

# St Peter's CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 113485      |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Plymouth    |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 311292      |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 4 June 2008 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Alex Baxter |

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                                    | 133                                  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body                   |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Sam Philpott                         |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Steve Boatright                      |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 1 November 2004                      |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Rendle Street<br>Plymouth<br>PL1 1TP |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 01752 667724                         |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 01752 267976                         |

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This small primary school serves the needs of pupils in the local area, with most coming from White British backgrounds. The number of children seeking entry to the school varies considerably from year to year. There is a very high rate of movement of pupils into and out of the school other than at the normal times. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. The movement of pupils and their specific learning needs often affect some year groups very significantly. The school has gained Healthy Schools and Activemark awards.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school. It has a distinctive, caring Christian ethos which, alongside the good quality of education their children are getting, is much appreciated by parents. One echoed the views of most when writing, 'I feel the school as a whole is very good. My child is very happy and doing well.' The headteacher gives a very effective lead. He encourages the full involvement of all staff and governors and receives good support. Leadership and management are good because all adults who work in the school share a strong commitment to doing the best they can for every child. Together, they ensure that weaknesses are identified and tackled effectively, for example the improvement in standards and pupils' behaviour in recent years. This has established a foundation of good provision, which promotes pupils' good academic and personal achievement. A high number of pupils enter or leave the school other than at the normal time and a much higher proportion of pupils than average find learning difficult or have social and emotional needs. As a result, the performance of individual pupils has a big influence on standards from year to year. Currently, standards by the end of Year 6 are below average but, given the above factors, most pupils make good progress during their time at St Peter's because of good teaching. The pupils' good achievement begins with a supportive welcome and a careful analysis of their needs. These are backed up by good quality teaching and learning and a well-planned curriculum that interests the pupils. In response to good provision, children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. Although a well above average proportion of children arrive with low levels of skills, especially in communication and language, almost all make good gains in speaking and listening as they move from class to class. By Year 6, standards are below average in English, mathematics and science. Despite this good improvement, pupils' spelling and punctuation skills remain weaker aspects. In addition, the progress of average and lower attaining pupils in mathematics slows at times because work is not matched sharply enough to their levels of skill. All pupils make good progress in developing self-confidence because of good care, support and guidance, which includes excellent pastoral support. Consequently, pupils' personal development and well-being are also good. In particular, pupils demonstrate outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural qualities. These are evident in they way they relate warmly to each other and respond with a 'twinkle in their eye' when adults show interest, value their ideas and efforts, and 'give them time!' The pupils appreciate this and say, 'We are treated fairly at this school.' Given this boost to their confidence, pupils apply themselves well to their learning and to school life in general. They make good contributions to clubs and in undertaking responsibilities, such as supporting other pupils at playtime. Despite some weaknesses in literacy and numeracy skills, pupils' boosted self-esteem and good social skills prepare them satisfactorily for future life.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Supportive links with parents help children make a good start in the Nursery and enable a smooth transition into the Reception class. Good leadership and teamwork ensure that the well-equipped and spacious indoor and outdoor facilities are used effectively to interest and enthuse children. Teachers work well with their assistants to provide good quality teaching and excellent pastoral care. As a result, all children make good overall progress. In particular, many children make very good progress in developing positive attitudes to school and in communicating with others. Even so, given the often very low starting points, standards remain below average on entry to Year 1. There is a good balance of adult-led learning and activities

chosen by the children themselves. At times, however, such as in role-play in the 'café', adults do not support children's learning choices as well as they might. The creation of an outdoor sensory area is a positive development to provide additional enrichment to the children's learning.

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

- Improve pupils' spelling and punctuation skills to develop the quality of their writing.
- Ensure that work in mathematics is always pitched at the right level for all pupils.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement is good by the time pupils leave the school. However, because of the high number of pupils who find learning difficult, standards, although improving, are below average by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. Children are taught well and make good progress in the Foundation Stage. Most children do best in developing positive attitudes to school and in learning to converse with others. Pupils make good progress throughout the rest of the school and in particular make best progress in their personal and speaking skills. A whole-school focus on writing is bringing improvement, especially in pupils' handwriting skills and extending their vocabulary, but spelling and punctuation are still not good enough. In mathematics, more able pupils and those with complex learning needs make consistently good progress because they receive well-matched challenge and support. However, at times, the work presented to average and less able pupils is not matched as precisely to their ability, which slows their learning.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils feel safe in school. Even though many pupils start with low self-confidence, they soon feel valued and relate amicably to others. Their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a particular strength that is underpinned by a very supportive Christian ethos. Pupils respect the cultures, beliefs and views of each other, including the caring staff who look after them diligently. Pupils behave well and play a full part in making the school a happy place to learn. School councillors, for example, 'look after' those who might feel lonely at playtimes. Pupils enjoy school, because, as one pupil said, 'We care about each other. Punishments are fair and we are rewarded when we do good things.' Rewards and incentives include book tokens for regular attendance and, as a result, attendance is improving and is satisfactory overall. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and participate enthusiastically, and with some success, in a good range of clubs and inter-school sporting competitions. Pupils make good contributions to the community through fundraising for charities and taking part in school events. Despite their weaker academic skills, pupils' willingness to learn and to cooperate with others prepares them satisfactorily for the future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching is typified by warm relationships, good management of pupils' behaviour and questioning that holds the pupils' attention and extends their thinking. Teachers and their

assistants value the pupils' ideas and, in turn, this is appreciated by the pupils who respond with renewed enthusiasm. Whole-class discussions proceed with good pace and teachers are skilful at keeping pupils of different ability fully engaged. This was seen to good effect in a lesson in Years 3 and 4, where all pupils were stimulated by a visit to the Eden Project and references to a 'Tyrannosaurus Poem'. Staff emphasise the pupils' vocabulary and social skills well, raising their skill and confidence in speaking and listening. Teaching assistants support individuals and small groups effectively, for example in the Foundation Stage by using a 'Pooh Bear Teddy' to encourage children to talk about their own personal experiences. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully and assessment information is mostly used well to plan work that matches pupils' abilities. However, in mathematics, the work set for average and less able pupils is not always matched as sharply to their skills as it is for pupils with more ability, which slows their progress.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum has good breadth and balance and is relevant to pupils' needs and interests. Learning activities, including a good range of clubs and visits and links with other schools, are particularly successful in enhancing pupils' personal development and well-being. Very strong links with the church also support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The absence of grassed outdoor play areas is compensated for by regular visits and the good use of a spacious hall, the playgrounds, and garden and wildlife areas. There is an effective focus on developing pupils' handwriting, speaking and listening skills across the school. Increasing opportunities for pupils to read and write about a range of subjects are also helping to develop these skills. Resources for information and communication technology (ICT) have recently been improved. These are enhancing pupils' ability to work independently, but have not been in place long enough to develop skills to best effect.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The pastoral care given to pupils, particularly in lifting their self-confidence and encouraging them to relate well towards each other, is outstanding. In turn, this boost to the pupils' self-esteem greatly assists their academic learning, as seen in the way pupils sustain concentration and try hard to learn in lessons. The school works effectively to promote good links with parents and outside agencies and these contribute very well to the pupils' personal, social and emotional needs. Despite the school's best efforts, not all parents are as helpful in ensuring that their children attend regularly. Pupils with additional needs, especially those who find retaining knowledge and communicating with others difficult, receive good support. Pupils receive good oral guidance from staff to aid their learning. However, the quality of teachers' marking varies and pupils do not always receive enough guidance on how to improve their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher, who is a very capable leader, promotes a strongly shared sense of direction and a closely-knit community feel based on Christian principles. Staff and governors provide good support and everyone works well together to make sure that all pupils are included equally

and their needs addressed as effectively as possible. The school has strengthened its monitoring and evaluation procedures since the last inspection and these are now good. Senior staff have a sharp awareness of the pupils' literacy and personal needs. Priorities, targets and strategies to bring about improvement in these aspects have been particularly well founded and effective. However, at times, partially because of changes in coordination, the analysis of provision in mathematics has not been as precise. As a result, actions to bring improvement have not been as successful and the pace of improvement in mathematics has not kept up with that accomplished so far in literacy and personal development. Even so, the steady rise in standards and in pupils' behaviour reflects the school's good capacity to improve in the future.

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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 |
|---|----------------|

### 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   | 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?                                  | 2 |
| 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   | 2 |
| The attendance of learners  | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |

### 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  | 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  |

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

- 4 June 2008 Dear Pupils Inspection of St. Peter's Church of England Primary School, Plymouth PL1 1TP We really felt welcomed when we visited your school recently and would like to thank those of you who took the time to talk with us, especially members of the school council. It is clear why you enjoy coming to school each day and we agree with you and many of your parents who feel that St. Peter's is a good school. These are the main things we found:
- St. Peter's is a welcoming and very caring community where adults treat you all fairly and equally.
- You are taught well, enjoy the good learning activities provided and make good progress during your time in this school.
- You behave well, readily give of your best and make good contributions to the life of the school and your community.
- Staff do their very best to work closely with your parents. They also work well with other people to make sure that you receive individual help when it is needed.
- Your headteacher is a very good leader. He presents a kindly example to everyone in the school and receives good support from other senior managers and governors. They are a good team who look after you well. To help the school to become even better we have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to do two things.
- Help you to improve your spelling and punctuation when writing.
- Make sure that the work you do in mathematics is at the right level for each of you. We were so pleased to see the way you try so hard to learn. Keep it up and you will help to make your school even better. Thank you once again, and best wishes for the future. Yours sincerely  
Alex Baxter Lead inspector

**Annex B**



4 June 2008

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St. Peter's Church of England Primary School, Plymouth PL1 1TP**

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To help the school to become even better we have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to do two things.

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- Make sure that the work you do in mathematics is at the right level for each of you.

We were so pleased to see the way you try so hard to learn. Keep it up and you will help to make your school even better.

Thank you once again, and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Alex Baxter  
Lead inspector