

St Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102667
Local Authority	Merton
Inspection number	355232
Inspection dates	10–11 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Sarah McDermott

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	458
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Gibbons and Declan Kelly
Headteacher	David Hennessey
Date of previous school inspection	25 March 2008
School address	Cricket Green Mitcham Surrey CR4 4LA
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The team observed 17 lessons taught by 17 teachers. The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They scrutinised pupils' work and looked at the data the school had collected on pupils' academic progress and attendance. They also looked at the school development plan, investigated procedures for keeping pupils safe and analysed the responses to questionnaires from pupils, staff and 214 parents and carers.

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

- The extent to which different groups such as Black African pupils, White British pupils and girls progress as well as others.
- The extent to which pupils are making progress in reading and writing.
- The consistency of the quality of teaching and learning in different classes across the school.
- The effectiveness of leaders and managers in tracking the progress of different groups of pupils and successfully addressing any underachievement.
- The extent to which the school has been successful in promoting community cohesion.

Information about the school

SS Peter and Paul Catholic Primary is larger than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. A large majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, predominantly Black African, and over a third of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. Their needs mostly relate to speech, language and communication difficulties.

The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a morning Nursery session, an afternoon Nursery session and two Reception classes. Among other awards, the school has the Healthy Schools Award and the Activemark. The school hosts a breakfast club and after-school club on site run by another provider; this provision is subject to a separate inspection.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

SS Peter and Paul Catholic Primary is a good school where pupils' achievement has improved convincingly since the last inspection. Children, many with English as an additional language, get off to a flying start in the Nursery class and continue to make good progress until they leave in Year 6, reaching broadly average levels of attainment. The headteacher is justifiably held in high esteem by parents, carers, staff and pupils alike. One parent commented, 'The headteacher is excellent because you can approach him at any time for support and help.' Following the last inspection, he worked with focus and determination to tackle underachievement in writing and to make sure boys achieved just as well as girls. Writing is a great success story in the school, reflected in the way pupils write with flair and imagination and their above-average attainment in this area. The governing body is not only very supportive of the school, but scrupulously questions any slippage in attainment and progress. Together with the headteacher, all staff and governors have the welfare of the pupils very much at heart and strive to ensure all pupils make the most of their talents. The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. Parents and carers are very appreciative of all the school does for their children. One parent commented, 'I have nothing but good things to say about this school my son has thrived and is so happy.' Pupils are safe and sound while at school and are looked after extremely well.

Pupils behave well in lessons and out at play. Relationships between pupils from many different backgrounds and cultures are strong, with the Catholic ethos of caring for each other evident throughout the school. Pupils are particularly knowledgeable about leading healthy lives. They jump at the chance for sport, eat well-balanced meals and, as they get older, learn about the dangers of alcohol and tobacco. Attendance has been consistently above average for several years. Together with a well-developed sense of responsibility, pupils are well prepared for moving onto secondary school.

Pupils enjoy their lessons because teachers and support staff are welcoming and make learning fun. Teachers ensure pupils are clear about what they should know by the end of the lesson. Marking is regular and encouraging, but the good practice of a few teachers in adding challenging comments or extra tasks to reinforce learning is not evident in all classes. Most pupils know what they need to do to improve their learning. However, they are not sure how fast they are progressing because teachers do not identify the date when they meet their personal targets. Pupils are keen to find out more and relish bouncing ideas off each other to extend their learning. They have genuine ownership of their learning because their interests are captured and incorporated into the 'bespoke curriculum'. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage also have a varied and interesting range of activities to enliven learning. Nevertheless, staff in the Nursery and Reception classes are not always deployed in such a way that they can provide learning

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support where it is most needed and on occasion the more-able children are not sufficiently stretched.

The headteacher and his effective team of senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's performance, have successfully tackled the areas for improvement from the last inspection and have moved the school from satisfactory to good. Consequently, they are demonstrating a positive track record and good capacity to improve the school even further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure pupils make the most of their learning by:
 - incorporating further challenge when marking work and checking that pupils follow the suggestions into effective practice
 - identifying precisely when personal targets are met so pupils can see how fast they are progressing.
- Maximise the progress of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring assessment data are used effectively in the Reception classes to devise sufficiently challenging activities to match individual needs
 - reviewing the deployment of adults in extending children's knowledge and understanding across all the areas of learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

'I really, really, really enjoy school!' exclaimed one pupil. He spoke for the many who come to school with a spring in their step each morning, looking forward to meeting their friends and teachers. Pupils have an excellent knowledge of how to keep fit, healthy and eat the right foods. Year 6 made the most of their physical education lesson after a morning of national tests, aware of how it improves their brain power. Pupils who attend special tennis coaching provided by Wimbledon All England Lawn Tennis Club are excellent ambassadors for healthy and active lifestyles. Pupils feel safe at school and know to turn to a known adult should they feel concerned. Behaviour is good overall and on occasion exemplary in lessons. Pupils move around the school sensibly and eat lunch together sociably. They take on a good range of jobs and responsibilities around the school. Members of the school council proudly represent their class's views and contribute positive and realistic ideas to help the school improve. They helpfully suggested ways to separate different sports activities at playtime and to make the water fountains more accessible to younger pupils. Pupils are beginning to take a more active role as citizens of the local Mitcham area, through sports and music events. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, evident in the pupils' respect for each other and their zest for life and learning.

Pupils arrive in Year 1 with skills lower than typically expected for their age. By the end of Year 6, they leave with attainment broadly in line with national averages. Previous inconsistencies in the pace of learning between classes have been ironed out because teaching is now reliably good, resulting in steadily good learning and progress. The school's own data, methodically and accurately collected, indicate that the current Year 6 pupils are on course to attain levels above average in English and in line with average for

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mathematics, representing good progress for these pupils too. The good results in writing are a credit to the school's hard work, especially when a high number of pupils speak English as an additional language. Progress in reading is catching up with writing due to enticing book corners in each classroom, constant explanations of vocabulary and regular practice of letters and sounds. The school is now concentrating on improving mathematics progress by reinforcing basic knowledge and bringing more numeracy skills needed into everyday life into lessons. Girls, boys and pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, including Black African and White British pupils, make similarly good progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of careful attention from teaching assistants in lessons and well-directed support in small groups out of class.

In lessons, pupils have good relationships with teachers and teaching assistants. They learn positively because they listen carefully to instructions, quickly pick up expected routines and get down to work promptly. Pupils make the most of their talking partners to spark ideas off each other. They like to try their best. In a good Year 3 literacy lesson, pupils proudly read out their ideas for memories in their treasure chest, such as 'the scale of a mermaid's tail' and 'a baby's first lost tooth'. Pupils relish taking more of a lead in their own learning by checking their learning targets or marking their classmates' work. Teachers are already working on improving pupils' ability to see what needs to be done better a good preparation for secondary school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
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

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How effective is the provision?

Teachers get lessons off to a good start by making sure all resources are to hand and the interactive whiteboard is loaded with useful learning aids. They always ensure pupils understand the learning objective before setting them off to work independently. However, in a few lessons, too long is spent on the introduction at the expense of moving learning along at a good pace. Teachers are firm and manage behaviour well but also add a touch of humour to make lessons fun. They carefully check individual understanding as they move around the classrooms and put pupils back on the right track should they be struggling. In an excellent literacy lesson, high expectations of productivity, together with work well matched to individual ability, meant pupils put great thought into their descriptions of characters in Anne Fine's *Angel of Nitshill Road*. Teaching assistants are well versed in helping pupils who speak little English and in supporting pupils with learning difficulties to help them make good progress. Marking of work is upbeat and very thorough, but teachers do not always check that pointers to improved learning are put into practice by pupils in later exercises. Although most pupils know what they need to do to reach higher levels, they would like to have a clear indication of what date the teacher judges them to have met each personal target.

The school has been successful in reviewing the curriculum to ensure it introduces themes that entice and stimulate pupils, particularly in writing for boys. Pupils have a say in how a topic is developed so it interests them and boosts their learning. For example, Year 5 pupils' study of the Thames, which included both geography and art, was then linked into information and communication technology via the school's 'managed learning environment'. Pupils in Year 1 could recall many historical details about the Great Plague because they reinforced their learning by deciding to design and make felt rats. The combined French and music lessons are successful in linking two subjects in a lively and effective way. Senior leaders are now thinking of ways to enhance the mathematics curriculum to raise attainment and progress. Pupils enjoy a good range of visits to enliven learning, often travelling on public transport to develop their skills for later life. Plenty of extra-curricular clubs develop pupils' fitness and provide wider experiences they might not otherwise have at home.

The care, guidance and support for pupils are second to none. The school liaises very closely with parents and carers so staff know each pupil's precise needs and go out of their way to include pupils with mobility difficulties or health issues. Practical care, such as first aid and security of the site, is very thorough. Vulnerable pupils are looked after particularly well through careful monitoring and close communication with outside experts.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has high expectations for his school. With rigour and good humour, he takes pupils, parents and carers, and staff with him on his journey to improve achievement further. The professional and committed senior management team work very well with the headteacher to lead the school forward. Senior leaders monitor lessons regularly, identifying where teachers need further professional development or support. The leadership team's understanding of assessment data is growing, enabling them to pick out those pupils slipping behind and finding ways to help them catch-up. Consequently, both attainment and progress are improving.

The governing body is very knowledgeable about the context of the school and has a particularly good grasp of how pupils are performing so is able to give thoughtful and perceptive strategic direction to the school. Governors and the headteacher regularly gauge pupils', parents' and carers' views, ensuring these inform future planning. They communicate well with parents and carers, both on forthcoming events and their children's learning. One parent commented, 'I have seen big improvements in the way parents are given information to help them follow and be part of their child's progress.' Bit by bit, the school is working with hard-to-reach parental groups to encourage them to share in their children's learning with the school. The school maintains good links with outside organisations to bring in expertise for pupils who need specific help and is an active member of local clusters of schools for training and development purposes. The promotion of equal opportunities is good and results in all pupils making equally good progress in their learning. Safeguarding procedures are robust and effective, and governors regularly check on the effectiveness of recruitment and child-protection systems. The school promotes community cohesion well. It is proud of the wealth of cultures and diverse backgrounds of its pupils and keeps a close eye on the achievement of different groups. The school is a happy, close-knit community with good ties with families and a genuine appreciation of traditions, costumes and religions around the world. It is aware that an area for further development is the establishment of links with schools in different parts of the United Kingdom.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children quickly settle into their Nursery and Reception classes because they are happy, welcoming places. The learning environment is attractive, adorned with many pictures, letters and words to promote interest in and love of language, especially important for children who arrive with little understanding of English. Plenty of stimulating activities capture their imagination, such as looking for 'mini-beasts' with the aid of magnifying glasses or filling different kinds of bottles with coloured water. Each learning area is labelled with 'key questions' so support is consistent and learning has a purpose. However, on occasion, adults are statically attached to one activity, drawing children to them but leaving others to play for lengthy periods of time without sufficient adult interaction. Children make good progress from their starting points, which are generally below typical expectations. Staff know the individual children well and maintain good assessment records but they are not always used well enough to plan challenging activities to meet the precise next steps children need to take to make the best progress.

Relationships between the adults and the children are warm and trusting. Parents and carers know their children are in very safe hands. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully integrated and play with their friends happily. All children behave sensibly and integrate well in groups of girls, boys and different ethnic backgrounds. The recently appointed leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage is getting to grips with her new role and is having a good impact on provision and children's learning. Money is spent well on good quality resources both inside and out. While some staff are inexperienced in the Early Years phase, they are enthusiastic about working with children of this age and are building up expertise via training.

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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

Views of parents and carers

The level of response to the questionnaire was above average for primary schools. Most parents and carers are positive about the school. All who replied justifiably believe that their children are safe at school. A very small minority of parents and carers expressed concerns over the way the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. The inspection team judges behaviour to be good because the staff have high expectations and manage any instances of misbehaviour well. During this inspection, the inspection team did not endorse the views of a very small minority who believe their children do not make sufficient progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 214 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 458 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	149	70	61	29	2	1	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	142	66	70	33	0	0	1	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	134	63	74	35	3	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	105	49	90	42	11	5	5	2
The teaching is good at this school	111	52	89	42	2	1	4	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	103	48	101	47	7	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	109	51	96	45	5	2	1	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)	98	46	100	47	3	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	100	47	101	47	6	3	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	98	46	95	44	12	6	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	86	40	115	54	9	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	112	52	90	42	3	1	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	129	60	75	35	7	3	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



12 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of SS Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School, Mitcham, CR4 4LA

Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school. St Peter and Paul Catholic Primary is a good school. You make good progress in English and mathematics, and especially in writing. Teaching is good because lessons are carefully organised and teachers make sure you know what you should learn. You have interesting trips and exciting residential visits arranged for you. Mr Hennessey and his team of senior teachers lead the school well and they know what needs improving.

You behave well and certainly know how to look after each other and keep yourselves safe. We particularly like the way the school councillors have given their ideas on how to improve the school grounds. We are impressed with how you keep yourselves healthy by eating the tasty lunches, enjoying sport and walking to school. Well done in having such good attendance levels!

To make your education better, we have asked your school to do the following:

- Make sure you are following up suggestions in teachers' marking to improve your work.
- Ask teachers to add the date when you meet personal targets so you know how fast you are making progress.
- Organise play activities in the nursery and reception so children make the best learning possible.

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to your school. We know that your teachers and their assistants make your school a very special place for you. All of you can do your bit by continuing to do your best all the time.

Yours sincerely

Sarah McDermott

Lead inspector

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