

SS Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124375
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	328121
Inspection date	15 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Mike Capper

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	128
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	Andy Cross
Headteacher	Teresa Cotter
Date of previous school inspection	9 May 2009
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Dimbles Hill Lichfield WS13 7NH
Telephone number	01543 510748
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Most pupils come to this smaller than average sized primary school from the local community. The number of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. Over the last three years, the school has been admitting an increasing number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, and they now make up about one in ten of the school's roll. A significant number of these pupils start school with limited spoken English, with Polish being the most common home language.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Reception class and in the Lichfield Little Learners' Nursery. This private nursery has a base on the school site, is managed by the governing body and takes children aged three and four. The school also provides pre- and after-school clubs as part of its extended provision.

There have been several staff changes and absences in the last year, with the most recent appointment being the deputy headteacher, who took up post in April 2009.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school that is moving forward steadily under the clear direction of the headteacher. The new leadership team has a good understanding of what needs improving and are taking the right steps to tackle weaknesses.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, where teaching is good, children make good progress in all areas of learning. Recently improved provision means that standards by the end of the Reception Year are rising. This is very recent and has yet to filter through to the rest of the school. By the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average, reflecting satisfactory progress over time for all pupils. In English, pupils do best in reading. Progress, whilst satisfactory, is slower in writing. There are too few opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in different subjects so that they can practise and improve them.

Thorough monitoring and support from senior leaders, as well as the appointment of permanent staff, have resulted in the quality of teaching and learning improving. As a result, teaching is satisfactory, with some good features across the school. Teachers get on well with the pupils and they assess learning carefully. They plan thoroughly, but they do not always match work well enough to pupils' differing needs. When this happens, the pace of learning is too slow.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Good rates of attendance show that most pupils are keen to come to school, and most show reasonable levels of enjoyment in lessons. Pupils are especially positive about the way that teachers use visits and visitors to bring subjects alive and to enrich the otherwise satisfactory curriculum. However, occasionally pupils do not settle quickly enough to work.

Pupils' spiritual development is good. Close links with the parish church and with the local community reflect the school's strong Catholic ethos. Pupils are happy to talk about their faith, write prayers and show good consideration for the needs of others by raising funds for charities. Pupils are keen to take responsibility and do this well. There is an active school council that gives pupils a voice and helps them to make a good contribution to the community. Pupils develop a good understanding of how to stay healthy, explaining, for example, the importance of rest and exercise.

The quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory. Teachers have the best interests of the pupils at heart in their daily work. There has been some good recent work on improving academic support, and teachers are beginning to make better use of marking and target setting to help pupils understand how to improve their work. This practice is not yet consistent across the school or in different subjects. In writing, some pupils are not sure about the next steps in their learning because marking and target-setting does not always give clear enough guidance.

Well managed child care provision for children before or after school and in the nursery extends the work of the school successfully. Pupils who go to the after-school club are well cared for and they take part in a good range of fun activities.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new leadership team works together well and shares a strong commitment to improving provision. Recent developments such as the focus on improving teaching are already proving beneficial, and demonstrate that there is a satisfactory capacity for further improvement. Leaders at all levels know that they now need to monitor recent developments, such as the focus on marking and target setting, more sharply

to check that all are being applied consistently and are having the desired effect on progress across the school.

The majority of parents are happy with the school, saying such things as 'adults know the children well and treat them as individuals'. Parental concerns centre largely on communication between home and school, and the way that the school tackles bullying. The inspection team found that systems for communicating with parents are the same as those typically found in most schools, with some good practice in the recent introduction of pupils' personal profiles. These give a clear picture to parents of how well their children are doing. The school tackles bullying appropriately but knows that it could do more to explain to parents how it does this.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Most children are working within the levels typically expected for their age group when they come into the Reception class. Children achieve well, and standards are above average when they start in Year 1. This is higher than in recent years and reflects improved provision. Members of staff in the nursery and the Reception class work together closely, enabling children to settle into school life quickly and to become happy and confident. In the nursery, a well established routine and a good variety of interesting activities engage the children's interest and make them keen to learn. Children work well when they are with an adult or in activities chosen independently. In the Reception class, children benefit from particularly well focused teaching on sounds and letters. The rhymes they have invented with their teacher help them to remember what they have learnt and to use their knowledge when spelling words. Occasionally, children are expected to sit for too long and when this happens, they start to become distracted. Children's personal development is promoted well and as a result, children have good manners, and are willing to try new things. Children's welfare is supported well and all adults are conscientious in promoting healthy eating and safe behaviour.

Leadership is good because leaders work together to evaluate provision and to identify areas for development. Leaders are rightly now working on extending further the breadth of opportunities for children when working outside, particularly to support learning in literacy and numeracy.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching by ensuring that teachers consistently pitch work at the right levels for all pupils.
- Close the gap between reading and writing by strengthening opportunities for pupils to write in different subjects and giving them clearer guidance about how to improve their writing.
- Rigorously monitor the impact of recent developments to check that they are having the desired effect and are being followed consistently across the school.

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

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, resulting in standards being broadly average by the end of Year 6. After making a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils' progress in the

rest of the school is satisfactory overall, although not all meet the challenging targets that they have been set. Pupils make the best progress in Year 6, where the teacher is particularly successful at meeting differing needs and providing good levels of challenge. Across the school, pupils make faster progress in reading than writing because they get good opportunities to practise their skills at home and at school. This good practice is less evident in writing where opportunities to write in different subjects are not yet firmly established in all classes.

Pupils with English as an additional language learn at the same rate as others in lessons. They quickly become confident English speakers due to the good use of volunteer helpers from the local Polish community. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress towards the goals in their individual education plans.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. Whilst most pupils behave well, there have been several changes of teachers in the last two terms, and this disruption has had a negative impact on the attitudes of some pupils, who do not always settle quickly enough in lessons. Whilst most pupils enjoy school and attendance is good, some pupils and parents say that occasionally pupils are unkind to each other and consequently they do not always enjoy school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils raise funds for charity and develop a particularly good awareness of spirituality. For example, older pupils have made their own 'chill out' area to provide pupils with the chance to reflect and to 'change negative feelings into positive ones'. Pupils enjoy helping pupils with English as an additional language to practise their speech.

Pupils know how to stay safe when using the internet and when walking to school. They make steady progress in developing basic skills and are prepared satisfactorily for the next stage of education and later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

There are good features to teaching in all lessons. A willingness to respond to advice from the senior management team has helped to improve the quality over the last year. Good use is made of the interactive whiteboards to share information with the pupils at the start of lessons. Although there are few teaching assistants, due to budgetary constraints, they are used well to work with groups of pupils. However, teachers do not always plan work closely enough to the pupils' differing needs, slowing the pace of learning. This is less evident in Year 6 than in the rest of the school; in this year group, there is good challenge and progress is generally good. The school has improved marking so that it helps pupils to know their next steps in learning, although this is not yet used consistently well in all subjects, especially in writing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

There are good opportunities for pupils to take part in a wide range of additional activities such as clubs and visits. These special activities are appreciated by pupils. For example, pupils in Year 6 are very enthusiastic about their residential visit, where they learn new skills such as

abseiling and canoeing. The curriculum includes good opportunities for pupils to improve their health and fitness through sports clubs.

The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils to develop their basic literacy and numeracy skills. A good start has been made to improving the links between subjects during themed weeks in history, geography and science. However, such links are not yet well developed in everyday lessons in all classes. In particular, opportunities to write in different subjects are patchy across the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Most pupils say that they feel safe and they are confident that members of staff will help them when necessary. There are satisfactory arrangements for safeguarding pupils and, at the time of the inspection, these met requirements. The school has good induction procedures to help newly arrived pupils settle quickly.

Assessment procedures are satisfactory and have improved significantly in the last year. They provide teachers with helpful information about how well pupils are doing and are used to set group targets. However, teachers do not always use the information well enough when planning work for the full range of abilities in the class. In English, not all pupils are clear about how to improve their writing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and her new leadership team are moving the school in the right direction. There is an accurate awareness that, despite recent improvements, progress in Years 1 to 6 still needs to be faster. Procedures for evaluating school effectiveness are satisfactory. Changes in the structure of the leadership team mean that there is a sharper focus to self-evaluation than in the past. The school has begun to accumulate a wealth of data about pupils' progress and is starting to use this to identify more quickly those who are in danger of falling behind. There have been some good recent developments and these have helped to improve teaching and to strengthen the role of subject leaders in monitoring provision. Leaders know that they now need to monitor initiatives more sharply to check that they are applied consistently and have a sustained impact on pupils' progress.

The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. Pupils learn to respect each other's cultural differences and leaders work hard to respond to the needs of the local community through the school's extended provision. The school has rightly identified that pupils need more opportunities to learn about the world beyond Lichfield.

Governors are kept well informed by the headteacher and are doing the right things to strengthen their role in holding the school to account, for example by taking a more proactive part in development planning.

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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 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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	3
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

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**

16 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of SS Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School, Lichfield WS13 7NH

Thank you for being so welcoming and for showing us your work. You were polite and friendly and we enjoyed talking to you. At the moment, your school is providing a satisfactory education. This means that we found some good things in the school but also some things that need improving.

- Some of the things we found out about your school
- Good teaching helps you to learn quickly in the Reception Year and in the 'Lichfield Little Learners' Nursery. You settle quickly and work hard in lessons.
- Satisfactory teaching means that you are making steady progress in Years 1 to 6. At the moment, you make slightly faster progress in reading, mathematics and science than in writing.
- You develop a good understanding of how to stay healthy. It is great that you learn to grow your own food in the gardening club. You make a good contribution to the community. We were particularly impressed by the way that the school council gives you a voice in the life of the school.
- You are taught all the subjects you should be and you are able to take part in lots of fun activities out of lessons.
- All adults in school are kind and they help you when you are struggling with your work.
- Your headteacher, teachers and governors are working hard to improve the school and know what they still need to do.
- What we have asked your school to do now
- Make sure that teachers always pitch work at the right level so that it is not too hard or too easy for you.
- Give you more opportunities to write in different subjects and make sure that marking and target setting help you to improve your writing.
- With the changes in teaching staff, there have been many helpful things happening recently. Your headteacher, teachers and governors now need to check that these are really making a difference to the way you learn.

You can help your teachers by trying harder to always be kind to each other.

We thoroughly enjoyed watching you learn. We wish you all well for the future.

Yours faithfully

Mike Capper

Lead inspector