

St Peter's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101237
Local Authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	323427
Inspection date	8 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Kay Charlton

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	352
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Len Bryant
Headteacher	Mr Daniel Craft
Date of previous school inspection	16 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Goresbrook Road Dagenham RM9 6UU
Telephone number	020 8270 6524
Fax number	020 8270 6525

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the impact of teaching and learning on pupils' achievements in English
- the strengths in care, guidance and support, and their impact on pupils' personal development
- the effectiveness of leaders, particularly middle leaders, in school improvement.

Evidence was gathered from observing lessons and pupils' work, and from a scrutiny of the school's documentation and progress data. Inspectors also analysed the parent questionnaires and had discussions with senior leaders, pupils, staff and governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors 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 a larger than average primary school. Pupils come from a range of ethnic backgrounds, with the most predominant being Black African. Around twenty different languages are spoken, and a sizeable number of pupils are at an early stage of speaking English. An above average proportion of pupils are eligible for a free school meal. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, and the largest group are those with moderate learning difficulties. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a 26-place part-time Nursery and two Reception classes. The school has achieved the Activemark. From September 2009, the school is to increase the number of pupils on roll as it moves from a one-and-a-half-form entry to a two-form entry.

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 is a good school, where pupils learn Christian values in an environment that reflects the range of their cultural backgrounds. Pupils' personal development is outstanding as a result of the excellent care, guidance and support they receive. The school has made significant improvement since the last inspection, and the vast majority of parents are very positive about the quality of the provision. Comments such as 'St Peter's has done a tremendous job with my daughter in developing her educational and social skills' sum their views up very well.

Pupils of different backgrounds and abilities achieve well because of good teaching and learning. They achieve particularly well in mathematics and science and, by the end of Year 6, standards are above average in these subjects. Staff make very effective use of practical opportunities to extend their pupils' mathematical and scientific understanding. By Year 6, standards in English are broadly average and, in this area, the school has rightly put in place a wide range of strategies to improve pupils' achievement. These initiatives are beginning to pay dividends, as was seen in an outstanding Year 6 lesson. In this lesson, the teacher used an exceptionally wide range of approaches to challenge the learning of all pupils. However, this practice is not yet sufficiently consistent across the school for all pupils to achieve their best. In all lessons, teachers plan activities carefully and use information and communication technology (ICT) very effectively to make learning interesting. They work very well with support staff, and this is an important contributory factor in the good progress of pupils with learning difficulties. All have excellent relationships with pupils and are successful in encouraging them to concentrate and work hard. Assessment is much improved, and staff make sure that pupils are clear about their targets and what they need to do to improve their work.

Pupils learn to respect those of different backgrounds and beliefs, and think through the effects of their actions on others. As a result, they work and play together in a very harmonious atmosphere, and their behaviour is excellent. They show a high degree of reverence during worship, as when they sang Ave Maria in assembly. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and take on extra responsibilities, such as being a member of the school council, with great enthusiasm. They make a very strong contribution to the wider community, particularly through the school's links with the church. All show a very good awareness of the need for a healthy lifestyle and, as recognised by the school's Activemark award, participate in a good level of physical activity. Pupils are very considerate and look after each other very well, showing an awareness of safety at all times. Whatever their age, pupils are confident to give their views because they know that their ideas are valued - for example, about the ways in which the school uniform might be improved. Older ones are keen to represent the school at the local Children's Forum. Attendance is excellent, and pupils develop well the basic skills needed for the next stage of their education.

The school's good curriculum goes a long way to meeting pupils' needs, with a very strong focus on their personal development. It celebrates the cultural diversity of the school's surrounding area and makes an effective contribution to pupils' understanding of the wider world. There is a very good level of enrichment, particularly through sport and music. Provision in ICT has improved significantly since the last inspection and is used very effectively across all curriculum areas. The school has highlighted a review of curriculum planning as a priority for the next academic year, to make best use of the opportunities afforded by the proposed single-age-group organisation. This is suitably focused on ensuring a more flexible and creative approach to planning, as well as a fully systematic development of pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy across all subjects.

There are thorough procedures to safeguard pupils, and the care given to them is exemplary. Staff make sure that all pupils, including those who arrive at different times, settle quickly and happily into school life, and that they feel confident about moving to the next stage of their education. Consequently, these pupils progress in line with their peers. Adults know all the pupils very well and have a good understanding of their personal circumstances. Their knowledge of individuals, along with the comprehensive tracking of each pupil's progress, is used to advantage to organise extra support for pupils that need it. Those who speak English as an additional language, and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, have support that is tailored well to their needs, and their achievement is good. The school is highly effective in supporting pupils' personal development and has ensured very good improvement in their attendance. It has excellent links with others, including parents, outside agencies and other schools that support pupils' development.

Leadership is good. The headteacher provides a very strong lead and, very ably supported by his deputy, has overseen a number of improvements, such as pupils' improved behaviour. They give a clear sense of direction and have the drive and determination to ensure that all pupils, whatever their ability, achieve success. Senior leaders instil a can-do philosophy among pupils and staff, and there is a climate of strong teamwork among all adults. Everyone realises that they have a part to play in the school's future development. Middle leaders are enthusiastic, and support their areas well. In line with the school's drive for continual improvement, it has rightly been identified that their role can be still further developed. This is so that these staff can take an increased responsibility for monitoring the areas that they lead, particularly in light of the growing number of pupils on roll. The governing body challenges the school well and acts effectively as its critical friend. Governors work well with the staff and, together, they make a good contribution to community cohesion. All value the diversity of the local community, and actively involve those from a range of different backgrounds in school life so that all learn from each other. The rigorous evaluation of the school's performance by the headteacher and his deputy ensures that everyone is clear about its strengths, and areas that are in need of development. Along with the determination of all staff and governors to provide the best, the school has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children achieve well because of good teaching. By the time children start in Year 1, they attain the expected goals in all areas other than in communication, language and literacy, where, on entry, their starting points are lower than in other areas. Staff provide excellent support and ensure that children's welfare is second to none. As a result, children quickly develop daily routines and independence, and achieve exceptionally well in the area of personal, social and emotional development. Staff match learning well to the children's age and needs, so that children are motivated in their activities - for example, in the wide range of activities associated with their current topic on growth. There are times where teaching is excellent, as seen in one of the Reception classes, and this was exemplified by the exceptional quality of staff's questioning to extend children's understanding of the writing process. Leadership is good and has ensured significant improvement in the provision after a time of staff change. It has highlighted the need to ensure that teaching consistently challenges all children in communication, language and literacy, so that their achievements improve even further. In line with the rest of the school, staff are rightly focusing their efforts on improving children's achievements in English.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in English by ensuring that teaching consistently challenges all pupils to achieve their best.
- Extend the role of middle leaders so that they take more responsibility for monitoring the areas that they lead, especially as pupil numbers increase.

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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?	2
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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	2

The quality of provision

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

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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**

21 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Dagenham, RM9 6UU

Thank you for all the help you gave us when we visited your school.

Many of you told us that you feel that you are lucky to attend St Peter's School. You have made good friends and, as you said, other pupils and staff are always ready to help if you have a problem. You mentioned that you really enjoy all the extra activities, such as taking part in 'Voices for a Better World' concert at the O2 arena, the sporting opportunities, and the gardening club. We were very impressed with your excellent attendance and the way you approach worship, for example when singing Ave Maria in assembly. The effort that you have all put into improving your rewards system for behaviour has worked, and your behaviour is outstanding. We found that teaching is good and that you progress well, particularly in mathematics and science. We can see why you are proud of your school and agree that it is a good school.

The headteacher and deputy have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and the areas in which it could be even better. Along with all staff they are keen to see it improve further. They have made sure that many improvements have already taken place and, now, are rightly focusing on improving teaching in English so that all of you achieve your best in all your lessons. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are also helping those teachers who have responsibility for particular areas to check more closely on how well each one of you is achieving. This is so that they can then be even clearer about how they might help you improve in future, especially as the number of pupils at St Peter's grows. You can help by trying your hardest at all times.

Yours faithfully

Kay Charlton

Lead Inspector