

St Peter's Church of England (Aided) Primary School, Whetstone

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120202
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	313550
Inspection dates	21–22 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Marion Thompson

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	247
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Collins
Headteacher	Sue Bracey
Date of previous school inspection	4 May 2004
School address	Wale Road Whetstone Leicester LE8 6NJ
Telephone number	01162 775750
Fax number	01162 775750

Age group	4-11
Inspection dates	21–22 November 2007
Inspection number	313550

© Crown copyright 2007

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 two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large school, where most pupils come from White British backgrounds. Children's level of skills on entry to the Reception class varies from year to year, but is generally similar to that expected for their age. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below 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 school provides a satisfactory education, which is improving. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and enables children to make sound progress. The school is highly valued by parents, especially for the good quality of care and support it provides. Children feel safe and they enjoy school. They behave well, attend very regularly and develop positive attitudes, which support their learning. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Christian values are successfully promoted, and pupils take their many responsibilities, including representing others, seriously, because they feel the school values their opinions.

Having emerged from a difficult period, when staffing problems had a detrimental effect on pupils' achievement, many aspects of the school's work are beginning to improve. Standards are broadly average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils are starting to make faster progress, especially in mathematics, because the strategies the school has put in place, including closer monitoring, are beginning to have an impact. However, marking in mathematics does not consistently offer clear enough guidance on how to improve. Achievement in English is good, because the work set is challenging. Knowledge and understanding in science remain weak for older pupils, because their progress in these aspects is not sufficiently well reviewed in Key Stage 2. Plans are in place to address this.

Enthusiastic teachers, many of whom are recently appointed, contribute to the purposeful atmosphere of the school. Teaching is improving because of effective coaching. Frequently, lessons are exciting and engage pupils' interest. Good use is often made of drama to enliven lessons. Other lessons are satisfactory but occasionally the pace of learning is too slow and the work lacks challenge, so the most able pupils do not make sufficient progress. Despite the concerns of a small minority of parents, the amount of homework set is reasonable and supports pupils' learning effectively.

The curriculum is also improving. Creativity is developed well in Years 1 and 2, and these improvements are gradually being introduced for older pupils. The wide range of sporting and other activities supports pupils' good awareness of health issues. Pupils' sound academic and good social skills are a satisfactory preparation for the next stage of their education.

The headteacher has provided strong leadership throughout a difficult period. She is developing a relatively new staff into an effective team, focused on raising standards. School self-assessment is accurate, and clearly prioritised planning is beginning to lead to improvement. Monitoring of teaching by middle leaders is not yet sufficiently rigorous, but is being improved through coaching. Governors provide good support but more limited challenge to the work of the school. The school is soundly placed to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision is satisfactory and leadership is sound. Good links with families play an important part in helping children settle into school quickly. Staff are particularly skilled at planning activities which encourage children to express themselves and to develop their creativity, areas of learning which are the weakest when children start school. Pupils make satisfactory progress and by the time they go into Year 1 their skills are generally at the level expected for their age. However, opportunities to make choices and develop independence are limited, for example children do not currently register themselves. The curriculum provides a satisfactory range of

activities to stimulate children's interest and to develop their social skills. The programme in the mixed Reception/Year 1 class is carefully planned to ensure it provides a suitable range of experiences for all children. The school is very responsive to children's personal and social needs. Links with parents support children's achievement well, for example parents frequently hear children read.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement and standards, especially for the most able pupils, by ensuring that teaching is consistently challenging.
- Improve achievement in science, by ensuring that aspects of knowledge and understanding are covered and pupils' progress is fully reviewed in Key Stage 2.
- Ensure that the monitoring of teaching by middle managers is consistently rigorous.
- Ensure that marking in mathematics consistently provides clear guidance to pupils on how to improve their work.

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

Pupils are beginning to make faster progress and raise their standards, because closer tracking of achievement is leading to more rapid intervention when they fall behind. Achievement is good in English, where the work set is more challenging than in other subjects. In mathematics, closer attention to developing pupils' skills in number and calculation, areas identified as weaker, is beginning to raise standards. Pupils' work on scientific investigation is satisfactory, and often better, but their understanding and recall of content is weak in Key Stage 2. In a minority of lessons, the more able pupils do not make sufficient progress, because the work lacks challenge or the pace of learning is too slow. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because of effectively targeted support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and their attendance is good. The great majority behave well and safely. They treat each other with respect and there is very little bullying and racism. They play an active part in school life through the school council, children's committee and eco committee, which promote pupils' views and take on issues to protect the environment. They willingly raise money for charities in Britain and abroad, for example they are raising money to 'send a cow' to an African village. Their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. Pupils participate readily in the wide range of out of school activities. They have a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and eat sensibly, and most of them take part in physical exercise. They get on well together, have satisfactory academic skills and are soundly prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers' good relationships with their pupils ensure that learning is enjoyable. In literacy lessons, teachers use challenging questioning and discussion effectively to help pupils develop their ideas. Because they feel safe and respected, pupils take a confident part in lessons and are prepared to risk being wrong. Targets set for pupils in English and mathematics are appropriate and clearly explained. Consequently, pupils are keen to achieve them. Marking in English provides clear guidance on what pupils need to do to improve their work, but this is too inconsistent in mathematics. In a minority of lessons, the pace of the lesson is too slow or activities lack challenge, especially for the most able pupils, and they do not make enough progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets the needs of most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Occasionally the work planned is not challenging enough for the most able pupils. Changes in the recently reviewed curriculum in Years 1 and 2 are successfully helping develop pupils' creative skills. Similar provision is not yet fully in place for older pupils. Too little coverage of the knowledge and understanding elements has led to some underachievement in science in Key Stage 2, but this is improving. The school provides a wide range of activities, visits and visitors to enliven the curriculum. For example, pupils visit theatres and a local airfield to make topics they cover lively. They have the opportunity to learn French and Spanish. The range of out of school sports, clubs, drama and music activities is wide and there is a high level of pupil involvement.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school works effectively with other agencies to provide a high level of support for pupils' welfare. Policies to deal with bullying and racism are effective. Although incidents do occur, pupils report that these are handled sensitively. Safeguarding procedures are good and the school is a safe and secure environment. Progress is carefully monitored and information is used well to set challenging targets for pupils. Guidance given on how to improve literacy skills is good. It is not so thorough in numeracy and, as a result, pupils do not consistently know what they need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides a strong sense of direction for the school and has the support of the vast majority of parents. Planning is sound and based on an accurate evaluation of the school's work. Keen middle leaders, many of whom are recently in post, provide sound support, but monitoring skills are in need of further development. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Effective coaching and staff development are improving the quality of management and teaching. These improvements, together with closer monitoring of pupils' progress, are

beginning to result in better achievement for pupils. Governors provide good support and demonstrate a high level of commitment. However, they do not have a clear enough view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school to hold it fully to account for its performance. Progress since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

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?	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	3
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	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	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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter's Church of England (Aided) Primary School, Whetstone, LE8 6NJ

Thank you for the warm welcome when we visited your school. Your good manners and honest responses made the visit very enjoyable and useful. Many of your parents and carers wrote giving their views of the school, so please discuss this letter with them. You will be glad to know that the school provides you with a satisfactory education, which is improving.

Here are some important things about your school:

- Children in the Reception class settle in quickly and make satisfactory progress.
- By Year 6, standards are broadly average and you make satisfactory progress.
- Progress is especially good in English, where work is the most challenging.
- You are beginning to make faster progress, because many aspects of school are improving, including teaching and the curriculum.
- Better tracking of your progress means teachers help you to catch up more quickly when you fall behind in your work.
- Staff set challenging targets for you to reach, which is helping some of you to reach higher standards.
- You have positive attitudes to your work because the school takes good care of you and makes sure you are safe and secure.
- You behave well, treat each other with respect and rarely miss school.
- The headteacher, supported by the staff of the school, makes sure that the school continues to improve.

This is what your school has been asked to do to make things even better:

- Make sure teaching always challenges you to do your best, especially those of you who are very clever.
- Help you to do better in science, by making sure in Years 5 and 6 that you cover everything you should and that you remember and understand it.
- Make sure that teachers notice all the important things that need to be improved when they visit each other's lessons.
- Make sure marking in mathematics gives you clear guidance on how to improve your work.

With best wishes

Marion Thompson Lead inspector

24 November 2007



Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Peter's Church of England (Aided) Primary School,
Whetstone, LE8 6NJ**

Thank you for the warm welcome when we visited your school. Your good manners and honest responses made the visit very enjoyable and useful. Many of your parents and carers wrote giving their views of the school, so please discuss this letter with them. You will be glad to know that the school provides you with a satisfactory education, which is improving.

Here are some important things about your school:

- Children in the Reception class settle in quickly and make satisfactory progress.
- By Year 6, standards are broadly average and you make satisfactory progress.
- Progress is especially good in English, where work is the most challenging.
- You are beginning to make faster progress, because many aspects of school are improving, including teaching and the curriculum.
- Better tracking of your progress means teachers help you to catch up more quickly when you fall behind in your work.
- Staff set challenging targets for you to reach, which is helping some of you to reach higher standards.
- You have positive attitudes to your work because the school takes good care of you and makes sure you are safe and secure.
- You behave well, treat each other with respect and rarely miss school.
- The headteacher, supported by the staff of the school, makes sure that the school continues to improve.

This is what your school has been asked to do to make things even better:

- Make sure teaching always challenges you to do your best, especially those of you who are very clever.
- Help you to do better in science, by making sure in Years 5 and 6 that you cover everything you should and that you remember and understand it.
- Make sure that teachers notice all the important things that need to be improved when they visit each other's lessons.
- Make sure marking in mathematics gives you clear guidance on how to improve your work.

With best wishes

Marion Thompson
Lead inspector