

SS Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102667
Local Authority	Merton
Inspection number	286454
Inspection dates	25–26 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Alison Thomson

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 on roll	
School	457
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Walsh
Headteacher	Mr D Hennessey
Date of previous school inspection	3 February 2003
School address	Cricket Green Mitcham CR4 4LA
Telephone number	020 8648 1459
Fax number	020 8640 0178

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school serving a mixed socio-economic area with some pockets of deprivation. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is average. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who do not have English as their first language is high. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including a group of those who have moderate learning difficulties, is lower than average, although the proportion with a statement of special educational need is average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

SS Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School is a satisfactory and improving school. The overwhelming majority of parents are extremely positive about the school. Comments, typical of many, are, 'The school is improving all the time in many areas', and 'It's very welcoming to parents'. Central to the improvements is the vision and determination of the headteacher. Together with his new deputy and newly formed senior leadership team, he has instilled a common sense of purpose and accountability amongst all staff. One member of staff commented how exciting it was to be so involved. The many changes in staff responsibilities have not yet had sufficient time to fully impact on the work of the school. The school has evaluated its provision well, is focusing on the correct areas for improvement and is in a strong position to improve further. Although several initiatives have not been in place long, there are already signs that they are having a positive impact on the progress of the pupils. For example, a focus on 'reading for writing' has brought about some improvements in boys' literacy. A focus on behaviour has meant a significant reduction in the number of lunchtime incidents. The school has addressed successfully areas for development identified at the school's last inspection. Governors know the school well, give it good support and are becoming effective critical friends.

The decline in standards over the past few years is being reversed. Standards at the end of year 6 are broadly in line with those seen nationally. This represents satisfactory achievement given pupils' starting points in Year 1. Throughout the school, pupils' personal development is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is evident in their good behaviour and willingness to learn. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good and they demonstrate a good understanding of how to lead healthy lives and how to keep themselves safe. They know that their opinions are valued and they show high levels of self-confidence and enjoyment. When asked to describe his school, one pupil commented, 'It's a great school with great teachers'.

Pupils throughout the school do equally well, regardless of their background or ability. Learning support assistants are used well to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities including those with moderate learning difficulties, and those for whom English is not their first language. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, although best practice is not shared well enough. The school is aware of where teaching is less effective and has put in place strategies which are already helping to bring about improvements. The curriculum is satisfactory, with enrichment activities a strength. The school provides pupils with a good level of care, guidance and support. While the pastoral aspect of this is very good, the academic side is not as strong. This is because there are inconsistencies in the reliability and use of assessments. As a result, progress in writing and science particularly, and especially that of boys, is not as good as it could be.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The Foundation Stage gives children a secure start to their education. The children are happy and enjoy coming to Nursery and Reception. Most children join the Nursery with broadly average knowledge and skills. As they play, they learn to share, take turns and become more independent as well as learning the skills they need for reading, writing and mathematics. They make steady progress through the Nursery and Reception. By the time they start more formal education, most are achieving the expectations for children of their age, though girls are doing better

than boys. The curriculum is based on a good understanding of the needs of young children and provides a wide range of activities that stimulate children's imagination and develop their knowledge and skills. The Nursery and Reception classrooms are welcoming and well-equipped. The outdoor area provides good opportunities for active play in the Nursery which the children enjoy. Access to this for Reception children is more limited, but the space is used effectively. Staff work well together and are monitoring children's progress increasingly effectively. They are using the information to raise the level of challenge and increase the rate at which the children, particularly the boys, make progress. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Areas for improvement have been clearly identified and the action plans are bringing about improvement in the quality of teaching and in achievement and progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the accuracy and use of assessment data, with a view to raising achievement, especially in writing and science, and that of boys.
- Ensure teaching and learning are more consistent, with a clear focus on sharing good practice.
- Consolidate the changes in staff responsibilities so that their full impact may be seen.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

At the end of Year 2, standards have fluctuated, but are broadly average, in reading, writing and in mathematics. At the end of Year 6, standards have been falling over the last three years. In 2007, results were average in English and mathematics but below average in science. Across the school, standards reached by boys are lower than those of girls in English especially, but also in mathematics and science. There is insufficient analysis of the differing standards reached by boys and girls. This prevents the school taking early action on improving the overall achievement of boys as they move through the school. The school is addressing concerns about the accuracy of some teacher assessment through termly meetings involving each class teacher and the headteacher or deputy headteacher. Teacher assessment is being scrutinised more rigorously through this process and this is beginning to have an impact. For example, mock test results just completed in Year 6 show that progress has accelerated there this year. Standards in English, mathematics and science are at least in line with expectations and significant proportions of pupils are achieving at the higher level, meeting school's targets. Progress in other years is not yet consistent enough, especially in writing and in science, because of variation in the quality of the teaching.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are proud of their school. They attend very well and enjoy a good range of activities both in and outside lessons, many of which reflect the cultural diversity of the school. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about events as varied as 'The Big Hug' on World Peace Day and the Enterprise Challenge in Year 5. They are confident in their own beliefs and understanding of Christianity and learn to respect the values and beliefs of others. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school and from an early age they learn to take responsibility for themselves and others. They particularly enjoy reading and working with children in the Nursery. They did

not feel that bullying was an issue and are confident that it would be dealt with if it did arise. Pupils are consulted through the school council and feel that teachers listen to their views. The council has been able to make important changes, for example, to lunch time arrangements.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but inconsistent. Pupils speak enthusiastically of the good relationships they have with their teachers and the fact that 'they are always there to help you'. Pupils are eager to learn and co-operate well when given the opportunity to work together. One Year 6 pupil commented, 'Lessons are more interesting and fun when we get to work in groups'. Information and communication technology (ICT) supports learning well, particularly the use of the interactive white boards. In most lessons teaching is well planned with interesting activities so that pupils enjoy learning and work with enthusiasm. However, these activities do not always link well together so that learning is fragmented and not reinforced sufficiently. Pupils are usually set tasks that are well matched to their individual needs. Teachers encourage pupils to play an active part in assessment. This was seen to particularly good effect in a lesson in literacy, where pupils were skilfully guided to evaluate their own report writing. Marking is carried out regularly, but does not always inform pupils clearly enough how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. The overall plan for the curriculum is still limited although work on it is just starting to show some improvement. Links between subjects are largely the responsibility of individual teachers, which limits opportunities for pupils to use and extend their developing skills across subjects. There has been an increased focus on ensuring that the planning of work is matched to the needs of all pupils, especially in English and mathematics. In these subjects, additional support is provided for lower attaining pupils and challenges are provided for more able pupils. In other subjects, this type of planning is not used enough. There are good enrichment opportunities. Specialist music teaching and the opportunity to learn French broaden pupils' experiences. In Year 6, this is consolidated by a residential visit to France. A good range of extracurricular clubs are provided and records are kept of who attends, so that pupils who may not be participating can also be encouraged to take part. Cultural diversity is celebrated well. Educational visits, including residential visits in Years 4 and 6, enrich pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils spoke very appreciatively of the care and support they receive. They feel safe in school, feel that they are treated fairly, and are confident that there are adults to whom they can turn if in difficulty. As one pupil said, 'We can always talk to someone'. Staff know their pupils and their families well and provide excellent individual care and support. Parents speak very highly of the care the school gives their children. The use of assessment to monitor pupils' progress and set targets is satisfactory and rapidly improving, but not yet good enough to ensure consistently good progress across the school. The school has recognised that this is a priority

and is currently moderating data and instructing teachers on its use. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, or who are at an early stage of learning English, have their needs carefully identified and are provided with appropriate support. The school meets the current statutory requirements for safeguarding children and for health and safety and its recordkeeping is a model of excellence.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Parents and pupils are most appreciative of the way in which the school is led and managed. One parent commented, 'The new head is working hard with the senior management team to make sustainable change in quality and culture'. Along with his deputy, he has been swift to identify immediate priorities and has decisively made difficult decisions to ensure the pupils have the best possible chances of success. The newly formed senior leadership team has ensured that more staff are providing leadership. There is a culture of self-reflection with teachers taking more responsibility for the progress of their classes. The school is working hard to involve parents with its 'Family Learning Week' and 'Parent's Forum'. Parental comments reflect just how much they feel valued and listened to: 'They exceed my expectations and try to involve the parents as much as possible'; 'At all times we feel that our views and concerns are taken seriously'. The newly reconstituted governing body is supportive, knows the school well and is increasingly holding it to account.

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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?	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

02 April 2008

Dear Pupils

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

We enjoyed our visit to your school very much. Thank you for being so welcoming and talking openly to us. We liked meeting you and seeing all the interesting work that you do.

Here are some of the things that we liked best.

- You behave well and enjoy school.
- You know how to stay healthy and how to be safe.
- You are developing good personal skills.
- Adults in school look after you very well.
- You have lots of exciting visits and clubs.
- Your teachers make your lessons interesting.

There are three things that we have asked the school to improve.

- The progress you make could be better, especially in writing and science, and particularly that of the boys.
- More of your lessons should enable you to make the best progress possible in your learning. You can all help by working as hard as possible in lessons.
- Many of the staff have new responsibilities and need to check that these are carried out well. This will help to make the school even better.

Thank you again for welcoming us into your school.

Best wishes for the future

Alison Thomson

Lead Inspector