

St Peter's CofE (C) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124252
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	314861
Inspection date	20 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Laurie Lewin

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	444
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Barker
Headteacher	Nikki Parkinson
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2004
School address	Reservoir Road Hednesford Cannock WS12 1BE
Telephone number	01543 512400
Fax number	01543 512407

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the progress of pupils in writing, especially the boys and the higher-attaining pupils; the effectiveness of the school's systems for tracking pupils' progress; and the roles of managers and subject leaders. The inspector gathered evidence from discussions with staff and pupils, lesson observations, samples of pupils' work and a review of areas of the school's documentation. 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 is a large school. Most pupils are White British and a few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than that found in most schools. The school has gained the following nationally recognised awards: Eco Schools, Activemark and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

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 and rapidly improving school. During her 18 months in post, the headteacher has succeeded in establishing an atmosphere in which staff work as a strong team. Parents are very pleased with the school. Many of them heap praise on the headteacher, expressing the view that her positive and clear approach has invigorated the school to help staff move things forward. They are right. Very ably supported by her deputy headteacher, the headteacher has helped staff put in place a range of good-quality initiatives to boost pupils' progress. As a result, pupils' achievement is now good and getting better all the time. Staff have worked very effectively to improve the quality of writing to ensure all groups of pupils, including boys, achieve equally well and, in particular, to ensure that higher-attaining pupils are fully extended. Although pupils produce much good written work, standards in this area are weaker than in other subjects. Giving pupils a clear and precise idea about what they need to do to improve their work has been at the heart of the school's successful drive to improve standards. This approach is applied skilfully in many classes but not consistently in all. The school rightly identifies that fully embedding this approach in all classes is at the heart of driving standards up further, especially in writing.

Children start school with skills that are broadly in line with the expected levels for their age, but with below average skills in communication, language and literacy. Because of the good provision in the Foundation Stage, including outstanding provision in the Nursery, they achieve well and their skills and experiences are slightly above the expected levels by the time they start Year 1. The good progress continues throughout the school so that by the end of Year 6, pupils reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science.

Teaching is good and often outstanding. Much input in terms of training has helped teachers improve what they do. They have acquired good skills in using the school's excellent systems for tracking pupils' progress. This means that lesson plans focus precisely on catering for pupils' specific needs. Teaching assistants do a top-quality job of supporting teachers and working with individuals and groups of pupils. In particular, they make a valuable contribution to ensuring that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. Pupils have a very high regard for the staff and Year 6 pupils say things like, 'They all really try hard to help you... they make a lot of the work fun... we have really clear targets and know exactly what we have to do to make the work good'.

The school has an exciting curriculum and staff provide a wide range of activities that boosts pupils' motivation and enjoyment in learning. There are some good examples of links being made between different subjects to boost pupils' learning. However, there remain areas of the curriculum where these links are not sufficiently clear to enhance learning fully.

The school provides outstanding pastoral care and the academic support and guidance staff give pupils is of good quality. Staff know the pupils very well and cater sensitively for their needs. The school adopts a vigilant approach to ensuring pupils' health and safety. Pupils feel entirely safe and fully encouraged to do their best. They derive much enjoyment from their time in school and their attendance is good. Excellent relationships flourish throughout the school and underpin the high level of pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. The strong international links set up by the school have done a lot to deepen pupils' understanding about how people from different cultures and backgrounds lead their lives. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They are polite and well mannered

and, by Year 6, they have a mature and very sensible approach towards school and about how to get the most out of their experiences. Pupils are fit and healthy. Through the active work of their school council, they have a very clear voice and influence upon school improvement. Through this and the wide range of charity fund-raising events that they organise, they make an excellent contribution to life in their immediate and wider environment. They gain a good set of basic skills to help ensure their future success.

The headteacher and her senior leadership team have established a very clear vision for where the school wants to be in the future. They have rightly identified the need to develop greater clarity in the roles of some of the subject coordinators, and clear priority is given to boosting this area through training in the near future. Governors carry out their roles well and provide good levels of support for the headteacher and staff. The school has a clear and accurate awareness of how well it is doing and what it needs to do to improve further. Setting high expectations and challenging and precise targets have been the key areas that have helped the school improve rapidly. The track record of rapid improvement, alongside the strong commitment and enthusiasm of the staff and governors, shows that the school is well placed to go from strength to strength in the future.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Strong provision in the Foundation Stage ensures that children get off to a good start. The exemplary work by staff in the Nursery class provides children with a very exciting and enjoyable range of experiences so that they are acquiring a love for learning, exploring and trying out new things. Similarly, the good provision in the Reception classes ensures that children have a wide range of exciting practical opportunities. These activities encompass a good blend of opportunities to learn and explore independently as well as opportunities to learn in groups working together with staff. In the Nursery and the Reception classes, the care, support and guidance for children are excellent so that all children make especially good progress in acquiring a confident approach to tackling work and activities. A good start has been made in the Reception classes to broadening the opportunities for children to learn through using the outdoor facilities. However, staff rightly recognise that this area is not yet planned as well as other areas of the curriculum so that experiences in the Nursery are not yet built on to the fullest possible extent.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the good systems to help pupils improve their work are applied consistently in all lessons to raise standards in writing.

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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?	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	2
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	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?	2

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	1
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

Dear Children

Inspection of St Peter's C of E Primary School, Hednesford, Staffordshire WS12 1BE

It was really good to visit your school! Thank you for making me so welcome, talking to me and helping me during the school's inspection. I especially enjoyed the good discussion I had with some of you from Year 6. I learned a lot from talking to you. I think you would all make very good future inspectors!

- You will be pleased to know that the school is doing a good job and improving rapidly. I think you will agree with me that your headteacher and staff have done a lot to improve things for you. Here are some of the most important bits of the report that I thought you might like to know about.
- You work well in lessons and your achievement as you move through the school is good. This helps you to reach above average standards.
- Your personal development is excellent and you learn to become confident, polite and well mannered as you progress through the school.
- You have an exciting curriculum and your teachers work hard to make it as interesting as possible for you. However, some subjects need to be linked together a little better to help your learning.
- You told me that your teachers are doing a good job and I agree with you. Your teaching assistants do an excellent job of supporting you.
- The school does a top-quality job in making sure you are safe.
- Your headteacher does a tremendous job in helping everyone work together to make the school as good as it is and to make sure it keeps on improving.

To improve further, I have asked staff to do one specific thing to help you do better.

- Help you improve your writing even more by ensuring that in every class you know precisely what to do to produce your best possible work.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when I came to see you.

Yours sincerely Laurie Lewin Lead inspector2

21 February 2008



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WS12 1BE**

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Laurie Lewin
Lead inspector