

St Peter's Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116666
Local Authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	312362
Inspection dates	20–21 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Anthony O'Malley HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	197
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Gallagher
Headteacher	Martin Holt
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2003
School address	Cherry Tree Close Winslow Road Bromyard HR7 4UY
Telephone number	01885 483237
Fax number	01885 483829

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St Peter's Primary School is a smaller-than-average primary school with a nursery. The great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. Children enter the school with the skills and knowledge expected. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness, although judged by the school to be good, is satisfactory. The school does have a number of important strengths, but achievement and standards are no better than satisfactory because teaching is not as effective as the senior leaders judge it to be. Outstanding provision in the Foundation Stage gives children an excellent start and they achieve beyond the levels expected for their age. However, from then on, the quality of teaching is less consistent and progress slows. In recent years, pupils have achieved average standards in the national assessments at the end of Years 2 and 6. Lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work show that this satisfactory progress is continuing. The progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is sound. Whilst the school targets additional resources to support individuals, it does not always check the precise impact of these interventions.

Teaching is satisfactory. Pupils are well motivated and enjoy the challenge of work that forces them to think hard. However, this good practice is not consistent in Key Stages 1 and 2. Learning is slower when the activities set do not build on an accurate assessment of what pupils know and what they need to learn. In these lessons, a few pupils find the work too easy, or too hard, and a minority lose concentration. The curriculum is satisfactory. Its strengths include educational visits and after-school clubs that contribute to the pupils' enjoyment of school. Similarly, there is effective provision to ensure pupils are aware of how to keep safe in school and at home. However, a lack of curriculum policies means that there is only limited guidance on teaching and assessment to encourage consistent practice. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The high quality pastoral care and support provided contribute well to the pupils' good personal development. However, academic guidance is weaker and the majority of pupils do not receive helpful information about their progress.

Pupils love coming to school. Asked why they enjoy it so much, one boy confidently replied, 'Because the teachers are so friendly'. Relationships throughout the school are strong and reflect the pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils behave well and those who find concentrating difficult receive good levels of support. Their dietary choices at break and lunchtimes, and enjoyment of physical activity show an outstanding commitment to leading healthy lifestyles. The pupils also make an excellent contribution to the school and local community through, for example, their fundraising activities, the school council and choir. Good personal development and sound literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills prepare pupils adequately for the next steps in their education.

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Senior leaders set a clear direction and high expectations in relation to promoting pupils' personal development through good quality care and support. They have been less successful in their efforts to raise achievement in Key Stages 1 and 2. Systems for tracking progress and monitoring the effectiveness of teaching lack rigour. The result is that the identification of underachievement is not prompt enough and teachers do not receive the support they need to become more effective. Governors are committed to supporting the school but they would benefit from training to enable them to ask the probing questions needed. Parents overwhelmingly praise the school's work, particularly its caring ethos. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and has a sound capacity to improve further

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Most children enter Nursery with the knowledge, skills and attitudes expected. Excellent provision ensures that they make rapid progress and, by the end of the Reception year, they achieve above the expected levels in all areas of learning. This success is because highly skilled staff have a clear understanding of how young children learn and use this expertise to provide high quality activities both inside and outside the classroom. For example, adults make best use of every opportunity to develop speaking and listening skills. When two boys were having a problem using outdoor equipment, skilful adult intervention encouraged one boy to explain his concern and, with sensitive prompting, the other boy listened and responded.

A particular strength is the quality of assessment and planning. Through close observation, there is a rigorous monitoring of how well individual children are learning. This ensures that all adults know the precise learning needs of individuals and can plan activities that successfully meet those needs.

Links with parents and outside agencies also play a major part in this area's success. Parents are genuine partners in their children's learning and well-being. Not surprisingly, responses to the inspection questionnaire were unanimously positive. One parent expressed the views of many when she wrote, 'We are extremely impressed by the level of care, attention and support given by the staff and the many activities and choices available every day'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in Key Stages 1 and 2, ensuring that lessons build on an accurate assessment of what pupils know and what they need to learn.
- Ensure that all pupils make consistently good progress through Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management, improving systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and providing better curriculum guidance.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The outstanding progress made in the Foundation Stage slows in Key Stages 1 and 2 and pupils leave the school with average standards in English, mathematics and science. This slower progress is particularly evident in writing at Key Stage 1. In 2007, the standards of writing of seven-year-olds were below average and no pupils achieved the highest level. The school is tackling this problem and has introduced a number of strategies to improve writing skills. Indications are that standards in Key Stage 1 are beginning to rise. In Key Stage 2, rates of progress vary because of differences in the quality of teaching. Progress is quickest in Years 5 and 6. In the 2007 national tests for 11-year-olds, achievement was highest in mathematics and over a third of the pupils achieved the highest level.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school is at the heart of the local community and pupils enjoy supporting local events. For example, the choir has represented the school at the Bromyard in Bloom ceremony, at the Last Night of the Proms and at nearby residential homes. Throughout the school day, there is clear evidence of the pupils' good personal development. Pupils treat adults and other children with respect and sensitivity. They take good care of the school environment and facilities. The playground is litter free and vegetable and fruit waste, from their healthy diets, is recycled for the school garden. Visits to theatres and places of interest promote good spiritual and cultural development. The school has acted to increase the pupils' understanding of Britain as a diverse society and but at present the pupils' knowledge of other cultures is limited.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Progress is no better than satisfactory because the quality of teaching varies from outstanding to inadequate. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are able to discuss their learning targets and have a good understanding of their strengths and weaknesses in English and mathematics. They are keen to give explanations when asked to share how they arrived at an answer or opinion and are able to sustain concentration when tackling activities that require considerable reflection. However, learning is usually slower than this because the majority of pupils do not benefit from challenging questioning, helpful marking and carefully planned lessons that accurately match their needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The range of educational visits, links with the local community and attention given to encouraging healthy lifestyles are strong features of the curriculum and contribute well to the pupils' good personal development. Parents rightly value how the curriculum promotes self-esteem and helps pupils to manage personal stress. Similarly, pupils recognise how the residential visits in Years 5 and 6 will help them to cope with the transition to secondary school. However, there is a lack of curriculum guidance to ensure that provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT is consistently good, and that teaching builds on previous learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

This caring school has a strong commitment to promoting the pupils' emotional well-being and safety. Pupils in turn feel wholly safe and secure, knowing there is always someone there with whom they can share concerns. The school works closely with parents and children's services to provide good support for all pupils. Procedures for child protection and for safeguarding pupils meet government requirements. The quality of academic guidance varies considerably throughout the school. In the majority of classes in Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils do not receive good information about their progress through helpful marking and assessment. The systems for tracking progress are not sufficiently rigorous to identify promptly underachievement and ensure effective interventions.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Parents overwhelmingly praise the school's work, particularly its caring ethos. As one wrote, 'Our son's confidence has grown immeasurably during his time at the school.' Such comments accurately reflect the success senior leaders have had in establishing a school with a clear moral code where pupils learn to work and play with confidence and enthusiasm. However, the school has been less successful in raising academic achievement in Key Stages 1 and 2. This is because, while self-evaluation accurately identifies most of the school's strengths and weaknesses, it has not monitored teaching and learning with sufficient rigour. However, there is evidence of the school's sound capacity to improve, including the early signs of improving writing standards. Senior leaders, including governors, have an accurate view of present achievement and have set challenging statutory targets for future attainment.

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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?	3
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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1
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?	3
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

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

25 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter's Primary School, Bromyard, Herefordshire HR7 4UY

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and joining you in your lessons. We were very pleased to see how much you like school. This is what we found out.

Your school is providing a satisfactory education. This means that we found some good things in the school but also some things to improve. The great strengths of your school are the teaching and learning that happen in the Nursery and Reception classes. These are outstanding and get you off to a flying start. We were also very impressed with your awareness of how to stay healthy and how you participate in the life of the school and the local town. You are rightly proud of your school choir and all of the fundraising you do to help people in this country and in Tanzania. We agree with your parents that you behave well at school and work hard in lessons. The staff care for you very well and so you enjoy school and feel safe. You all work together as a friendly community.

We have asked the school leaders to do three things that would help your school become even better.

- Make sure that the activities you work at in class are not too easy or too hard for you.
- Check carefully the progress you are making throughout the school year and give extra help to anyone falling behind.
- Check carefully that teaching and learning are good in all classes and that there are policies to help teachers teach more successfully.

You can help your school improve by attending regularly, remaining positive and enthusiastic about your learning and continuing to behave well. Thank you again for all your help.

Yours sincerely

- Anthony O'Malley
- Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex B



25 February 2008

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