

St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126377
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	315523
Inspection dates	15–16 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Tom Simpson

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Stoker
Headteacher	Caroline Wood
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2003
School address	The Parade Marlborough SN8 1LQ
Telephone number	01672 513158
Fax number	01672 513020

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a slightly smaller than average sized school serving part of a small market town. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) varies from year to year but is currently average. However, the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is above average. A specialist learning centre (SLC) serving East Wiltshire is based at the school. Attainment on entry is below average. The school has gained the 'Healthy School' award, the sports 'Activemark', an 'Artsmark' and an International Schools Award, the latter reflecting its commitment to global education and multicultural understanding.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. It has some significant strengths as well as areas of relative weakness. A particular strength is the effective pastoral care and guidance it provides for the pupils. The pupils and their individual needs are well known to staff and this contributes effectively to their good personal development. Pupils with LDD, particularly those in the SLC, are very well provided for and this is having a significant impact on the progress they are making. Staff at all levels are committed to raising standards while further developing a curriculum which is both interesting and relevant to the pupils' needs. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe there. Most parents are happy with the provision the school makes for their children. One wrote, for example, 'St Peter's is a happy school striving to do its best for children with a huge range of educational needs.' Another commented, 'I feel the school offers an all-round education, not purely an academic one, which is surely what all schools should be doing to ensure that children are prepared for future education and life.' A small minority of parents expressed concerns about the number of supply teachers, which has been unavoidable.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average. Pupils with LDD achieve well and some very well. However, achievement in science is less strong than in other subjects. This is largely because the work provided for the pupils, particularly those who are more able, is often not interesting enough and does not challenge them effectively. This is reflected in the inconsistent quality of teaching and learning. Although satisfactory overall, it ranges from satisfactory to outstanding. Curricular provision meets statutory requirements. However, it is not engaging the pupils enough in some subjects, or stimulating them to reach for higher standards. The school has recognised this and has appropriately identified it as one of its targets for improvement. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Academic guidance has been improved in the recent past through the introduction of targets for improvement in literacy and numeracy, but these are only beginning to have an impact on standards.

The headteacher and the senior leadership team are strongly committed to raising standards and improving the school's provision. With the support of the local authority they have thoroughly assessed the current situation and put in place a number of strategies to achieve this. These have not had time to have had a full impact. Leadership and management are satisfactory.

There have been a number of improvements since the last inspection. Standards, for example, are higher and the quality of teaching is better. These show the school's sound capacity to improve further in the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Set more challenging work in science, particularly for the more able pupils.
- Ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good through setting pupils work that is more relevant and exciting. A small proportion of school's whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Standards have risen since the time of the last inspection and are now broadly average. Results in national tests are not always an accurate reflection of overall standards or the progress pupils make during the time they are in the school. This is because, as in 2007, they are affected by the above average number of pupils with LDD in the year group, some of whom have profound and multiple difficulties. Evidence from the school's own records and the observation of lessons during the inspection show that most pupils are making at least satisfactory progress against their starting points. Pupils with LDD, particularly in the SLC, are making good and sometimes dramatic progress. Science, however, is the weakest of the assessed subjects and pupils, particularly those who are more able, are not doing as well in this subject as they might.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

As the pupils come into school in the morning, their positive attitudes and their good relationships with each other make it clear that most enjoy being there. Some express the view, however, that lessons in some subjects could be more interesting if they included more practical activities. The pupils feel safe and say that there is always an adult they can go to if they are worried. Attendance is satisfactory. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with links, for example, being currently developed with schools in China. Most pupils behave well in lessons and in the playground, although a small minority exhibit challenging behaviour from time to time. The pupils participate enthusiastically in physical activities and have a very good understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles. There is an active school council and the pupils as a whole enjoy supporting their school and wider communities. For instance, they appreciate being a member of a pupil 'Play Squad' which leads playtime activities, and enjoy supporting charitable activities such as 'Red Nose' day. The school council's views contributed to improvements in toilet facilities. The way pupils are prepared for their further schooling and later life is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

A strength of the teaching at the school is the positive way in which the pupils are managed in lessons. This contributes well to good relationships at all levels. Lessons are generally well planned. Methods are varied and resources are used well to motivate the pupils. Teaching assistants are well deployed, providing good quality support, for example, for pupils with LDD. In the best teaching and learning, the pupils are exceptionally well challenged, have good independent learning skills and make excellent progress. From time to time, however, the pace of a discussion is too slow, or pupils are not involved enough in it, which leads to some losing interest. Also, in some lessons pupils are not given enough say over their own learning and tasks that are provided lack excitement or do not provide a high enough level of challenge for the more able. Pupils in the SLC are very well taught and this contributes very effectively to the progress they are making.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is broadly appropriate to the needs of the pupils. It is enriched by a number of out-of-lesson activities, including clubs, residential and other visits and visitors to the school. During the week of the inspection, for example, there was a performance of Indian music. Pupils throughout the school learn a modern foreign language. There is some cross-subject teaching. However, not enough is done to make some subjects, especially science, more relevant and interesting for the pupils. Pupils told inspectors that they would like to do more investigations in science. Good links with other local schools include contributions from the local secondary to the programmes for providing French, mathematics and design and technology. Provision for pupils with LDD is good and some aspects, such as provision for pupils in the SLC, are outstanding.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

This is a very caring school. The pastoral guidance provided for the pupils is good. The support provided for all pupils, including those who are vulnerable, those with LDD and those who exhibit challenging behaviour, is particularly effective in enhancing their access to learning. For example, the individual needs of the pupils in the SLC are very well met, while staff throughout the school have received recent training on positive strategies for managing behaviour. There are also good links with outside agencies such as the school health service to provide specialist support for pupils with specific needs. Suitable procedures for child protection, health and safety and safe staff recruitment are in place. The school has recently introduced the setting of pupil targets to support their academic guidance. Although these are beginning to be used well, particularly in English, they have not been in place long enough to have had a measurable impact on standards and achievement. There is also some inconsistency in the use of marking to guide pupils as to what they need to do next to improve their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides strong and proactive leadership. She has a very clear view of the school's needs and a strong vision for raising academic standards while maintaining and further developing a broad and creative curriculum. She is well supported by a senior leadership team whose members are having a significant individual and corporate impact on the school's forward development. For example, the leadership and management of the provision for pupils with LDD, including those in the SLC, are outstanding. Strong procedures for monitoring and self-evaluation are in place and, with the support of the local authority, these are now successfully informing the school's action plan for improvement and are beginning to have a positive impact on the school's provision. For instance, weaknesses in assessment, academic guidance, aspects of teaching and provision for science have been recognised and are being addressed. Subject managers are well involved in monitoring standards and provision in their areas of responsibility in a number of ways, although not all have had the experience of observing teaching and this reduces their capacity to take their subject further forward. Governance is satisfactory and the governors are becoming increasingly involved in the focused monitoring of the work of the school and in developing their role as 'critical friends'.

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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?	3
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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

16 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter's Junior School, Marlborough, SN8 1LQ

Thank you for making us so welcome at your school. We enjoyed meeting you and hearing about your work. We found that your school provides you with a satisfactory education.

Here are some of the things we found.

- Most of you are well behaved and you are developing good personal skills. For example, you have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles.
- You are well cared for by the adults at the school.
- You are soundly taught and are making satisfactory progress in your work.
- The school and the specialist learning centre provide particularly well for those of you who need extra help with your learning.
- The headteacher and other staff are working very hard to make the school even better.

Here is what we have suggested the school does now.

- Raise standards in science by ensuring that you are set challenging work, especially those of you who find the work in science too easy.
- Make more of your lessons interesting and exciting.

We hope that you will all work very hard to improve your work further.

Thank you again for your help.

With best wishes

Tom Simpson Lead inspector

Annex B

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With best wishes

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Lead inspector