

# St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Bloxwich

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104234
<b>Local Authority</b>	Walsall
<b>Inspection number</b>	323996
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30 June –1 July 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Eadie

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

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	234
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	61
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	J Kennedy
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mary Green
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 July 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Lichfield Road Bloxwich Walsall WS3 3LY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01922 710872

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30 June –1 July 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	323996

**Fax number**

01922 493153

<b>Age group</b>	3-11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30 June -1 July 2009
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is of average size and serves the local community and parish, with a few pupils coming from a neighbouring parish which does not have a Catholic school. Most pupils are White British, the remainder representing a wide range of other ethnicities. There is a small but increasing number of pupils from Europe, who arrive speaking little or no English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is smaller than average. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is made in a part-time Nursery and a Reception class. The governors also manage on-site before- and after-school provision, which is registered under the voluntary section of the Early Years Register. The school has suffered significant staffing turbulence in recent years, with long-term absences and other difficulties.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

St Peter's is providing a satisfactory education for its pupils. Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Their skills and knowledge are below the levels expected for their age when they start school, especially in terms of communication and language, but they join Year 1 having almost reached average standards. Pupils' progress through the rest of the school is satisfactory and they leave Year 6 with broadly average standards. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, but standards vary between subjects; they are above average in reading, average in mathematics and only barely average in writing and science. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because their progress is checked very regularly and they are supported very well.

One of the strengths of the school is pupils' good personal development. In particular, pupils get on well together and they behave well. Older pupils play happily with and care for younger pupils. They say that they enjoy being at school and that they feel safe because they are confident that they can share concerns with an adult. Pupils make a good contribution to the smooth running of the school by willingly carrying out a variety of responsibilities. They also make a good contribution to the local community, by singing at Christmas in homes for the elderly, for instance. The major reason for pupils' good personal development is that pastoral support for individual pupils is very good. This is recognised by parents, who say such things as, 'All staff show care and understanding.'

Pupils are making satisfactory progress because teaching is satisfactory. There are good relationships in class and pupils are generally keen to learn. Teachers use a good range of resources to add interest to their lessons to stimulate learning. However, there are too many lessons where the range of activities is not planned well enough to suit the range of abilities throughout the lesson, and the more able pupils often have to either listen to explanations which apply to others or complete easier work before moving on to work at their level. When asked whether they would like more challenging work, one pupil responded, 'Bring it on!' The curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching in French and music, but the range of first-hand experiences, such as trips out of school and visitors, is very limited.

Academic support and guidance are in the early stages of development. Systems are in place to measure pupils' progress and the results are used effectively to plan interventions for those in danger of falling behind. However, teachers are not confident about assessing what pupils know and can do without resorting to tests. This means that they are not always planning effectively for what each pupil needs to learn next and setting these as targets for pupils' learning. This also means that, while marking is supportive and encouraging, it does not consistently help pupils to improve their work.

Leaders have managed the staffing difficulties effectively and minimised disruption to pupils' learning. However, monitoring of initiatives put in place to raise standards is insufficiently rigorous and the success of these strategies is therefore unclear. Progress has been made, for example in raising standards in reading, and the school is satisfactorily placed to continue improving.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because teachers understand the level of challenge appropriate for each child. This is based on good systems of assessment, which are completed regularly. Progress is particularly good in the Nursery, where the strong teamwork between all the adults ensures a consistency of approach. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and the leader has carried out a good analysis of strengths and areas she would wish to improve. For example, she has identified that standards in creative development are not as good as other areas of learning and has good plans to address this.

Provision for children's learning and development in both the Nursery and Reception is good and this results in children achieving well. For instance, at the beginning of the day in the Nursery, the 'helpers' for the day complete their register, making the appropriate marks, with the greetings between the adult and the children carried out in the language of the day, which was Filipino during the inspection as there are a few Filipino children in the school. Good plans are made to use the area outside, though this cannot be included in free-flow activities for either class due to the lack of access from their classrooms. A good programme to develop children's phonic skills is in place and children were observed in both classes enthusiastically identifying letter sounds.

Provision for children's welfare is good and this results in their good personal and social development. They happily work and play together and take responsibility for clearing up when they have finished their work. The partnership with parents is recognised as important and the close links established help children settle quickly. There are also good links with the on-site before- and after-school provision, and assessments of children of Early Years age are shared with them. Their staff also carry out regular observations of these children, while in their care.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve systems of assessment so that teachers are more aware of what pupils know and can do, and can then guide them to what they need to learn next and use this guidance when they mark their work.
- Ensure that lessons and wider activities are planned to include a variety of stimulating activities so that all pupils, particularly the more able, are suitably challenged throughout.
- Improve the rigour of monitoring, particularly of initiatives put in place, so that the effectiveness of these strategies can be measured more accurately.

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

After the good progress made by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, progress flattens through the rest of the school. There are exceptions to this and data show that pupils in some year groups are now making good progress, particularly pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory. Standards in the national tests in Year 6 have been broadly average for some years and are likely to remain so this year, despite an improvement in writing and also particularly in reading. This improvement has been

counterbalanced by a fall in standards in science, where changes in staff have meant that too little investigative and experimental work has been done in earlier years. Pupils who are at an early stage of learning English fit in quickly and fairly soon make the same progress as their classmates. However, this is because of teachers' and other adults' sensitivity to their situation rather than any whole-school plan as to how their needs are to be met.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Improving their awareness of the multicultural society in which we live was identified as an area for development in the last inspection. The school has worked on this with some success, for instance by organising a multicultural week earlier this term, but pupils still have too few opportunities for first-hand experiences from visits or visitors. Pupils are well aware of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, but too many do not carry this into their daily lives. There are limited opportunities to take part in sport and unhealthy snacks find their way into many lunch boxes. Pupils are very conscious of potential dangers, both around school and outside, including when they use the internet. Pupils' contribution to the school and the church and local community is good and they collect good sums for national and international charities. They are developing a good work ethic, which is preparing them well for their future lives. Their development of information and communication technology (ICT) skills is good, but their development of basic literacy and numeracy skills is only satisfactory. Despite pupils' good enjoyment of school, attendance is only satisfactory.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

There are good relationships between adults and pupils, and behaviour is generally managed well. Classrooms are therefore calm working environments where pupils are keen to succeed. Teachers make good use of resources, particularly their interactive whiteboards, to enliven learning. However, there are times when teachers talk for too long and the pupils are listening or single pupils are answering questions when they could be more actively engaged in learning. Some good use of discussions with partners was observed, which helped pupils to embed learning. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution, particularly to the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum has been suitably planned to meet the needs of most pupils, though the more able are not always sufficiently challenged. Provision for ICT is good and the high level of skills pupils acquire has been commented upon favourably by one of the local secondary schools. Good provision is made for pupils' personal, social and health education. Although some teachers make sure pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects, this has not been planned consistently, so opportunities to further practise these basic skills are missed. There is only a limited range of extra-curricular clubs and activities and further enhancement through visits and visitors into school is also narrow.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 3

Pastoral care and support provided for individual pupils are good. The support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very good; parents are closely involved and external agencies used well whenever appropriate. At the time of the inspection, statutory safeguarding requirements were met and relevant health and safety procedures were in place. Although pupils who arrive in school speaking little or no English are welcomed and dealt with sensitively by all adults, there is no school plan or direction on how best to ensure that these pupils learn English as quickly as they could. Academic support and guidance are satisfactory. Pupils' standards are tested regularly and their progress is thus monitored. The resulting data are used well to identify those in need of extra support. However, there is no clear plan for what individuals need to learn next as teachers are not secure in their knowledge of what pupils can and cannot do. This means that pupils are not receiving sufficient guidance on how best to improve their work.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The headteacher, well supported by the senior management team, is committed to 'getting the school back on track' after the staffing difficulties. The school has satisfactory systems for self-evaluation, which have identified suitable areas for development. The senior management team demonstrates good understanding of, energy for, and commitment to these areas identified for development. However, plans to make these improvements are not specific enough and success criteria are not sufficiently measurable to enable effective monitoring of the success of initiatives. A satisfactory contribution is made to community cohesion at the local and national level, for example harvest baskets are distributed to families suggested by the local housing association. The global aspect of community cohesion is not yet sufficiently developed, especially in terms of first-hand links. The school has begun to set challenging targets for pupils' progress but these are not yet embedded or sufficiently understood by all staff.

The governing body discharges its duties appropriately, has a clear understanding of the day-to-day running of the school and is adequately informed about areas for development identified by the school. However, the role of governors in the monitoring and evaluation of priorities and initiatives is not well understood.



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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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### 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 <sup>1</sup> 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	2

<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which 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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 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	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**

2 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Walsall, WS3 3LY

Thank you so much for welcoming us so warmly when we visited your school recently. We very much enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work and hearing from you how much you enjoy school. We think your school is giving you a satisfactory education.

These are some of the things we found.

- You behave well and are developing into responsible and caring young people.
- You get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- You make satisfactory progress in Years 1 to 6 because teaching is satisfactory. You make better progress in reading, but your progress in writing and science is only just good enough.
- Although your curriculum could be more interesting, the expert teaching you enjoy in French and music is benefiting you.
- All adults take good care of you.
- Your headteacher and all the staff have satisfactory plans to make your school better.

These are the things that we have suggested should be improved.

- Teachers should make sure you always know what you need to do to improve your work and tell you this when they mark your work.
- Lessons should have more interesting activities to challenge you, particularly those of you who find your work easy. Some of you told us that you would like much more challenging work.
- Staff should check that the improvements put in place to help you do better are working by seeing if you are making better progress.

I know you will help your school to become even better by continuing to work hard and doing your best.

Yours faithfully

John D Eadie

Lead inspector