



St Peter's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number 108385
Local Authority Gateshead
Inspection number 288083
Inspection dates 13–14 February 2007
Reporting inspector Mr John Heap

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

Type of School	Primary	School address	Dryden Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Low Fell
Age range of pupils	4–11		Gateshead
			Tyne and Wear
			NE9 5TU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 4878233
Number on roll	202	Fax number	0191 4878233
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr J Quinn
Date of previous school inspection	June 2002	Headteacher	Mrs Lisa Stokoe

Age group 4–11	Inspection date(s) 13–14 February 2007	Inspection no. 288083
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a broadly average sized primary school that serves several residential areas, some with signs of disadvantage. The school population is predominantly White British and a small number of pupils are from other minority ethnic backgrounds, some of whom are learning English as an additional language. A few pupils are cared for by the local authority. A broadly average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities. Children enter the Foundation Stage with abilities that are at the expected level for their age. The school has Healthy School and ArtsMark status and the Quality Standard in Basic Skills.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. It provides good value for money. The school benefits from the active support of, and good links with, parents, church, local community and, of course, the pupils. As one young child wrote: 'I love this school, I love it so much I would marry it, you know!'

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They benefit from the excellent care provided by the school and the very strong elements of the curriculum that promote enthusiasm, inquisitiveness and a willingness to work collaboratively. Several national awards highlight the school's effective work in areas such as basic skills and the arts. This results in pupils thoroughly enjoying school and their lessons; this is endorsed further by their good attendance. Staff are vigilant and care procedures are robust so pupils say that they feel very safe and secure in school. Older pupils also provide welcome support by successfully 'buddying' the Foundation Stage children. Along with the good teaching, this also plays a significant part in the good start children have to their time in the school and the good progress they make in the Reception class. The strong Catholic ethos fosters exemplary spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong; as a result, behaviour is excellent. Pupils are aware of mankind's responsibilities to the environment and to each other. Outward signs of this are the regular fund-raising and the donation of proceeds to very worthy causes, often in other cultures. They are very aware of the benefits of leading a healthy lifestyle.

Pupils are taught well and learning is good. Marking is effective, but inconsistent in showing pupils what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve further. Nevertheless, standards are significantly above average at the end of Years 2 and 6 and pupils make good progress. Results in national tests are on an upward trend. In Years 3 to 6, pupils make particularly strong progress in mathematics leading to the school being ranked in the top four per cent nationally. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 is double the national average in English and mathematics. All pupils achieve well, including those in minority groups. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those learning English as an additional language benefit greatly from the good links the school has with outside support agencies. The good academic standards and their enjoyment of learning mean that pupils are outstandingly prepared for their next stage of education and life beyond school.

Strengths in provision and pupils making good progress in their academic and social development are not brought about by accident. They are the result of:

- exemplary leadership by the headteacher and the effective sharing of her vision with staff and the effective governors
- good self-evaluation, the willingness to work hard and building on the good progress already made.

Consequently, the school is not complacent and there is a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that marking refers consistently to the targets they set for pupils so that they know what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well because they are taught well and have very good attitudes to learning. Standards are significantly above average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Children in Reception make good progress, particularly in their personal and emotional development, language and early mathematical skills. By the time they enter Year 1, almost all have achieved the typical levels found nationally, and a good proportion has exceeded them.

At the end of Year 2, standards have been above average in most years, with the exception of 2004. Results are better in reading and mathematics, but there has been a surge forward in writing standards since 2005. Results in national tests are on an upward trend. By the end of Year 6, standards in national tests are above average. This continues the trend for the last five years during which the school has met its challenging targets. Pupils make particularly strong progress in mathematics leading to the school being ranked in the top 4% nationally. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 is double the national average in English and mathematics. All pupils progress well, including those in minority groups. For example, some pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities progressed from below average attainment in Year 2 to average attainment in Year 6, particularly in English and science. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. The school's mission as a Catholic school touches all aspects of its work and pupils regularly reflect on their growing experience of life and faith. Lessons, visits and visitors effectively promote pupils' good knowledge and understanding of the variety of faiths and cultures in Britain and the wider world. From entry to school, pupils develop superbly in their personal, social and emotional development and in Year 6 are confident and responsible ambassadors for the school. The high quality of relationships fostered by the staff leads to pupils developing very good attitudes to learning, behaving excellently and enjoying their work. Older pupils explain how they feel safe and extremely secure. All pupils understand the importance of living healthily and teaching has an important impact on what they eat and how they strive to keep fit. Their willing contribution to the school, parish and wider community is outstanding and their high sense of duty and care reflects their excellent moral development. Pupils are confidently looking forward to the next stages of their lives because their basic academic and social skills are at such high levels.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and pupils progress well, especially in English, mathematics and science. Pupils say that they really enjoy their work. The effective team in the Reception class promotes good progress by providing rich learning experiences in a stimulating setting. Lesson planning is good across the school. It is firmly based on the assessment of pupils' individual needs and also caters for the different groups effectively. Pupils' progress is monitored closely, but some marking practices are inconsistent. Although there are some satisfactory examples, in some classes, marking does not make it clear enough to pupils how well they have done and how they can improve their work further. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which is supplemented well by specialist music and sports' provision. There are strengths also in the teaching of writing, which has improved since the last inspection, and the challenge provided for high attaining pupils in mathematics. Support staff provide skilled and effective help for pupils needing extra support and help the teachers to enrich pupils' learning in after school activities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum is enriched by an exciting range of visits, visitors, and after-school activities. Although English, mathematics and science are the main focus for pupils' learning, there are also good opportunities for them to learn music, sports, art, French and information and communication technology (ICT). These opportunities lead to excellent promotion of pupils' personal development and well-being. Opportunities in the Foundation stage for outdoor play have improved since the last inspection and a new 'Spiritual Garden' provides pupils with quiet moments of reflection and prayer. There are special curriculum weeks based on particular themes and there are good curricular links with other local schools. Pupils have good opportunities to use their English and mathematics skills in other subjects, but the staff have not yet responded fully to national guidance on the linking of ideas and activities across subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This aspect is good overall but care is excellent. Parents are very satisfied with the way staff are vigilant in ensuring pupils' welfare. All required child protection and safeguarding procedures are in place. Older pupils assist the staff very well in caring for and supporting the younger pupils at playtime. Support and guidance are good in academic and personal development for all groups of pupils. Pupils say that when they need help there is always someone to turn to. Staff set pupils targets for them to aim for and share with them the learning objectives of lessons. Through discussion and marking, staff often link what pupils do to their targets or lesson objectives, but there is inconsistent practice across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher provides excellent leadership that promotes a very strong and secure climate for learning. As a result, pupils thoroughly enjoy what they do and achieve well. The school is not in any way complacent and senior staff know that there are areas that need further refinement. The senior leadership team knows the school well and evaluates its work accurately. Planning for school improvement is detailed, challenging and realistic, but some areas lack clear measures of success. Staff have a common and shared vision for the school and they make a good team. Their work is valued by governors, parents and pupils and they are supported in their willingness to improve. Procedures and practices are well established and lead to pupils being safe, really well cared for and ready for the future.

Governors play a full part in the school, give good support and have effective procedures for finding out what they need to know. Finances are managed carefully and good forward-planning means that important projects can be funded; for example, the remodelling of the playground.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

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 behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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

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.

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

St Peter's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School
Dryden Road
Low Fell
Gateshead
Tyne and Wear
NE9 5TU



15 February 2007

Dear children

Mr Jackson and I thoroughly enjoyed being in your good school this week. We are very impressed by the way you made us very welcome and the mature way you showed yourselves to be courteous and helpful throughout our visit. Please give a special thanks to the many children and adults who talked with us.

What we particularly liked about your school:

- the good and fruitful links with the community and your contribution to that
- the way that older pupils help the youngest to settle into school life and feel safe and secure
- your outstanding behaviour and consistently good attendance show how much you respect and enjoy school
- the good progress you make in Reception and Years 1 to 6, which results in you doing well in your tests in Years 2 and 6
- the good teaching, curriculum, guidance and support that you receive
- the way that you all contribute to the Catholic ethos in the school
- the excellent leadership of the headteacher.

We have asked the teachers to make the way they mark your work more consistent so that you always clearly understand how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve further. We know that you will follow the advice from your teachers very closely.

Mr Jackson and I wish you well and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

John Heap
Lead inspector