attention is paid to health and safety issues and child protection. Links with parents are effective and a range of local agencies safeguard the needs of the most vulnerable pupils.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Strong leadership by the headteacher is providing clear direction and promoting improvement in the new federated schools. Senior leaders know their main priority is raising standards through sustained improvement in teaching and learning. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Monitoring and self-evaluation have provided the middle school with an accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses. Issues raised at the last inspection have been improved and the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

A new joint governing body is now established and governance is satisfactory. The school rightly identifies that the governors need to play a full part in influencing priorities and holding the school to account for achievement and results. The school improvement partner is providing good support to help the governors and the school move forward. Learning resources and the accommodation are satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory value for money with a surplus carried over to assist with staffing the new federation of schools.

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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 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	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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### 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

21 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter's RC Middle School, Cramlington, Northumberland,  
NE23 6DB

Thank you for all your help when I inspected the school on 19 and 20 June. Please would you pass on my thanks to your parents and carers for returning the questionnaires and say we took all their views into account. I thought you might like to know what we thought about your school.

- St Peter's continues to be an effective school at a time when significant change is taking place.
- Senior managers are steering the school well.
- Inspection evidence confirms the school is moving in the right direction as a result of the federation with St Paul's and St Benet Biscop.
- Achievement and standards are rising and the quality of teaching is improving.
- Personal development is good because the school has you at the heart of its work.

Your teachers and the staff want to make the new federation of schools even better. To help them do this, I have asked if they could:

- raise achievement and standards in mathematics
- improve the proportion of good teaching
- analyse and use data on your performance to raise standards even more.

I wish you every success in all you do in the future

Paul Hancock

Her Majesty's Inspector