

St Peter's CofE Primary School

Birley Street, Newton-Le-Willows, Merseyside, WA12 9UR

Inspection dates 12–13 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils make excellent progress from starting points that are generally below average. At the end of Year 6 pupils achieve standards in reading and mathematics that are well above the national average.
- Standards in writing, although above national levels, are not quite as high as in reading and mathematics. Pupils do not always have enough opportunity to apply their writing skills across the curriculum.
- High quality teaching ensures that pupils learn extremely well. It is consistently at least good, and a good proportion is outstanding.
- Teachers plan lessons that stimulate, motivate and engage pupils. Teachers know pupils very well and set work that enables all pupils to make rapid progress, including those who are eligible for the pupil premium, and those who are disabled or have special educational needs.
- Teachers challenge pupils to do well and high quality marking ensures that pupils know what they need to do to improve.
- Pupils' progress is very carefully monitored, and any slower progress is quickly addressed.
- Occasionally, in some lessons, teachers direct learning too much and pupils do not have enough opportunity to think, work and learn independently.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around the school. They enjoy school, have very positive attitudes to learning and get on extremely well together. There are excellent relationships between pupils and staff and these are a key strength of the school.
- Pupils feel completely safe in school and say that bullying is very rare. They are very well cared for.
- The school has an enriched curriculum that engages pupils in their learning and makes a strong contribution to their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school is extremely well led and managed. The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have high ambitions for the school and relentlessly pursue excellence in all areas. They have secured improvements to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons or part lessons, including one observed jointly with the deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with school leaders and managers and with four governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors also met a representative from the local authority.
- Discussions were held with two groups of pupils and inspectors spoke informally to other pupils in lessons and during break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors looked at the work pupils were doing in lessons and in their books over time. They listened to pupils in Year 2 read and talked to them about their enjoyment of reading.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and examined a number of documents. These included data concerning pupils' current achievement, development plans and performance-management information. Inspectors also looked at records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding arrangements. Minutes of governing body meetings and the school adviser's reports were also considered.
- Inspectors took account of 70 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also considered nine responses to the questionnaires completed by staff for the inspection.

Inspection team

Robert Birtwell, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Steve Rigby	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in eight classes from the Reception Year to Year 6, including some mixed-age classes.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority and children from service families) is well-below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well-below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement and progress in writing by ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to apply their writing skills across the curriculum.
- Ensure that teachers do not direct learning too much and always allow pupils enough opportunity to think, work and learn independently.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Pupils join the school in the early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are generally below those expected for children of their age. They make rapid progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding so that by the end of Key Stage 2 they reach standards in English and mathematics that are well-above average.
- Children get off to a very strong start in the Reception Year because of outstanding teaching and leadership, and a very caring environment. As a result they make excellent progress.
- Pupils learn at a rapid rate in Years 1 and 2. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have improved since the previous inspection and are typically around average, although there was a slight decline in 2013.
- Pupils continue to make rapid progress throughout Key Stage 2. Standards in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 have risen steadily. In 2013 they were well-above average in mathematics and reading and above average in writing. This represents outstanding progress from pupils' starting points, especially in mathematics and reading.
- Inspection evidence from lesson observations, the work in pupils' books and the school's data confirms that pupils are currently making excellent progress throughout the school and that achievement is outstanding over time. The proportion of pupils making expected and more than expected progress is well-above average in all subjects.
- Pupils make rapid progress in reading because it is well taught and effectively promoted throughout the school. Pupils have regular opportunities to read in school and skilled teachers and teaching assistants ensure that they have a good knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they make). The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has increased and is around average.
- Pupils have very well developed basic skills in mathematics and they can apply and use these skills very effectively to solve practical problems in real situations.
- Pupils' writing skills are secure. Although they achieve above-average standards in writing, their progress is not as strong as in reading and mathematics where fewer of them make more than expected progress. Whilst they write effectively in a range of styles, they do not always have enough opportunity to apply their writing skills in different subjects across the curriculum.
- The most-able pupils do very well and make excellent progress. For example, in 2013, the proportion of pupils who achieved a Level 6 in mathematics at the end of Year 6 was over twice the national average.
- Few pupils in each year group are supported by the pupil premium but their progress is carefully monitored. They receive well-targeted support and their achievement at least matches that of other pupils
- There are very few disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. They also make rapid progress because of the excellent individual and small-group support they receive.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Almost all the teaching observed during the inspection was at least good and a good proportion was outstanding. Teachers' enthusiasm, subject knowledge and professionalism ensure that lessons are well planned to meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers have very high expectations of what pupils can achieve and set challenging work that inspires and engages pupils in their learning. As a result pupils enjoy lessons and show a real desire to improve.
- Teachers know pupils very well and there are excellent relationships between pupils and teachers. Teachers ensure that learning occurs at a rapid pace. They use questioning skilfully to check pupils' knowledge and understanding and to challenge them to improve their work. Pupils are successfully encouraged to work in different situations, either individually or as part of a

group.

- In a Year 4 mathematics lesson for example the teacher used an able pupil to introduce and suggest a solution to an algebra problem, before moving the pupils on to different activities that were well matched to pupils' needs and abilities. The teacher encouraged pupils to share ideas and ensured that there was a brisk pace. As a result all pupils greatly enjoyed the lesson and made outstanding progress.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and to a high standard. They use praise effectively to engage and motivate pupils and give very clear guidance about what pupils need to do to improve their work and to challenge them to do better. It is clear that pupils respond positively to this advice.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is consistently good and outstanding at times. There is a good balance between teacher-directed and child-selected activities and the use of the indoor and outdoor environment. Learning is purposeful and very well matched to children's varying levels of development. As a result they make outstanding progress.
- Teaching assistants work very closely with teachers to provide effective intervention and support where it is needed. This support is very well-focused to meet the needs of individual and vulnerable pupils and ensures that they make excellent progress in line with other pupils.
- Teaching is outstanding because these excellent features are present in a significant proportion of lessons. This ensures that pupils learn very well over time. Occasionally, when teaching is good but not outstanding, teachers direct learning too much and spend too long explaining work. In these lessons pupils do not have enough opportunity to think, work and learn independently and the pace of learning is slower.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is exemplary. Pupils are extremely thoughtful and polite and show great courtesy to staff and visitors. They get on very well with each other and with adults in the school. This has a very positive impact on the climate for learning and the strong caring ethos that is evident throughout the school.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They show high levels of engagement and are keen to do well. They enjoy lessons and listen attentively to their teachers. They work independently and in groups very effectively and lessons proceed very smoothly with no interruptions to learning.
- Pupils readily take on responsibility in a variety of roles. For example, every Year 6 pupil has a responsible 'job' and Year 2 and Year 5 pupils act as playground activity leaders for younger pupils.
- Pupils take great pride in their school and greatly enjoy coming to school. As a result attendance is high and improving.
- Pupils say they feel entirely safe in school and are very well cared for. They know how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including when using the internet. They have a good awareness of different types of bullying, but say that it is very rare in school. They would report it and are confident that staff would sort it out very quickly if it occurred.
- School behaviour records show that poor behaviour is extremely rare and that the excellent behaviour seen during the inspection is typical. On the very rare occasions that pupils misbehave the school acts quickly and effectively and can demonstrate improved behaviour as a result of its actions.
- Parents who responded to the Parent View survey agreed unanimously that their children feel safe at school and almost all thought that the school ensured that pupils are well behaved.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher provides inspirational and principled leadership. School leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, have very high expectations for the school and have secured improvements to the quality of teaching and learning and achievement since the previous inspection.
- The school is a very cohesive community. There is a very strong and clear ethos and vision that is shared by all staff and they work very closely to support each other.
- Leaders and managers rigorously analyse pupils' performance and this information is used to set targets for both pupils and teachers. As a result the school has a very clear and accurate view of how well it is doing and where it could do better. The school improvement plan has as its main priority further improving achievement, standards and teaching.
- Any underperformance or slower progress is quickly identified and addressed by providing additional support when it is needed. This shows the school's successful commitment to equal opportunities for all pupils.
- There is a strong focus on the continual improvement of teaching. Appropriate professional development, coaching and mentoring and the recruitment of some very talented new staff have led to a steady rise in the quality of teaching. All teachers and teaching assistants have targets that are linked to the pupil performance and this is taken into account when deciding on pay awards. As a result teaching is now at least consistently good and outstanding overall.
- The school's curriculum is very well matched to pupils' needs and interests and provides excellent learning opportunities for all pupils. It is carefully constructed to challenge pupils in their learning, encourage problem solving and to develop creative thinking. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of well-supported activities and clubs, as well as special events, trips and visits. For example, in February 2014, Year 6 pupils will be performing at a Young Voices presentation
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is successfully promoted throughout the school and is excellent. This is highlighted by very strong links with the local church and a clear focus on social and moral issues. There are established links with other schools in England and Africa to raise pupils' cultural and global awareness and understanding. As a result pupils are kind, considerate, reflective and responsible. They do not tolerate discrimination and further reflect the school's successful commitment to equal opportunities.
- The school is using the new sports funding to increase the range and quality of physical education in the school. For example, a consultant is working with staff to improve the quality of teaching, new activities, such as Zumba, have been introduced and the school now participates in more sports competitions.
- The local authority provides light touch but effective support for this very successful school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body meets its responsibilities very effectively. Governors understand how to analyse data and are well informed about all aspects of the school's performance, including the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement and progress. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths as well as high expectations for further improvement. There is an effective committee structure and governors hold the school to account by asking probing and challenging questions. Governors have a good understanding of performance management arrangements and ensure that pupils' progress is taken into account when making decisions about pay. They know how the pupil premium funding is being spent and the impact it is having on raising achievement. They make sure that the school's finances are soundly managed and that the school meets all statutory requirements, including those related to safeguarding.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	104801
Local authority	St Helens
Inspection number	426217

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	244
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joan Matthews
Headteacher	Barbara Flitcroft
Date of previous school inspection	12 November 2008
Telephone number	01744 678630
Fax number	01744 678633
Email address	stpeter@sthelens.org.uk

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