

St Peter's Church of England First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123781
Local Authority	Somerset [123781]
Inspection number	314714
Inspection date	9 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Denise Morris

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	113
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vacant Position
Headteacher	James Peate
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2004
School address	Doniford Road Williton Taunton TA4 4SF
Telephone number	01984 632480
Fax number	01984 633362

Age group	4–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or difficulties is broadly average. The school became part of a federation with two other local schools a year ago. The three schools have a joint governing body.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. It is improving because of the impact of the recent federation with two other local schools. Improvement is most noticeable in extended curricular opportunities for the pupils and the good support for leadership and management. A key strength of the school is the personal development and well-being of the pupils, which are good. Pupils enjoy school and attend regularly. Their behaviour has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Pupils are keen and eager to take part in the many additional experiences offered that help them to play and work together well. They have positive attitudes to school and relationships are strong. Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lives and how to keep safe.

The standards reached by pupils are below average. Given that the pupils enter the school with levels of attainment below those expected for their age, this represents satisfactory achievement. Standards are higher in reading than in writing and mathematics, but in all three subject areas too few pupils reach the higher National Curriculum levels in the national tests at the end of Year 2. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, although some good teaching is evident in all areas of the school and this is beginning to improve standards. Teachers know pupils well and lessons are harmonious, but they do not always make enough use of pupils' targets when planning their lessons or when marking and assessing their learning. This leads to a lack of challenge so that a few pupils do not fully meet their potential.

The curriculum is satisfactory but provides some good additional experiences to enhance learning, particularly the residential visits which are much enjoyed by the pupils. The school cares well for its pupils and keeps them safe and secure. Vulnerable pupils, including those with specific learning difficulties, hearing impairment or behavioural difficulties, are supported well. The way in which the school assesses and tracks pupils' achievements in literacy and numeracy is not rigorous enough. Pupils are not aware of their targets and do not know how they can improve their work.

There is a good focus for improvement at St Peter's due to the recent federation with two other local schools. This has provided positive support for the school's leadership, which is satisfactory. The federation's governing body has a clear vision for the future, provides very good support to the leadership team and is driving improvements forward at a fast pace. As a result, the school has a good capacity to improve further. The school knows the areas requiring development and joint leadership meetings with the other federation schools are a strength is focusing on these. This joint collaboration has resulted in good improvement recently in the curriculum and greater expertise in teaching. The joint enterprises are improving provision and beginning to impact on standards. The school works well with outside agencies, and this has resulted in good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in pupils' attendance and in their behaviour. Links with parents are good and they are supportive of the school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children behave well in the Reception class, enjoy learning and benefit from the satisfactory provision. They are well cared for, and are safe and secure at school. Children's attainment varies on entry to Reception but is usually below expected levels in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development. During their Reception Year they achieve

satisfactorily in most areas of learning, but make good progress in their social skills, in managing their own behaviour and in relationships. The recent introduction of a programme to improve literacy skills is having a positive impact on children's skills in linking sounds and letters. By the time they enter Year 1, many children have not attained the nationally expected goals for children of their age. However, they do particularly well in their personal and emotional development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in literacy and numeracy by tracking pupils' achievements more thoroughly and ensuring that teachers are clearly focussed on assessing pupils' improvements.
- Ensure that pupils know their targets and understand what they need to do to improve their work.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are below average by the end of Year 2 and Year 4. However, pupils' achievement is satisfactory in relation to their starting points. Standards are starting to rise and a slightly higher percentage of current Year 2 pupils attained the higher Level 3. Standards in reading are better than those in writing. New procedures to promote pupils' understanding of sounds and letters are helping to improve standards, particularly in reading. All groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make similar progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils benefit from the strong links with the church and the caring Christian ethos evident throughout the school. In assemblies, for example, pupils are keen to offer thoughtful contributions and ideas. Consequently, their spiritual, moral and social development is good. Cultural development, overall, is satisfactory as pupils' understanding of life in multicultural Britain is more limited. Pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes to learning. They value the regular opportunities to celebrate both their own and each other's successes.

As a result of recent initiatives, attendance rates are now in line with national averages. The behaviour of pupils is good, and they say that behaviour has improved and that any bullying is quickly dealt with. They appreciate and can clearly explain the system of rewards and sanctions.

Pupils describe St Peter's as 'a healthy school' and understand well what it means to make healthy choices. They understand how to work and play safely and have strategies for keeping safe. Pupils know there are adults who can help them and they believe their problems are taken seriously. Pupils make a good contribution to the community, regularly raising funds for local and world charities and working well with pupils from other schools. Pupils' progress in their key literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills prepares them appropriately for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers manage lessons well so that pupils enjoy learning and quickly settle. Relationships are particularly strong and pupils like their teachers, who they say are 'kind and helpful'. Lessons are well planned, although the use of pupils' targets to inform planning is inconsistent. Teachers make good use of resources, especially ICT, in most classes to keep pupils interested. New programmes to improve writing have been introduced and these are beginning to have an impact on pupils' achievement. Day-to-day assessment does not always focus well enough on improvement and not enough reference is made to pupils' targets in marked work. Teaching assistants play an important role, particularly in supporting those with specific learning difficulties.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy the many good opportunities they have for extending their learning through themed days and weeks. They are keen to attend the good range of after-school activities. The early morning 'DASH' club is popular, providing pupils with a good start to their day. The use of specialist teachers from the federation to deliver sports and modern foreign language teaching has a positive impact and helps pupils to gain good levels of skill and enjoyment.

The adaptation of the curriculum to meet the needs of specific groups of learners is satisfactory. Some personalised programmes enable pupils to learn specific skills based on their needs, such as the special activities promoted by the federation for the highest attaining pupils. The sounds and letters programme is helping all groups to improve their literacy skills. However, the school has not taken a systematic approach to planning ways in which middle and lower attaining pupils in particular can improve their numeracy skills through practical activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils are well cared for and effective links with other agencies contribute to their welfare. Pupils are already benefiting from the increased contact with the middle school as a result of the newly established federation and the guidance for pupils during this transition is good. 'You know the school already,' commented one pupil. Procedures for identifying vulnerable learners are effective and child protection and health and safety procedures are robust.

The school's provision for academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils are not actively involved in the target-setting process and, consequently, are unclear about their targets and what they need to do to improve. The marking of pupils' work celebrates their successes but does not consistently provide pupils with the next steps to improve their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Senior leaders have recently put in place several new procedures to improve provision and raise standards, and these are beginning to have an impact. For example, incidents of challenging

behaviour and bullying have decreased because of clear guidelines introduced by the schools. Similarly, attendance has improved because of close links with support services. The school knows it has more to do to raise standards, particularly in writing and mathematics, and has made a good start, as seen in the improved performance in Year 2. Good attention to improving reading through a sounds and letters programme is beginning to have an impact on standards. Pupils' targets, however, are not challenging enough and the tracking of their achievements lacks rigour. The recent federation with two other local schools is having a positive impact on leadership as well as on provision at the school. Staff teaching expertise has increased and wider opportunities in the curriculum are being developed. There is a clear vision for the future of the federation and a strong joint leadership team to drive improvements forward. Monitoring, though satisfactory, is improving due to new procedures. The federation governing body is very supportive of the school. Governors are experienced and knowledgeable and are clearly aware of the challenges facing the school.

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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	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?	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	2
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	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**

10 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter's Church of England First School, Williton TA4 4SF

Thank you for your help in our recent inspection of your school. We very much enjoyed meeting you and talking to you about some of the things that you do at school. Your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. There are a number of good things in your school, which are:

- You enjoy school, work together successfully and behave well.
- You like helping others and raising money for charities.
- Your knowledge of how to keep healthy is good.
- We noticed how much you enjoy learning Spanish.
- You like going on visits, such as the one to Pinkery to help your learning.
- All staff look after you well so that you are safe in school.
- Those who lead and manage the school and the new links with other schools are helping to improve your work and make better progress in your learning.

We are asking the school to do two things to help you improve.

- Help you to do better in literacy and numeracy by using your targets to plan activities and when assessing your work.
- Help you to know what your targets are and how they can help you to improve. You could help with this by learning your targets.

Thank you again for your help and good luck for your future lives.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely

Denise Morris Lead Inspector

Annex B

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Denise Morris
Lead Inspector