

# St Peter's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105537
<b>Local Authority</b>	Manchester
<b>Inspection number</b>	308883
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jim Kidd

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	218
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Philip Horton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Loftus
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 July 2003
<b>School address</b>	Fairbank Road Newall Green Manchester M23 2YS
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 437 1495
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 437 9337

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average-sized school is situated on the outskirts of Manchester and serves an area of significant social disadvantage. Most pupils are of White British heritage but there are increasing numbers from minority ethnic groups. The number of pupils who are new to learning English is also increasing. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average and there are six pupils with a statement of special educational need. St Peter's is an Investor in People, holds the Artsmark Gold award and is working towards the Manchester Inclusion Standard.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

The overall effectiveness of the school is inadequate. It has not made the necessary improvements in standards, achievement and attendance since the previous inspection. Indeed, attainment and the overall progress of pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, have fallen over the past three years. Standards are exceptionally low by Year 6. Pupils with learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language achieve well because of the good support they receive from teaching assistants. However, inadequate teaching - comprising low expectations, inappropriate challenge and slow pace - lead to pupils of average and above average ability failing to reach the standards of which they are capable. Curriculum planning and lesson preparation are improving, but weak assessment practice by subject leaders does not always gauge the performance of pupils accurately. As a result, targets are missed and pupils are not fully aware of their progress and of how to reach the next level of attainment.

Attendance is well below average and has been so for some years. The school does not involve pupils and their families effectively enough in attempting to improve it. Those who do attend feel safe, behave well, interact maturely with their classmates and take pride in involving pupils new to the school, and sometimes new to the English language, in many activities. Pupils are aware of how to eat healthily and they take full advantage of the many sports events on offer. They take pride in St Peter's well-founded reputation as a 'singing school' and they sing with enjoyment and consummate skill.

Teachers and teaching assistants care for their pupils well and vulnerable children and those new to England are integrated rapidly and effectively into all areas of school life. The school has strengths in pastoral guidance and support, although academic guidance is not strong enough to ensure that pupils make the progress expected of them. The curriculum is satisfactory, encompasses all statutory areas of learning and is enriched by Italian and the 'passport to sport'. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to reinforce the skills gained in one subject to their learning in others.

The new headteacher has accurately evaluated the school's areas for development but the strategies to bring about improvement in standards and achievement have not had time to show the necessary impact. Over time, governors have not consistently challenged the leadership and the school's effectiveness has worsened markedly since the previous inspection. Parents are supportive of the school overall but a significant minority have concerns about the decline in the quality of education their children receive. The school provides inadequate value for money.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

The Foundation Stage is satisfactory and there are some good features within it. Children enter the Nursery with well below average skills in communication, language and literacy, and their social development is also weak. They make satisfactory progress in both Nursery and Reception in all the six required areas of learning because they have access to a wide and varied curriculum,

which gives priority to the development of speaking, listening and social skills. Children are generally well motivated and gain in confidence as they learn through play. The Foundation Stage rooms are bright, secure and welcoming and children enjoy exploring their environment and using their imagination to extend their communication skills. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory; teachers and teaching assistants support their pupils effectively. On occasions, children spend too long on one activity and have insufficient time on others. Most children behave well but sometimes take too much time to settle. Leadership and management are satisfactory and staff work hard to plan work which is closely matched to the individual needs of the pupils.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise the levels of teacher expectation, challenge and pace in lessons to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- Raise standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science for all pupils but particularly for pupils of average and above average ability.
- Involve parents and pupils more effectively to ensure attendance is improved.
- Ensure subject leaders improve their practice in assessment and evaluation in order to play a more effective role in raising standards.
- Ensure the governing body holds the school's leadership rigorously to account.

### **Achievement and standards**

#### **Grade: 4**

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that standards are too low and that pupils' achievement is inadequate overall. Children make satisfactory progress in both the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. However, pupils' achievement in English, mathematics and science across Key Stage 2 has declined markedly over the past three years. Results in the national tests in both 2006 and 2007 indicate that boys do much better than girls, that pupils are missing their targets by a large margin and that standards are exceptionally low. This is confirmed by inspection evidence. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening are underdeveloped and significant numbers find it difficult to make any extended comment about their learning. Where there are higher expectations of what pupils can do, in the current Years 5 and 6 for example, progress in lessons is beginning to improve but pupils remain well behind where they should be. Pupils of average and higher ability, too, are not reaching the standards of which they are capable.

The school works hard to support pupils with learning difficulties, and the talented team of teaching assistants plays a key role in ensuring that progress for these pupils is satisfactory.

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

#### **Grade: 3**

The school's strategies for ensuring that pupils come to school regularly are ineffective and attendance has been well below the national average for some considerable time. An insufficient number of pupils, therefore, have the opportunity to learn, enjoy and benefit from what the school offers, particularly in its strengths in support for personal development. However, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good for those pupils who attend school and pupils are rightly proud of St Peter's reputation as a 'singing school.' They enter hymn practices eagerly and the smiles on their faces show just how much they look forward to the activities. Many pupils speak highly of what their teachers and teaching assistants do for them. Behaviour in lessons and around school is good and pupils are very positive about the 'starlight

room', which, they say, helps them to consider how their actions can affect others. Pupils new to learning English are integrated well into what the school has to offer. A pupil of Polish heritage spoke for many when he said, 'We have settled down so quickly here because grown-ups and children are all so kind to us.'

Pupils understand the importance of eating healthily and of keeping fit but would welcome more opportunities to take responsibility around school. They are making satisfactory progress in their computer skills but their achievement in literacy and numeracy is inadequate and the school is therefore not preparing them well enough for life beyond formal education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 4**

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. In a significant number of lessons, teachers do not challenge pupils appropriately to reach higher standards. In these lessons, pace is slow, teachers direct learning too much and pupils are not given the opportunity to think sufficiently for themselves. As a result, many pupils are not sufficiently interested in the topics covered, their attention wanders and their achievement suffers. The school leadership is accurate in its judgements of how teaching may be improved but the effect of its strategies to enhance pupils' learning is not fully apparent. In a minority of lessons there is some good teaching, and pupils benefit from a wide range of methods to meet their learning needs. In a Year 5 literacy session on Pandora's box, for example, pupils of all abilities were surprised at what they could do because of some sophisticated questioning from the teacher and teaching assistant.

Assessment and the tracking of pupils' progress are at an early stage of development and, although planning is improving, it does not always lead to work which is closely matched to the pupils' different ability levels. Marking is inconsistent in quality; much of it is cursory and lacking in comment that is helpful in explaining how the work could be improved.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum provides a satisfactory range of work and activities in school and an increasing number of enrichment opportunities for pupils. There are few examples of cross-curricular initiatives in which pupils can develop, reinforce and transfer their skills from one subject to another. However, appropriate emphasis is placed on promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, art is a very popular subject among pupils and the school is rightly proud of its Artsmark Gold award. Provision for pupils to develop their skills in information and communication technology is satisfactory but its use as a teaching tool is hampered by the lack of electronic whiteboards in classrooms. Physical activity features prominently and pupils benefit from a good range of activities through the 'passport for sport' project. They also take full advantage of tuition in Italian and greet visitors warmly with 'buon giorno' and 'ciao'.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

Pupils feel safe in school and say that there is always an adult to talk to if they are having problems. Pastoral care is good and a strength of St Peter's. The 'starlight room' does much

to encourage pupils to modify their behaviour and to raise their self-esteem. Procedures for child protection meet requirements. Teaching assistants and the learning mentor are very effective in ensuring that vulnerable pupils, those who find learning difficult and also those new to learning English, are able to take advantage of everything the school has to offer.

Academic guidance, particularly for pupils of average and above average ability, is not effective enough to ensure that the pupils make progress in line with their levels of attainment. Target-setting is not always founded on a secure assessment of pupils' performance, and pupils themselves are not fully aware of how they can improve their work. On balance, pupils' care, guidance and support are satisfactory because the strengths in supporting pupils' pastoral and social needs outweigh the inadequacies in academic guidance.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 4**

Inspectors disagree with the school's evaluation of the quality of leadership and management and judge them to be inadequate. The headteacher, comparatively new in post, generally has an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and works hard to address underperformance. However, it is too early to identify any significant impact of strategies established over the past twelve months to improve achievement, standards, teaching and learning. Subject leaders have too little knowledge of how their role can raise attainment and do not evaluate performance in the areas for which they are responsible effectively enough.

Over time, school self-evaluation has been a major weakness. Governance has been inadequate, though a new governing body was appointed in January 2007. Governors have not held the leadership to account and have not ensured that the school addressed effectively the key issues from the previous inspection. As a result, teaching has worsened, attainment has declined and attendance remains a serious cause for concern. The school now recognises that improvement in teaching and learning is an urgent necessity if pupils are to reach the standards of which they are capable. It has not had time to demonstrate the effect of its policies to bring this about. The school's capacity to improve is, therefore, judged to be inadequate.

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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	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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	4
The attendance of learners	4
The behaviour of learners	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	4

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
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

<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>	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Newall Green, M23 2YS

Thank you all for the welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting and talking to you and think you are very polite and friendly. We would like to tell you what we think about your school.

You told us how kind your teachers and teaching assistants are and how they help pupils who find the work hard and those who are new to the school and who are learning to speak English. We agree with you that the starlight room is very important and that it helps pupils to gain confidence and behave properly. Most of you behave well in class and in the playground and you look after each other. We really enjoyed your hymn practice and think you sing beautifully. However, we also think that your school is not providing for you well enough and needs extra help to improve. We have judged that it requires 'special measures'. Inspectors will come and visit your school regularly to ensure that things improve.

We have asked your teachers to help you make more progress in class by asking you to do some work which is more difficult and which makes you think. You can play an important part in this by always trying your best. We want you all to do better in English, mathematics and science, especially those of you that find these subjects easy. We have asked the teachers who lead these subjects to check on your work more thoroughly so that your standards improve. Your headteacher has worked very hard, in a short space of time, to try and improve St Peter's and we think it would be a good idea now if the governors made sure that everybody does their best and all your teachers keep an even closer watch on how you are all doing. If they do this, we think that your school will get better and better.

We have also asked your teachers to work more closely with parents, carers and yourselves to make sure that everyone knows how important it is to attend school regularly.

We enjoyed watching you learn and wish you all well for the future.