

St Peter's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	125211
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	381062
Inspection dates	26–27 April 2012
Lead inspector	Natalia Power

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	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rachel Daniels
Headteacher	Richard McKenzie
Date of previous school inspection	16 January 2007
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Natalia Power

Additional inspector

Peter Nathan

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors visited 12 lessons, observing the six teachers present, and conducted a scrutiny of pupils' work with a particular focus on the work of Year 5, who were away on a residential trip. The inspectors spoke to parents and carers, listened to pupils read, and held meetings with staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at its self-evaluation documents and plans for improvement, the data collected on pupils' progress, safeguarding information and the governing body minutes. They received and analysed 95 questionnaires from parents and carers, as well as survey responses from pupils and staff.

Information about the school

This school is smaller than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than usual. Around one in five pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic heritages, but currently very few speak English as an additional language. Around five pupils in a hundred are supported by school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs, and this proportion is lower than average. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The breakfast and after-school clubs are managed by outside providers and are subject to 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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It is not yet outstanding, because leaders and managers do not always ensure that the quality of all teaching matches the best. Occasionally, pupils make slower progress than they should, because the work set is too easy or too difficult, or because the teachers do too much that the pupils could do for themselves.
- The school is strongly supported by parents and carers. A typical comment from one parent accurately described it as, 'A happy environment which builds up strong bonds between school and home.'
- Pupils make good progress throughout the school. They achieve well, exceeding national average levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. This reflects the teaching, which is good overall, and in some cases outstanding.
- Pupils are extremely keen to learn, and behave exceptionally well. They feel completely safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe. Leaders and managers go to great lengths to ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and plan effectively for improvement. The governing body is fully involved in the life of the school and works in effective partnership with leaders and managers. The leadership of teaching and the management of performance are good overall. In their programme of classroom visits, however, leaders do not always focus sharply enough on how well pupils are learning and this means that opportunities for improving pupils' progress are sometimes missed. The strong provision for developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural qualities ensures that pupils are kind and respect one another's values.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - ensuring that the level of challenge in all lessons is appropriately matched to the needs of all groups of pupils
 - giving all pupils more opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Ensure in their programme of classroom visits that leaders and managers focus more sharply on how well pupils are learning, to enable more pupils to make outstanding progress.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' attainment is consistently above average in reading, writing and mathematics in the national tests taken at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6. Almost all the parents and carers who spoke to inspectors or returned questionnaires agreed that their children were making good progress. Inspectors endorse these views. Pupils, irrespective of ethnic heritage, make good progress from starting points in the Reception Year which vary but are generally in line with the language and number skills expected for their age. Inspection evidence, obtained from looking at pupils' current and past work, talking to them and observing their lessons, confirms the pattern of good achievement.

Inspectors found that pupils learn particularly well when they are fully involved in their learning and given challenging tasks. In one fast-paced Year 4 science lesson, for example, pupils were enthralled by an experiment in which two pupils wet their hands and all pupils joined hands with them in a circle, enabling an electric current to pass through the circuit made by their bodies and light up a bulb. They rapidly learned the concept of conductivity and used the knowledge to create their own mini-circuits using batteries and wires. The pupils worked intently and were expected to learn for themselves and to aim high. There are, however, occasional instances where teachers take over too much, preventing the pupils from contributing enough themselves. In these cases, the pace of learning slows and the pupils are then not sufficiently motivated to produce their best work all the time.

Reading is a strong aspect of the school's work because of a consolidated focus on it from the earliest years. An ethos of high expectations is established in the Reception class, where no opportunity is lost to encourage the children to learn to read using imaginative methods, such as when the children were introduced to the 'ch' sound by acting out the chuff-chuff of locomotives. The boys particularly enjoyed this task and learned the sound quickly. The reading skills of pupils in Year 2 are above average, and those who read aloud to inspectors were able to show they understood the books they were reading. The good teaching they receive gives

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them the tools to read unfamiliar words. Pupils' good reading skills are reflected in their above-average performance in the 2011 Year 6 national tests, where nearly half gained the highest levels.

The school is skilled at removing barriers to learning so that all groups of pupils make good progress. Girls and boys perform equally well. Consistently good teaching in the Reception Year by all the adults ensures that the children make good progress. The few disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well in class and in small groups by the teachers and their assistants, who know their needs, and this enables them to make good progress in line with others.

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers consider teaching in the school to be good. One remarked, 'All the teachers are very helpful and caring.' Inspectors endorse these views. Teachers use questioning skilfully to challenge pupils to think for themselves. They mark pupils' work well, ensuring that pupils understand how to improve. In most lessons, they plan well to ensure that there is a brisk pace, and that work is matched successfully to pupils' varying capabilities. For example, in a well-planned Year 1 mathematics lesson, the teacher acted out the part of 'Trudie', a girl doing her shopping, in order to introduce the pupils to the concept of subtraction. Having engaged their interest with her dress and lively manner, she set them subtraction problems to work out for themselves, with a suitable level of challenge for each group of pupils. This careful planning of the curriculum to meet the needs of individual pupils is typical of most teaching in the school, but there are occasional instances where the work set is either too easy or too difficult, and in these instances the pupils affected make slower progress.

In many lessons observed, pupils were busily involved in their own learning and clearly enjoyed their voyage of discovery. In one absorbing English lesson, for instance, Year 6 pupils clearly enjoyed imagining themselves into the role of sports personalities and writing a poem based on their thoughts and feelings. Year 2 pupils wrote stories about animals and were fully engaged in evaluating their own and others' work. Children in the Reception class enjoyed the opportunities to choose activities for themselves, and put a great deal of thought into their choices, including when a group of children drew and painted owls, inspired by a display of owls seen earlier in the school. Occasionally, teachers do too much that the pupils could do for themselves and, in these instances, pupils' concentration begins to flag and the pace of learning slows.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive effective support from their teachers and from skilled and enthusiastic teaching assistants. Teaching actively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, encouraging them to respect the views of others. For example, in an assembly led by the headteacher, pupils were encouraged to celebrate one another's success, and their support of one another's achievements was clear from their concentration

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and enthusiastic applause. As a result of such focus on considering the feelings of others, pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons and value their learning.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils told inspectors that the excellent behaviour seen in and around the school during the inspection was typical of behaviour generally. Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors. They told inspectors that there is no actual bullying, such as cyber-bullying or religious or racial abuse. One pupil said, 'Sometimes a boy accidentally hurts another boy and they have a small fight,' but reported that the incidents were quickly dealt with. They know which adults to turn to if they have any worries. Pupils' attitudes to learning are highly positive, and this is seen in the school's above-average attendance record, and in their eagerness for their class to win the trophy for highest attendance of the week.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe, and are taught how to protect themselves, such as when using the internet. A number of parents and carers told inspectors how much they value the safe and secure ethos of the school. Nearly all of those who completed the questionnaire agreed that behaviour is good and that they would recommend the school to others. A typical comment from a parent was, 'The school provides a caring, nurturing and well-disciplined environment for the children.'

Leadership and management

Strong leadership by the headteacher and the leadership team ensures that pupils achieve well and that the school's ethos is happy and cohesive. The school has met its recommendations for improvement from the previous inspection, so that, for example, pupils know their targets and are clear about how to improve. Marking is consistent and effective, and the quality of the provision in the Reception class has improved since the previous inspection. The governing body is proactive in bringing about improvements, ensuring that pupils' progress is measured more effectively than at the time of the previous inspection. As a result of this forward movement, together with the school's accurate understanding of its strengths and what remains to be done, it is well placed to continue to improve. Leaders and managers visit classes to ensure that standards of teaching are maintained, and the contribution they make towards teachers' professional development is mostly effective. However, leaders acknowledge that occasionally they tend to focus more on teaching techniques than on how well pupils are learning. This results in some inconsistency in the quality of teaching and learning.

Leaders, managers and the governing body are effective in ensuring that the arrangements to keep pupils safe are rigorous. The premises are securely protected. Statutory requirements concerning safeguarding are met. Staff are regularly trained in child protection procedures and all adults are thoroughly checked and vetted before working at the school. Leaders and managers promote equality of opportunity well, ensuring that all pupils, whatever their social or ethnic

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backgrounds or needs, make good progress. Pupils respect one another, and those from all backgrounds get on well together, because discrimination is not tolerated.

The curriculum provides good coverage of all key areas of learning, including information and communication technology, and it prepares pupils well for the next stage of schooling. Pupils report that they enjoy the school's programme of clubs, trips and visits, and these activities strengthen their learning of a wide range of topics. The school places considerable emphasis on shared experiences and on respecting the views of others, and this shows the strength of its development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural qualities.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



30 April 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Leatherhead KT22 7JN

We very much enjoyed our recent visit to your school, and it was lovely to see how helpful you are and how nicely you play together. Thank you for making us welcome and telling us your views, both in person and through your questionnaires.

- You go to a good school. You told us that your school keeps you extremely safe. Your behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. You told us that pupils are kind to one another, and we saw for ourselves how polite and welcoming you are to visitors. All these excellent ways of behaving reflect the impressive contribution all the adults make to your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- You make good progress at school, leaving with results in mathematics and English that are consistently better than those of pupils in the country as a whole.
- Your teachers teach you well, asking you questions that really make you think. You told us how much you enjoy school and how the teachers help you and make learning fun. We saw how you learn really quickly and enthusiastically when you play an active part in lessons. We have asked your teachers to give you even more opportunities to take responsibility for your own learning. We have also asked them to check carefully that each of you receives work that gives you just the right level of challenge, not too easy and not too hard.
- We have asked those in charge, when they visit your classes, to check even more carefully how well you are learning, and to make sure that all of you do as well as you can.

You, too, have a part to play in improving your school. Work hard and always ask a teacher if there is anything you do not understand.

We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Natalia Power
Lead inspector

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