

# St Peter's Catholic Primary School

Goresbrook Road, Dagenham, Essex, RM9 6UU

**Inspection dates** 22–23 January 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils' achievement is good. They make good progress, from low starting points, to reach average attainment at the age of 11 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Over each of the past three years, pupils' achievements have got better.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school and get on very well together. They value the support they are given, and feel safe and exceptionally well cared for.
- Teaching is good and challenging, which helps pupils to make progress and enjoy learning, from the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards.
- Attendance is high because school procedures are rigorous and minimising absence is given a high priority.
- Staff promote very well pupils' personal development and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of their lives.
- The headteacher, with the support of governors, has established a successful school community. The positive ethos is almost tangible. All work together to enable pupils to develop knowledge and skills to the best of their ability, as well as positive attitudes to learning. Parents greatly appreciate this.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards in writing are not yet as high as they are in mathematics, reading and speaking, but successful initiatives this year are already leading to improvements throughout the school.
- Occasionally, the pace of learning slows when pupils either struggle with the work that is taught or find it too easy.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 23 lessons, some of them seen jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Pupils of different ages were heard reading.
- Pupils were observed at play during their breaks and the lunch period.
- Inspectors took account of 96 responses to the online Parent View survey and spoke with a number of parents at the start and end of the school day. Responses to inspection questionnaires completed by 28 members of staff were also taken into account. Discussions took place with pupils, staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Documentation analysed included that related to safeguarding, teaching and learning, the allocation of money provided for pupil premium and sports funding, pupils' work, assessment information, records of behaviour and safety, governance, teachers' performance, school self-evaluation and improvement planning.

## Inspection team

Peter McGregor, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Patricia Underwood	Additional Inspector
Steve Nelson	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St Peter's is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Children usually join the school in Nursery or Reception. Not all Nursery children transfer to Reception.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is very high.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average; many of those entering the school are at an early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is broadly average. This is additional government funding for children such as those known to be eligible for free school meals, or looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion is low of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- A below average proportion of pupils join or leave the school other than at the usual times.
- The school is growing in size as it changes from one-and-a-half to two forms of entry.
- The school has Activemark status.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that it results in even better learning experiences for pupils, through:
  - giving pupils more opportunities to write accurately and at length in a range of subjects, raising expectation that the standard of their writing will be as good as their reading, speaking and mathematics
  - setting work for all pupils that is neither too easy nor too difficult, whatever their prior knowledge and ability, so that the pace of learning is maintained.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Nursery and Reception with much lower levels of personal development and oral language than are usually seen. They make good progress in all areas as a result of effective teaching but still leave these classes with standards below what is expected at that age, and in some cases substantially below.
- Good progress is made in Years 1 and 2, building on the pupils' positive attitudes to learning established in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Effective teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) enables pupils' reading to progress well and broadly average standards are attained at the end of Year 2. Standards are lower in writing and mathematics, even with the focus on early number work and writing established in Reception, because of pupils' below average starting points.
- In Years 3 to 6, progress accelerates as pupils make use of their learnt skills in reading and mathematics, resulting in a little above average attainment at the end of Year 6. Pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding are benefiting from the introduction of a new scheme, including weekly mental mathematics sessions. Writing standards are lower but improving, as effective support is provided for those pupils identified with the greatest needs.
- The proportion of pupils making and exceeding expected progress in mathematics across Years 3 to 6 is very good and progress is nearly as good in reading. Expected progress in writing is similar to the national picture but a below average proportion exceed expectations.
- The relatively small number of more-able pupils make similar progress in reading, writing and mathematics to that achieved nationally by pupils of similar ability. Success is greatest in reading and weakest in writing.
- Pupils eligible for pupil premium funding are one month ahead of those not eligible when their attainment is measured in mathematics and in English grammar, punctuation and spelling. Eligible pupils are five months behind in their reading and six months behind in their writing. These narrow gaps in attainment result from identification of individual needs and good teaching in English and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress, particularly those supported through school action. Progress in writing is not as high as in other areas for pupils supported at school action plus, several of whom have significant speech and language needs, and for those pupils who speak English as an additional language.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good with some that is outstanding. Teachers are enthusiastic, plan their lessons well using modern technology to good effect, and make good use of questioning to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding. These characteristics lead to pupils holding staff in high regard, and being attentive learners keen to succeed.
- Very good relationships between teachers and pupils result in pupils responding quickly to instructions and guidance, making effective use of their learning time.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge, in some cases exchanging classes with their colleagues where strength in one subject can then be of benefit to more than one class.
- In Years 5 and 6, pupils are taught in sets for mathematics, according to their previous success in the subject. This proves helpful in matching work to pupils' needs. In a lower set, for example, learning about translations in mathematics, the pace of work and degree of challenge, from the first moment of the lesson, were matched carefully to the pupils' ability to understand and learn the work. The outcome was excellent progress and understanding of basic principles of this aspect of symmetry.
- Aware that the standard of writing is a relative weakness, identified in the school improvement plan, teaching is now focusing on pupils' understanding and accuracy in their use of language.

Teachers use writing frames to structure pupils' work and successful results were observed when pupils engaged with an interesting topic (a rather gruesome tale!) to stimulate their ideas. Starting from a low baseline of skills, progress has not been as rapid in improving writing as in other areas because expectations of extended, accurate language use have not been high enough across a range of subjects.

- In some lessons, the pace of work is either too fast or too slow for some groups. When this occurs, those at the extremes of the ability range do not make the progress they should.
- Teaching assistants are well informed about the needs of the pupils they support and help to ensure they do well. Teachers and their assistants work very well together so that pupils benefit from the expertise of all the adults supporting/teaching them. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs benefit from this approach; they are taught well. Teaching of those at an early stage of learning English is very effective in developing their speaking and reading skills to enable them to do well in their other subjects.
- Staff make good use of data to check the progress of each pupil in their classes, and adjust the work set accordingly. Helpful extra sessions are provided for pupils in aspects of English and mathematics where they are underachieving. Teachers mark work well, providing advice on how to improve. Most, but not all, pupils respond to the guidance they are given.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They enjoy coming to school and have very positive attitudes to their education. Pupils of different backgrounds and abilities learn to work and play well together.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. Occasionally, they lose concentration, or chatter too loudly in discussion groups when work is too easy or too hard. They quickly quieten down and pay full attention when asked to do so.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- During breaks and lunch periods pupils are lively but always under control.
- Almost all parents responding to Parent View said that behaviour was good, bullying minimal and their children were well cared for. All staff responding to their questionnaire said behaviour was good or very good, it was well managed and any cases of bullying, of whatever form, were dealt with effectively.
- Younger pupils appreciate the Year 6 helpers who support them if they find they are lonely or feel worried. Elected school council members represent their classes well, taking their responsibilities very seriously.
- Attendance is high and has improved over several years. The school has excellent procedures, including praise and rewards for 100% punctuality and attendance. The governors will not authorise parents to take their children on holiday during term time.
- In the past two years, there have been no exclusions, racial incidents or instances of recordable bullying.
- The school is orderly and calm. The pupils are polite and considerate. The school environment is clean, well organised and free from litter.
- Pupils say they feel safe and are confident they can ask staff for help if the need arises. Safeguarding procedures meet legal requirements.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher has a clear view of what St Peter's is trying to achieve and has a well-considered school improvement plan which indicates how this will be done. Success criteria, timescales and responsible staff are identified. The headteacher works very closely with the deputy headteacher; they have complementary skills.
- Almost all parents responding to the online questionnaire said that the school is well or very well

led and managed, and all staff agree with these parents' views.

- Teaching is monitored rigorously and support provided where shortcomings are identified. Only the most senior leaders grade lesson observations, a role they carry out very well. The outcome of this work is seen in the good teaching and pupils' good and improving achievements. Subject leaders and those staff in charge of sections of the school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage, appreciate what their roles are and carry them out effectively. This is a substantial improvement upon the situation at the time of the last inspection.
- A good curriculum has well-thought-out linkages between subject areas, although opportunities for accurate, extended writing are not yet secured across subjects. Topics build on an exciting entry point, such as a visit by a theatre group, which provides motivation and interest. Through its curriculum, the school provides equality of opportunity.
- Extra-curricular activities are excellent, including a wide range of sport, music and academic clubs. On the first morning of the inspection, over 30 pupils attended the first 'pop choir' session at 8.00 in the morning and, after school, 20 pupils were engaged in an information technology club using tablet computers, among other activities. About half the pupils attend one or more club.
- The extra funding for sport is very well used to provide additional opportunities for the pupils, for example in rugby, dance, gymnastics and skipping and to support staff in improving their subject knowledge and understanding of physical education. The school's success in promoting pupils' engagement in sports is apparent in the award of Activemark, and in the pupils' own understanding of the values of a healthy lifestyle.
- Pupil premium funding is used specifically for the pupils it is intended for, through the appointment of additional teaching and support staff, and upgraded resources. The positive outcomes are seen in the self-confidence of these pupils, being indistinguishable from others, and the progress they have made in English and mathematics.
- In all aspects of its work and life, based on Christian foundations, the school promotes effectively pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This can be seen in the good personal social and health education lessons, social interaction in classrooms, play times and in activities, and in the strength of the caring school community.
- The school has good links with the local authority, for example using the skills of the advisory service in improving standards in writing. The local authority maintains a light-touch, monitoring role, judging that the school provides a good standard of education for pupils under the leadership of a strong headteacher and leadership team.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governors are highly supportive of the school, aware of its major strengths such as the good progress being made in improving standards and of the good quality of teaching. They were also involved in establishing the school improvement plan and the focus on improved standards of writing. At a time of financial constraint, because two classes have been formed from one-and-a-half classes of pupils in Years 5 and 6, they monitor the budget very carefully. Governors have some background knowledge of government data on pupils' performance but are aware that a better understanding of pupils' attainment and progress would help them to hold the school to account. Training in this aspect of their work is in hand. Governors make annual visits to the school to see it in action and are offered regular training in aspects of school life. They carry out their statutory duties with regard to safeguarding. Governors appraise the headteacher and ensure that the school policy on staff pay links closely to pupils' achievements and the quality of teaching.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	101237
<b>Local authority</b>	Barking and Dagenham
<b>Inspection number</b>	431262

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	435
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	George Lopez
<b>Headteacher</b>	Daniel Craft
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 May 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 82706524
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