



**St Peter's R.C. School
Aberdeen City Council
17 March 2009**

This report tells you about the quality of education at the school¹. We describe how children benefit from learning there. We explain how well they are doing and how good the school is at helping them to learn. Then we look at the ways in which the school does this. We describe how well the school works with other groups in the community, including parents² and services which support children. We also comment on how well staff and children work together and how they go about improving the school.

Our report describes the ‘ethos’ of the school. By ‘ethos’ we mean the relationships in the school, how well children are cared for and treated and how much is expected of them in all aspects of school life. Finally, we comment on the school’s aims. In particular, we focus on how well the aims help staff to deliver high quality learning, and the impact of leadership on the school’s success in achieving these aims.

If you would like to learn more about our inspection of the school, please visit www.hmie.gov.uk. Here you can find analyses of questionnaire returns. Where applicable, you will also be able to find descriptions of good practice in the school.

¹ The term ‘school’ is used to include the work of the nursery class, where relevant.

² Throughout this report, the term ‘parents’ should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

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1. The school

St Peter's R.C. School is a denominational school situated in Old Aberdeen and serving Catholic parishes in the north east of Aberdeen City. When the inspection was carried out in January 2009, the roll was 198, including 97 pupils with English as an additional language (EAL). Pupils' attendance was in line with the national average in 2006/2007.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Very good relationships among children, parents and staff.
- The school's strong identity as a community of faith and its positive approaches to developing children's understanding of other cultures.
- The school's partnership with parents and the community to enhance children's learning.
- The commitment and enthusiasm of staff, parents and children to health and wellbeing.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Children are motivated to learn and take part enthusiastically in activities. They enjoy learning about the world through interesting topic activities, such as Aztecs, slavery and buildings. Across the school children experience a broad range of opportunities to learn about the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Almost all children show very good skills in physical education. They are skilled at singing and playing musical instruments and successfully take part in school performances. Children have very good opportunities to achieve more widely through after-school activities and local and national competitions. They develop confidence, social skills and independence through educational visits and cultural events, including a residential visit to the Tomintoul Outdoor Centre by P7. Children's attainment in English language is good overall. At all stages they are developing their skills in talking and listening. Most read regularly for enjoyment and write well for a variety of purposes. Overall, children are making satisfactory progress in mathematics. They can work

confidently with shapes, graphs and angles. They need more practice in working with fractions, decimals and percentages. Almost all children need to improve their skills in problem solving. At all stages, they are beginning to develop appropriate skills in information and communications technology (ICT).

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

The school provides children with a broad and balanced curriculum which includes well-planned provision for their spiritual, personal and social development. Staff are taking forward the national initiative, *Curriculum for Excellence*, which develops children as confident individuals, responsible citizens, effective contributors and successful learners. Children have good opportunities to develop a respectful understanding of their own faith and others' faiths. This is enhanced by visits to pupils' places of worship, such as the local mosque and synagogue, as well as close involvement with the Catholic parishes. Children at the upper stages are making good progress in learning French. Most are able to ask simple questions and talk about themselves and family members in French. Staff give children opportunities to use and extend their literacy and numeracy skills through interesting activities linked to topic work. All children benefit from specialist teaching in music, art and physical education. At the early stages children would benefit from more experiences to be active in their learning. Across the school children experience a broad range of opportunities to learn about the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

Staff know their children well and identify those children requiring additional help with their learning. Classroom tasks and activities, particularly in mathematics, are not yet well enough matched to meet the needs of all children. Staff should review their planning to ensure that tasks are appropriate for all children and take account of their prior learning. The school has effective systems for identifying and supporting children with additional support needs. The programme to support children with reading is having a positive impact on developing their confidence. Staff need to make sure that children continue to make good progress. Visiting staff provide good support to children

who are learning English as an additional language. Across the school, in the majority of classes, teachers consistently share learning intentions. They do not always review learning at the end of the lesson to check for understanding. Questioning and interaction with children is good. There is scope for staff to provide more challenging activities to enable children to become more independent learners.

4. How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?

The headteacher links effectively with parents and other agencies, including psychological services, to plan effective learning support. This includes support for Polish children and their families. A class teacher, who speaks Polish, meets with Polish children and their parents weekly to discuss concerns. The support for learning teacher consults regularly with class teachers to identify and plan support for individual children. The school keeps parents well informed through fortnightly newsletters, a helpful website, parents' evenings and an annual progress report. The Parent Council supports the school well. The school has very effective links with other schools and places of educational interest. Planned visits to local museums, science centres and environmental and cultural events make learning more meaningful for children. Children enter P1 from a number of pre-school centres. The school is developing closer links with these centres to improve children's induction to P1. The school prepares children very well for their move from P7 to local secondary schools.

5. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their school community?

Staff are very committed to the school and work well together to make improvements. Several teachers have begun to share good practice in learning and teaching. The health committee takes responsibility for planning healthy activities, for instance promoting healthy snacks and organising the annual health week. Children play an active role in

improving the school through their participation in the pupil council and the eco and health promotion committees. Older children show responsibility and care by being prefects and buddying younger children. Parents support children's learning very well by volunteering to help with classroom activities, running after-school activities and helping to improve the school library. The school chaplain visits the school regularly and supports children who are preparing for the sacraments. The school has an effective system for dealing with complaints.

6. Does the school have high expectations of all children?

The school is very welcoming and children learn and play well together. Most children feel that their opinions matter and that they are valued by staff. All staff are caring and have very good relationships with children and their parents. They know about child protection and anti-racist procedures and implement them effectively. Staff have high expectations of behaviour and effort and have established a positive learning ethos. Weekly assemblies provide opportunities for worship and to celebrate children's successes.

7. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school. She has involved staff, parents and children in agreeing an appropriate set of aims for the school which are regularly reviewed. The principal teacher carries out her work effectively and supports staff well in planning for ICT and enterprise activities. This has led to better use of interactive whiteboards and computers to improve children's learning experiences. The headteacher visits classrooms to observe lessons and discuss learning and teaching. Working with staff, she now needs to make more use of the information gathered to identify and share strengths and areas for improvement. Staff take on extra responsibilities within the school, for example as coordinators for health promotion, Eco School activities and equality. The Parent

Council has clear plans to support the school, including the running of a homework club. The school is well placed to continue to improve further.

8. What happens next?

We are confident that the school will be able to make the necessary improvements in light of the inspection findings. As a result, we will make no more visits following this inspection. The school and the education authority will inform parents about the school's progress in improving the quality of education.

We have agreed the following areas for improvement with the school and education authority.

- Broaden children's learning experiences to further raise attainment in mathematics.
- Further develop approaches to planning to ensure tasks and activities meet the learning needs of all children.
- Develop approaches to self-evaluation to improve further children's learning experiences and ensure consistency across the school.

Quality indicators help schools and nursery classes, education authorities and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of a school and a nursery class. You can find these quality indicators in the HMIE publications *How good is our school?* and *The Child at the Centre*. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers evaluations of three important quality indicators to keep track of how well all Scottish schools and nursery classes are doing.

Here are the evaluations for St Peter's R.C. School.

Improvements in performance	good
Learners' experiences	good
Meeting learning needs	satisfactory

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school.

The curriculum	good
Improvement through self-evaluation	satisfactory

Managing Inspector: Pat May
17 March 2009

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This report uses the following word scale to make clear judgements made by inspectors.

excellent	outstanding, sector leading
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses