

St Peter's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126028
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	293440
Inspection dates	21–22 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Peter Sudworth

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 on roll	
School	366
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carol Eastwood
Headteacher	Nick Phillips
Date of previous school inspection	22 April 2002
School address	Fabians Way Henfield BN5 9PU
Telephone number	01273 492447
Fax number	01273 495563

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Most pupils in this above average size, two-form entry school are White British. A very small number of pupils are from a range of minority ethnic groups. A small number speak English as an additional language but all do so fluently. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is slightly above the national average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. Children's attainment on entry to the Reception class broadly meets expectations.

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 CE Primary is a good school with outstanding provision for pupils' care, guidance and support. Most parents are rightly pleased with the strong, caring, family ethos of the school and very supportive of it. Many speak highly of the school. Typical of several other comments, one parent writes, 'St Peter's is an excellent school with a supportive, caring and committed staff. We feel our children have been fortunate to be here for their primary education.'

Teaching and learning are good. Very respectful relationships between staff and pupils foster a good learning atmosphere and make for a happy school. The staff's provision of a richly stimulating learning environment very clearly promotes, values and acknowledges pupils' work and efforts. Much improvement in the quality of assessments in the past two years is now enabling staff to track pupils' progress accurately across the school, allowing them to intervene effectively if pupils fall behind with their work. Together with the well planned curriculum, pupils are enabled to make good progress. As a result, levels of attainment are above average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Significant numbers of pupils reach the higher levels. Pupils are well prepared for their future education and life beyond school.

Good teaching and a well organised curriculum in the Foundation Stage help reception children to get off to a good start in some areas of work. A particular strength is the way the children develop their independence. Whilst their overall attainment by the end of Reception is broadly average, they make a good start in early reading and writing activities. Their cultural development, as in the rest of the school, is less well developed. Despite this, pupils' personal development in the school is good. Through their various responsibilities, pupils play an important role in the smooth running of the school community and in raising money for various charities. Their enjoyment of school is transparent.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher effectively secures the support of staff. The school's self-evaluation procedures draw on a wide range of views which provide an accurate picture to inform its future planning. Governors and subject leaders monitor the school's work perceptively obtaining a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development. Recent monitoring in science, for example, has identified weaknesses in pupils' recording of their work and the subject leaders are now intent on securing improvement.

Staff are keen to improve the school even further, shown in the rigorous way that they have tackled pupils' lower attainment in writing, resulting in improved achievement for all groups of pupils. The school has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use pupils' literacy skills more effectively to improve the quality and organisation of their recorded work in science.
- Extend pupils' understanding and appreciation of different world cultures.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and pupils achieve well. Children make good progress overall in the Foundation Stage, especially in aspects of language and social development and reach an above expected level in these. Their cultural development is less well developed. Pupils continue

to make good progress by the end of Year 2 in reaching slightly above expected standards with greater percentages than nationally attaining the higher levels in all areas. Significant improvements have been made in writing for all groups which has been a past weakness. For example, the percentage of Year 2 pupils likely to reach the expected level is significantly higher than previously.

Pupils achieve well by Year 6. Test results have been consistently above average for a number of years with a greater proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels than nationally. Over time there is little overall difference between the attainment of boys and girls or of different ethnic groups. Most pupils with learning difficulties progress well because of good arrangements made for them. Though they understand the basic concepts in science well, pupils do not use their literacy skills well enough in the subject.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils live up to their school promises very well including 'we will treat others as we would like to be treated'. They behave well, participate enthusiastically in lessons and enjoy learning. Their attendance is above average, although, despite discouragement, some families take holidays in term-time. Pupils practise what they preach regarding living a healthy lifestyle. They know how to stay safe and of the dangers of misusing drugs. Their involvement in physical exercise is impressive and they have a sophisticated understanding of the virtues of a balanced diet.

Pupils make a good contribution to school life through the work of the school council, undertaking their own surveys and acting on them, and by carrying out conscientiously a wide range of responsibilities. Their spiritual, moral and social development is good. Their knowledge of cultures other than their own is satisfactory. Pupils are well placed academically and personally to do well in the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers' detailed lesson preparation helps to match work well to pupils' different capabilities. The careful balancing of explanations, discussion and activity, including effective use of modern technology, retains pupils' interest and concentration in their work. Consequently, pupils complete a good amount of work and make good progress in learning. Teachers manage pupils well. There are clear expectations of what pupils should achieve in lessons. Marking is good and supports improvements. Good teaching in the Foundation Stage assists children's independence well through the rich mix of child-initiated and adult-directed activities, though there is still scope for deepening the quality of these in the outside area.

Specialist teaching in art and music enhances pupils' progress and adds to pupils' enjoyment in learning. Paired discussion is used effectively to help pupils verbalise their understanding and to explore ideas. However, teachers do not have high enough expectations when pupils record work in science. They use too many worksheets and this does not always result in well ordered thinking and good use of literacy.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Good levels of intervention support pupils with learning difficulties. Keen participation in the imaginative range of extra activities, such as 'master classes', extends pupils who have particular gifts and talents. The very good provision for extra-curricular activities, with a particular strength in sport, adds to pupils' enjoyment of school. Well chosen visits to the locality and further afield, such as to Lewes Castle, bring geographical and historical work to life.

The structure of work in personal, social and health education is still developing but visitors, such as the police and school nurse, are used effectively to support pupils' understanding of safe and healthy living. Links between subjects are increasing. Some, such as the exciting interplay of art and geography seen in Year 3's studies of rainforests, are most imaginative. The use of specialist teachers in music and art adds quality to the curriculum. The teaching of French supports the curriculum breadth well. However, there are not enough opportunities to extend pupils' knowledge of other cultures. In science, pupils do not record predictions and draw conclusions about their investigations well enough.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school's caring, Christian ethos is very evident in the way staff and pupils display a sense of belonging to a family, shown in their mutual support and concern for one another. Effective arrangements for following up pupil absence have resulted in an above average attendance rate. Close links with the Church, which include the provision of a child care worker, together with ready access to a shared child counsellor, ensure that pupils with particular difficulties and their families are very well supported. Good links with external professional services provide extra support for pupils with particular learning difficulties.

Regular reviews of health and safety matters ensure that the school is a safe environment for learning. Child protection procedures are well established. Staff have regular training updates. The very good induction and transfer arrangements help the pupils to cope well in their new settings. Effective assessment systems enable pupils to be well informed about the progress they are making. Pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve further.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The shared and practised vision creates a school compassionate about each individual and where pupils can flourish in an inspiring environment. Consequently, pupils' academic and personal achievements are good.

Key to this are perceptive monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. Staff and governors have a very good understanding of the school's effectiveness. They seek parents' and pupils' views about the provision, analyse assessment information and keep the pupils' work under review. As a result the school's self-evaluation is accurate and it identifies how it intends to move good practice to outstanding. New systems for charting pupils' progress have strengthened the school's ability to identify the next steps in learning. Success is already evident in raising pupils' achievement in writing.

The improvement plan focuses accurately on those things key to improving the school. It does not outline precisely how it will measure its success in terms of the effects on pupils' achievement. This limits its effectiveness as a tool for development.

The school, in partnership with the local authority, has improved significantly since the last inspection. The good leadership of the headteacher, commitment of staff and governors and the support of parents mean it is well placed to continue to do so.

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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

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 disabilities make progress	2

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 behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the 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

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
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**

We were very pleased to visit your school and to see the good range of work that you undertake. Thank you for sharing with us what you do. Most of you clearly enjoy school a great deal. The staff obviously value your work highly and display it around the school to a high standard, providing you with a most pleasant environment in which to work.

You attend a good school. St Peter's is a school that is keen to improve further what it does for you. It has made several important improvements since the last inspection. We were pleased to see the good progress that you have made more recently in writing. You make good progress in your work. Standards are above average. Many of you reach a standard that is higher than usual for your age. However, we feel that you could use your literacy skills much better when you write up your investigations in science.

The staff look after you extremely well. They monitor your progress effectively. We were impressed with the targets for improvement that you all have. You develop well as young people. We were very interested in the work of the school council and how it consults you all for ideas. You know a lot about living healthily and keeping yourselves safe. You obviously enjoy taking part in extra school activities including the good range of sport.

Leadership and management of the school and teaching are good. The staff provide a good curriculum for you but staff could help you to appreciate more the wide range of influences that have shaped how different people in the world live and the range of customs, art, music and literature from various parts of the world.

We wish you all very well for the future. We know that you will work hard to achieve your ambitions.