

# St Peter's Roman Catholic Primary School, Rochdale

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105817
<b>Local Authority</b>	Rochdale
<b>Inspection number</b>	308959
<b>Inspection date</b>	19 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Heap

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	193
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Fr Michael Haworth
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs C Maddocks
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 May 2003
<b>School address</b>	Kirkway Middleton Manchester Lancashire M24 1FL
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 6433946
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 6546489

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The following issues were investigated: how well the school's leadership and management maintain strengths and identify areas for development, the pupils' achievement and standards, the quality of the curriculum and how effectively it promotes pupils' learning and personal development. Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons, the pupils' work and discussions with pupils, staff and a representative of the governing body. School documents and parent questionnaires were also scrutinised. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This broadly average-sized school serves residential areas that have few signs of disadvantage and there is a below average proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A small proportion of pupils are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds and a small proportion are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There have been recent and significant changes to the senior management team, including the appointment of a temporary associate headteacher and assistant headteacher.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Peter's is a good school that provides good value for money. This judgement reflects the school's accurate and effective self-evaluation and shows that it has maintained the many strengths identified in the last inspection report. The majority of parents appreciate that the school is doing a good job and give it a lot of support. The words of one parent sums up the views of others: 'The school provides strong emphasis on the pastoral care of the children and has also a strong emphasis on academic achievement. This is what we want from the school.'

Achievement and standards are good. In Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2), pupils continue to build on the good start they make in the Foundation Stage (Reception) and they make good progress. National test results at the end of Year 2 have fluctuated from year to year, but were above average in 2006. Reading results were particularly strong but they were a little weaker in writing and mathematics. Early indications from the 2007 tests show improvements in mathematics, particularly for the higher-attaining pupils. This is due to improved attention to problem-solving, which has particularly interested and motivated boys, who tend to do less well than the girls. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher than average Level 3 was far greater in reading than in writing. By the end of Year 6, standards have been consistently and significantly above the national average. Test data shows that pupils progress well and inspection evidence confirms this positive view. There is no difference in the achievements of boys and girls. Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. Evidence shows that some pupils who were below average at the end of Year 2 reached average standards by the end of Year 6. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those learning English as an additional language are also progressing well. Early indications from the 2007 national tests are again encouraging and exceed the targets set by the school. Pupils leave the school with a good range of basic skills and these prepare them well for later schooling and life.

Pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good because the school's curriculum promotes this area well. Moral and social development are particularly strong and lead to good behaviour, attendance and attitudes to school and work. The majority of parents say their children enjoy school and this view is endorsed by the children themselves. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the need to lead healthy and safe lifestyles. They know that it is important to eat a balanced diet, exercise regularly and act responsibly around the school. Older pupils welcome the opportunity and responsibility offered to them to help the younger pupils settle into school. The active school council provides a valuable voice for all pupils to have a say in the day-to-day running of the school, such as improving the external premises and raising money for extra playtime facilities. In discussion, pupils are thoughtful and reflective and teachers provide lots of opportunities for this in Circle Time (class discussion sessions). Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. They have good knowledge and understanding of local culture and their grasp of diversity is improving, as a result of wider experiences being offered in the curriculum.

The consistency and quality in pupils' academic and personal development are the result of good teaching and learning, coupled with a curriculum that effectively meets their academic and personal needs. They are also the result of good quality care, guidance and support. Lessons are well managed and promote good attitudes, concentration and behaviour. As a result, there are few interruptions to the flow of lessons and pupils are keen to learn. Ongoing assessment and tracking of pupils' achievements are used effectively to identify learning groups and set work that is well matched to pupils' individual needs. At its best, marking makes it very clear

how well pupils are progressing towards their targets and what they need to do to improve further, as in Year 6. The school effectively meets the specific needs of pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have work matched to their needs through regularly reviewed individual education plans. Pupils learning English as an additional language are supported by visual timetables and dual language books; gifted and talented pupils are challenged by activities forged in links with the local authority and the neighbouring secondary school. Teaching assistants make an effective contribution, particularly in their support for pupils with extra learning needs. They ensure that all pupils know what is going on, what they have to do and how well they are doing. They involve pupils in understanding what it is they need to do to improve. Pupils appreciate the range of activities that effectively enrich their learning, including visits, visitors and a good range of extra-curricular activities. Staff know the children well because of effective measures that check and track their academic and personal development. This is recognised and appreciated by parents and pupils alike. One pupil said, 'Now that we have the new fence we are all safe and we know who to go to if we have a problem.' Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils meet requirements and follow appropriate guidelines. Robust procedures are in place to protect pupils. Pupils' self-esteem is nurtured well through appropriate praise and rewards. Very rare incidents of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with quickly and effectively. Most parents appreciate the strong relationships that the school is developing with them. Nevertheless, there is a minority who feel that their views are not sought, or listened to, for example, about: fire safety on the first floor, entry and exit to school and lack of play equipment on the playground. There is evidence in all of these matters of the school monitoring and taking some action, but the school accepts that information on these and other matters could be better.

Leadership and management are good. Although the school has experienced a lengthy period of disruption this has not led to a significant weakening in standards or provision. This is due largely to strong traditions of teamwork, sensible governance and the good support of outside agencies such as the diocese and local authority. A significant result of this partnership is the temporary appointment of an able, experienced and knowledgeable associate headteacher. Several parents wrote to the inspector to express their gratitude for the way she has stabilised the leadership of the school. The associate headteacher is well supported by key staff who play a major role in ensuring that all pupils benefit equally from what the school offers. Effective improvements continue to be made and the capacity for further development is good. For example, the library is better than it was and provides more effective support for independent learning; the new perimeter fence has improved security and has allowed for greater use of external premises in the curriculum, particularly for the Foundation Stage. The satisfactory school development plan lacks a focus area or targets for raising standards.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children get a good start in the Foundation Stage. They enter Reception with skills and abilities that are broadly typical for their age, but lower in communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development. Children benefit from good teaching and an effective curriculum that helps them reach standards that are a little above those expected as they enter Year 1. Effective teaching and learning is underpinned by continuous, good quality assessment that helps staff to appropriately challenge children. Parents are pleased with the way their children settle quickly and are appreciative of the advice provided by the school. One parent wrote: 'My son's first two weeks have gone smoothly, he is settled already and goes in

happily everyday. This appears to be the same with all the children in his class, which I feel is a credit to the teachers and the school.' Furthermore, it is an outcome of the effective and competent leadership and management. Recent and essential improvements to perimeter fencing have enabled staff to make greater use of the outdoor areas, much to the children's delight.

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

- Increase the proportion of pupils who reach the higher than average Level 3 in writing, by the end of Year 2.
- Ensure that the school development plan contains measurable targets for the continued improvement of academic standards.
- Improve information for parents.

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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?	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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
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?	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	3
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

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

Inspection of St Peter's Roman Catholic Primary School, Manchester,  
M24 1FL.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time in your good school this week. The welcome was warm and I much appreciate the courtesy and help you provided. These are some of the key findings about your school.

What I really liked about your school:

- the happy atmosphere, support for each other and the contribution the school council makes, particularly in providing views about improvements
- the good progress that you make in your learning and personal development
- the good teaching and strong support you receive from all the adults
- many of you told me how much you like school, but it was made obvious by the good behaviour, good attendance and your keenness and concentration in lessons
- the good contribution that you make to a safe and caring ethos in the school, particularly the way that the older pupils help the younger ones to settle
- your enjoyment of the good and interesting range of activities that enrich your curriculum
- the way that the school has worked hard to make the school more secure and thereby increase the use of the outdoor premises
- the good leadership and management of the associate headteacher and other staff.

I have asked your teachers to ensure that there is an increase in the proportion of Year 2 pupils gaining the above average Level 3 in writing tests. I have also suggested that the school writes achievement targets into the school development. Finally, I have asked the school to make more contact with your parents so that everyone understands what the school is doing about a range of important matters.

Good luck for the future and best wishes.