

St Peter's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105069
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	377173
Inspection dates	21–22 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Nigel Cromey-Hawke

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	157
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Hovington
Headteacher	Peter Sherry
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 11 lessons, observing eight teachers and eight classes. They also held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils, and parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including development planning, safeguarding arrangements, self-evaluation records, policies and performance data. Questionnaires from 35 parents and carers, 78 pupils and 27 staff were scrutinised.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How challenging teaching is and whether independent learning is being sufficiently promoted.
- What the school is doing to promote better attendance.
- How well leaders and managers monitor the school's performance.

Information about the school

Most pupils in this smaller than average-sized primary school are of White British heritage, with a small number of British Indian pupils. Almost none speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, and the number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is average. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The school has a number of awards, including Healthy School status and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. The very large majority of parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaire are highly supportive of most aspects of its work.

The good levels of personal development made by pupils have been sustained since the last inspection, as has their attainment, and there is now good leadership of school improvement. Children have a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of good teaching, leadership, curriculum and care. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who are potentially vulnerable due to their circumstances make good progress. A recent dip in attainment has been recovered, although some pupils' writing abilities remain below average. The overall trend in pupils' attainment when they leave Year 6 is broadly average, but higher grades are not yet being gained in national tests in English and mathematics.

Teaching is good overall, with some that is outstanding. Weaknesses remain, however, in providing opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. The curriculum is good, especially in its promotion of pupils' personal development and health, particularly through the many sporting opportunities taken up by a good number of pupils. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. There is good pastoral care but not enough attention given to improving pupils' attendance and some aspects of quality assurance have only recently been put into action. Behaviour is good, as is pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding, reflecting the strong Catholic ethos of the school. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their learning.

The senior leaders and managers set clear direction and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Self-evaluation is accurate, but some subject leaders' involvement in monitoring their areas is underdeveloped and some aspects of their planning for improvement lack a sharpness of focus. The governing body is taking an increasing role in supporting and challenging the school. The school is a warm, harmonious and welcoming place in which the large majority of pupils say they enjoy their learning. Actions to overcome weaknesses in the school's provision have been concerted and effective and, as such, its capacity for sustained improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve attainment and achievement by ensuring that:
 - pupils' speaking and listening skills are more developed so that they learn more effectively from each other and from adults in lessons
 - develop pupils' writing skills so that they can communicate their learning more effectively
 - ensure that all pupils' attendance is at least good, so that their learning is not disrupted by absence from school.

- Improve leadership and management across the school by:
 - developing the role of the subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning in their areas and improving the quality of their development planning
 - ensuring that all risk assessments are fully in place and monitored effectively.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enter the school with low basic skills compared with those typical for their age, especially in personal development and language skills. Inspection evidence and the school's assessment information show that a very large majority of pupils make good progress from their starting points. Learning is good in most lessons because of the generally good teaching that captures pupils' interests and makes them keen to learn. As a result, most pupils acquire new knowledge, develop their understanding and learn new skills well. Most pupils are eager to produce their best work and are enthusiastic about their learning. Their achievement is good.

A dip in attainment last year has been largely recovered and relative weaknesses in boys' performance are being reduced. Pupils' writing skills remain below average in some classes, however, reflecting the often wide range of ability across different year groups. Most groups of pupils, including British Indian pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make at least good progress. Some of the potentially most vulnerable pupils make accelerated progress, helped by the extensive range of specialist intervention programmes operated by the school.. Pupils' attainment on leaving in Year 6 is broadly average although the higher levels are not being reached in English and mathematics.

Most pupils say they feel safe in school and have a good understanding of what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle, reflecting the school's awards in this area. Behaviour is good and often excellent in the very best lessons. Attendance has been an area for concern since the last inspection, but recent action by the school has begun to improve this, particularly in regard to previously high levels of persistent absence. The progress pupils make in developing their key skills in literacy and numeracy is good, often from low starting points, and pupils' knowledge and use of information and communication technology (ICT), for example, in running their own radio station in school, is good. Pupils are also actively involved in an increasing number of enterprise activities. Pupils make a good contribution to the daily running

of the school as trained Reading Buddies, playground leaders and in helping with the school garden. Pupils are also well involved in the local community, especially through the very close links with the parish church. The strong Catholic ethos of the school helps promote high levels of spiritual development. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is held back by weaknesses in pupils' awareness of the diversity of the wider world, however, and lack of contact with cultures other than their own. As a result, this aspect is good overall, rather than outstanding. Overall, pupils are well prepared by the school for moving on to the next stage in their education

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching and use of assessment to support learning is good overall. There is a small amount of outstanding teaching. In the best lessons, teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and use this and a good variety of teaching approaches to make learning interesting and relevant. Good assessment and tracking systems give teachers a clear picture of the progress of pupils. This information is used well in lessons to target support from teaching assistants and other specialist teachers and establish additional support groups to meet pupils' needs. Individual pupils' learning targets are effective in most cases in raising pupils' aspirations and focusing their learning. The school has responded well to the concern in the last inspection report about the need to improve pupils' opportunities to learn independently. Strategies have been put in place and pupils are increasingly able to work on their own or in small groups, helped by high quality resources. Speaking and listening skills are sometimes not given enough attention, however, with the result that pupils do not learn as effectively as they could from each other or from adults.

The good curriculum is responsive to most pupils' needs. There is a clear focus upon the key areas of literacy and numeracy, and appropriate Reading Recovery and Big Write programmes are proving effective in improving pupils' basic skills. Links with other subjects are being developed, as well as the use of ICT. There is good

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

attention to pupils' personal development and health. Good partnership working also provides pupils with opportunities within the arts and sport that the school could not otherwise provide. There is a good range of clubs and additional activities that are enthusiastically supported by all groups of pupils. The overall design of the restructured curriculum has yet to be finalised.

The care, guidance and support provided by the school are satisfactory. Pastoral care is good and the school works especially well with outside agencies to help to ensure that the needs of pupils who are potentially vulnerable due to their circumstances are met. This is helped by a good programme of social and emotional aspects of learning within the school. Systems for managing behaviour are also good. Good transition arrangements help pupils on entry to the school and when they transfer to the next stage of their education. Past weaknesses in quality assurance practices that resulted in some risk assessments being overlooked have now been remedied.

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	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The experienced headteacher has a clear vision for the school and has driven improvement forward since the last inspection with determination. He communicates this ambition well to staff, the governing body, parents and carers. The leadership and management of improvement was judged at the last inspection to be satisfactory but is now good, with challenging targets being met by most pupils.

Restructuring of some aspects of subject leadership has been undertaken, but the direct involvement of some subject leaders in monitoring the quality of provision within their areas and the quality of their improvement planning, remains underdeveloped. Nevertheless, the school has a good understanding through its self-evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses and good plans in place for future improvement. The promotion of equal opportunity is good and discrimination is extremely rare. When it is encountered it is dealt with well. The majority of safeguarding practices are good, but this area is satisfactory overall. Some practices identified during the inspection, that needed tightening, have now been attended to by the school.

Engagement with parents and carers is good, and they value the family support and training sessions that the school provides, especially for reading and parenting. The governing body has become increasingly involved in the day-to-day life of the school, and supports and challenges it satisfactorily. Community cohesion is good at school and local levels but the school recognises that its links with the wider world are still being developed and thus this area is satisfactory overall.

These are the grades for the 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	3
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good induction arrangements ensure that children and their parents and carers receive a warm welcome in the Reception class. Children settle happily into the stimulating environment that caters well for their needs. They make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage because of the strong focus on their basic skills and personal development. Children who are potentially vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress.

Teachers communicate regularly with parents and carers and are well aware of children's interests. Teachers assess children's progress well and use this information to inform the next steps in their learning and to construct interesting learning journals for each child. Teaching is good and planning of high quality, with a good balance of activities that children choose for themselves and ones that are adult directed. The outdoor learning area has been improved recently but needs further development to allow all areas of learning to be accessed. Children's behaviour is good and staff work together well to ensure that children have a good understanding of expectations and routines. Leadership and management are good, but some aspects of planning need a sharper focus. Staff training is up-to-date.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The response rate from parents and carers to the Ofsted questionnaire was much lower than that normally seen. Those who returned the inspection questionnaire are very happy with most aspects of the school's work. They consider it provides a safe and caring environment for their children and that it is well led and managed. A few feel that the school does not deal with unacceptable behaviour effectively. Inspectors looked carefully at the school's practice in this area and found that it was good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Peter's Catholic 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 inspection team received 35 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 157 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	66	12	34	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	26	74	8	23	1	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	20	57	14	40	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	60	13	37	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	25	71	10	29	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	63	12	34	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	57	14	40	1	3	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)	23	66	10	29	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	66	12	34	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	57	12	34	3	9	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	66	11	31	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	21	60	13	37	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	69	10	29	1	3	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 all 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



23 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Prenton, CH43 9QR

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school recently. You were very friendly and polite, and enthusiastic about what you do.

St Peter's is a good school. You make good progress through the school as a result of the good teaching and the subjects that you cover in lessons. Those of you who find learning difficult also make good progress because of the high quality additional support you receive. Your behaviour is good and you are well involved in the daily life of the school and local community. You say you feel safe and highly valued in school and you have a good understanding of what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle, helped by the many sporting opportunities provided through the school's good links with other schools. Your spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is good.

We have asked the school to consider the following points that will help it improve further.

- Improve some aspects of your learning, such as your speaking and listening skills and your writing skills.
- Improve attendance to at least good, so that your learning is not disrupted by absence.

You can help by telling your teachers how best you learn and if your work is too hard or too easy. I wish you the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Cromey-Hawke
Lead Inspector

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