

St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111670
Local Authority	Hartlepool
Inspection number	337722
Inspection dates	28–29 April 2010
Reporting inspector	Margaret Armstrong

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	95
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Sacha Bedding
Headteacher	Mr Stephen McDonnell
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors saw five teachers, observed 10 lessons and undertook a detailed scrutiny of pupils' work. They held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils, and parents and carers.

Inspectors looked in detail at the following: the school's development plans and safeguarding policies; the school's data on pupils' progress and systems for monitoring the quality of teaching. There were 48 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and scrutinised by the inspection team. Staff and pupils' questionnaires were also analysed during the inspection.

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

- the quality of indoor and outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the consistency of the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress in writing and mathematics
- how effectively all leaders monitor, review and evaluate the impact of their actions to improve outcomes for pupils.

Information about the school

This is a small village school situated a few miles from Hartlepool. The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The remaining pupils are from a diverse range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The school has gained a number of awards including the Healthy School Status, Activemark and the Basic Skills Quality Mark. The school is part of a federation of two schools, with a shared governing body and headteacher.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This warm and welcoming school is one in which the outstanding care and support for pupils is central to its strong Christian ethos. Exciting learning opportunities provide pupils with new experiences which trigger their enthusiasm. Pupils behave very well, their attendance is well above average and they are very keen to learn. Their excellent understanding of a healthy lifestyle and how to stay safe and their good basic skills mean they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Pupils spoke confidently about the contribution they have made to improve the life of the school. For example, they take their responsibilities as fundraisers and sports leaders very seriously. An overwhelming proportion of parents and carers appreciate the happy and friendly atmosphere of the school in which every child is valued as an individual.

Attainment is above average by the end of Year 6 and achievement is good. Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage at a level which is typical for their age. Good provision in both the Nursery and the Reception class results in children rapidly become active learners and they achieve well. Pupils make consistently good progress as they move through the school towards increasingly challenging targets. This is a result of high expectations and good teaching. Mostly, teachers' assessments are accurate and support learning well. However, teachers occasionally do not make effective use of information from assessments to plan sufficient challenge for higher attainers, particularly in writing. The skilled work of support staff enables pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those from minority ethnic groups to progress as well as others.

The school's positive reputation in the community and the good outcomes for pupils are due to the effective support of all staff and governors who share the headteacher's values and ambitions for the school. Accurate self-evaluation has meant the school has successfully addressed areas of weakness since the last inspection. This realistic self-evaluation alongside the school's recent track record of improvements in performance confirms that there is a good capacity for sustained improvement. Although leaders are now fully involved in monitoring the school's performance and taking steps to improve it, they do not always evaluate the impact of new initiatives on pupils' progress. Governors support the school well and are committed to continuous improvement. They have ensured procedures for safeguarding are of the highest quality. The school promotes community cohesion well. Consequently, the school is a cohesive and harmonious community where the contributions of all pupils are valued. Resources are managed well to secure good outcomes for pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress in writing by ensuring that:
 - teachers make better use of assessment data to plan effectively for higher attaining pupils, particularly in writing
 - leaders are more rigorous in evaluating the effectiveness of new initiatives.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' enjoy school and have excellent attitudes to learning. They arrive punctually, respond well in lessons and take a pride in their work. Pupils work productively and are interested in their learning. Exemplary relationships ensure that pupils behave very well and are motivated to learn. As a result, achievement is good. Pupils make consistently good progress and attain above average standards in reading and mathematics. Standards in writing are not as high, particularly for the higher attaining pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress due to the carefully-tailored support they receive. There is no noticeable difference in the progress made by pupils from different backgrounds. Although there is some variation in the attainment of boys and girls, there is no measurable pattern.

The dedication of the school in providing an environment in which pupils can increase their self-esteem has been extremely effective. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the considerable experiences the school offers them. They thoroughly enjoy the wide range of physical activities provided and recognise this helps to keep them healthy and positively engaged. Their eagerness to learn is reflected in their very good attendance. Pupils are proud of the contributions they make to their school. They act responsibly as school councillors and actively support church events. Pupils have a good awareness of Britain's culturally diverse community and happily support fundraising activities such as the 'Haiti Appeal'. As a result, pupils make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The good grounding pupils receive in their social and basic skills prepares them well for the next stages of learning.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹ The quality of pupils' learning and their progress The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
	2
	2
	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate	
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers set clear expectations for all pupils. They explain to pupils how they will know when objectives are achieved. Consequently, pupils know what they have to do to be successful. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support learning. Resources such as the learning platform are used imaginatively so that pupils engage particularly well and make brisk progress. Teachers are skilled at intervening when pupils need individual support. They are quick to pick up any misconceptions in their learning and provide clear guidance to enable pupils to achieve well. Teaching assistants are well trained and provide good support for individuals and small groups. Generally, teachers make good use of their knowledge of pupils' previous learning to ensure tasks are smartly tailored to pupils' needs. Occasionally, teachers do not use this information effectively enough to ensure the needs of higher attaining pupils are fully met.

The curriculum has been developed effectively to enhance pupils' motivation to learn. It is adapted particularly well to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or other disabilities. There is a consistent approach to teaching and applying literacy, mathematical and other key skills across the curriculum. This contributes well to pupils' enjoyment of learning. An extensive range of activities is available to all pupils throughout the school day. These include opportunities to participate in exciting projects in art, ICT and multicultural education. Pupils benefit from a wide range of experiences outside school. They talked excitedly about their experiences of singing in Durham cathedral and their enjoyment of the residential visit to Robinwood Activity Centre. The partnership with other schools in the area supports the school well in developing its curriculum. As a result, pupils benefit from specialist support in areas such as dance, sport and music.

The outstanding pastoral care pupils receive from the headteacher and staff result in exemplary behaviour and a very caring atmosphere around school. Well established and effective lines of communication ensure that parents and carers are well informed and opportunities for them to engage with and support their children are highly successful. The strongly inclusive ethos of the school and teachers' excellent knowledge of pupils

ensures that concerns are quickly addressed. Close effective work with external agencies means that support for vulnerable pupils, and those at risk, is rapid and effective involving a breadth of specialist expertise. Transition at all stages is a positive experience as teachers work closely with families and other schools to ensure pupils settle quickly and confidently into new surroundings.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The visionary leadership and clear aspirations of the headteacher are shared by all leaders and managers. Teachers are very supportive of the school and of each other. They lead their individual areas well and work effectively as a team to address areas for improvement. Consequently, the school is effective in promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination. Leaders make good use of a range of monitoring activities to improve the quality of teaching and other aspects of provision. They have been particularly successful, for example, in making effective use of data to track the progress of those pupils at risk of poor attendance and to target support where it is most needed. However, although observations of teaching take place regularly, new initiatives to raise attainment in writing have not been evaluated rigorously enough.

The school promotes community cohesion well. Good partnerships with specialist agencies, the parish church and its partner school broaden opportunities for learning and ensure pupils are well supported. The governing body has extended its role in holding the school to account and is influential in determining the strategic direction of the school. There is a clear understanding of key responsibilities, especially of those which require robust assurance checks. As a result, safeguarding arrangements are outstanding, ensuring the safety and well-being of staff and pupils.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2

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

The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Nursery with skills which are typical for their age except in writing and creative development, where their attainment is below average. There is some variation from year to year depending on children's abilities and readiness to learn. Children make good progress and achieve well because adults are attentive, listen to the children and create conditions in which children feel welcomed, safe and secure. As a result, the majority reach average levels by the start of Year 1. Parents and carers are pleased with the start their children make to their education. Induction arrangements are good and parents and carers appreciate the 'School Link Books' which ensure there is effective dialogue between home and school. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well integrated and benefit from good quality support.

Teaching and learning in the Nursery and Reception class are good. Adults make regular observations and assessments to plan the next step of learning for each individual. As a result, there is a good balance between adult-led activities and those from which children can choose. Children are confident, independent and work happily on joint tasks. Activities, both inside and outside, are interesting and motivate children, helping them to enjoy their learning. Relationships are positive so that children interact well with each other and with the dedicated staff. Leadership and management are good and there are detailed plans in place to improve outdoor provision further. Arrangements to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the children meet requirements.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers have overwhelmingly positive views of the school. This was matched by staff responses to their questionnaires. Parents and carers feel their children are very safe and well cared for throughout the school. They comment that their children enjoy school, are well prepared to lead a healthy lifestyle and that staff work hard to help all children achieve as well as they should. A few individual concerns were investigated but not shared by the vast majority of parents and carers or by the inspectors.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 48 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 95 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	69	14	29	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	35	73	12	25	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	16	33	28	58	4	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	40	24	50	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	46	24	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	44	20	42	5	10	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	52	22	46	1	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	17	35	26	54	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	48	24	50	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	56	14	29	1	2	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	40	21	44	4	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	30	63	13	27	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	58	18	38	2	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



2 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Hartlepool,
TS27 3EG

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave me when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed talking with you and especially liked the way in which you care for each other and your school.

I was impressed with your excellent behaviour and the valuable contribution you make to the school and local community. I was particularly interested in the way you take responsibility as members of the school council and organise fundraising. Yours is a good school. Your teachers know you well and find lots of interesting ways to help you learn and develop. As a result, you make good progress and attain above average standards by the time you leave at the end of Year 6. You clearly really enjoy your learning and your attendance is very good. Well done!

You have an excellent understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle. The adults who care for you make sure you are very well looked after and I know you feel very safe in school. Your parents and carers told me they are very happy with the work of the school. The headteacher, staff and governors have your best interests at heart and they are dedicated to making sure you do well. It is clear you have many lovely experiences at school but I have asked your headteacher and governors to help you even more. I have asked them to make sure your teachers plan more challenging work for faster learners, particularly in writing. I have also asked them to check to see if new approaches are helping you develop your writing skills.

You can help by continuing to come to school as regularly as you do, by working as hard as you can and helping each other in and around school.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Armstrong

Lead inspector

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