

St Peter's CofE (C) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124277
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	328095
Inspection date	7 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Michael Merchant

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	117
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	Michelle Curtis
Headteacher	Ken Smith
Date of previous school inspection	8 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Main Street Stonnall Walsall WS9 9EE
Telephone number	01543 372060
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is much smaller in size than other primary schools and there are far more girls than boys. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than is typically found. The overwhelming majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is smaller than average, as is the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The school has one Reception class in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The headteacher is leaving the school at the end of this academic year. There is an acting headteacher from September until a new headteacher is appointed.

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 CofE Primary is a satisfactory school. The majority of parents are supportive of its work, as one wrote, 'My child loves going to St Peter's because it is such a friendly school.' The headteacher leads the school with clarity ensuring that leadership and management are satisfactory. However, there is a shared and accurate understanding amongst staff and governors that pupils should be making faster progress in some subjects. New appointments to the governing body ensure that a broader range of experience is now increasingly being used to hold the school to account for its work. Governors are beginning to provide stronger strategic direction. Leaders have an accurate view of the school's work and are beginning to tackle the school's weaknesses. Consequently, improvement since the last inspection and the school's capacity to further improve are satisfactory.

Children in the Reception class make good progress because there is a very strong focus on developing their social skills and their ability to communicate with each other. Their skills and abilities are above average when they join Year 1. Standards at the end of Year 6 are average and this represents only satisfactory achievement overall. Results in the latest national tests rose because the school paid close attention to meeting the needs of the higher attaining pupils. Inspectors agree with the views of some parents who feel that progress is not fast enough from Years 2 to 4, especially for middle attaining pupils.

Satisfactory teaching and learning means that pupils' progress is satisfactory. The proportion of good teaching is higher in Years 5 and 6 where teachers pay particularly close attention to ensuring that the needs of all pupils are met. Here, pupils' learning is faster and many make good progress. This progress occasionally slows when teachers do not plan well enough to meet the range of needs in their classes, particularly in Years 2 to 4. For instance, standards remain below average for middle attaining pupils because they are not always challenged sufficiently and their subject-specific skills and knowledge are not reinforced in lessons. The school provides satisfactorily for those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. As a result, they make progress similar to other pupils.

There are three key reasons why pupils make satisfactory rather than good or better progress. First, the school's systems for keeping a check on the progress that pupils make does not always enable it to identify pupils who are not making the progress they should. Second, targets set for individuals are sometimes too general and so pupils do not always know what they need to do to reach the next step in their learning. Third, the good and sometimes outstanding teaching is not identified and shared sufficiently to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress throughout the school.

Most pupils enjoy being at St Peter's. They feel safe and have a satisfactory understanding of how to stay healthy. Pupils' satisfactory progress in their basic skills makes them soundly prepared for the next phase of their education and beyond. The satisfactory curriculum encourages pupils to work hard in English and mathematics and pupils enjoy using computers to help them learn. Although the school is developing more meaningful links between subjects so that pupils can practise writing skills more regularly, these opportunities are not extensive enough to increase progress across a range of subjects. Pastoral care is good and secure partnerships with outside agencies ensure that the needs of vulnerable pupils are well met. Despite their enjoyment of school, pupils' attendance is below average. This is because, against the very strong advice of the school, many parents take their children away for extended

holidays in term time, and this holds back their learning. Although pupils from all backgrounds work and play together well, their awareness of different cultures in the diverse society in which we live is less well developed than it should be. This is because the school has not fully evaluated how well it meets its requirements to promote community cohesion.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's welfare is of paramount importance to the staff so they settle quickly into school routines and are happy learners. Children make good progress because teaching, learning, leadership and management are all good. Staff have a very clear understanding of how young children learn and this expertise is used to provide activities that are well matched to the full range of children's needs. Classrooms are attractive and stimulating and effective use is made of the well-appointed outside learning area. As well as enabling children to use their imagination, the extensive use of role play enables children to practise their writing and speaking skills which develop well. Children's progress is sometimes restricted because some work set for them and some activities around the classroom are not matched closely enough to their needs. Consequently, opportunities are missed to extend children's language and mathematical skills. Children's personal development and welfare are good, which enables them to be active, inquisitive and independent learners. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has a very clear vision of how to improve outcomes for all children and fosters a common sense of purpose amongst the cohesive team.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve how teachers assess, plan and teach lessons to challenge all pupils' learning so they reach higher standards in English, science and mathematics.
- Work with families to improve pupils' attendance rate by reducing the number of term-time holidays taken.
- Ensure that senior leaders devise effective ways of monitoring class progress and improving pupils' knowledge of others from differing backgrounds so they achieve better in their academic and personal development.

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

Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2008 were below average overall and were exceptionally low in science. Standards fluctuate year-on-year in this small school, reflecting changes in the proportions of pupils who join with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or whose previous attainment had been very low. Pupils' current work, classroom observations and provisional results of this year's national tests confirm that current standards have risen and are average overall. However, the proportion of pupils who gained the expected level or above in these tests is below average and a minority of these middle attaining pupils are not making the progress they should. Given that pupils' standards are close to those expected when they join the school, they make satisfactory progress overall. Pupils' progress is faster in Reception and Year 1 and in Years 5 and 6 where teaching is particularly effective. Pupils with

learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils because the school works effectively to meet their needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. As a result, pupils behave well in class and around the school. Their moral awareness benefits from visitors from a local church. A new child, reflecting on starting at the school, said, 'Everyone is friendly here.' Pupils say that bullying and racial incidents are rare but are dealt with promptly and effectively. They are confident that if difficulties arise their teachers will help because 'they always sort out our problems'. Pupils willingly take on roles such as school councillors and monitors which enable them to develop well as responsible members of the school community. Their contribution to and involvement in the life of their wider community, however, is more limited and many pupils have little awareness of the multicultural society in which we live. Through their work in personal, social, health and citizenship education, pupils become increasingly aware of their responsibilities to themselves and others. Most pupils have good attitudes to learning but are often passive in lessons and do not show great eagerness to answer questions or to 'join in'. Despite the school's persistent attempts to resist requests for term-time leave, too many pupils miss school for holidays during term time which interrupts their learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers are knowledgeable and classrooms are well ordered and calm. Lessons are typified by good relationships, mutual respect, humour and warmth. Teachers are generally good at telling pupils exactly what they are expected to do in lessons and this helps them make sense of their learning. Teaching assistants are well prepared and contribute well to the learning of the individuals they work with. In most lessons, pupils experience a range of approaches and this helps to sustain their interest. However, in some classes, teachers often talk for too long which restricts the opportunities pupils have to take a more active part in lessons. Assessment information is not used well enough in all lessons to plan activities to meet pupils' different needs effectively. As a result, pupils are sometimes given activities that are either not challenging enough or too hard, and their learning is then restricted. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported appropriately so they keep pace with their peers.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum enables pupils to make steady progress in developing basic skills. There is good provision for the core skills of numeracy, literacy, and information and communication technology. Senior leaders are working hard to improve the curriculum and are aware that there are still not enough opportunities for pupils to write in different subjects and that this has a negative impact on the speed at which writing skills can improve. Visits and visitors significantly enhance pupils' understanding of the wider world and good use is made of outside providers to extend the range of sports provided. Work in personal, social and health education helps pupils to understand their rights and responsibilities within the community. While there is some good practice developing whereby meaningful links are made between different subjects, this

is not yet consistently embedded and used in all classes, and few opportunities are provided for pupils to investigate or research topics themselves.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Procedures for safeguarding pupils are firmly in place and are effective. The school works closely with external agencies and parents to help support vulnerable pupils. Consequently, pupils feel safe at school and report that members of staff deal with any concerns they have to their satisfaction. The school's systems for checking upon the progress that pupils make do not give school leaders and teachers the information they need to quickly spot underachievement and to step in to address it. There are inconsistencies in the way teachers set targets and mark work. Targets set for pupils are inconsistent and are not well linked to the next steps in learning. This hinders their usefulness in helping pupils understand how to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher gives the school a clear direction and his calm, thoughtful approach results in staff eagerly taking on real responsibility for their respective areas. The systems for monitoring teaching are thorough and, along with other monitoring, give a clear picture of what is going well and what needs improving. There is an accurate, clear awareness that, despite recent improvements, progress from Years 2 to 4 still needs to be faster. The use of data to check pupils' progress is not well enough established so too little is known about any pupils who are underachieving. Leaders create a school that has a harmonious environment, in which pupils of all backgrounds get on well together. However, because the extent to which pupils are encouraged to work in the community with others from different ethnic groups is limited, community cohesion aspects are only partly developed. The governing body brings a wealth of relevant experience to its 'critical friend' role. It is extremely supportive of all the school's work and is increasingly holding the school to account for its development.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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 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	3
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	3
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?	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

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	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**

8 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter's CofE (C) Primary School, Stonnall, WS9 9EE

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We greatly enjoyed meeting you. We judge that your school is a satisfactory school which means that we found some good things in the school but also some things that need improving. These are the good things that we found out about your school.

- St Peter's is a well ordered school. Your behaviour is good and you look after each other so well. You enjoy working in groups and like to help your classmates when they find things difficult. The younger children in the Reception class settle into school very well and are making good progress.
- In school, you feel safe and know there are people to whom you can turn with worries or concerns.
- Your headteacher and your teachers are working hard to make it a better school for you.

There are a number of important things that your school needs to do to help it get better for you. We have asked your headteacher, teachers and governors to do the following:

- Ensure that when teachers plan work for you, it is not too easy or too hard, but just right for you.
- Do as much as they can to ensure you come to school every day, especially by helping you and your parents to understand that you miss a great deal by having holidays in term time.
- Make sure that the school checks your progress carefully as you move through the school so more of you reach even higher standards in the tests that you take in Year 6, and also that you learn more about the beliefs and ways of life of people who come from different backgrounds from yourselves.

Thank you once again for making such a helpful contribution to the inspection. We enjoyed watching you learn.

Yours faithfully

Michael Merchant

Lead inspector