

St Peter's Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121656
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	327542
Inspection dates	18–19 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Amraz Ali HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; 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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	212
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs M Howey
Headteacher	Mrs K Boyes
Date of previous school inspection	September 2005
School address	North Leas Avenue Scarborough North Yorkshire YO12 6LX
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector. The inspectors visited 14 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the school development plan, schemes of work and lesson plans, pupils' work books, pupils' reports, school's assessment data, individual education plans, minutes of governors meetings and 69 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of developments to improve standards and progress at Key Stage 1
- the effectiveness and consistency of teaching and the use of assessment to ensure that all pupils make good or better progress across the school
- how the strong personal development of pupils is used to secure good or better progress for all
- the extent to which leaders at all levels are effective in their self-evaluation and how this is used to maintain or improve standards and progress.

Information about the school

This is an average size Catholic primary school situated to the north of Scarborough. Most pupils are White British but the number of pupils from minority ethnic heritages has increased since the previous inspection and is now average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language. A very small number are at the early stages of learning English. The number of pupils eligible for a free school meal is below average, as is the proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is made for children who start in the Reception class at the beginning of the academic year in which they become aged five.

The school has Healthy School Status and the North Yorkshire Inclusion Mark.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Peter's Primary School provides a good quality of education with some outstanding features and outcomes. Some aspects of children's personal and social development are outstanding in the Reception class. Good support, care and guidance along with the nurturing ethos of the school ensures that the degree to which pupils feel safe and well cared for and the extent to which they adopt healthy lifestyles are outstanding. The school's motto of, 'Following Christ, Striving for excellence, Working together, and Growing in Faith.' is evident in all that staff and governors do. This is one of the key reasons why all staff work well together and collectively want to improve the outcomes for pupils. Pupils and their parents value highly what the school offers and this is reflected in the many positive comments that were made about the school. Pupils greatly enjoy school and take advantage of the wide range of interesting activities provided.

Pupils start school with knowledge and skills that vary but are generally typical for their age. By the time they leave in Year 6, standards are above average and this has been the case for several years. While this represents good progress overall, the rate of progress is uneven as pupils move through the school. It is particularly strong in the Reception Year and in the last two years at the school. However, progress in Key Stage 1 is sometimes slow. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning to speak English as an additional language make good progress overall, but this varies.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and some is outstanding. Some particularly effective teaching accelerates the learning and progress of older Key Stage 2 pupils who consequently achieve very well. A key feature here is that activities are well planned and executed to meet the full range of abilities and interests of pupils. However, this is not always the case. In some lessons tasks do not consistently provide enough challenge for all ability levels and, consequently, learning slows. The good relationships and clear expectations impact positively on pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning which in turn enhances progress. The good curriculum provides a broad and varied range of experiences with a strong focus on science, music and physical education. Information and communication technology (ICT) is a particular strength. Teachers use this effectively to support teaching and learning and pupils use their good ICT skills in many subjects. The curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development and helps them to develop into polite and confident young people. There are some good

opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures and they gain good first-hand experiences through trips to places of interest and from visitors to the school. Pupils' behaviour is good and they are very welcoming of new pupils who join the school. These good personal qualities combined with good academic skills, including their skills in ICT, give pupils a good foundation for their future education and economic well-being.

There are several strengths in leadership and management and these are reflected in the good and outstanding outcomes for pupils. The headteacher's commitment and dedication along with a strong partnership with all staff have been particularly successful at providing a very caring and supportive ethos for all pupils. There are strengths in the work of governors and subject leaders. The school's self-evaluation is largely accurate, but lacks sufficient precision and rigor to ensure that the progress of all groups of pupils, across the whole school, is checked carefully. Furthermore, the school is at the early stages of monitoring rates of pupil attendance and its impact on learning and progress. The consistently good standards by the time they leave the school, along with improvements in provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in ICT reflect the school's good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the progress of pupils in Key Stage 1, particularly the more able.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is more consistently like the best at the school by:
 - identifying and sharing the good and outstanding practices within the school
 - developing teachers' skills at supporting pupils who speak English as an additional language
 - executing the lesson plans more effectively to challenge and extend all ability levels.
- Improve the precision of the school's systems of self-evaluation by:
 - extending the tracking system to include Key Stage 1 pupils
 - developing staff skills in analysing and using assessment information and data
 - closely monitoring absence and its impact on learning and progress
 - ensuring that findings from school self-evaluation inform school improvement planning.

How good is the overall outcome for individuals and groups of pupils?

2

Pupils learn well in most lessons and their achievement is good overall so that by the time they reach Year 6 their standards are typically above average. When they start the school aged four children have the skills, knowledge and abilities that are generally typical of their age, though there is a wide and varied range of abilities.

Children's good learning and progress during their Reception Year means that by the time they start Year 1, the majority have achieved or exceeded the Early Learning Goals. Pupils' learning and progress throughout Key Stage 1 is satisfactory although it is patchy and sometimes slows, particularly for the more able pupils. Standards attained at the end of Key stage 1 are average. In Key Stage 2, pupils' learning and progress picks up again and is particularly strong in their last two years at the school. By the time they leave in Year 6, standards overall are above average and this has been the case for the last three years. Inspection evidence shows that pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make variable, but nonetheless good, progress overall because they receive appropriately planned support which is reflected in the fact that many of these pupils reach the level expected for their age in English and mathematics by the time they leave Year 6. While many pupils learning to speak English as an additional language reach similar standards to their peers their progress, although good overall, is particularly variable.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. There is a strong school community spirit. Pupils are well behaved and show exceptional care for one another. Pupils speak confidently and sensibly about how to keep themselves safe. Older pupils relish the many opportunities they have to make their school a happier, healthier and safer place to learn. Opportunities for younger pupils to influence school decision making are less well developed. Effective links within the locality, such as with the church, make a good contribution to the local community. Pupils participate enthusiastically in a good range of activities to help raise funds and are particularly sensitive to the plight of others less fortunate than themselves around the world. Pupils' excellent understanding of the importance of leading healthy lifestyles is reflected in the enthusiasm with which they participate in many physical and sporting activities, such as the daily wake up and shake up sessions. They delight in the rewards they receive from making healthy lunch choices. Although pupils enjoy school a good deal their attendance is in line with the national average. In recent years their attendance rate has steadily declined, which in part reflects an increasing proportion of parents taking their children on holidays during term time. Nevertheless, by Year 6, pupils are mature and confident young adults. This, along with their above average academic standards is why they are well placed to be successful at secondary school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	1
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	1
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2

¹ Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

Pupils' attendance	3
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	1

The quality of the school's work

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Good relationships and clear expectations of behaviour are strong features in all lessons. Tasks are varied and interesting and skilful work by teaching assistants often supports learning well. In the very best lessons, pupils are fully engaged and they achieve very well. Pupils are given opportunities for collaboration, cooperation and independent work and often these result in a real buzz from pupils who exude enthusiasm for learning. For example, in an English lesson, pupils were enthused when comparing a Greek Myth with the Old Testament version of creation because of the interesting way in which the story had been presented using ICT. In some lessons however, learning is not always quite as effective. The teachers' planning usually identifies activities designed to meet all levels of ability but the execution of the lessons does not always reflect these. Thus tasks sometimes lack appropriate challenge for all ability levels and this slows progress. While there were some good examples of support for pupils who are learning English as an additional language, practices vary and on a small number of occasions pupils were not benefiting fully from the curriculum and opportunities were missed to extend spoken English skills. There have been some improvements to the way that the school uses and undertakes assessments of pupils' work. While there are some good examples of this, for example, in the way that older pupils know their targets for improvements and some pupils are becoming confident at assessing their own work, the impact of this work is inconsistent. Additionally, it is only recently that the school has identified the need to track more effectively pupils' progress in Key Stage 1.

The curriculum enables pupils to achieve well. Some elements are outstanding, such as the range of enrichment activities on offer, within the curriculum and beyond. Pupils' outstanding understanding of how to keep healthy is reflected in their participation in a wide range of sporting activities, promoted effectively through local partnerships. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their enjoyment of science. They say that this reflects the many opportunities they have to learn through practical investigations. Pupils, however, say their enjoyment of learning is not always as strong because on a small number of occasions they are asked to sit and listen to their teacher for too long before they are given opportunities to work independently. The timetable provides an appropriate balance between subjects, placing sufficient emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Since the previous inspection, the curriculum and resources for ICT have improved and this is reflected in the pupils' good achievement in this subject.

The support, guidance and care pupils receive are good. Staff know pupils particularly well and this enables them to provide caring and sensitive support at the right time. Effective arrangements for meeting the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are in place that enable them to achieve well, such as good links with external support agencies. New starters in Reception and those that

join the school settle in very easily and this is reflected in parents' positive views. The school is well aware that there is now a need to strengthen its provision to promote better attendance with both pupils and parents to halt the recent decline in attendance rates.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	2
Effective assessment	3
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	2
Support, guidance and care	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leaders and staff are united and well motivated to do their best for the school and its pupils. The school's leaders are generally accurate in their self-evaluation of the school's performance and there are some good features in their monitoring. For example, there is a rolling programme to ensure that all subjects are regularly reviewed. Subject leaders are conscientious in fulfilling their duties and all have influenced the work of others to good effect, for example, in ICT where improvement has been strong. However, the rigour and precision with which all aspects of the school's work are checked is inconsistent. Particularly evident, for example, is the way that the tracking of pupils' progress is strong in Key Stage 2, but is less well developed in Key Stage 1. Additionally, the skills of staff and the systems in place to collect and use assessment information and data require further development to enable staff to check on the progress of all groups of pupils.

The school's policies and procedures for ensuring equality of opportunity and for safeguarding are effective; consequently, all groups of pupils are fully included in the life of the school, feel very safe and achieve well overall. Effective steps are taken to ensure that the school is a safe and healthy environment and regular checks are made to minimise risks. Good procedures are followed and well documented for all educational visits; however, the processes for formally recording all risk assessments off the school site are less well developed. The governors work tirelessly to support the school and make regular visits to gain first hand information about the work of the school. They have a clear vision for the future, know the school's strengths and weaknesses and provide some effective challenge to the leadership to ensure further, continued improvement. The school leadership and governors know the community very well and have some valuable strategies in place to promote community cohesion. These are already impacting positively on pupils, for example, the annual 'culture' weeks and the encouragement of tolerance, is reflected in pupils' respect for diversity. However, the school's role in documenting and formally evaluating the impact of its actions to promote community cohesion is at the early stages of development. There are many successful partnerships which are benefiting pupils, for example, the school's work with the sports partnership is helping to provide specialist sports coaches. The school provides good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Communicating ambition and driving improvement	3
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	2
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	2
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	2
Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	2
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	2
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	3
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

When children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, their skills are broadly those typical for their age. Children come to school eager to learn. The very warm, safe and caring environment encourages children to settle very happily and very quickly. Very strong partnerships with parents are fostered. As a result of the good teaching and learning and an effective curriculum, children make good progress. When they start Year 1, many children are working beyond the levels expected nationally. Children's personal, social and emotional development is outstanding. This is because no opportunity is overlooked to foster good behaviour, positive attitudes to learning and to help children to get along well together and develop their independence. Activities offered enable the children to develop a sense of curiosity and fire their young imaginations. They discover that school is enjoyable and fun. Leadership and management are good. Improvements to the outdoor learning environment, for example, are evident since the previous inspection. Although a watchful eye is kept on how well individual children are doing, and daily activities take account of their learning needs, staff do not yet make fullest use of the information to find out where or how teaching and the curriculum might be fine-tuned to accelerate children's progress further.

How good are the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
What is the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
Overall effectiveness: how well does the setting/school meet the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2

Views of parents and carers

The inspectors received 69 parental questionnaires and around a half of these contained additional comments. Eight parents, attending the 'Stay to Play' session in the Reception Class spoke to inspectors during the inspection. Most parents who responded to the questionnaires are positive about the school. They regard the

school as caring and supportive and the staff as approachable. Comments such as, 'St. Peters is a wonderful place.', 'A caring environment.' and 'Our child settled very well.' reflect the levels of satisfaction that parents expressed about the school. Parents told inspectors that they value highly the opportunities that the school provides for them to visit classrooms and see how their children are learning. Parents may wish to know that there were no significant trends in the small number of criticisms offered in the questionnaires, but that inspectors did consider these as part of the process of evaluating the school.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a Key Stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



20 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter's Roman Catholic Primary School, Scarborough,
YO12 6LX

Thank you all so much for welcoming us to your school when we visited recently to find out how well you were doing. We enjoyed speaking to many of you and particularly enjoyed hearing Year 5 and 6 practising their singing ready for the 'Big Sing' at The Spa. You told us that you all enjoy coming to your school so much and we could see why you enjoy the exciting activities that are on offer. You will not be surprised when I tell you that we judged your school to be providing you with a good education. The headteacher and all of the staff help you to make good progress in your work. They provide interesting lessons and help you to do your best in all subjects, which was clear from the work that we saw. You benefit from visits to local places of interest and you learn about other cultures as well. You are very enthusiastic about your work and keen to achieve your targets. All of the adults help you to become sensible and responsible young people.

All of the staff and governors are determined that you will get the very best education possible. I have agreed some ways with the headteacher which can make things even better for you. This includes improving the progress of pupils in Key Stage 1, making teaching more consistently like the best teaching that we saw and improving the way that teachers and leaders at your school check on your progress and the work that you are doing.

You have your part to play as well, especially by attending well, continuing to work very hard and behaving well, which I know you can do.

Yours sincerely

Amraz Ali
Her Majesty's Inspector

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