

St Peter's CofE (A) First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124328
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	380860
Inspection dates	17–18 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Alan Dobbins

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	52
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Arthur Forrester
Headteacher	Caroline Gregory
Date of previous school inspection	12 December 2006
School address	Town Head Alton Stoke-on-Trent ST10 4AW
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed seven lessons and all three of the school's five teachers who were teaching over the time of the inspection. They held meetings with five representatives of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils, a few parents and carers, and with the consultant to the school. Inspectors looked at documents and the data the school has on pupils' progress, monitoring and self-evaluation records, and policies and procedures for safeguarding. They scrutinised 35 questionnaires from parents and carers as well as others submitted by pupils.

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

- How accurate is the school's information on pupils' attainment and progress?
- How well do teachers use information about what pupils know and can do in planning to ensure that lessons that are right for the pupils?
- How effective is the team of senior leaders and the governing body in improving the quality of the school?
- How good a start do children get in the Reception class?

Information about the school

St Peter's is a smaller than average-sized village school. Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school's two classes are mixed age, extending over a wider-than-typical age range. The governing body manages the breakfast and the after-school clubs. The school has gained a number of awards, including the Arts Mark Gold and has Staffordshire Healthy Schools status. For a number of years, it has won the schools award for teaching across Staffordshire.

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

St Peter's is a good school. Its small size and the outstanding relationships pupils have with staff give it a strong family feel. It provides a caring, supportive environment where pupils thrive and are prepared well to meet the challenge of their next school. Most parents and carers are committed supporters of the school and about a third have chosen to send their children to St Peter's rather than to schools closer to where they live. One said, 'The school has a lovely ethos and my children are very happy there' and another commented, 'We are lucky to have this school in our village.'

The Reception Year provides children with a good start to their education. They enter with skills levels and understanding broadly in line with national expectations in most of the areas of learning. Over their time in the Reception Year, they make good progress and enter Year 1 with levels just above the national average. Through the school, pupils make good progress in the core subjects of English and mathematics. At the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2), they attain standards that are above the national average. By the time they leave school at the end of Year 4, they are further above the national averages and achieve well. They do well in the other subjects, especially in art and design and in information and communication technology.

Helping pupils to develop into well-rounded individuals is a major strength of the school. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and pupils are valued and respected. They say that they like being at school 'very much' because they feel 'safe'; 'it is an easy place to make friends'; and because they are doing well in their learning. The strong link with the local church is beneficial in promoting spiritual and moral beliefs, such as the importance of trust, respect and friendship and in learning about right and wrong. Pupils know the right choices, especially when these have to do with staying safe and keeping healthy. Attendance is high. That and their outstanding behaviour and attitudes to their work make important contributions to the good progress they make in their learning and to their development as thoughtful and considerate young people.

The school has a good capacity for sustained improvement. Through good self-evaluation procedures, senior leaders and the governing body know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. Since the last inspection, senior leaders have dealt well with staff changes without allowing them to limit pupils' achievement. Their programme for monitoring, evaluating and improving teaching is resulting in a greater number of good lessons being taught than hitherto. Behaviour has improved

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and pupils are better prepared to face the challenge of their next school. The governing body has precise knowledge of what is required to attain outstanding provision and is excited about supporting leaders in their drive to improve. In most lessons, teaching is good. Nevertheless, pupils wide-ranging needs are not always met well enough. In such lessons, while planning is good enough to promote good progress overall, it does not take a precise enough account of what each pupil knows and can do. During some parts of the lessons, the tasks for pupils can be either too hard or too easy; both act to limit learning. Also, the procedures for tracking how well pupils are doing in their learning do not identify quickly enough those who are falling below their targets. The progress of those pupils is slowed because they do not gain speedy enough access to the interventions available to provide additional support for their learning.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and progress even further by sharpening:
 - the use of assessment information so that teachers plan lessons that are always made up of tasks that challenge each pupil effectively
 - the procedures for recognising how well pupils are doing against their targets for learning, so that those who fall behind can be identified more quickly for additional work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

In most lessons, planning matches well with the learning needs of most of the pupils much of the time. Hence, progress is good overall for all groups, including boys and girls, the few pupils of minority ethnic heritage and those who are gifted and talented. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress also against their targets. There is much that is good in lessons. For example, routinely, pupils gain good support from the teaching assistants. In a good lesson in information and communication technology, pupils learned to use a software package to create a photo story that visitors could access to learn about the history and places of the local village. The wide range of pupils' capabilities and experiences in using computers was managed effectively by pairing up those with a good knowledge of computers and of the software package with others with less knowledge. The teacher and the assistant provided quick and effective support. That meant that all pupils made good progress in learning to use the photo story programme. The pupils enjoyed the lesson for many reasons, including working on a task that made sense to them. They worked well together and created a high-quality pastiche of pictures and titles to which they would record voice-over in the next lesson. Nevertheless, those with the greatest capability spent too much time reinforcing their knowledge of the programme and not exploring new dimensions, as they needed to explain procedures to their partners. In other lessons, for example in a lesson on bar graphs in mathematics, the lower-attaining pupils worked on a task they did not fully understand. They lost time in their learning trying to work out what was expected of them.

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Pupils have accepted their roles as learners fully and their behaviour and attitudes to their work rarely limit the standards they attain. Pupils gain much benefit from and are proud of the contribution they make to the running of the school as members of the school council, classroom monitors, playground leaders, buddies and reading partners. The good take-up of lunchtime activities and after-school sports clubs shows pupils’ good awareness of the need to maintain a healthy life style. The very well-established relationships with the local church and with village life have a very positive impact on the way pupils develop into polite youngsters who show respect to their adults and to their friends. They have many opportunities to consider their lives in comparison with those of others. They know about the work of Sight Savers in preventing sight loss; take part in productions, such as the ‘Emerald Crown’ production on rainforests; and learn about the Fairtrade organisation. Pupils take a full part in all the church festivals and have excellent opportunities to gain awareness of the traditions and beliefs of others. For instance, they do it through links with a school in Japan and through the diocese link with a school in Kenya.

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	2
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	1
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 workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good because most teachers, most of the time, meet the challenge of matching lesson tasks to the learning needs of their pupils. The good progress seen in English and mathematics is solid evidence of this. Over the time of the inspection, lesson observations showed teachers and their assistants to have the skills and competencies to increase standards and progress even higher. Many of the major

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

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contributory requirements for outstanding teaching and outstanding progress are in place. Nevertheless, teachers are not precise enough in using their knowledge of what pupils can do already and how they are progressing towards their targets to achieve the highest of standards and the best possible progress. The school's computer assessment system for recording and analysing the extent of pupils' learning is good, but it is not being used well enough to plan lessons that provide an even better match with the learning needs of each pupil. The interactive whiteboards are often used well to present learning objectives and to add colour, sound and movement to stimulate learning.

The curriculum is good because it provides effective learning opportunities for all pupils. Its strength lies in the additional breadth gained through the school's awards. The Arts Mark award has led directly to very successful computer-generated presentations in the village hall on topics such as the evacuation of children in World War II. Also, a pupil for each of the last three years has had a painting chosen for display at the Royal Academy. Staffordshire teaching awards have been won by the school for each of the last three years. In conjunction with Creative Partners last year's winning entry, an animated presentation of the story of 'Odin's Quest', was presented at a theatre in Stafford and in the village hall. Winning the Sight Savers award has required pupils to learn about the causes of sight loss and the ways in which this can be prevented. Work for the Healthy Schools award has raised awareness of the need to keep fit and healthy. Clubs act also to broaden the experiences available to pupils. They have a high take-up and range from gardening and knitting to sports and music. The breakfast and after-school club which runs every school day is led and managed well. It is appreciated very much by parents and carers because they know that their children are safe and secure and looked after well.

The procedures for care, guidance and support, reflected regularly in the friendly advice and encouragement staff routinely offer to pupils, are good. It is not surprising that pupils flourish because their personal and social needs are met so well. Records show that when they require specialist help, for example from the educational psychologist or the nurse, it is available quickly and is most often effective. Transition through the school and to the next school that most pupils attend works well and ensures a smooth passage. The prompt check made on pupils' absence contributes to their high level of attendance overall. Support for learning is not as effective; those who fall below their targets for learning are not recognised quickly enough.

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

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The effectiveness of care, guidance and support

2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher gains good support from senior leaders and from the governing body. Together, they have dealt well with staff changes in recent years so that these have not had an adverse effect on the progress of pupils or on the ethos of the school. Behaviour is now outstanding and pupils show increased maturity in their preparedness for their next challenge. The procedures for monitoring and evaluating teaching have been improved. Leaders and the governing body are right in recognising that more effective use of assessment information is a necessary step to raise standards and progress from good to outstanding.

Safeguarding procedures are thorough and the school exceeds statutory requirements. The governing body ensures that the appropriate policies are effective in securing the safety and well-being of pupils. Training in child protection is good. The good links established with other relevant agencies are effective in making the school a safe and secure place for pupils. All pupils gain equal access to all that the school offers and make good progress. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are looked after well. There is no evidence of discrimination of any sort. The school has good procedures for ensuring parents and carers are able to gain all the information they wish on the progress of their children and the activities of the school. A good number have direct links to the school by acting as governors or as classroom helpers. Most are enthusiastic supporters of the activities of the school association.

Good regard has been paid to community cohesion. The school is a central element in village life. Links with other local schools add benefit through joint initiatives, such as reading week, storytelling week and the language festivals. Taking part in activities in the local area, including the recorder festival in Lichfield Cathedral and working with staff at the Potteries Museum add richness to the curriculum. Many activities are selected purposefully to increase pupils' awareness of those with different beliefs and who are from different cultures. They work well. Pupils have a clear recognition of advantages in their lives compared with those of children in other countries, such as India, Guatemala and Japan, but the school has few national links.

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
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2

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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	2
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 get off to a good start in the Reception Year. They settle quickly as they develop strong and trusting relationships with the adults. They enter with skills and understanding around the levels expected in each of the areas of learning and slightly below in literacy. During the Reception Year, they catch up in reading and writing, and move into Year 1 with levels just above the local authority averages in each area of learning. The class is a purposeful, but fun place. Teaching places good emphasis on the development of children’s basic skills and the curriculum provides them with varied learning opportunities. Assessment procedures are good and provide detailed information on how children are progressing in each learning area. The information is used well in planning sessions and activities that are relevant to individual children, including a good balance of indoor and outdoor activities that are both child initiated and adult led. Children enjoy their learning. They work hard and take a full part in activities that provide opportunities to learn independently, readily making choices for themselves. Their personal, social and emotional development is evident as they take turns, share the resources harmoniously with one another and listen carefully. Through their good behaviour, they show good regard for staying safe. They have good awareness of the choices they can make to stay healthy, including the need to follow good hygiene practices, eat healthily and to be active. The good progress they make reflects the good organisation and management.

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

Almost all of the parents and carers who answered the questionnaire or who talked with an inspector were supportive of the work of the school. They are pleased their children enjoy the school and, overall, are happy with its work. In their comments, parents and carers said they were very appreciative of the work of staff. A very few

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registered concern that the school was not fully meeting the needs of their children. Inspectors looked closely at this and judged that teachers were effective in meeting the learning needs of most of their pupils most of the time. When pupils present with special educational needs and/or disabilities the school makes a serious effort to deal with these, so that they gain full access to learning. Inspectors judged that the above-average attainment seen in each of the last few years is testament to the school's good success in matching its provision to the needs of its pupils.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Peter's CofE (A) First 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 52 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	89	4	11	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	29	83	6	17	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	14	40	14	40	3	9	2	6
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	40	17	49	2	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	16	46	17	49	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	14	39	18	50	1	3	2	6
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	69	10	28	0	0	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)	18	50	15	42	0	0	1	3
The school meets my child’s particular needs	19	54	10	29	4	11	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	50	14	39	2	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	46	14	40	2	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	16	46	16	46	2	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	22	63	12	34	0	0	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 are 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.



19 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter's CofE (A) First School, Stoke-on-Trent, ST10 4AW

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We found it to be a good school that does some things very well. These are some of the things we liked especially.

- Your excellent behaviour and the way the school helps you in growing up to be polite and thoughtful.
- Your very regular attendance.
- That you say you are safe and secure at school and enjoy being there.
- The good progress you make in your learning.
- The way in which your headteacher, the governing body and all the staff are working to make the school an even better place for you.

To help your school continue to improve, we have asked all your teachers always to use the information they have about what you know and can do in planning lessons. That will help them to give you work that is neither too easy nor too hard. Also, we have asked the school to identify those of you who are not doing as well as you should in your learning more quickly so you can be provided with extra help. Of course, you can all help by continuing to behave as well as you did over the time of my visit, always working hard in lessons and by taking a full part in school life.

Yours sincerely

Alan Dobbins
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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