

St Peter's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124315
Local Authority	Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number	328107
Inspection date	30 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Marion Thompson

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 aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	234
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	Kevin Daley
Headteacher	Dianne Mason
Date of previous school inspection	10 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Waterloo Road Cobridge Stoke-on-Trent ST6 3HL
Telephone number	01782 235040
Fax number	01782 236415

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- The effectiveness of the school's strategies to improve the achievement of girls and the most able pupils.
- The effect of absence on pupils' achievement and the impact of the school's actions to secure higher attendance.

Evidence was gathered from discussions with leaders, the chair of governors, pupils and staff; visits to most classes; analysis of pupils' work; scrutiny of safeguarding arrangements; observations of other aspects of the school day such as assembly, break and lunchtime; and analysis of parents' questionnaires and school documentation, in particular data on pupils' progress.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors 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 this report.

Description of the school

This is an average size school, with a Nursery and a Reception class in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school provides a breakfast club run by the governing body. Most pupils come from Pakistani or Bangladeshi backgrounds and the vast majority are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of children identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average, especially in relation to speech, language and communication. The school has been awarded Active Sports Mark, Health Promoting Schools Award, and the Healthy Schools Award. Since January 2006, the school has been part of a federation with a nearby Catholic primary school, with the headteacher providing leadership for both schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school which provides an effective education for its pupils. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is excellent as it is managed highly effectively. The school has won the strong support of parents and local community leaders. Parents particularly comment on the bright and inviting learning environment, the welcome they receive when they go to school with problems and the outstanding quality of pastoral care for children and their families. A nurturing, family atmosphere has been created, which helps pupils to develop a strong sense of security. Systems to keep pupils safe operate very effectively. Pupils treat each other with great respect and care. As a result, their behaviour is excellent and their very positive attitudes provide strong support for learning. Excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensures that pupils' personal development is of high quality regardless of their backgrounds. Not surprisingly, pupils have excellent social skills, clear shared values and contribute effectively to the local community.

The school, in productive partnership with local community leaders, has worked effectively to improve attendance, which is now broadly average and above that of similar schools. Pupils love coming to school and develop confident attitudes to their work, because their success is valued. They make a good contribution to the school and wider community, for example acting as games leaders in the playground. Their awareness of how to live a healthy lifestyle is very well developed and they take full advantage of the many opportunities provided by the school for exercise.

Standards reached by the end of Year 6 are broadly average. This represents good achievement for all pupils, including girls and the most able, from their very low starting points. English and mathematics have been a priority for improvement and standards are rising rapidly throughout school due to the wide and effective range of strategies the school has put in place. Pupils in most year groups are on track to meet or exceed challenging targets, as they did in national tests in 2008. Close tracking of progress enables the school to intervene rapidly when pupils fall behind in their work. Pupils are clear about what their targets are and what they need to do to achieve them. Progress in science is a little slower. In a small number of lessons, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to raise their own questions and to design and carry out their own scientific investigations.

Progress for pupils at the early stages of learning English is very good. Teachers pay careful attention to developing listening and speaking skills in all lessons and careful attention is given to ensuring pupils understand specialist vocabulary. Preparation for writing is also good. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make rapid progress because they are supported well.

Pupils' rapid progress is promoted by good teaching which makes the most of the broad, flexible and interesting curriculum. Well taught lessons are characterised by mutually respectful relationships, which lead to productive learning. Management of behaviour is skilful and creates a calm and purposeful learning environment. Day-to-day planning takes good account of pupils' needs and ongoing assessment is frequently used well to check whether pupils have understood. However, occasionally, teachers talk for too long and pupils' attention wanders a little. Academic guidance is good, but marking does not always provide clear guidance to pupils on how to improve. Occasionally, insufficient time is given to pupils to follow the advice when

it is provided. However, their good achievement in literacy and numeracy and development of their very good social skills prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, supported well by the senior team and staff, provides a very clear sense of direction, based on an accurate and thorough evaluation of the work of the school. The school benefits from sharing expertise with its partner school in the federation. Governors are supportive and are keen for the school to do well, but their monitoring of its work has been hampered by having a number of vacancies. The school is resolving this issue shortly to aid their oversight of the school's work. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. It makes good provision for the pupils in its own community, enabling them to achieve well and successfully promotes commonly held values of mutual respect. The needs of the local community are met well through a variety of adult classes which are well attended and a breakfast club for pupils. It has good links with the school with which it is federated, which encourages pupils' understanding and respect for those of different faiths, ethnicities and cultures. Links with local community leaders are strong and productive, for example the local imam has worked hard with the school to improve the attendance of children of Pakistani origin. Knowledge of international affairs is well developed, for example in arranging events on the election of the American president.

There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. For example, attendance has risen, standards in English and mathematics have risen and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and personal development, which were good, are now excellent. The school is well placed to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children benefit from outstanding provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage as a result of significant improvements in outdoor provision and assessment over the last two years. Levels of skills on entry to the Nursery are exceptionally low and the vast majority of children speak English as an additional language. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is high. Despite rising rapidly over the last two years, standards remain below average on entry to Year 1. This is a significant improvement on previous years when pupils entered Year 1 with much lower standards. Children's achievement is excellent in all areas of learning, especially in their personal development and communication skills. Much of this rapid progress is promoted by excellent teaching which captures children's interest. Teachers keep a close watch on their progress to match activities closely to their needs. Adults are astute in judging when to intervene to move children's learning on and when to allow children to work things out for themselves. Very supportive relationships that are securely built between children and adults enable them to make the best of the opportunities provided for children to learn through focused play and through direct teaching. The environment is rich and well resourced to encourage children's listening and speaking skills and they benefit from a wide range of worthwhile learning experiences. The outdoor area is exceptionally well planned to foster all aspects of children's learning. For example, children's skills in estimating, measuring and language development were very well developed through working in an outdoor 'Builder's Yard'. This is a hive of happy, productive activity, where attention to children's welfare is outstanding. Excellent induction processes help children to settle in quickly. Children soon learn school routines and begin to cooperate with others. They start to make choices and to develop independence.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement in science through making sure more opportunities are provided for pupils to pose their own scientific questions and design and carry out investigations.
- Ensure that marking provides clear guidance to pupils on how to improve their work and provide longer time for pupils to follow the advice given.

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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?	2
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?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	2

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?	2
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	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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**

1 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent ST6 3HL

We really enjoyed visiting your school and were very impressed with the politeness you all showed us. Please thank your parents for replying to our questionnaire. Most of them appreciate the quality of education the school provides for you. We know that you are proud of your school, so we are pleased to tell you that the school provides you with a good education and some aspects of the school's work are excellent. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes get off to an excellent start, because teaching and the programme of activities are very good and it is extremely well led. Children's personal development is excellent, because of the outstanding care the Early Years Foundation Stage staff provide.

You make good progress from your starting points and by the end of Year 6 reach broadly average standards in English and mathematics. This is because teaching and the curriculum are interesting and well matched to your needs, especially if you are learning English as an additional language. Those of you who find it more difficult to learn do particularly well, because you are supported well. The headteacher and staff are working hard to make sure things carry on improving. They keep a close eye on the progress you make and help you to catch up quickly when needed.

Staff take excellent care of you and treat you with respect, so you learn well, feel secure and develop confidence. Because you feel valued in school, you work hard and your positive attitudes and excellent behaviour help you to learn more effectively. You really enjoy school and take on substantial responsibilities, like acting as play leaders. You know a lot about how to stay healthy and active and your good progress in literacy and numeracy, and excellent social skills prepare you well for the future. The school, together with local community leaders, has worked hard and successfully to improve attendance, so keep it up!

In order to improve things further, we have asked the school to make sure that you have more opportunities to raise questions and design investigations in science. We have also asked the school to make sure marking provides you with clear guidance on how to improve your work and that you have time to follow up the advice you are given.

Yours faithfully

Marion Thompson

Lead inspector