

St Peter's Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 132927 |
| Local Authority | South Gloucestershire |
| Inspection number | 328683 |
| Inspection dates | 7–8 October 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Kevin Hodge |

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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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 172 |
| 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 | Barrie Keast |
| Headteacher | Keith Purvis |
| Date of previous school inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Bank Road Pilning Bristol BS35 4JG |
| Telephone number | 01454 632439 |
| Fax number | 01454 632439 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This smaller than average school was established in September 2007 as a result of an amalgamation of two previously separate schools. The headteacher was appointed at the same time to lead both schools that continued to operate on separate sites. In September 2008 they combined to be on one site. There are advanced plans for a new school building, which is due to open in around two years. Pupils enter the school with skills and experiences that are typical for their age. The school's Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provides for four- and five-year-old children, taught in the Reception class. A very small minority of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St Peter's is a satisfactory school. It has some good aspects, not least in the way the headteacher and governors have successfully brought together two groups of staff and pupils. Together they are increasingly developing a shared philosophy for the 'new' school. Parents are enthusiastic about the school's early progress and typically point to the 'smooth' transition to one school site.

Children get a secure start in the EYFS and make satisfactory progress in most areas of learning. They reach average standards when they start Year 1. In the school's first year of national tests, results for pupils in Years 2 and 6 were broadly average, except in pupils' writing, where they were below average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory given their previous starting points. Their current work still reflects their weaker abilities in writing, which is developed more slowly.

Comments from pupils, which are very positive, reflect the school's success at making changes as stress free as possible. Clear expectations and routines ensure their satisfactory personal development. Pupils behave well around school and like being involved in aiding improvement. They really enjoy school. The curriculum is satisfactory rather than good as some activities are not planned well enough. This hampers pupils' learning, particularly in the limited range of writing opportunities. Some innovations in environmental work called 'forest skills' are beginning to take shape, and provision for health education is good. Teachers are good at promoting positive relationships among pupils, but not all are successful at setting work that matches pupils' needs in order to stretch their thinking, particularly for those who are more able. Parents strongly value the care and guidance given to their children, although this aspect is satisfactory rather than good because pupils' academic guidance is not yet developed well enough. One parent summed up the feeling of others by saying, 'It was difficult last year being on two sites, but everyone seems to have settled in well.' Pupils confirm that they feel safe, really enjoy having new friends and believe that their classmates behave well around the school and at playtimes.

The school has come some way in its first year, having navigated through practical issues of having two sites and preparing for the move together. The headteacher, senior staff and governors provide satisfactory leadership and management, and have an emerging picture of the 'new' school's strengths and weaker areas. However, they have not yet delved deeply or long enough to see what further steps and initiatives will move it forward more quickly, particularly in raising the quality of teaching and providing an exciting curriculum. The school's early successes reflect its satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The leadership of this age group is satisfactory. Good pastoral care ensures having all children together is working successfully. Children make at least satisfactory progress in all aspects of the EYFS curriculum. Progress in their personal, social and emotional development is good, with children learning the benefits of taking their turn and sharing. They enjoy working together and readily respond to adults and classmates. Children develop basic communication skills, such as matching letters to sounds, and have enjoyed discovering what the backgrounds are of their friends. They listen carefully to the teacher and are beginning to learn simple skills to help them read and write. The checks on children's progress are not always used well enough to

plan further work. This means that opportunities are missed to develop children's independence further or to stretch their abilities. The children's 'learning diaries' are however, a useful tool to gain insight into their learning. There is a strong commitment to getting outdoor education right, despite the outside area being quite small, which limits the number of children who can use it. Initiatives such as 'forest skills' outdoor work are successful.

What the school should do to improve further

- Plan more opportunities for pupils in Years 1 to 6 to write in a range of styles and subjects to help improve their writing skills.
- Ensure teaching through the school is more challenging, particularly for the most able, so that pupils make quicker progress in their learning.
- Improve the monitoring of the school's and pupils' work to focus more sharply on those areas which will improve teaching and the curriculum more quickly.

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

Based upon just one set of national results and their current work, pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their starting points. They make a sound start in the Reception class. By the time they leave, pupils reach average standards. Their progress is slower in writing and to some extent in problem solving in mathematics, particularly for the more able pupils. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities keep up with classmates as they are supported well. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in both science and information and communication technology (ICT). The very small number of pupils from ethnic minorities and those who speak English as an additional language achieve similarly to their classmates as a result of the appropriate support provided. The school is on track to reach its challenging targets next year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils really enjoy school and behave well, despite having to get to know pupils from another school. As one pupil said, 'It is good being in a bigger school – you have more friends!' Their enjoyment of school encourages pupils to attend regularly. Their attitudes to each other are good. In lessons they listen carefully and work together well as they have good social and moral guidance. Their knowledge of other children's beliefs and backgrounds are not as well developed. Pupils say they feel safe and like their new friends. The new school council is enjoying its role in influencing school improvement, but is at an early stage. Pupils really understand and try to adopt healthy lifestyles, aided by taking part in a range of physical activities during playtimes and in after-school clubs. These raise their exercise levels effectively. The pupils are involved in the local community, but this is at a limited level, as is their knowledge of others lifestyles in more distant places. Pupils' current level of academic skills and their abilities to work well together prepare them appropriately for the next stage of their education and later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils throughout the school benefit from teaching that fosters good relationships and working together. However, there is not enough teaching that really stretches pupils' thinking, particularly for those who are more able, and teaching can be pedestrian in pace. Staff use interactive whiteboards well to make lesson introductions more appealing. Teaching assistants support pupils well during activities, although during introductions they are used less effectively. There are some high spots. For example, good teaching based on environmental learning, effective in the Reception class, is starting to spread through the school. Teachers generally mark work regularly and give some helpful advice about how pupils can improve. Checks to see if they have improved, however, are not always apparent, which reduces its benefit.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

There is an appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' basic skills, but there are weaknesses in the way problem solving in mathematics and writing is planned. There are missed opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in problem solving or to write within other subjects. Pupils' experiences of ICT work have benefited from more class-based learning using laptops, but activities are often too low level. A good emphasis on promoting pupils' personal development has helped to ensure that pupils from the different schools have 'gelled' together well. The school's 'forest skills' approach to promoting outdoor education is proving a success and is a good feature. The school is aware that planning to help promote pupils' knowledge of other cultures or countries could be developed more, but their knowledge of their own culture is provided for securely. The curriculum is broadened effectively by a number of music and sports clubs and trips away from school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school, mindful of the need to be watchful of pupils who may have found the recent changes stressful, has successfully helped them to all feel part of the 'new' school. The good focus on pastoral support helps underpin pupils' improving personal development and good levels of behaviour. The school works closely with outside agencies to ensure that pupils make satisfactory progress, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils make a smooth start to school with simple, but effective, induction arrangements. The very few pupils from ethnic minorities are supported closely. Academic targets for pupils to guide their learning are only just starting so they are not as beneficial as they might be as pupils are not clear about what they are. Checks on pupils' overall progress are satisfactory, but the information gained is not used skilfully enough to modify plans of work or lesson content.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has succeeded in bringing staff and pupils from two schools together under one roof. An increasingly clear and shared vision for the school's future direction is emerging,

but there is some way to go. Staff are rising to the challenge of their new roles as subject leaders, but most have not had enough time to fully identify underlying subject weaknesses, monitor teaching or modify planning. This reduces the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation. As a result, the priorities chosen to improve teaching or the curriculum are not clearly identified or shared so all staff can improve further. Governors have helped steer the early development of the school effectively and provide a sounding board for ideas and concerns. They are mindful of their role to promote community cohesion and have been successful in involving the local community in their plans. Governors' routines to check on the work of the school promise much, but have not been in place long enough to give them information with which to gauge its performance. Safeguarding procedures of pupils are effective and governors are vigilant about the safety of pupils, particularly as the 'below par' accommodation presents challenges until the new building is ready.

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

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| 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

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| 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 | NA |
| 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

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|---|---|
| How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS? | 3 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve? | 3 |
| 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? | 3 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted? | 2 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 3 |

Achievement and standards

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|--|---|
| 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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| 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

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| 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**

Dear Children

Inspection of St Peter's Primary School, Pilning BS35 4JG

We liked visiting your school recently. Thank you for talking to us so openly about what you thought about your 'new' school. We think that it is a satisfactory school that is trying hard to be even better. Here are some of the things that we thought were particularly notable.

- You make sound progress in your work and reach average standards in your work by the time you leave, but your writing skills could still improve more, as could problem-solving skills in mathematics, for some of you.
- You all really enjoy being at the school and like having more friends.
- Children in the Reception class have a smooth start to school and like doing their 'forest skills'.
- You said you feel extremely safe and all the adults are good at helping you.
- You have a good understanding about how to keep fit and you seem to like eating healthy foods when you can. School dinners were yummy.
- You behave well in class and in the playground. Keep it up!
- Teachers try to make you work hard, although some of you could be pushed just a bit more in your learning.
- Your headteacher, governors and other staff are working hard to run the school and the plans for the new school look really cool.

There are three things we have asked the school to do to help improve it some more.

- Give you more work that lets you use your writing in other subjects, not just English lessons.
- We have asked the teachers to see if they can make lessons even more fun and exciting to help you learn quicker, particularly for those of you who can do harder work.
- The headteacher and governors will keep a closer eye on how the school runs so they can help the staff make it an even better place to be for you.

You can help too by continuing to give your ideas about how your new school can develop.

Yours sincerely,

Kevin Hodge Lead inspector