

St Peter's CofE (A) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124331
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	314889
Inspection date	6 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Hemmings

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	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Osbourn
Headteacher	Adrian Dipple
Date of previous school inspection	4 May 2004
School address	School Lane Caverswall Stoke-on-Trent ST11 9EN
Telephone number	01782 393118
Fax number	01782 393118

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector who investigated the overall effectiveness of the school and the following issues: •Why the performance of pupils in English is relatively weaker than in mathematics and science. •How effectively information about pupils' progress is used to set them challenging work. •The extent to which pupils are involved in evaluating for themselves how well they are doing and how they might improve. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation form, assessment and tracking records, observations of the school at work, discussions with staff, the chair of governors and pupils. The parental questionnaire responses were analysed. Other aspects of the school 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 the report.

Description of the school

This is a small village school. The attainment of most children on entry to the Reception class is below that expected for their age. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. There has been considerable instability in recent years owing to long-term staff absences and maternity leaves. An acting headteacher led the school for two terms in 2007. The present headteacher was appointed in September 2007.

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 that is improving. It provides pupils with a very caring and friendly environment in which to learn. Parents are rightly proud of the school's Christian ethos that promotes respect and care of others, tolerance and a feeling of self-worth. They are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and the way it looks after their children, with the following parental comment being typical of many. 'My children are happy and safe and enjoy their learning experiences. I have nothing but praise for the staff at the school, which is like an extended family.'

The disruption of recent years has affected the progress that the school has been able to make in raising pupils' achievement from satisfactory to at least good. Out of necessity, the school has had to concentrate on consolidating its provision rather than pushing ahead with initiatives to bring about further improvement. Leaders acknowledge that the school could do better and are determined that it does so. The headteacher has a perceptive understanding of the needs of the school and takes quick action to bring about improvement. For example, he has introduced a rigorous system for tracking pupils' progress so that any underachievement is identified early and appropriate action put into place. This system ensures that teachers are fully accountable for the progress their pupils make. He provides focused direction and has a clear vision of how the school will improve. All those involved in the school share this vision and there is now a common commitment to ensuring all pupils achieve as well as they are able. Leadership roles are being effectively developed to enable all subject leaders to play a more active role in supporting school improvement. Governors support the school well and are developing further their skills in asking relevant questions about its performance. The school is well placed to move forward and its recent track record shows the capacity to make the necessary changes is good.

Children in the Reception class make good progress and by the time they enter Year 1 are working at the levels expected in all the areas of learning. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 make satisfactory progress and reach broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science. This represents satisfactory achievement. Although progress is satisfactory, it is uneven between classes. As a result, some pupils learn at a faster rate than others. This stems from some teachers not always effectively using the information about pupils' progress to set work that is sufficiently challenging for them. Standards in English are relatively weaker than in mathematics and science. This is because pupils' writing skills are not as well developed as they could be. The school recognises the need to improve the way pupils organise their writing, particularly in their sentence structure, spelling and punctuation. Pupils are limited in the variety of writing styles they use to express their ideas in other subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given well-targeted extra support and so make the same satisfactory progress as other pupils.

Pupils behave very well and show real enjoyment in coming to school. They say they particularly enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as being a member of the school council or the eco committee. They carry out their responsibilities enthusiastically and diligently. They are adopting healthy lifestyles well and clearly know the importance of eating a balanced diet and of taking regular exercise. They know how to stay safe, such as by moving sensibly in and around school. As one pupil in Year 2 said to the headteacher, 'Make sure you don't run around school or you might hurt yourself'. As well as contributing well to school life, pupils make a positive contribution to the wider village community, for example by carrying out fund raising activities

for a variety of charities and attending the monthly family worship services at the local church. The pupils are developing their basic skills in literacy and numeracy in a satisfactory manner, which shows they are soundly prepared for their future lives.

Relationships are outstanding throughout the school and make a very significant contribution to the calm and friendly atmosphere evident in all classrooms. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and enjoy lessons. As one pupil commented, 'Our teachers are nice and make lessons fun.' Teachers set activities that are engaging and explain them carefully so pupils are clear about what they are to learn and how to set about their tasks. At times, these tasks do not effectively match pupils' individual abilities and so their progress is hindered. The school is beginning to guide pupils to evaluate for themselves how well they are doing and what steps they might take next to improve their performance. This is at an early stage of development.

The curriculum is extended effectively by a variety of good quality enrichment activities. These include a wide range of out of school clubs and educational visits. Pupils have opportunities to work with a variety of specialists, such as professional sports coaches, to extend their skills further. There is good provision for music, drama and dance and this effectively promotes pupils' creative talents. There are limited planned opportunities for pupils to refine and improve their writing skills by writing in different styles in subjects other than English. This contributes to the fact that writing is a weaker aspect of pupils' achievement in English.

The strong pastoral care and support for pupils underpins their good personal development. All staff are fully committed to ensuring the health and well-being of pupils while in their charge. There are rigorous safeguarding procedures in place and staff are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil's well-being. The links with outside agencies are good and effectively provide extra support for individual pupils when required. Pupils say they feel safe and secure in school and know they can talk to an adult if they have any worries. Parents are very pleased with the level of care and support afforded to their children by the school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The provision in the Reception class is good and enables children to make good progress and achieve well. Staff are well aware of the needs of children of this age and set activities that effectively challenge their different abilities. These activities are practical, engaging and planned well to build upon children's personal experiences. Children behave well and clearly enjoy their activities. They are given many opportunities to work together in pairs and small groups and this makes an effective contribution to their personal and social development. Children are encouraged to make choices for themselves, which provides a firm foundation for developing their skills as independent learners. The school is seeking ways of improving the use of the outside area to better promote children's skills across all the areas of learning. The links with parents are good and they are kept fully informed about the progress their children make.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English by improving pupils' writing skills.
- Use the information about pupils' performance more effectively to set work that challenges them all to make at least good progress.
- Involve pupils more effectively in evaluating for themselves how well they are doing and how they could improve.

A small proportion of 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.

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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	2
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	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	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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

7 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter's CofE Primary School, Caverswall, ST11 9EN

Thank you for the really friendly welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I enjoyed meeting you and seeing the things you do. Yours is a satisfactory school that is improving. You make satisfactory progress and by the end of Year 6 reach standards in English, mathematics and science that are average. Your parents are very pleased with the way the school looks after you.

What I liked most about your school:

- Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent and help make the school a very friendly place in which to work and play.
- You behave well and you are kind and considerate to others.
- You say you really enjoy coming to school and that teachers make learning fun.
- Your attitudes to your learning are good and this helps the progress you make.
- There is an extensive range of out of school activities for you to take part in.
- All adults take very good care of you and make sure you are safe while in school.
- The leaders of the school are working hard to help the school improve further.

What I have asked your school to do now:

- Improve your writing skills.
- Make better use of the information about your progress to help you all do better in your work.
- Involve you more in evaluating for yourselves how well you are doing and what you need to do next to improve.

I give a special word of thanks to the members of the school council and eco committee who gave up their time to talk to me about their activities. You are a credit to your school and it is rightly proud of you.

All my best wishes for your future and I hope you continue to enjoy your learning and carry on being kind and considerate to others.

Melvyn Hemmings

Lead inspector

Annex B

7 March 2008

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