

St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Shoreham-by-Sea

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126041
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	315408
Inspection dates	20–21 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Chris Grove

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	210
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nicky Stevens
Headteacher	Catherine Walker
Date of previous school inspection	18 April 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Sullington Way Shoreham-by-Sea BN43 6PJ
Telephone number	01273 454066
Fax number	01273 440257

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is located in an urban setting, taking pupils from the immediate locality and also from outlying areas. It is smaller than average and includes a Reception class as its Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average. A below average number of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, a small proportion of whom are at an early stage of acquiring English. The school has gained the Healthy Schools, Artsmark (Gold), and Basic Skills Quality Mark awards. It has status as a dyslexia-friendly school. The school hires out part of its space to the Spangels private nursery.

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 Catholic Primary is a good school. It also has outstanding features. The headteacher has created a cohesive senior leadership team who share an excellent vision for the work of the school. Parents attest to its vibrant and spiritual ethos. As a result, one delighted parent recorded that she had found the school to be 'exceptionally warm and welcoming'. Another family wrote that 'the atmosphere is safe, caring and conducive to learning. My children are happy, enthusiastic and eager to go to school'.

The school rightly judges that pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils enjoy school immensely. 'We are all treated the same. The teachers are nice and make learning fun,' agreed members of the school council. Behaviour is excellent, and pupils of all ages work very co-operatively. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Their adoption of safe and healthy practices, and their positive contributions to school, are excellent.

Pupils thrive in the school's highly positive environment for learning that results from outstanding care, guidance and support. Requirements for safeguarding pupils' welfare, providing child protection and assessing risks are met in full. The school's outstanding arrangements to track pupils' progress, and excellent marking and target-setting, are important factors in guiding pupils to improve their work.

Pupils' standards are above average and their progress is good. At the end of Year 2, standards have been significantly above average in most recent years, particularly in writing. In 2008, standards were a little lower in all subjects, but remained above average in reading and writing. In mathematics, standards were broadly average and not enough pupils attained the higher levels in this subject. At the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science have varied between broadly average and above average. In 2008, the provisional results show considerable improvement on the previous year, especially in English and mathematics. Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils' good progress is the result of the consistently good teaching. Warm working relationships and high expectations help pupils to learn well. Classroom organisation and management are consistently good. Since the last inspection, a review of the curriculum has sharpened its relevance for pupils, especially boys. The impact of this review can be seen in boys' above average attainment in reading and writing at the end of Years 2 and 6. However, more remains to be done to sustain high standards in mathematics by the end of Year 2.

Leadership and management, including that of governors, are good. Through very effective self-evaluation, the headteacher and other leaders have made major improvements to teaching and the curriculum to the point where both are consistently good, with some significant strengths. Curriculum enrichment is outstanding. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory, because pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the diversity of communities within Britain and beyond.

The partnership with parents, other schools and local authority services is good, and this supports pupils' enjoyment, and their education and care, very well. Since the last inspection, the pupils' achievements in reading, writing and ICT have improved, as have the quality of the curriculum and the use of assessment procedures. Together with good self-evaluation, this demonstrates that the school has a good capacity to make further improvements.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children join the Reception class with skills that are typical for their age. They make a good start and quickly settle into the routines. Induction does not yet include home visits to enhance children's transition to school, though these are now planned.

Provision in the EYFS is good, with outstanding features. Children thrive because of the good teaching and imaginative curriculum. They make good progress. By the end of the year, they are working securely within the early learning goals, with some exceeding them. They enter Year 1 with above the expected levels of knowledge and skills. They thoroughly enjoy the challenging activities, which are well organised. The outdoor area has been developed well, and is used effectively for all aspects of learning. The children benefit from good role-play opportunities, for example in the 'Night-time House'. These enhance their language skills and provide stimulating learning.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is exceptionally good, so that they soon become confident, co-operative, well-motivated learners. Children display excellent attitudes and behaviour, because they are very well cared for. The skilled teaching assistants are particularly sensitive in responding to their interests and provide the resources and guidance to encourage their learning. They interact very well with the children during independent activities, to develop their speaking and listening skills. Assessment is used well to identify individual needs, and to ensure successful learning. The attention to children's welfare is outstanding. Procedures are securely in place and contribute well to the calm, happy atmosphere. Good leadership ensures that the children's needs are met well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' standards in mathematics in Key Stage 1, by providing additional challenge for more able pupils.
- Improve the school's contribution to community cohesion by giving pupils a better understanding of the wider world through more contact with other people elsewhere in the country and in the world.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 in 2008 were lower, reflecting in part the nature of that year group. Nevertheless, boys' standards in reading and writing were markedly higher than those of their peers nationally, because of the school's close focus on boys' attainment. In mathematics, the proportion of pupils who attained the expected level was lower than in 2007, as was also the number of pupils who reached the higher Level 3. At the end of Year 6, overall standards in the national tests in 2007 were broadly average, though here too, boys scored more highly than their national counterparts. Standards rose in 2008. A markedly higher proportion of pupils reached expected standards in all subjects, particularly in English and mathematics. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved considerably, as a result of good leadership and improved resources. Pupils with learning difficulties make the same good progress as others. This is because of the well-targeted support provided by teachers and teaching assistants, and the good leadership of the special educational needs co-ordinator.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

In lessons, pupils listen attentively, and talk enthusiastically about their learning. Their very positive attitudes to school are reflected in above average levels of attendance. Pupils say the teachers help them to feel very safe in school. Their outstanding personal development was evident in an excellent assembly where they learnt more about co-operation, one of the school's declared core values. Pupils are very aware of right and wrong. They are friendly and considerate. Most are from White British backgrounds, but show a very good respect for others' cultures and religions.

Pupils know about healthy diets, and many participate keenly in the after-school sporting activities. All pupils feel very pleased when given one of the many roles of special responsibility. School council members represent the views of their classmates very well. Playground friends organise the safe use of the outdoor equipment, while the 'lunchtime squad' provides pupils with good support. Pupils are eager to do their best, and to develop independence, another core value, which has a strong impact on their personal development. These values, together with good standards in literacy, numeracy and ICT by the end of Year 6, mean that pupils are prepared well for the next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The pace of lessons is brisk, and this sustains pupils' interest well. Lesson planning is thorough, so that activities are well matched to the needs of different groups of pupils. Teachers make judicious use of praise and rewards to motivate pupils, and are good at providing challenge through thoughtful questioning. This promotes explicit thinking and reasoning, and enables teachers to assess pupils' understanding well. The teaching assistants contribute well to lessons through their good support for pupils with learning difficulties. In order to raise standards in mathematics, teachers are beginning to provide more opportunities than formerly to challenge pupils through problem-solving and applying the subject. Some teaching is outstanding. In an excellent English lesson seen, the teacher used drama to arouse pupils' excitement. She drew from pupils some examples of vivid vocabulary and expression, and skilfully used the interactive whiteboard to illustrate how their ideas could be woven into a paragraph of engaging writing. Pupils' own writing greatly benefited from this high-quality input.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Since the previous inspection, a newly designed curriculum has been implemented. It builds on core values such as independence and co-operation to improve pupils' skills and strategies for learning. Creative planning across the school results in imaginative starting points for learning, including links between different subjects. ICT provision has improved considerably, and now develops pupils' skills well. In mathematics, areas for further improvement such as problem-solving and puzzles have been identified. The Artsmark (Gold) and Healthy Schools awards attest to the good quality of provision. Attractive examples of pupils' work in writing, art and ICT, are displayed around the school. From Year 3 onwards, pupils learn French. Staff ensure that pupils with learning difficulties participate well in the exciting curriculum.

Opportunities for enrichment are outstanding. Workshops are very well planned with other schools to promote the skills of gifted and talented pupils. Themed events provide excellent extension to pupils' skills and creativity. The wide-ranging programme of visits and visitors to school, and extra-curricular music, art and physical education activities, are excellent.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The excellent provision for personal, social and health education contributes strongly to pupils' personal development and well-being. Pupils who need specific help with learning are supported extremely well. The school's good tracking systems are used effectively to identify any who may underachieve, and staff provide focused support for them. The arrangements to set pupils targets in English, mathematics and science are very well devised, and are used to help them to understand how to improve their work and to identify the next steps in their learning. Written guidance in marking, and oral advice in lessons, are very effective and help pupils to evaluate their own progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school uses information from self-evaluation particularly well to form an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses, and to improve its provision. This has led to pupils' excellent personal development, outstanding care and guidance, and improvements in teaching and curriculum. Subject leaders play an important role alongside the headteacher in self-evaluation processes. The school makes good use of challenging targets to raise standards. The strong commitment to promoting equal opportunities leads to good additional provision for particular groups of pupils. Pupils have good contacts with the local community and with other schools, including those in the local Catholic deanery. However, their opportunities to understand other British communities, and communities abroad, are more limited, although an initial link has been made with a school in India. Governors are highly committed to the school, and confident in its leadership. They know its many strengths and few weaknesses. They are willing to play the role of critical friend, for instance by enquiring into the reasons why standards have been variable.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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 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

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	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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**

24 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Shoreham-by-Sea BN43 6PJ

We would like to thank all of you, and your teachers, for your help during the inspection. We enjoyed seeing you in your classrooms and talking to you at playtimes and lunchtimes. St Peter's Catholic Primary is a good school, and has some excellent features. These are the most important strengths:

- The school is a very happy place where everyone is made to feel welcome.
- You all show an outstanding enjoyment of school.
- You have excellent relationships with the adults, who take outstanding care of you.
- Your personal development, including behaviour, is excellent. You feel very safe in school, adopt very healthy lifestyles and contribute very positively to school life.
- The headteacher and the other school leaders are doing a very good job. They do a lot of checking up, so they know what is good about your school and how to improve it.
- You are making good progress in your learning. Standards in Year 6 are above average at present.
- The teaching in your school is good, and sometimes excellent.
- Teachers' marking and target-setting give you excellent guidance about how to improve.
- The school has a good curriculum and excellent extra-curricular activities. Lots of you get involved in these activities.
- The overwhelming majority of your parents are very pleased with the school.
- Your school has good relationships with your parents, and with other schools.

The headteacher and the other leaders have worked very hard to make the school a good place for you. We have asked them to do the following to make things even better:

- Raise your standards in mathematics at Key Stage 1 by giving more challenges to more able pupils.
- Give you a better understanding of the wider world through more contact with other people elsewhere in the country and in the world.

You can help by continuing to work hard and taking advantage of the improvements that your teachers will be making. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Chris Grove

Lead Inspector