

St Peters Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, West Hanningfield

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115202
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	311876
Inspection dates	28–29 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Roger Brown

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	89
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mark Reed
Headteacher	Mrs Carol Gooding
Date of previous school inspection	18 November 2003
School address	Church Road West Hanningfield Chelmsford Essex CM2 8UQ
Telephone number	01245400327
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average and serves the villages of South and West Hanningfield as well as the surrounding area. Almost all of the pupils are from White British backgrounds with very few from other cultural and ethnic backgrounds. There are no pupils known to be in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils who need additional support is well below that found nationally.

The school has been granted Healthy Schools status, the Activemark and an award for its international work.

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's is a good school with a justifiably high reputation. Some parents bring their children a long distance to allow them to attend the school. The great majority of parents are very positive about all that the school has to offer. 'It has a happy and relaxed environment,' wrote one parent. Another pointed out that, 'all pupils are treated fairly... in a friendly, welcoming environment for pupils to learn in.' The pupils too are very positive. 'I know that I am trusted by the teachers and I trust all the adults to look after me', remarked a Year 6 girl.

The excellent quality of the pupils' personal development and the outstanding care guidance and support they receive reflect the school's Christian foundation. Pupils take excellent care of each other, support their community very effectively and show a strong awareness of the needs of others in different countries and contrasting circumstances. As part of a whole school assembly, the school council leader explained to everyone how he hoped that they would support the council in developing the school's commitment to showing greater ecological awareness and responsibility.

Pupils throughout the school attain standards that are above average. Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage, and then continue to make good progress throughout the school. Pupils' achievements are more consistent in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2 where their achievements are more erratic. The older pupils attain lower standards in writing and science than they do in reading and mathematics. In part, this is a result of several changes in teaching staff over the past three years, and weak strategies and teaching methods employed by staff in teaching these subjects. The staff have identified these problems through a very effective and honest self-evaluation process, but as yet, these issues have not been wholly eliminated. A productive system for assessment, which feeds in to an equally effective arrangement to track pupils' progress, indicates that the outcomes for the current Year 6 look to be much more promising.

The impact of teaching on pupils' learning is good, but the quality of teaching is inconsistent. In most lessons, the pupils find the tasks challenging, interesting and at times both exciting and fun. In the less effective lessons, the pace of learning is slow, the pupils are easily distracted, their concentration slips and their attitudes and behaviour reflect this. The school's curriculum is well designed and thoughtfully constructed. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support pupils' learning. Year 6 pupils note that the imaginative use of interactive whiteboards is a significant factor in improving their motivation and the quality of their work.

The headteacher and the school governors have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have action plans in place to address and rectify the weaknesses and therefore the school has a good capacity to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The school admits children from a wide range of pre-school settings, and although there is considerable variation, the average level of attainment when children first start is broadly in line with that which is expected. During their time in the reception class children make good progress in all aspects of their learning. This means that by the time that they move into Key Stage 1, most are already achieving levels above those expected. The staff make an effective

team, successfully supporting each other and the children. An interesting and attractive classroom environment and outdoor space provide a good basis for the work of the team. The curriculum is well planned covering all aspects of the children's needs. The leader is very thorough in the assessments she makes, and has a good understanding of the progress that the children make.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing and science throughout Key Stage 2.
- Address the uneven quality of teaching to boost the quality of pupils' learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The standards that pupils attain are above average in all subjects at all stages. However, although the results are consistently strong in the teacher assessments at the end of Year 2, there is much more variation in the end of Year 6 assessments. Pupils perform particularly well in mathematics. Last year's Year 6 results were outstanding in this subject. They were also very strong in reading, but not as high in writing, or in science. The current Year 6 looks to be better placed to achieve a more even performance and at a high level. The small number of pupils who need extra support with their learning are targeted effectively and they too make good progress relative to their starting points. Given pupils' good progress overall, their achievement is good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

This aspect is clearly one of the school's strengths. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons and around school are good, with the older pupils setting very good examples for the younger ones. Just occasionally, when the pace of lessons is slow, some lose concentration and drift off task. Pupils are thoroughly involved in the work and life of the school, helping to design the new adventure trails, and instigating environmental work. The pupils are also committed to their village communities, attending church services and other village events. Staff work hard to expand pupils' understanding of the wider world and prepare them well for the next stage of their education. Pupils relish the opportunities to take responsibility. They contribute to the school council, raise money for charity and plan improvements to the school environment. The older pupils would welcome more opportunities for independent learning, but recognise the limitations that are imposed upon the school. It is little wonder that they enjoy school and their attendance is much higher than average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The impact of teaching on the quality of the pupils' learning is good. Nevertheless, there is a marked variation in the quality of the teaching. In most lessons, the pupils find their learning exciting and stimulating. Teachers make impressive use of the interactive whiteboards, the work they devise is challenging and clearly motivates the pupils. The good pace of learning engages the pupils interest and the tasks are relevant, varied and accurately targeted at the interests of the pupils. Teachers make good use of thorough and regular assessments to build

a detailed picture of pupils' development. Effective teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants then enables this information to be used to ensure pupils make secure progress in the development of their skills, knowledge and understanding. However, in the less effective lessons the pace of learning slows and the pupils are not fully engaged in the tasks and activities they are given.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Teachers have invested much time and energy in adapting the curriculum to make it relevant and interesting. Staff have worked hard to develop the concepts which ensure pupils know how to keep healthy, stay safe, develop good personal and social skills and enjoy what they learn. Good use of the locality, visits and visitors enriches pupils' learning. A range of additional activities and a wide range of sporting opportunities extend their interest and understanding of the wider world very effectively. The curriculum for English and mathematics meets government requirements and the provision is good. The science curriculum is less effective. Staff conducted a scrutiny of pupils' work in the subject and this showed too little emphasis was being given to developing scientific concepts and ideas. The quality of ICT available in the school is much improved, and now makes a good contribution towards integrating work across all subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Child protection procedures are well established and meticulously maintained. The safety and security of the school and everyone in it is rigorously sustained. The lack of targets and adequate academic guidance was criticised at the last inspection, but the staff have addressed this very effectively. The systems to check and promote pupils' academic progress are now excellent, and a major factor in successfully raising standards at the school. The older pupils are especially complimentary about the guidance they get from the staff, both during the lessons and in the ways that their work is marked. They have targets explaining what they should aim to achieve, and are frequently encouraged to assess and discuss their work with their peers. The quality of the pastoral care for those pupils who need support and guidance is equally high.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has a clear vision for the role and development of the school. Working in conjunction with the governors and staff she has created a highly effective self-evaluation process that allows the leadership to understand the school's strengths and weaknesses well. As a result, standards are rising and the quality of the provision is improving. Governors, have a strong level of commitment and involvement with the school, supporting initiatives such as the improved school meal provision which has done much to promote the pupils' healthier lifestyles. They and the staff recognise they still need to promote more consistency in the quality of the teaching as they understand that this will help to secure uniformly high standards. The good quality partnerships with other local schools, which have been developed by school leaders, have helped to improve the provision for gifted able and talented pupils.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	2
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?	1

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

30 April 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of St Peter's C of E (Aided) Primary, Chelmsford CM2 8UQ

Thank you for your warm welcome when I visited your school. I would like to share with you what I found when I spent time in your lessons and talked with you and your teachers.

I think you go to a good school. I could see that your teachers, the governors, your parents and the community worked really hard to get your new classrooms. I hope that their ambitious plans for more work to improve the buildings and grounds succeed. However, what pleased me much more than the building was the good standard of your behaviour around school and in most of your lessons. I thought that the example you older ones set was especially important. I could see that you all get along together, and from the comments in some of the letters that your parents sent to me, I know that they too are just as pleased that the older pupils help to look after and play with the younger children. I was also delighted that you not only know about keeping healthy, but also put your knowledge into practice. I could see that you have many opportunities to take part in sports and other activities. No wonder you told me that you enjoyed school so much.

When I watched your lessons and looked at your work, I could see that you are working hard, and that your teachers and teaching assistants work really hard too. Even so, I have asked your teachers to continue to help you to raise your standards in writing and science. I could see that they are getting better, but they are not yet as high as the standards you are reaching in reading or mathematics.

In my discussions with those of you in Year 6, I was impressed by your insights into what is happening in your school. I agree with you that it is usually an interesting place to learn, especially when your teachers make their lessons challenging, exciting and fun. I also agree that not all lessons manage to do this all the time. I have therefore asked the staff to look at how to improve this.

Finally, I think that your headteacher and the school governors have a very clear understanding of what works well at your school and what needs to be improved. For this reason, I think that they will make it even better in the future.

All the best for the future.

Roger Brown

Lead inspector