

St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School,  
Sible Hedingham  
Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115070
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	311813
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29–30 September 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Nichola Perry

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.  
The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	197
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Rosemary Jenkins
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr John Smith
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 May 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	School Road Sible Hedingham Halstead Essex CO9 3NR
<b>Telephone number</b>	01787460362
<b>Fax number</b>	01787461657

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29–30 September 2008
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Most of the pupils who attend this popular village school come from the local area. There are currently no pupils from minority ethnic groups and none speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion identified with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities is also below average. The attainment of pupils entering the Reception class varies widely but is broadly in line with levels expected nationally. The school has gained Investors in People status and the Healthy Schools Award.

There is a privately run nursery operating from a classroom in the school. This provision has not been included as part of this inspection.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with strengths in the good standards of pupils' personal development and in the quality of care and well-being provided for the pupils. The headteacher is well supported by a committed and enthusiastic staff and a positive governing body which is determined to do its best for the school. Appropriate management systems are used to identify areas needing improvement, but the arrangements for monitoring the provision are not sufficiently developed to further speed school improvement. The headteacher is energetic and cares passionately about the children. He strives to ensure that no individual or group is in any way disadvantaged. Parents speak very highly of the school and all it provides for their children. A comment made by one parent sums up the views of most, including the pupils themselves: 'St Peter's is a lovely school with a family atmosphere. Every child is known by name and staff are genuinely concerned with the whole child and their learning journey both in and outside school.'

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. They make satisfactory progress and, by the time they leave Year 6, academic standards are broadly average, although marginally better in English and science than in mathematics. Effective systems of pastoral care contribute strongly to pupils' well developed personal skills. Behaviour is good and attendance is satisfactory. Pupils show high levels of enjoyment of their learning and great respect for others. One pupil said, 'We look out for each other' and another rated the school as, 'a big family with sports in our hearts'. Many say they feel safe and show good understanding of how to live a healthy life. This aspect of their learning is particularly well developed through the wide range of sporting and physical activities provided and high quality school meals, which includes daily, freshly baked bread. Older pupils willingly take on responsibilities and play key roles in managing the playground, including games, to make lunchtimes more enjoyable and safe. Pupils develop into confident, positive and friendly children who make a significant contribution to the school community.

Whilst many aspects of the curriculum and teaching are good, the overall impact on learning is only satisfactory. Although the curriculum has yet to be further developed to take account of the specific needs of the school, it meets statutory requirements. Due attention is paid to developing important skills in literacy, numeracy and science in Years 1 to 6 but not in the Reception class where there is insufficient emphasis on promoting basic skills. There are many enhancements to pupils' academic learning through a wide range of visitors, extensive use of the local community and the wider community, as exemplified by the recent residential trip to the Lake District. Improvements in teaching and learning have eradicated the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. However, teaching is still not consistently good enough to ensure enough progress and higher standards across the school, particularly in mathematics. Good use of external agencies and in-class support for pupils who are vulnerable or have learning difficulties and/ or disabilities ensures that they are able to participate in all aspects of learning and make satisfactory progress.

The headteacher and governors are aware of areas requiring improvement and where the school needs to be. Together, they have managed some difficult financial issues in recent years through effective budget management. The school has made necessary improvements since its last inspection and shows satisfactory capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Children settle very quickly in the Reception class because of effective liaison with the on-site nursery provision and the good relationships established with children and their families. Behaviour is good and children clearly enjoy school. Parents are very happy with the start their children make. The learning environment, both inside and outside, is stimulating and well resourced. Particularly good use is made of the small woodland area for investigations. There is appropriate balance between learning indoors and outdoors and lots of opportunities for children to make choices. This helps children develop good self-confidence and independence. Staff know the children well because assessments are thorough and regular. Staff are increasingly taking account of children's interests in their planning for individual needs. Children make satisfactory progress overall in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. However, the standards they achieve in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development are not as high as they should be, given their starting points. Leadership of the EYFS is currently satisfactory and a good start has been made on implementing the new Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that leaders at all levels develop more robust monitoring arrangements in order to accelerate the rate of school improvement.
- Improve further the quality of teaching so that there is greater consistency across the school and more examples of good teaching.
- Improve standards and pupils' achievement in mathematics across the school.
- Place greater emphasis on the teaching of communication, language and literacy and mathematical development in the EYFS.

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 inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Pupils make satisfactory progress overall during their time in school and standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6. Standards reached by the end of Year 2 have fluctuated over recent years and show a very slight upward trend. However, they remain broadly average because too few pupils have reached the higher Level 3. Similarly, the school's performance in all subjects in the Year 6 national tests has fluctuated over the past few years. The latest test results, although unconfirmed, appear broadly average overall. These show some improvement in English with more pupils reaching the higher Level 5 than in previous years. Numbers of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 in mathematics are not sufficiently high. In relation to the levels pupils reached at the age of seven, pupils' achievement in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. Current assessments indicate that pupils may reach similar standards in 2009. Pupils with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities achieve satisfactorily for their capabilities.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school and rate highly the range of additional activities available. Attendance is average and rigorously monitored by the school. Pupils know about leading healthy lives and are very clear about how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. Behaviour is good throughout the school because it is well managed and most pupils are good at taking responsibility for their own actions. Pupils are polite and clearly care for each other. They show high levels of self confidence when talking to visiting adults because they are always listened to and their views valued. Pupils delight in acting as play leaders and sports leaders which have a very good effect on younger pupils' enjoyment of lunchtimes, and particularly on those who find lunchtimes difficult. Pupils' cultural and spiritual development are satisfactory. Contribution to the wider community is good, both in school through the school council and in the wider community through organising events, raising money for a wide range of charities and participating in parish council meetings. The development of skills to support pupils' future economic well-being is satisfactory.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. The resulting good behaviour, high levels of respect and quiet, calm and industrious classrooms all contribute strongly to pupils' enjoyment of learning. There are examples of good teaching. However, these are not sufficiently consistent to ensure that pupils make enough progress. Most teachers use questions effectively to develop learning and sustain interest but this is variable between classes. Although lesson planning is detailed, it is not sufficiently adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistently high enough. As a result, pupils, particularly those who are more able, are sometimes insufficiently challenged. Teachers are growing in confidence in the use of electronic whiteboards and this is beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of lessons. Pupils are increasingly encouraged to evaluate their own learning when teachers help them to identify ways they can gauge their success. However, at times, these measures are not always sufficiently precise. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together, particularly in support of pupils who find learning difficult and those with disabilities.

## Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The recently revised national frameworks for literacy and numeracy are being implemented satisfactorily but have yet to result in the speeding up the rate of pupils' progress and so raise standards. Links between subjects are being developed appropriately to provide more creative and practical opportunities for pupils to enjoy their learning. Good standards in art are evident in the many colourful displays around the school. Pupils particularly enjoy their art and design lessons. Elements of the music curriculum, especially singing, are also a strength. However, the school does not place sufficient emphasis on promoting pupils understanding of other cultures and ways of life. A good range of out of school activities, visits and visitors to the school enhances the curriculum and effectively supports pupils' personal development. Pupils in Year 6 spoke enthusiastically about their recent extended visit to the Lake District and clearly demonstrated a good understanding of being healthy and staying safe. Pupils benefit from

learning in a spacious, well-equipped environment with good facilities outdoors for pupils to participate in physical activities. Many were keen to share their experiences of the sporting opportunities. One pupil proudly pointed out the many trophies and affectionately described the school as being 'very sporty'.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Pastoral care is a strength. Staff, and particularly the headteacher, are expert at helping pupils to negotiate ways forward in any disputes. As a result, pupils feel safe and well cared for. Arrangements for child protection and for safeguarding pupils are robust. Satisfactory risk assessments and equipment checks are carried out regularly. There is good support for vulnerable children and those with challenging behaviour. Links with outside agencies to provide additional support are good. As a result, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive the necessary help to enable them to make at least satisfactory progress. All pupils are set targets to help them improve their work in English and mathematics, and systems are in place to keep track of their progress. However, some pupils do not know their targets, whilst others do not always know precisely what they need to do to improve. This is because some marking does not clearly identify the exact steps the pupils should focus on to bring about improvements. Links with the secondary school are good. This facilitates well the transfer process and the continuity of learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher has established a strong sense of teamwork throughout the school, and parents are overwhelmingly supportive of all it does for their children. Staff work hard to create a happy environment for pupils and everyone involved in the school is committed to all aspects of pupils' care and development. Subject leaders are developing as a team and carry out regular monitoring of their areas. However, the systems for monitoring provision in all areas are not yet sufficiently robust to identify key actions and support more rapid improvement. The school's contribution to community cohesion is positive. There are productive partnerships with a range of organisations such as local churches and schools, the parish council and the local authority. Self-evaluation is mostly accurate and involves staff and governors. The school has a good range of data to help it track pupils' progress and staff are becoming increasingly confident in using this information to identify any underachievement. Targets set to raise standards are currently satisfactory. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive, have high aspirations for the school and are becoming increasingly effective in challenging its performance.

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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?</b>	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	3

<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	3

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

1 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Sible Hedingham CO9 3NR

This letter is to thank you for your help when Mr Wynford Jones and I visited your school recently. We really enjoyed our time with you. We were impressed by your good behaviour, how polite you are and how much you care for each other and those who are less fortunate than yourselves. We saw in lessons and around the school, as well as from talking to you, how you obviously enjoy being at school.

We think you go to a lovely school where you are able to do lots of activities, especially in sport and games. You told us how safe you feel and we were pleased to see how much you know about keeping healthy. We saw many of you trying hard in lessons and paying good attention to your teachers. There was lots of very neat handwriting in your books and you are presenting your work very carefully now. We loved your super art work around the school.

Your headteacher and all the teachers work hard to make sure they know a lot about the school and about you, and we have seen that you are doing reasonably well in English, mathematics and science. We have asked your headteacher to do some things to help improve your school:

- To make sure that all of you, from the Reception class upwards, make better progress in English, mathematics and science, but especially in mathematics.
- To help your teachers get even better at teaching - (you can also help them do this by trying your best in all your lessons).
- To make sure that the senior teachers check very carefully what the school needs to do to improve.

Carry on enjoying your school and trying your best.

Best wishes to you all.

Nichola Perry

Lead inspector