

St Peter's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106241
Local Authority	Tameside
Inspection number	309067
Inspection dates	23 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Clare Henderson

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 on roll	257
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Elizabeth Merrylees
Headteacher	Mrs Elaine Summersgill
Date of previous school inspection	October 2003
School address	Hough Hill Road Stalybridge Cheshire SK15 2HB
Telephone number	0161 338 3303
Fax number	0161 303 2073

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The following issues were investigated: standards and achievement of higher attaining pupils in writing and mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 1; pupils' multicultural development; and the effectiveness of guidance given to pupils through target-setting. Evidence was gathered from: observation of learning; the pupils' work; discussion with pupils, the staff and governors; and a scrutiny of school documents and 79 parent questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified. These have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

Description of the school

This is a large parish based school. A below average proportion of pupils take up free school meals. The percentage of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the proportion of those most vulnerable is below average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A few pupils of minority ethnic heritage are at an early stage of learning English. The school has gained the Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Peter's is an outstanding school that provides excellent value for money. It is founded, as parents proudly state, 'on a family approach in which teamwork is paramount'. The school is held in high regard by parents, the parish and local community. A typical viewpoint of parents is 'We feel privileged to have our children at such a lovely school'. Most parents appreciate the care and devotion shown by staff. They are right to do so, because the school provides an outstanding level of care, guidance and support. All adults, with support from outside agencies, do all they can to ensure the safety of the most vulnerable pupils and work tirelessly to support and guide them. Pupils' self-esteem and learning is guided sensitively, paving the way towards their high achievement and excellent personal development.

Pupils take immense pride in their school and exclaim that, 'We think it's the best!' Their pride is reflected in excellent rates of attendance and exemplary behaviour. They strongly resist any form of bullying or racism and show much concern for others, for example, as playground leaders, school council members and through their partnership with a nursery school in Gambia. Worry boxes and pupil questionnaires ensure that pupils' views have a bearing on school life. Pupils' awareness of other cultures and their spiritual, moral and social development are outstanding. They are acutely aware of the benefits of good diet and exercise, as seen in the achievement of the Healthy Schools Award. In acquiring secure literacy, numeracy and study skills, pupils are very well prepared for the future.

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Their standards on starting Year 1 are at, or near, the levels expected for their age. Standards at the end of Year 2, in 2007, were above average for all groups of pupils. There is an improvement on those attained in 2006, particularly for the more able pupils in writing and mathematics. This was as a direct result of the school's swift action in putting in place specific programmes to improve pupils' writing and mathematical skills. Pupils' achievement from Years 3 to 6 is consistently high. Standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science and are rising year on year because the school sets very challenging targets, which pupils reach. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those most vulnerable or at an early stage of learning English benefit from skilled teaching, which helps them to make exceptionally good progress. Support from within the local community for pupils at an early stage of learning English greatly improves their command of the language. Able and gifted pupils also progress rapidly in response to teachers' high expectations.

Teaching is outstanding. The way pupils are managed and encouraged is of the highest calibre and, consequently, they give of their best. Teachers ensure that pupils know exactly what is expected of them, how well they are learning and what they need to do to improve. Their understanding is carefully checked and extended through excellent use of self and peer group assessment, enabling them to become confident, independent learners. Lessons are challenging and move along swiftly. The work provided and the targets set are tailored carefully to match pupils' different learning needs. Concentration and interest levels are high. This accelerates learning and promotes high achievement.

Pupils' enjoyment of learning and their achievement are positively influenced by a stimulating curriculum, which imaginatively links subjects together to make learning interesting and fun for all groups of pupils. Partnerships are grasped to bring breadth and a wider range of specialisms to the curriculum. For example, the very effective health education programme, residential visits and excellent range of additional activities provide unique opportunities for pupils to: experience the wider world; learn to speak a choice of other languages; develop their talents in art, music and sport; and appreciate safe and healthy lifestyles.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide outstanding leadership and management, never resting on their laurels in their pursuit of excellence. Senior staff check the work of the school by observing lessons and analysing pupils' progress on a regular basis. This provides a wealth of information, enabling governors to provide excellent support and challenge to the school. Areas for improvement, such as raising standards in Key Stage 1 for the more able in writing and mathematics, have been clearly identified and very successfully improved. At the time of the previous inspection, the school was judged to be good. Since then, standards have risen, yet there is no hint of complacency. This is why the school was over cautious when it judged some areas of its work to be good, when in fact they are outstanding. Pupils say the school is the best, but the view of the staff is that, 'We continue to strive for excellence in all we do'. This reflects the school's drive and excellent capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the foundation stage

Grade: 1

Provision in the Foundation Stage is outstanding. Children get off to an excellent start in Nursery and Reception because of the exemplary care and attention they receive from staff. This, accompanied by high quality teaching and strong and effective leadership, sets excellent foundations for the children's journey in learning and their personal development. The school has fostered excellent links with parents, who are happy with all aspects of provision. 'My child is thoroughly enjoying school, I have noticed a difference in their speech and use of language,' and, 'They are able to express a view about the topics being taught,' typify the wholehearted support of parents. Activities in both Nursery and Reception enable children to explore, investigate, design, build and enjoy new experiences imaginatively and freely in a stimulating environment that makes best use of both indoor and outdoor space. This is why most children, from a broadly average starting point, achieve standards expected for their age at the end of the Foundation Stage and move smoothly into Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- The school has identified accurately its priorities for further improvement and so there are no further ones to add.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of boarding provision	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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



24 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Stalybridge, SK15 2HB

Thank you so much for being really helpful to me during my visit and for your warm welcome and politeness in answering all my questions. I thoroughly enjoyed my visit and would like to share my findings with you.

I enjoyed looking at some of your work and listening to what you said during lessons. I agree with you that staff listen to what you have to say, take really good care of you and make sure that you all do really well. These are some of the reasons why you mature into such courteous and caring individuals, who show great interest in other people. The personal qualities you gain are excellent and will equip you very well for your life ahead.

You told me that your school was, 'the best'. After spending a day with you, I agree that it is outstanding in every way. When I asked you what you liked best, you said the staff. I agree with you that your headteacher and deputy headteacher are excellent leaders who do everything they can to make your time in school enjoyable, happy and worthwhile. Teachers and support assistants work extremely hard to make your lessons interesting and provide work at just the right level to help you learn successfully. This is why your achievement is exceptionally good and the standards you reach are well above average by the time you are ready to move on to high school.

As well as providing a first-class education for you, all adults within your school do their very best to keep you safe and help you to understand why it is important to be healthy and hardworking. Your behaviour and the care you show for others and your school is excellent.

Your school is very successful. Your headteacher and your teachers know exactly what needs to be done to improve your school even more. You can help by continuing to listen to your teachers and do your best at all times.

With best wishes for the future

Mrs Clare Henderson
Lead inspector