

St Pancras Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114568
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	357573
Inspection dates	15–16 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Peter Thrussell

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	144
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elizabeth Kennedy
Headteacher	Debra Turner
Date of previous school inspection	18 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Five different teachers were observed teaching nine lessons. The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the governing body, staff and a group of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documents including the school's support programme, data on pupils' progress, policies and procedures relating to safeguarding, and the results of questionnaires returned by staff, pupils and 65 parents and carers.

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

- How well teachers make and use assessments to match work to ability to ensure a good pace of learning for different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the more able.
- Whether behaviour is managed effectively to avoid disruption to pupils' learning.
- The effectiveness of the school in driving improvement given frequent changes to leadership and management.
- Whether improved provision and good leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage are leading to better outcomes for children.

Information about the school

This is a small primary school. Most pupils are taught in mixed-age classes, with children in the Early Years Foundation Stage being in a class with the Year 1 pupils. Most pupils are from White British or other White backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and of those with statements of special educational needs, is above average. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school during their primary education is higher than in most schools. In recent years there have been frequent changes to leaders and managers at senior levels. The current headteacher took up post at the start of 2011 and there is an acting assistant headteacher.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

St Pancras Catholic Primary School is a satisfactory school. Good links with parents and carers, combined with the school's good quality of pastoral care and support, mean that pupils feel safe and enjoy their time in school. They particularly enjoy the wide range of well-attended clubs on offer. One parent commented, 'My child goes to St Pancras because it creates a happy, nurturing environment.'

Children get off to a good start in Reception, where they make good progress in all areas of learning. Pupils' progress across Key Stages 1 and 2, although satisfactory, is variable both between year groups and subjects. However, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. This is because the support for them is very focused on their individual needs. Attainment by Year 6 in English and mathematics over recent years has been broadly average, although showing a rise in 2010, especially in English where attainment was significantly high. The work in books and the progress made so far this year indicate that attainment is set to rise further in 2011.

Inconsistencies in learning and progress are partly due to a lack of rigour in monitoring pupils' progress in the past. Assessments have not been sufficiently accurate to keep a check on how well pupils are doing and to raise expectations of what they could achieve. Recently introduced systems for tracking pupils' attainment and progress are beginning to enable the school to more readily identify and support underachievement and to hold teachers accountable for pupils' progress. Although teachers use assessment well to identify different ability groups, the use of this information to plan work that matches pupils' different ages, abilities and aptitudes is less secure. As a result, more-able pupils especially are not always challenged sufficiently, while less-able pupils sometimes rely too much on adult support to complete their activities. Occasionally, introductions to lessons are overlong, leaving insufficient time for pupils' independent work. Teachers and teaching assistants do not always help pupils to move their learning forward by discussing their work with them, checking their understanding and helping them to see where improvements could be made. In some classes marking and individual targets are used effectively to guide pupils in their learning, but this practice is inconsistent.

The new headteacher has very quickly gained the confidence of parents, carers and staff. A comment, 'She has made a very positive impact in a short space of time', reflects the views of many parents and carers. With the support of the local authority she has very quickly ensured that school self-evaluation is effective and a detailed support programme is in place. One strand of this programme is to fully implement and develop the role and responsibilities of subject leaders, especially in English and mathematics. Another strand is to improve the quality and consistency of teaching, which, due to disruption in senior leadership, has not been consistently monitored, although maintained at an overall satisfactory level. An immediate action this term was to stem a rise in unacceptable

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behaviour. A new behaviour policy has already rapidly improved behaviour to an overall satisfactory level that no longer disrupts pupils' learning. At times behaviour is exemplary, for example in assemblies. Pupils appreciated that they were involved in discussions on behaviour and had their say about the new procedures. They also like the fact that the school has had a very recent 'spring clean' at the instigation of the headteacher, with furniture replaced, rooms decorated and better displays which have all improved the learning environment.

Given a determined senior leadership team which is working well together, and is focused, with the full support of staff, on bringing about clearly identified school improvement, rising attainment at Key Stage 2, and the positive impact of recent actions, the school has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and progress in English and mathematics by improving the quality and consistency of teaching, ensuring that:
 - teachers make the fullest use of accurate assessment information to plan the next steps in learning in line with pupils' differing ages, abilities and aptitudes
 - lessons provide more time for pupils to talk about their learning and to work independently
 - marking and pupils' individual targets are used to show pupils how to improve their work.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by:
 - developing the roles and responsibilities of subject leaders, especially in English and mathematics
 - rigorously monitoring the quality of teaching in relation to pupils' learning and progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Children in Reception make good progress from starting points that are in line with those expected for children of this age. In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils achieve satisfactorily, with those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities making better progress than other groups. Small cohorts and a number of pupils joining the school in upper Key Stage 2, often with personal and learning difficulties, mean that attainment by Year 6 tends to fluctuate. It has been broadly average in recent years, but there is now an upward trend that reflects pupils' satisfactory progress from above average starting points in Year 1.

Lessons observed during the inspection showed that where pupils are challenged and understand what they are learning, enjoyment is evident and good progress is made. This was seen in a science lesson where pupils were challenged to separate a mixture of solids. Additional support for less-able pupils and questions that made pupils think, meant that all achieved their learning goal. They enjoyed working independently and spontaneously talked about their work, creating a working buzz about the room. In other lessons,

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planned activities were not matched well enough to ability and opportunities for pupils to talk about their work and to develop their own ideas were limited. Along with overlong introductions, this meant that pupils sometimes lacked enthusiasm for learning and, as a result, progress was no better than satisfactory.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Good church and parish links effectively contribute to this. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, knowing the importance of diet and benefiting from the many sporting opportunities on offer. Pupils make a good contribution towards the school community, with the school council representing their views. Their contribution to the wider community is shown in their fund raising for local and national charities. Opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their learning and to work independently are not fully promoted. Along with their average attendance and adequate acquisition of core skills, this means that pupils are satisfactorily prepared for their later life and learning.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
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

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are mostly well managed and good relationships ensure that pupils quickly settle to lessons. Good use is made of interactive whiteboards to introduce lessons and to check pupils' initial understanding. In a small minority of lessons, where introductions are overlong and pupils are not fully engaged in learning, attention slips a little and a few become restless. Although pupils are encouraged to talk with partners about their

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learning, lessons do not always set aside sufficient time, especially at the end, for them to discuss and evaluate their work and to consider how well they have done.

The curriculum makes adequate provision for English, mathematics and information and communication technology, and leaders are starting to identify where specific improvements are required. They have noted that the topic work in place needs to be reviewed to take greater account of mixed-age classes, and whether it provides an effective medium for developing pupils' basic skills. Curriculum enrichment is very good. There is a wide range of lunchtime and after-school clubs which effectively promote pupils' personal and social development. The school keeps a careful check that as many pupils as possible are involved and that there is something for everyone. Partnerships are used well to support these activities, such as the recent ones established with local football clubs.

Pastoral care is a key strength of the school's work. Pupils have confidence that staff will listen and respond to any concerns they may have, which contributes to the good degree to which pupils report that they feel safe. New systems to promote good behaviour are proving effective. Pupils respond well to the rewards now provided. One parent comments, 'The golden ticket reward where the children go to tea with the headteacher has been a real incentive for the children.' There are good links with outside specialists, good engagement with parents and carers, and very well-organised and managed support within school. All of this ensures that the specific needs of pupils, including those who have emotional, social and behavioural difficulties, are very well met. Inspectors noted the tremendous lengths to which the school goes to support and include its vulnerable pupils. Despite often only staying for a short period of time, there are good induction arrangements for pupils joining the school beyond the normal starting points that help them to settle quickly. Transition arrangements for pupils moving on to secondary school are good. The school has started to use the local authority's strict guidelines to raise levels of attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Staff clearly indicate that they are proud to work at this school, knowing fully what it is trying to achieve. Along with senior leaders and members of the governing body, they work well together as a team, with a shared ambition and drive to bring about school improvement. The governing body has helped to steer the school through a difficult period in its history. It ensures that all statutory requirements, including safeguarding, are met. Safeguarding is satisfactory and ensures the safety and well-being of pupils, although the school recognises where some further improvements are required. However, the

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governing body is not fully involved in monitoring the school's work and does not yet provide a consistently rigorous level of challenge. The school has a good range of partnerships which particularly support pupils' personal and social development. Engagement with parents is good. 'Drop in' sessions provide opportunities for parents and carers to discuss any concerns. Although the school works extremely hard to include its vulnerable pupils, inconsistencies in the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils mean that the promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory rather than good. There is no discrimination in the school. The school promotes well pupils' understanding and respect for communities within its own locality and nationally. However, promotion of pupils' understanding of communities globally is not as strong.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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

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Views of parents and carers

There was an above-average response in terms of the numbers of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire. Of those that responded, almost all are happy with their children's experience of school, felt that they enjoyed their time here and were kept safe. Inspectors concur with these views. A few parents and carers felt that the school did not take account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors found that the school has good procedures for listening to parents and carers and taking their views into account, and that avenues of communication have recently improved. One parent commented, 'The new Friday update has made a huge difference, improving communication between the school and parents. This has also been a really good incentive for the children, as each week they look forward to seeing if their name is mentioned.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

The inspection team received 65 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 144 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	60	23	40	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	43	66	20	31	2	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	26	40	37	57	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	52	28	43	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	39	60	26	40	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	49	31	48	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	43	36	55	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)	30	46	25	38	4	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	51	27	42	4	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	45	22	34	6	9	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	48	23	35	9	15	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	26	40	31	48	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	58	27	42	0	0	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.



17 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Pancras Primary School, Lewes BN7 1SR

Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We spoke with some of you during our visit and found you interesting to talk to, and very polite and helpful. You spoke enthusiastically about enjoying school and all the things you take part in. St Pancras Catholic Primary is a satisfactory school, which means that although some things are good, some things need to be improved.

These are some of the things that the school does well.

- Children get off to a good start in Reception.
- The school looks after you well.
- Your behaviour has improved rapidly this term and I know you like the new reward system. Well done and make sure that you keep it up!
- The school provides you with many exciting clubs and activities.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep safe, healthy and fit.
- You make a good contribution to the life of the school and the local community.
- The school encourages your parents and carers to support you in your learning and development.
- Your new headteacher is doing a very good job.

Some of you could do even better in English and mathematics. The following things will help.

- Teachers should use the information they have on how well you are doing to plan work that is just right for each one of you, neither too easy nor too hard. Lessons should provide more opportunities for you to discuss the work you are doing, so that you can work independently and check for yourselves on the progress you are making.
- Subject leaders, especially in English and mathematics, need to develop their roles to ensure that improvements in their areas are fully effective. Along with other senior leaders, they need to check that your lessons are of the highest quality and help you to make as much progress as possible.

Thank you again for your help. You can do your bit to help by working hard in lessons, behaving well and checking for yourselves how well you are doing.

Yours sincerely

Peter Thrussell

Lead

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