

# St Peter's Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118617
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	298567
<b>Inspection date</b>	11 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sheila Browning

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 controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	110
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Linda Sharpe
<b>Headteacher</b>	Simon Temple
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 December 1999
<b>School address</b>	Mount Pleasant Aylesford ME20 7BE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01622 717335
<b>Fax number</b>	01622 717235

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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

This is a below average sized school. There is a wide social mix amongst pupils. Children join the school with levels of ability that are broadly typical for their age. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is considerably higher than found nationally. In recognition of its work, the school has an Activemark and Investor in People award. When the school was last inspected in June 2006, it was given notice to improve because pupils were making insufficient progress in their writing, work was not being monitored effectively, and the role of governors was underdeveloped.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

In accordance with section 3 (5) of the Education Act 2001, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. This is a good and rapidly improving school. This reflects the outstanding leadership of the headteacher and his relentless determination to enable pupils to achieve their best. The school has worked hard to ensure that St Peter's provides a safe, happy learning environment in which children really enjoy learning and achieve well. Parents strongly support the school's work and say, 'The school has improved so much'. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good because pupils' individual needs are important to all staff and met effectively. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and this is reflected in the calm, positive work ethos and excellent attitudes to learning. Pupils are developing satisfactory skills for their future lives and enjoy working together and independently. Attendance is satisfactory, but is improving because of the rigorous way it has been tackled. The good care, guidance and support reflect the school's inclusiveness and its excellent partnerships with parents, the community and other agencies.

Children are given a good start in the Reception Year and make good progress. Good leadership and management have eradicated the school's previous legacy of underachievement. Pupils have achieved well this year and caught up on previous lost ground so that standards at the end of Year 6 are now similar to the national average and rising. Pupils are now given good opportunities to develop their writing skills and this has resulted in considerable improvement in standards. However, there are still weaknesses in pupils' handwriting, spelling and presentation of work. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve well because of the good support they receive. The most able pupils are not always consistently challenged. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers' expectations have been raised and targets set are more challenging. Work is marked well and pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work.

The learning environment has developed enormously and is aptly described by the headteacher as a mix between 'Hogwarts' and 'The Tardis'. The effect it has had on motivating pupils has been tremendous. The good curriculum and improved resources enhance the development of pupils' basic skills and social and emotional aspects of learning. Pupils particularly enjoy learning French and using information and communication technology (ICT). Many pupils attend the good range of extra-curricular activities. The headteacher and staff work together well as a cohesive team. Their evaluation of the school's work is accurate and good progress has been made since the last inspection. The work of governors has improved significantly. Governors now offer good support and effectively hold the school to account for its work.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children achieve well in relation to their starting points. Most reach the expected levels by the end of the Reception Year and a good number exceed them. Children are happy and respond positively to the good expectations of their behaviour and attitudes. Good teaching, a varied curriculum, and the newly refurbished learning environment motivate children to do well. Consequently, they enjoy learning and make increasingly good progress.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the teaching of spelling and encourage pupils to take greater care with their handwriting and work presentation.
- Ensure that the most able pupils are consistently given challenging work and learning opportunities.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good and this is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The legacy of underachievement has been largely overcome and pupils have made up for lost ground. This improvement is due to good quality teaching, a robust attitude to assessment and data analysis, and an improved curriculum. At the end of Years 2 and 6, standards have improved year on year for the past three years from significantly below average to average. The school's latest national test results indicate that there has been further significant improvement. Standards and pupils' achievement are rising at a faster pace than before. Pupils meet increasingly challenging targets and a large number exceed them. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve well because of good support and well directed provision. Pupils' listening and speaking skills are good and, as a result, pupils are confident orally and can express their thoughts and ideas clearly.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Parents and pupils both commented favourably on the good behaviour and attitudes of pupils in and out of lessons: 'My child is happy and contented and is always talking about his day and the fun he has had'. Pupils are positive about how safe they feel at school and how well the school tackles the very rare instances of inappropriate behaviour. Pupils have positive attitudes to healthy living and to being actively involved in both the school and local communities, through activities such as the school council and the Aylesford Village Festival. Skills for the work place are developed satisfactorily.

Pupils' personal development is good and the school's ethos is one where pupils feel valued, cared for, and supportive of each other. They integrate well with each other, although there is currently insufficient provision for pupils to fully develop an understanding of living and working successfully in a multicultural society. Pupils develop well socially, morally and culturally and their spiritual development is well supported through good links with the local church and through charitable events such as 'Shades Day'.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

The school has concentrated on improving the quality of teaching and has been successful in achieving this priority. Teachers work well in partnership with other adults in the classroom. Lessons have a clear focus and pupils are in no doubt as to what it is they are intended to learn. Teachers plan good opportunities for pupils to reflect on the progress they have made and what they need to do to improve. Assessment of pupils' attainment is good. Teachers use this

information well to plan the next stages of the pupils' learning. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.

Teachers have good relationships with the pupils and adopt good management strategies to organise the learning in their classrooms. The level of challenge the teachers plan for their pupils has improved overall, although more able pupils could occasionally be given more challenging tasks. Parents indicate that the pupils have good relationships with the teachers and that 'the staff really help pupils feel happy which shows in their work'.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils say they enjoy learning and especially like French and ICT. The strong emphasis on promoting pupils' personal development means pupils have good opportunities to develop their emotional and social skills. Pupils learn well through an integrated curriculum that successfully links different subjects together, which makes learning more relevant. Teachers provide stimulating and well-resourced learning opportunities. They encourage pupils to transfer the skills they have learnt to new situations. The school has successfully extended pupils' writing opportunities since the last inspection, but not enough attention is given to spelling, handwriting and presentation skills. Pupils are fully involved in initiatives such as Healthy Schools, Activemark and the Travel Plan, which all successfully promote safe and healthy education. Pupils particularly enjoy the many extra-curricular activities. Links with the village and other local schools are very strong.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Good care, guidance and support are strong features at St Peter's. Pupils learn in a safe, secure, inclusive and happy environment. Excellent links with pre-school providers and the Foundation Stage to Year 1 ensure that transition is seamless. Pupil 'buddies' effectively help new children to settle in happily. Child protection and safeguarding systems are robust. Parents say and pupils confirm that they feel safe and confident to talk about any concerns they may have. Excellent partnerships with parents and outside agencies benefit the good progress pupils make, especially those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Comprehensive systems for monitoring and tracking pupils' academic and personal development are effective in identifying where additional support for behaviour or work may be needed. Pupils have a good understanding of how well they are achieving and what they have to do next to achieve their challenging learning targets.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good overall. The school has made considerable strides to improve and has been successful. This reflects the outstanding leadership of the headteacher, a view shared by a number of parents in the questionnaires. Parents strongly support the school's work and this is reflected in the sharp upturn in the number of pupils in the school. There is now a relentless focus on raising standards and improving pupils' progress within the context of a school where all pupils are valued equally. This has resulted in a very cohesive community. The clear vision on how the school will improve is shared by staff, governors and

the school community. There has been considerable change recently in middle managers and some are developing their good expertise in monitoring the quality of standards and teaching and learning in their subjects. Overall, the capacity of the school to continue to improve to achieve its vision is good. This is reflected in the recent rapid improvement in standards.

Effective management has led to significant recent improvements in the school's learning environment and resources are deployed effectively. The site has been transformed into a quality environment for learning.

The governors and staff have a very good understanding of the strengths and weakness of the school and use this information appropriately to determine the school improvement plans. Very effective systems are used for self review and performance management. Governors challenge the school's leadership well. A strength of the school is its partnerships with other schools and agencies, for example working with the local community to establish an independent pre-school group on the site and planning a youth club for older village children.

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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<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>	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<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>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

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**Annex B**

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

11 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter's Church of England Primary School, Aylesford, ME20 7BE

Thank you for making our visit to your school so enjoyable. We liked talking with you and seeing your work. We think St Peter's is a good and rapidly improving school and the teaching is good.

Here are some of the things we found out

- You work hard together to make St Peter's a good school.
- You told us you felt safe, know how to lead healthy lifestyles, and that all staff help you to make good progress.
- Those of you in Reception settle quickly and make good progress.
- Your behaviour is outstanding. You have excellent attitudes to learning and really enjoy your work and involvement in the community.
- All the staff, governors and parents work really hard together to improve your school.
- The adults in your school really care for you and look after you well.

Here are the things we would like to see improved

- Your teachers need to help you improve your spelling, handwriting and presentation of your work.
- Those of you who find work easy need to be given harder work all of the time.

Yours sincerely

Sheila Browning Lead inspector

11 September 2007

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Yours sincerely

Sheila Browning  
Lead inspector