

St Peter's Church of England First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123781
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	359514
Inspection dates	19–20 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Jane Neech HMI

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	127
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Rowe
Headteacher	Ian Bradbury
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2008
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Introduction

The school is part of 'The Quantock Federation' with Danesfield Church of England Middle School and Old Cleeve Church of England School, two other schools locally. Separate inspection teams inspected the two first schools simultaneously.

The inspection of St Peter's First School was carried out by one of her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The team observed 10 lessons and seven teachers. A lesson observation and a learning walk were observed jointly with the federation executive headteacher. Inspectors held meetings with teachers, senior leaders, a group of pupils, the chair of the federation governing body, and a group of parents and carers. The inspectors scrutinised a range of school documentation. They looked at 67 questionnaires received from parents and carers, 15 from staff and 50 from pupils.

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

- How the school is narrowing the gap between the underperformance of groups of pupils.
- The quality of teaching, and assessment of pupils' learning and how curriculum opportunities as a result the federation support pupils' learning.
- The school's systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress.
- How effectively actions by leaders and managers raise standards.

Information about the school

St Peter's Church of England First school is smaller than average. The school shares the federation governing body. Changes in staffing have resulted in the school now being led by the federation executive headteacher. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Pupils are taught in five single-age classes. A breakfast club and a range of extra-curricular clubs are run for pupils. The school has 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

The school motto, 'Together on the Learning Journey', permeates all aspects of this good school's work. Since belonging to the federation the school has focused on developing pupils' positive attitudes to learning. In this they have been extremely successful and pupils' behaviour is outstanding. The outstanding level of nurture and care, guidance and support afforded to pupils means that they feel extremely safe in school. This is demonstrated by the positive relationships and the productive way in which pupils work and play together. Parents and carers are pleased with how well their children benefit from the curriculum opportunities offered through the federation.

Current school data and pupils' work show that the progress of all groups of pupils is improving, and is now good. However, not enough time has passed for this improvement to feed through into raising standards by the time pupils leave in Year 4. The school has a good capacity to make the improvements necessary to raise standards further because of:

- the ambition, drive and commitment of leaders, governors and staff in responding to the needs of pupils
- excellent governance
- strong leadership by the executive headteacher
- the systems in place to track and evaluate pupils' progress
- the school's close monitoring of teaching and learning which leads to good self-evaluation
- the actions leaders have taken to ensure good teaching and rising progress.

Since St Peter's has become part of the federation it has gained from an improved reputation in the community. The school intake has increased and new families report that the induction is 'fantastic', particularly for the children in Reception. Pupils are polite, very friendly and confident to try out new learning in lessons. There are good links with a broad range of partners and professionals both within the federation and wider afield. These are having a positive impact on the well-being of pupils and their families. Although attendance, for example, remains broadly average, as at the last inspection, it is rising because of the measures put in place through the federation partnership.

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The improvements in teaching since the last inspection are a result of the school's sharp focus on improving the relevance and interest of the curriculum. This has helped to develop pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Consequently the gap in performance between groups of pupils is narrowing. However, teaching in English and mathematics is not always sufficiently challenging because expectations are not always high enough. Assessment during lessons is limited, so opportunities to change the direction of the lesson to increase challenge can be missed. The marking of pupils' work does not always focus enough on correcting basic skills nor give enough guidance on how to improve. This means that pupils have limited opportunity to respond to the targets they are set to improve their written work and their mathematical skills.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure teaching in English and mathematics is consistently challenging through:
 - high expectations when work is planned
 - assessing pupils' progress during the lesson and making changes if needed.
- Ensure rigorous marking is a sharp feature of pupils' learning so they know how to improve their written work across all subjects and extend their mathematical skills.

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

The younger children begin school with skills, knowledge and understanding below levels expected for early literacy and mathematics. By the time they reach the end of Key Stage 1, their performance in National Curriculum tests is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. From pupils' starting points this represents good progress. Pupils are proud that the school has received the Basic Skills Quality Mark. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have consistently outperformed their national counterparts over the past three years in reading, writing and mathematics, representing good and sometimes outstanding progress. Pupils' performance for all groups is weaker in writing. Recent initiatives are beginning to have a positive impact on improving work for all groups. For example, in a lesson observed during the inspection, a Year 2 class enthusiastically rehearsed a story in preparation for writing, using actions and different voices. This led to pupils demonstrating confident skills in sentence construction and story telling. Whilst performance in mathematics is average, pupils' learning and progress have improved as a result of focused interventions. In a Year 3 lesson concentrating on doubling numbers, higher-ability pupils were keen to apply their mental skills to double numbers containing three digits. However, not all pupils are yet able to routinely extend their mathematical thinking in solving more complex problems.

In reading, the gap between the achievement of boys and girls is narrowing as a result of the focus on phonics and new reading materials selected to interest boys.

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School data show that the progress of the pupils in Year 4 is improving steadily. Consequently more pupils are on track to achieve expected standards. Pupils know their targets but are less clear about how to improve their written work or develop their mathematical skills. The school recognises this is an area for improvement.

The School Council and older pupils enjoy the responsibilities given to them. They play an active part in the life of the school. The school has responded to suggestions made by pupils such as putting safety catches on doors. However, children report they would like to be more involved in a range of responsibilities, and the school has plans in place to address this. Pupils have a good understanding of staying healthy through diet and exercise but are less skilled in helping others to live healthily.

Pupils display impressive levels of respect for one another. During the inspection the youngest children were observed outside in their play, singing about working as a team to 'get the job done', whilst attempting to secure the walls of a large castle which kept falling down! They know the difference between right and wrong and respond quickly to advice from adults. Pupils reflect on moral, spiritual and wider cultural issues during assemblies which focus on Christian and multi-faith issues. Community links are strong through the federation and local area.

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	1
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Lessons engage pupils' interest. The teachers use resources and technology to make a marked contribution to the quality of learning, For example, in a history lesson

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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pupils had previously created their own Egyptian mummy using a computer programme. This led to pupils showing their knowledge about Egyptian tombs. The teaching of early literacy skills, such as how to read words from the sounds letters make, is having a positive impact on pupils' progress in reading. The social and emotional needs of all groups of learners, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are extremely well met because of timely interventions and good support in lessons from teaching assistants. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good. Teaching is particularly good in Spanish. During the inspection older pupils enthusiastically demonstrated their Spanish skills, showing increasing confidence in speaking a foreign language. Teachers set tasks for different abilities some lessons lack challenging opportunities for pupils in order to raise standards further.

Teachers' marking and the use of assessment generally make a contribution to pupils' learning. However, pupils' ability to improve their work is sometimes restricted because at times marking fails to guide pupils how to correct basic mistakes in written work, not only in English but across a range of subjects, or to improve the content. In mathematics, marking does not always take opportunities to give further challenge to all abilities, for example through raising questions or suggesting problems to solve.

The good curriculum is enhanced by extended opportunities through the federation specialism, such as in sport music, drama and modern foreign languages. A favourite among pupils is the running club. The school is aware of some limitations that exist in the use of the school site to engage pupils in active learning and is currently redesigning the environmental area.

The school's excellent targeted support for individuals ensures that pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable make the most of the opportunities it offers. It can demonstrate many striking examples of how individuals have been helped to overcome challenges. The breakfast club provides a nutritious and secure start to the day for those who attend. A further example of the excellent care afforded to pupils is the swift action taken by the school in response to the recent severe flooding of three classrooms. Through providing for the older pupils at the partner middle school there has been little disruption and no groups have been disadvantaged in their education. These actions have been wholeheartedly praised by parents, pupils and their families.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	3
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

1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers are highly ambitious to ensure all groups have an equal chance to achieve as well as they can. The newly created federation leadership team is well led by the executive headteacher, and changes, though comparatively recent, have had an impact on improving teaching and pupils' progress. Morale is high and key areas for improvement are being tackled systematically. Effective partnerships are making a positive difference to the equality of opportunity for all groups and individuals. Families praise the work of the school in supporting learning at home. A particular example is the transition boxes given to younger pupils for the summer holidays.

The federation governors are extremely experienced and committed to improving learning. In the current good progress for all groups of pupils they are seeing the fruits of decisive actions taken. The exemplary leadership of the chair of the governing body underpins a clear strategic understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The governing body reviews its own effectiveness and has restructured committees so that responsibilities are sharply tailored to respond to school improvement. Safeguarding arrangements and child protection responsibilities are highly rigorous. All staff gain from training and shared expertise through the federation. The consistency of policies and procedures means that this area of the school's work is outstanding. Leaders and managers ensure resources are well deployed in school and shared within the federation. Community cohesion is well promoted within the school, federation and locally. Discrimination against any group or individual is avoided at all times. Work related to improving pupils' understanding of wider communities is not as strong but the school has well-developed plans to address this through the curriculum.

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	1
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2

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The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2
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Early Years Foundation Stage

Good relationships with adults enable children to confidently enjoy the variety of active learning tasks provided for them. They respond exceptionally well to one another, showing delight in playing together. Adults plan play activities carefully, responding to children’s individual needs and this makes a good contribution to increasing children’s progress. During the inspection children were observed outside with the teacher investigating forming numbers and letters in flour paste and rice. This activity supported previous work on investigating numbers and letter formation in the classroom. The good teaching and questioning supports children’s knowledge and understanding of caring for themselves and others. One such example during the inspection was the ‘special visitors’ in the form of two puppies. Great care was taken by adults to ensure all children were safe and as a result youngsters responded with impressive maturity to the additions to the class.

Children are actively interested in books and will select favourite stories independently. They learn to put the sounds of letters together to make words. Consequently they are developing early reading and writing skills so that from their starting points children make good progress. The well-organised resources and clear routines underpin the good team work within the setting. Whilst effective use is made of the outside area for learning, leaders acknowledge the large space offers opportunities for further development. Adults in the Reception class are well led and managed by the Federation Early Years Foundation Stage leader. This has resulted in a shaper focus on assessment and tracking of children’s progress in line with federation systems. Reception staff benefit from training opportunities within the federation which inform their self evaluation and support the good overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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

The proportion of questionnaire responses returned was comparatively high, and of these, an overwhelmingly majority of parents and carers are happy with all aspects of their children’s education at school. They appreciate the opportunity to engage in learning activities with their children and report that their youngsters are keen to

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share their successes when they return to school. They speak with pride about their children's performances in joining together with partner schools. They express the view that these extended opportunities, together with the smooth transition to the next stage in education, are a real strength. A very small minority commented on concerns about how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. During the inspection inspectors observed positive behaviour in lessons, at lunchtimes and break times. The school has clear policies and procedures for following up incidents of poor behaviour.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Peter’s Church of England 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 67 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 127 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	44	66	21	31	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	43	64	20	30	3	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	27	40	35	52	3	4	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	46	33	49	1	1	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	39	58	25	37	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	31	46	32	48	4	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	51	32	48	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)	32	48	27	40	0	0	1	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	32	48	32	48	3	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	33	30	45	8	12	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	34	37	55	5	7	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	24	36	38	57	3	4	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	36	54	29	43	2	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 2009 to 31 August 2010 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 2009/10 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.



21 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter's Church of England First School, Williton TA4 4SF

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team to your school on our recent visit. Your excellent behaviour and the way adults care for you mean that your learning and progress are good. Your parents and carers are pleased about this. We were impressed with how safe you feel in school and how older pupils enjoy lessons in your partner middle school. We were pleased to hear your views and these helped us to make our judgements. Your school gives you a good education. This letter is to tell you what we found.

- The headteacher, staff and governors ensure you are kept extremely safe and cared for outstandingly well.
- You have very positive attitudes to learning and behave extremely well.
- The good teaching means you enjoy school.
- Those of you with special educational needs and/or disabilities perform well.
- You know how to be healthy and enjoy taking part in sporting clubs.
- Your curriculum is enriched through events with your partner schools.
- The staff make sure those of you who are new settle quickly in school.

I have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to work on some areas to improve your work. I have asked your teachers to give you more tasks that challenge you to produce high quality work in English and mathematics. We have also asked your teachers to mark your work so that you know exactly how to improve your written work in all subjects and develop your mathematical skills further. I am confident you will do all you can to help by working hard on your English and mathematics.

Yours sincerely

Jane Neech
Her Majesty's Inspector

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