

St Peter and St John RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105964
Local Authority	Salford
Inspection number	308997
Inspection date	20 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Margaret Lewis

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	135
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr I Clarke
Headteacher	Mrs M O'Brien
Date of previous school inspection	20 September 2004
School address	Mount Street Salford Lancashire M3 6LU
Telephone number	0161 8344150
Fax number	0161 8397980

Age group	3-11
Inspection date	20 May 2008
Inspection number	308997

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and progress in the Foundation Stage; pupils' achievement and progress in English and mathematics; their personal development and well-being; and the school's efforts to raise attendance levels and improve care, guidance and support. This was done by gathering evidence from observing lessons; examining a sample of pupils' books; scrutinising school documentation and national published assessment data; and analysing questionnaires completed by parents. Further evidence included observation of the school at work; interviews with senior members of staff, the learning mentor and the headteacher; and by talking with pupils and the chair of governors and finance. 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, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This school is smaller than the average primary school and is situated close to the centre of Manchester. A significant proportion of pupils come from homes that are economically disadvantaged, as is reflected in the high numbers of pupils entitled to a free school meal. A higher than average number come from a minority ethnic background. The school has a higher than average number of pupils from Traveller backgrounds. Almost all pupils speak English as a first language, although some are bilingual. A small number of pupils are looked after by the local authority. Over 30% of pupils have been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This is higher than in most schools. When children start in the full-time Nursery their knowledge and skills development is much lower than that typically expected for their ages. The school holds the Healthy Schools Award, the Activemark and the Bronze Eco- Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The Cathedral Roman Catholic School of St Peter and St John is a good school where pupils achieve well. The commitment shown by the staff to make every pupil feel valued is underpinned by the school's Christian teachings. As a result, the school provides outstanding care, guidance and support for pupils that impacts strongly on their personal and social development, which is excellent. Pupils get on well with each other and with the adults they have contact with because of the positive environment the school has created. The headteacher leads the school very well and the school works closely with parents, who are overwhelmingly supportive of its work. Parents are extremely pleased with the quality of education the school offers. They particularly appreciate that their children enjoy school in a warm and friendly atmosphere; that the school is well run and gives such good support and help to children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; and that staff are always happy to discuss any concerns they may have.

Pupils' excellent attitudes to their work and behaviour in lessons, and the effective teaching and support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants ensures that their achievement is good. Pupils make good progress and achieve well from their starting points. Pupils enter Year 1 with skills that are below those typical for their ages in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards at the end of Year 6 in the school's national tests have been broadly average over the past five years. In 2007 results were broadly average in English, above average in science and below average in mathematics. The targets set for this age group were exceeded in English, but missed in mathematics where fewer pupils reached the higher levels. The school has taken decisive action to improve standards in mathematics and this is beginning to pay off in the current Year 5/6 class. The school's data show that pupils in Years 5 and 6 are making good progress and are on course to reach above average standards. In recent years progress has dipped at the beginning of Key Stage 2. This has now been addressed, but consistent progress across Key Stage 2, particularly in mathematics, is yet to be demonstrated. In Year 2 standards have been broadly average over the past five years. Pupils reached average standards in assessments of writing and mathematics in 2007 and reading dipped to below average. This reflected the specific size and needs of the cohort. Extra teaching support, including small-group teaching and booster groups to develop basic skills in Years 1 and 2, is helping to raise reading standards. Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and vulnerable pupils are very well supported. As a result, they participate fully and make good progress.

Pupils say they like school because, 'The teachers do a lot for us. If we are stuck they help us along to understand - but they don't tell us the answer!' They say that they always try to behave well, show good manners and get to school on time. Attendance is average and continuing to improve due to the school's good efforts. Punctuality has vastly improved recently and many pupils are keen to get to school to take part in the early morning dance and exercise classes, 'Morning Move'. Pupils have a good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle and are very aware of the importance of taking regular exercise. They say they feel very safe in school and show good consideration of the need for respect to all people, including those from different cultures. They know who to go to if they have a problem.

School council members enjoy their tasks, take their work seriously and are proud of the differences they have made. These include increasing the range of play equipment for use at lunchtimes and keeping the school tidy with regular litter picking. They are knowledgeable about recycling and look forward to 'Green Week' in school, which is based on their own ideas.

The curriculum is of good quality. It has improved since the previous inspection and supports pupils' personal development well. Displays of a high standard enhance the learning environment and art and design is clearly a strength of the curriculum. The curriculum is enhanced by all pupils being able to learn French. Moreover, a wide range of extra-curricular activities and special weeks set aside for poetry and science enrich learning effectively and make work interesting and fun for pupils. An important factor in the school's success is the good quality of teaching and learning. Strengths include clear objectives, effective questioning, challenging tasks and the range of strategies used by teachers to help make learning enjoyable. For example, science investigations for testing which materials were waterproof in a Year 3 class, and testing different types of soil in a Year 4 class, resulted in a hive of activity and pupils having fun in their learning in both classes. Teachers know their subjects well and have very good relationships with pupils. Teachers receive good support from teaching assistants in supporting learning, and any challenging behaviour is managed very well. Assessment information and tracking of pupils' progress is used well to ensure that pupils are carefully grouped in lessons and receive additional help when needed to help them make the best progress. Pupils' work is carefully marked with good pointers for improvement, and individual targets also ensure that pupils know what they need to do to improve. Parents are kept informed each term of the progress their children make.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides very effective and positive leadership and is well supported in this by the recently appointed deputy headteacher. The newly created leadership team has made a good start, and although it is too soon for its work to have had a full impact on raising standards, there are clear signs of improvement already, especially in raising standards in writing. Self-evaluation is accurate, although the school is modest in judging some areas of its work. Improvement plans identify relevant priorities and areas for improvement. The governing body is well informed and knowledgeable. It supports the school well. The budget is well managed and the school is well resourced. It has very recently attained the Financial Management Standard in Schools. It gives good value for money. These factors indicate that the school has a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage is good, so that children make good progress from their low starting points. They do well, and by the time they begin in Year 1 they reach the average expectations for their ages in personal, social and emotional development, and physical and creative development. However, they do not reach the expected levels in communication, language and literacy or mathematical development. The early years unit is very well managed, and children and their families are well supported from the outset so that children settle quickly. Well planned activities and good deployment of staff ensure that children in their early years experience a free flow of opportunities between indoor and outdoors. Considerable emphasis is placed on helping children to be kind and sociable individuals who can share, wait their turn and begin to see how their actions affect others. Basic skills of speaking, listening, reading, writing and numeracy are woven into activities. Children have fun learning through play and teacher-led activities, as when they observed caterpillars through a microscope linked to the interactive whiteboard, and, when dressed as builders, they designed and built a house in the outside 'builders' yard'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve progress in mathematics, especially across Key Stage 2.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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 ¹ 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

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 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	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?	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?	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

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

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school to see how well you are learning. It was good to hear your views and find out about life at St Peter and St John School.

I agree with you that your school is a 'very friendly and warm school' and that you always try to behave well, be helpful and have good manners, such as opening doors for teachers and visitors. Your school is providing you with a good education. Your teachers and helpers take extremely good care of you, supporting you and guiding you very well so that you grow up to be sensible and independent young people by the time you leave. I was pleased to hear that you know what to do if you have any concerns.

It was good to see you that you work hard in lessons and enjoy the exciting things that you get to do. I had a superb time in the Foundation Stage unit when I saw the caterpillars photographed onto the big screen. I enjoyed looking at your books, reading your stories and letters and looking at your work on display around the school. Your classrooms and corridors are bright and interesting. You clearly enjoy art and design and making pottery.

I found it interesting having my lunch with some of you in the dining room and talking to the school council. You know a lot about healthy eating and exercise and the need for recycling.

Your headteacher leads the school very well and knows exactly what to do to make it even better. I have asked the governors, headteacher and teachers to make sure that you make better progress in mathematics so that you reach higher standards, particularly in Key Stage 2. I know that you will want to play your part to help your teachers make your school even better than it is now.

With best wishes for the future.