

St Peter's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102335
Local Authority	Havering
Inspection number	307972
Inspection date	4 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Charalambos Loizou

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	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Sizer
Headteacher	Mrs J Waterfield
Date of previous school inspection	24 May 2004
School address	Dorset Avenue Romford RM1 4JA
Telephone number	01708 745506
Fax number	01708 730699

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following areas:

- the quality of teaching and the curriculum, and their impact on standards and the pupils' personal development
- the achievement of more able pupils in mathematics
- the quality and accuracy of assessment and target setting carried out by staff.

The inspector gathered evidence from lesson observations, the analysis of test results and assessments of pupils' performance, as well as that of parents' responses to questionnaires and discussions with pupils and staff. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

St Peter's is smaller than average in size and serves a mixed area of private and social housing in Romford town centre. The large majority of pupils are of white British heritage and others come from a range of backgrounds, the largest groups being of black African or Caribbean heritage. The proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language is low compared to most schools. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD) is below average, and most have moderate learning difficulties and need additional support with basic reading, writing and mathematics. There are well established links with other schools and organisations, including very close links with the local church and parish community. The school has many national and locally accredited awards that include the Active Mark, the Healthy Schools award and it is an Eco School.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The large majority of parents are right in their belief that their children gain very much from the outstanding education that St Peter's provides. The school's modest assessment of its effectiveness reflects the high expectations set by the headteacher, governors and staff, and their determination to continue improving the school for the benefit of the pupils and the community it serves. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, as reflected in consistently good attendance rates and in the school's work, which as its mission statement sets out, '...celebrates the joy of learning and playing together, growing up as individuals and as a caring community'. Many parents have paid tribute to the efforts of the staff, one of many rightly commenting that this '...is an excellent school and has a really strong community behind it.'

The headteacher is both energetic and innovative and has guided very good improvements to the school in the three years she has been in post. Her outstanding leadership has brought about many changes, in particular, the excellent improvements to the curriculum. Building on the very good quality of education provided at the time of the last inspection, a great deal of success has been achieved in improving standards and the consistency of teaching, whilst at the same time expanding the curriculum to include many more creative and practical activities that extends learning further. Information and communication technology (ICT) resources are used very well to support pupils' work in all subjects, and this has contributed greatly to an ever expanding and creative curriculum. This results in high standards in the creative and performing arts and in sport.

The teaching is consistently at least good and is outstanding overall. This helps pupils of all abilities and backgrounds to make at least good, and often excellent, progress. Consequently, achievement is outstanding and standards are above average overall by the end of Year 6 and are particularly high in English. Pupils make excellent progress in relation to their starting points, particularly in their development of reading and writing skills from an early age, and increasingly, they are achieving very well in science. The children join the school in the Reception Year with skills and abilities that are just below those expected of four-year-olds. They make rapid progress in the Foundation Stage and achieve well in Key Stage 1 to reach the standards expected by the end of Year 2. Reading and writing standards are improving well in both Years 1 and 2. Assessments show that very effective and consistent teaching in Year 1 accelerates the progress pupils make. National test results and current assessments show that, by the end of Year 6, the proportion of pupils attaining higher levels in English and science is above average. Nevertheless, the proportion of more able pupils predicted to reach higher levels in mathematics is usually lower. The staff use assessment well to monitor how well pupils are doing but are not specifically checking higher ability pupils enough in mathematics to ensure that they all reach their targets.

The school's strong sense of social cohesion is enhanced by its close links with the church and community. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils form strong friendships and mature into courteous and responsible individuals. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent with many opportunities provided for prayer and reflection during assemblies, church services and special lessons. One pupil explained that 'These special moments help us to explain how we feel.' Pupils thrive on the many opportunities they have to care for others or to represent their classmates as school councillors and house captains. There are very strong links with the local and wider community, including well-established international links with a school in Cuba, that provides very good opportunities for pupils to write and study cultures other their own,

including learning to speak Spanish. Cultural and racial diversity is often celebrated and reflected in the high quality of art work and writing displayed around the school, including the recent celebrations of the school's fortieth anniversary.

Pupils feel very safe and well cared for and say that the staff are helpful and approachable if they have any concerns, 'We also have special worry boxes so we know there is always someone we can talk to', said one. All safeguarding arrangements are robust and provision for pupils who need extra help with reading, writing or mathematics is very effective.

The many out-of-school clubs and the interesting activities during lessons enable pupils to adopt healthy and active lifestyles and attitudes. They are rewarded with prestigious 'walk to school' badges and many cycle, or even 'scoot' to school each day. Food technology and cooking are popular and pupils eat very healthy lunches, and enjoy fruit at break-times. Special projects, themed weeks and celebrations incorporate a wealth of visits and visitors that enhance pupils' learning. For example, the visit to St. Alban's led to pupils producing excellent writing about Roman myths. High quality collages depicting Tudor buildings were inspired by images of the Tower of London. The many opportunities to research, using skills acquired from a range of subjects and ICT, have been particularly successful in raising achievement in all subjects. Older pupils skilfully use multi-media presentations on computers that illustrate very well the work they do in a wide range of topics, such as diversity, and the school's focus on conservation, recycling and the sustainable use of resources. The acquisition of ICT skills, using computers, digital cameras and other technologies, prepares pupils very well for the next stage of their education.

Governors are a real asset and provide excellent support for the school whilst holding leaders to account. The headteacher, deputy and senior staff work closely with governors and parents and demonstrate excellent capacity to continue improving the school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The excellent provision in the Reception class is attributable to the effective planning of purposeful and stimulating activities that challenge and extend children's learning. For example, children thoroughly enjoy reinforcing their counting skills in the role-play sweet shop. 'I think you need some change,' said one when dealing with the next 'customer'. The teacher and teaching assistant assess the children accurately and maintain good records of their progress in language and communication that help them to check how each child is doing in each area of learning. Children make rapid progress and reach the learning goals expected of five-year-olds. They are well prepared for the early stages of the National Curriculum by the time they start Year 1. Although assessments are used well to track children's performance, they are not always used regularly enough to predict expected targets for more able children, particularly in their mathematical development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the way teachers assess the performance of more able pupils in mathematics to raise standards and to help them predict more accurately the proportion of pupils likely to achieve higher levels by the end of Years 2 and 6.

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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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

14 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Romford, RM1 4JA

I was very pleased to visit your school and I thank you for making me feel so welcome. I especially enjoyed talking to pupils in lessons and during break time. I think that you go to an excellent school. You all work very hard with your teachers, and I agree with many parents who say that your school is helping you to do very well. I was very impressed with many different things that have happened since your school was last inspected. There are many good things about your school:

- your teachers and support staff are good at helping you to reach good standards
- you are exceptionally well behaved, polite and courteous and are a credit to your parents and the school
- you enjoy school very much and I can see why because there are many things for you to do; I was impressed with the quality and range of artwork, including those lovely paintings depicting the style adopted by impressionist artists; these are excellent, well done!
- I was very impressed with the way pupils help each other like the monitors and house captains, and the school council; I was also very pleased with the efforts you all go to maintain your Eco school, like recycling and caring for the environment
- the large majority of parents are very pleased with you and your teachers and the school is always trying to work closely with them
- the headteacher, staff and governors manage the school very well and work hard to keep looking for ways to make the school even better.

I have asked your teachers to:

- make sure that, when checking which pupils will reach higher levels in mathematics, that they do this more often to continue raising standards.

You can all help your school by carrying on with the very good work you do to make your school even better and by coming up with really good ideas. Well done, and I wish you all the very best.

Yours sincerely,

Charalambos Loizou

Lead Inspector