

St Peter's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105537
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	323163
Inspection dates	9–10 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Allan Torr HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	233
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Philip Horton
Headteacher	Ms Loftus
Date of previous school inspection	11 September 2007
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Fairbank Road Newall Green Manchester M23 2YS
Telephone number	0161 437 1495
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

When St Peter's Catholic Primary School was inspected in September 2007, it was judged to require special measures because it was failing to provide an acceptable standard of education for its pupils. Subsequently, Ofsted inspectors have made three visits to monitor the school's progress. This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St. Peter's is an average sized primary school; a quarter of its pupils have a minority ethnic background. The proportion of pupils eligible to receive free school meals is almost twice the national average. The proportions of pupils with a statement of special educational needs and with a learning difficulties and/or disabilities are average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language has more than quadrupled in the last three years and is above the national average. The school provides for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in its Nursery and Reception classes. There is an on-site breakfast club and after-school club, which are not managed by the 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

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

St. Peter's is a satisfactory school and some features are now good. At the last inspection in September 2007, teaching and learning, children's enjoyment of school, and leadership and management were inadequate. These aspects are now good. This is due to the relentless focus of all adults in the school, under the excellent leadership of the headteacher, on improving teaching, standards and achievement. Pupils' comments during this inspection reflect this improvement. They said the atmosphere in lessons has improved, the work is more interesting, and teaching is better.

Pupils' achievement is now satisfactory. Children's skills and understanding are below average on entry into the Nursery class. They make good progress and enter Year 1 with broadly average skills and understanding. Progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 was inadequate in the past. As a result, in 2008, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were significantly low. Standards and progress are now improving rapidly. Most pupils in Years 1 and 2 are on track to attain average standards and some are on track to exceed them, although attainment in some foundation subjects such as art, music and physical education remains below average.

As in Key Stage 1, there has been significant underachievement in Key Stage 2 in the past due to inadequate teaching. This is now resolved. The majority of pupils now make good progress in Key Stage 2 because teaching is exciting, lessons are challenging and pupils know what they need to do to improve their work. This better achievement has yet to materialise fully into good standards by the end of Year 6 because teachers have to plug the gaps in pupils' learning. Standards rose in 2008. Pupils in Year 6 attained average standards in English and science. Attainment in mathematics improved but remained below average. Standards in some foundation subjects such as history and geography are below average because children do not always have the opportunity to use their information and communication technology (ICT), English and mathematical skills. In these subjects, children often complete low-level worksheets or copy texts that require very little thinking. Pupils with a learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because they receive support from skilled teaching assistants. The curriculum and some lessons do not cater fully for pupils with English as an additional language. This is because key skills and key vocabulary are not extended into all subjects and in some lessons, there are not enough visual clues to help pupils to understand what teachers are saying. A good range of out-of-hours activities including specialist sports coaching and language teaching enhance the satisfactory curriculum. Pupils are increasingly involved in their own learning; they have opportunities to perform, to collaborate on problems and on tasks and to understand cultural diversity.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' behaviour has improved since the last inspection. They get along well together because of the caring and supportive ethos the school has created. They are aware of how to live a healthy lifestyle and make informed choices about how to keep themselves safe. Pupils raise money for good causes and older pupils take some responsibility, for example, as 'buddies' to pupils new to the school or to the United Kingdom. Attendance has improved because of good strategies and systems to engage parents and to reduce levels

of persistent absence. It remains, however, below average because many families take pupils away for holidays and extended visits, for example, to Poland, in term time.

The leadership and management of the school are good. Senior leaders and the governing body have focused their work on the issues identified in the 2007 inspection report and in subsequent monitoring reports. They are open to external evaluation and take rapid action to remediate any perceived weaknesses. The chair leads the governing body exceptionally well. Governors, subject leaders and senior staff now rigorously monitor and evaluate all aspects of the school. There is a clear direction and clear priorities for improvement. Targets are used well to manage the performance of staff and to raise pupils' attainment. The school has a good capacity to improve further and provides satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the EYFS with skills that are below those typical for their age. In communication, language and literacy, children's skills are well below expectations. There is a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Children feel safe and secure because they are well cared for and their welfare is a priority to all staff. Children make good progress because teaching is effective, the curriculum is exciting and adults form secure relationships with the children. In one outstanding lesson, Goldilocks sent a letter to the class to make some porridge because the three bears had none left. The children made the porridge with the teacher then wrote the recipe back to Goldilocks. Activities are well planned and coordinated around a central theme. This enables children to make rapid progress in all the areas of learning and to get a full understanding of the skills and concepts. Very few, however, attain the higher levels by the end of the Reception year. The learning environment is stimulating. Children enjoy the wide range of learning activities provided for them. There is a good balance between teacher-led activities and activities that the children initiate themselves, based on the central theme.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase attendance rates and reduce levels of persistent absence.
- Raise standards in mathematics.
- Enable all pupils, including those with English as an additional language, to make better use of their key skills in all subjects.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall performance is judged to be 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

On entry to Year 1 most pupils have attained the expected levels for their age in each area of learning but few have exceeded them. In the past, progress through Key Stage 1 has been inadequate. This is reflected in the 2008 national assessments which showed that pupils were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils now make at least satisfactory progress as seen in lessons, pupils' work and in the school's own assessment information. They are now on track to attain levels that are in line with national expectations.

In 2008, standards by the end of Year 6 were the highest for several years. Eighty per cent of pupils attained the expected Level 4 in English which is around the national average. Considering

their well below average starting points, this constitutes outstanding progress. In science, almost every child attained Level 4 and achieved well in relation to their starting point in Nursery. In mathematics, standards were below the national average and achievement was satisfactory. Pupils currently in Key Stage 2 make satisfactory progress and over a third are making good progress. Most groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those from a minority ethnic background and those with English as an additional language now make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils understand how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Most know how to eat healthily and most take advantage of school meals and fruit. This means that they receive a nutritious diet. Many take part in sporting activities after school and take advantage of the equipment at lunchtime. There is a missed opportunity at break times, however, to extend pupils' activity further by using equipment and other strategies to keep them active. Pupils have an understanding of how to stay safe; they say they feel free from harassment, although there is some bad language at break times which they would like to eradicate. Initiatives such as the worry box, councillors and buddy system make pupils feel well looked after and make them feel that their views are heard by adults. They enjoy taking opportunities to exercise responsibility, are generous, and regularly raise large sums of money for the parish and for other good causes. Pupils frequently take up opportunities to reflect and to consider their own beliefs and culture as well as those of others. They have a good understanding, for example, of the Polish and Italian cultures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The headteacher and senior leaders have taken decisive action to tackle the inadequate teaching of the past. Teaching and learning are now good. Two thirds of the 18 lessons observed during the inspection were good or better and none was inadequate. This is because lessons are now active and pupils participate throughout the length of the lesson and the onus is on pupils to do the work. Teachers use talking partners and effective questioning to give pupils the opportunity to think, reason, justify their opinions and to extend their understanding. This has an additional benefit of increasing pupils' confidence, self-esteem and collaborative skills. This also enables teachers to assess and monitor during the lesson and adjust their teaching to ensure all pupils are challenged. In contrast, in a small minority of lessons, pupils sit inactively for too long listening to the teacher.

The quality of the work given to pupils had improved significantly. In science, for example, pupils devise their own tests and experiments and are frequently involved in problems and investigations. In some foundation subjects such as history and geography, the tasks do not use pupils' key skills as well as they could. This means, for example, that instead of extending their writing skills in other subjects, their progress is stifled because pupils copy out passages, colour in sheets and only write a few words on a worksheet.

Pupils' work is marked frequently and teachers' detailed comments usually tell pupils what the next steps in their learning are and they are given time to respond to the comments. Teachers have very good systems to control and manage their classes and this has improved significantly

since the last inspection. Pupils during the inspection said that the atmosphere in classrooms had improved and they are no longer shouted at all of the time.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets the needs of most pupils. There is a good range of visiting professionals to enrich the learning and to lead themed days. Sports coaches and specialist Italian teachers, for example, provide expert teaching and this makes the curriculum interesting for pupils. They have the opportunity to take part in events such as Crucial Crew and Bike Right cycling, as well as to take visits to the hospital and science centre. Pupils have good opportunities to develop skills that will benefit them in the future, for example, they learn to solve problems, to collaborate, to give presentations and to perform. Pupils have opportunities to attend many clubs such as baking, arts and crafts, drama, dance, cheerleading and a large number of sports. Pupils' achievement in ICT is good and provision has improved significantly. There is sometimes a lack of opportunity to use their key skills in other subjects when the class is not timetabled into the ICT suite and there are also missed opportunities to link subjects together so that pupils can have a wider understanding of the concepts and skills they are learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils receive good guidance on how to improve their academic work. They know what their curriculum and end of year targets are and what they have to do to achieve them. They also know which level they are working at and what they need to do to improve. New tracking systems and frequent pupil progress meetings are effective in identifying pupils in danger of falling behind in their work. The new special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) has made a very good start to reorganising provision for pupils with a learning difficulties and/or disabilities and has begun tailoring teaching programmes to groups and individuals to accelerate their progress.

Pastoral care is also good. Pupils and parents are able to speak in confidence with a skilled learning mentor who helps them with their anxieties and their problems. Extensive links with parents are having a positive effect on attendance and on other aspects of the school's work. Links with outside agencies, such as social services, help in supporting vulnerable pupils. Safeguarding is a high priority and procedures are up-to-date and meet all statutory requirements. Health and safety systems are in place and reviewed frequently.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has set a very clear direction for all staff and has put raising standards and achievement at the forefront of the school's work. Performance management systems are now in place and are effective in helping staff understand the school's priorities and their role in its success. The quality of subject leadership has improved significantly. Subject leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. They undertake good monitoring exercises. For example, the subject leader for English based her action plan on information she had gleaned from interviews with pupils, scrutiny of data, work and planning, from observations of lessons and from priorities identified by stakeholders and outside agencies.

As a result, there has been staff training leading to a significant improvement in pupils' achievement.

Governors challenge, support and guide the school and have a significantly improved understanding of their roles and responsibilities. New systems and structures are in place to enable them to monitor the work of the school critically. The school has no formal procedures to promote community cohesion. It is however, taking action to bring different faiths and ethnic backgrounds together and to ensure that pupils have a good understanding about different cultures. Its work with parents and the community is good. St. Peter's is an inclusive school where pupils and staff of all faiths and cultures thrive.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
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	3
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	4
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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 learners' needs?	2
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?	2

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to Mrs Tolley and me when we came to your school to see how well you are doing. As you know, I have been visiting your school every term over the last year because, in the last inspection, the school was in 'special measures' which means that it was not doing as well as it should. Each term I have noticed an improvement. You will be delighted to know that St. Peter's is now a satisfactory school. In addition, I have judged some things that the school does as good. You now achieve well in English and in science because lessons are more interesting and are of better quality. Results in mathematics lag a little way behind so I have asked the school to look into ways of improving standards in mathematics still further. The EYFS (Reception and Nursery) are now good and I have judged that the way that the school cares for you and supports and guides your progress is now good. Those in charge of your school are doing a good job in helping the school to get better; in particular, Ms Loftus is providing excellent leadership and has made significant improvements to how well you learn.

I have really enjoyed talking to you all and observing your lessons. You told us how much better the atmosphere is in the classrooms and playground and how much better lessons are. I have been impressed with your good and improving behaviour each time I have visited. Your attendance is more regular but it is still well below the level of other schools. This is because there are still too many of you regularly not in school. I have asked the school to improve attendance figures further.

Your comments and hard work have helped us to make decisions about how much progress you are now making. We have seen the evidence of this progress in your lessons and in your books. Your teachers give you very detailed information about what you have done well and how you can improve your work. I noticed that the good work and key skills in English, mathematics, science and ICT are not always as good in other subjects such as history and geography. I have asked the school to improve how you use key skills in all subjects.