

St Peter Chanel Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101461
Local Authority	Bexley
Inspection number	286069
Inspection dates	11–12 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Wendy Simmons

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 on roll	
School	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs V Startup
Headteacher	Ms M F Gurhy
Date of previous school inspection	26 March 2001
School address	Baugh Road Footscray Sidcup DA14 5ED
Telephone number	020 8302 6029
Fax number	020 8308 9883

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Peter Chanel is a popular small school. Most pupils are Roman Catholic. The majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. The next largest group are pupils from Black African heritages. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties. The school has gained awards including 'Healthy Schools', 'The Bexley Environmental Challenge' and the 'Silver Flag' for being eco-friendly. They are working to gain the higher 'Green Flag' in addition to the 'Quality Mark' for standards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Peter Chanel is a good school with a welcoming feel. In the words of one parent, 'It is a friendly family orientated school'. There is a strong Christian ethos and governors confirm that 'Every child matters'. This is reflected in the good care, guidance and support provided and through pupils' outstanding personal development. Pupils behave exceptionally well and show very positive attitudes.

The headteacher, deputy and senior staff form a strong team. They care about the children and want them all to do well. The combination of good leadership, teaching and learning ensures that pupils' achievement is good. Pupils make quick progress from their average starting points and as a result, standards of work are above average by the end of Year 6.

When the youngest children join the school, in the Foundation Stage Reception class, they settle quickly and gain important skills whilst having fun when learning. The provision in the Foundation Stage is good with some outstanding features.

The school has a good capacity to improve further. For example, in the last year, there has been significant improvement in standards by the end of Year 2. These have risen from above average to become exceptionally high overall. Throughout the school, pupils achieve especially well in English and mathematics but, they do not do as well in science. Pupils find it hard to explain their conclusions in a scientific way when doing investigations. Pupils gain a good range of skills in Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

Leaders are keen to make the school outstanding. Useful plans are already in place to help with this. The plans do not however, include termly or possibly even shorter term targets for pupils to work towards to help them with their learning.

Leaders have been working hard with pupils to make the grounds attractive. The many stunning gardens contribute much to pupils 'all round' learning and such areas as the 'Sunshine Garden' cheers everyone on a gloomy day. Plans are underway to extend the school buildings, as space is extremely cramped, but progress on this has been very slow due to circumstances beyond the school's control.

Parents have confidence in the standards of work and in the quality of teaching and learning in most classes but, several commented they often feel that their suggestions and concerns are not valued enough.

Pupils enjoy school. They contribute outstandingly well to the community and are adopting healthy lifestyles exceptionally well, especially through sport. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is well developed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Introduce short term targets for pupils to work towards
- Improve pupils' skills in explaining their conclusions in science
- Work in partnership with parents to ensure that they can contribute positively to school developments

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Pupils of all backgrounds and abilities do equally well. When children join the school, in the Foundation Stage, they have the knowledge and skills expected for their age. They make good progress and this leads to above average standards by the end of Reception in important basic skills. In particular, standards in writing are exceptionally high because children write for interesting purposes and are confident in using their knowledge of letters and sounds. Children make brisk progress in their social development and in gaining knowledge of the world around them. Standards are above those expected in reading and counting.

Pupils make good progress, overall, through the school. Pupils currently in Year 2 have reached exceptionally high overall standards for the first time this year. The strong teaching of basic skills in reading together with regular practice and discussion has helped them to make rapid progress. The support given by visitors and parents contributes much to this. Standards have risen considerably in mathematics as pupils are more skilled at doing calculations and have strong basic number skills. Plans are in place to introduce joined up handwriting earlier in the school to further improve writing. By the end of Years 6, standards are above average in English and mathematics and, for these pupils, this represents good progress. In science, standards are average. Pupils find it hard to explain their conclusions when doing experiments and this restricts some from gaining even higher standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Right from the beginning of the Foundation Stage children quickly gain the skills to work successfully with each other. They gain further independence and confidence as they move through the school. Pupils enjoy all that school has to offer as is evident in their excellent attendance and very positive attitudes. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils make sensitive suggestions for prayers and can talk about many faiths as represented in the wider community. One pupil commented, 'We learn to put ourselves in each other's shoes, which helps us to understand other children's feelings'. The lively production of 'Fleeced' is an example of their good cultural knowledge, as they successfully retold the story of Jason and the Argonauts. Pupils have a very good understanding of environmental issues and healthy eating. This is greatly enhanced by projects on growing wonderful vegetables. Pupils support many charities and work closely with the church and local parish. They are adopting healthy and safe lifestyles exceptionally well. For example, over 25% of pupils walk to school; many take part in sports and select foods to make up a balanced diet. Pupils have the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed for success in their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage because they have very good opportunities to learn in different ways, both inside and outside the classroom. Across the school, teachers have good subject knowledge. They ensure that new activities build on what pupils already know. Lessons are well paced and there is a good emphasis on discussion work through 'talking partners'. Planning is good in mathematics and English

and for children in the Foundation Stage. There is however some inconsistency in the challenges planned for the most able learners in science. Relationships are very good and this helps pupils to show an eagerness to learn. Teaching assistants give good support especially in ICT. Parents positively contribute to their children's learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum. There is an excellent range of activities in the Foundation Stage. In particular, visits and gardening projects are linked well to help pupils to learn in a meaningful way. Reception year work is captured outstandingly well in the book 'A Year of Memories', which is presented to each child as a keepsake when they leave Reception. Throughout Years 1 to 6, the school day has been modified to make the best of the teaching time by splitting the morning lessons into three well timed slots. There is a good focus on English and mathematics. French, music and the good range of clubs and visits contribute well to pupils' development. Pupils' research skills are sometimes underdeveloped and they would like to do more of this. For example, they were thrilled to research 'Mountain Life', which enhanced their ability to engross themselves in learning. Strong links with the community promote sport and healthy lifestyles. The World War II garden not only brings learning to life but, helps pupils to gain self-esteem and hobbies for their future lives.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Outstanding links with the home enable children to settle in the Foundation Stage. Pastoral care is good and contributes much to the very good relationships. Pupils like the staff and say, 'They help you to be happy'. The school has good plans in place to help pupils to explore their emotions. Child protection and health and safety procedures are rigorous. Well established links with specialists contribute to the good progress that pupils with learning difficulties make. Inspectors agree that pupils would benefit from having short term targets. One pupil said, 'It would be useful to know your targets and how you are getting on during the year and not wait until the summer report'. The marking of pupils' work is often thorough although it does not guide pupils consistently well in how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leaders place the best interests of the children at the core of their work. They have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness because they check the quality of learning well. The tracking of pupils' progress is outstanding in English and mathematics and the leaders rightly recognise that science needs further development. Governors provide good support and are very well led. They have recently initiated a high quality questionnaire for parents. This showed that most parents are very happy with the school but some feel that their views are not valued enough. Leaders are ambitious to resolve this and to involve parents more in the life and development of the school.

All leaders are very keen to activate the building project, as four out of the seven classes are in mobile classrooms, two of which have no water. The school has no library and the ICT room is far too small to accommodate a whole class. This restricts teachers' abilities to make the very

best of all learning opportunities. Building work has been held up by the slowness to confirm the possible existence of crested newts and thus ensure that these can be safely protected.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

3 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter Chanel Catholic Primary School, Sidcup, DA14 5ED

You may remember that two inspectors came to your school. Thank you for being so friendly. I am writing to let you know our findings.

Your school is a good school. You make good progress from the day that you start and by the time you leave your work is better than many pupils in other schools. You enjoy learning and are well cared for. As a result of good teaching in most classes you make good progress and learn the things that you need for success in the future. Your work in English and mathematics is especially good. We think that the Reception class is great. We were very inspired to have seen your marvellous efforts in gardening and keen to copy your fantastic efforts!

Congratulations, may you remember the skills for ever. We are pleased that you work to support the community so much and that you are so healthy! Well done for being so polite, respectful, and behaving outstandingly well.

Your headteacher staff and governors are working especially hard to make the school even better. We have asked them to do the following things:

- give you clear targets, for each term, so that you can make even quicker progress
- help you to explain scientifically why things happen when you do experiments
- work closely with all of your parents to help the school to develop

Please help them with this. Check that you know your termly targets. When you don't understand science ask your teachers to help you. Thank your headteacher, all of the adults and your parents for making this a good school. If you all work together you may be able to make the school outstanding in the future, which would be marvellous! Your production of 'Fleeced' was great.

My best wishes to you all and have a rest in the summer, as you deserve it!

Yours faithfully,

Wendy Simmons (Lead inspector)