

St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, South Weald

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115164
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	326141
Inspection date	9 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Marianne Harris

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	316
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 John Long
Headteacher	Mr Iain Gunn
Date of previous school inspection	26 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Wigley Bush Lane South Weald Brentwood Essex CM14 5QN
Telephone number	01277 215577

Age group	5–11
Inspection date	9 June 2009
Inspection number	326141

Fax number

01277 214480

Age group	5-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school. They investigated the following issues:

- how successful the programme to promote multicultural education has been
- whether or not girls make as much progress as boys
- confirmation of the school's very positive view of the curriculum.

Evidence was obtained from lesson observations, discussions with staff and pupils, looking at work and talking to representatives of the governing body. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the schools own assessments, as given its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This school is larger than average and is consistently oversubscribed. The majority of the children start the school with standards that are above those normally expected for this age. Pupils come from a range of social and economic backgrounds, although few are from minority ethnic groups and all speak English at home. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is smaller than average, although the proportion who have a statement of special educational needs is larger than average. These needs vary, but are mainly for autism, moderate learning difficulties or for speech and language delay.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Peter's provides an excellent standard of education and care for its pupils. Parents are very supportive of the school and many comment on the 'fantastic staff' and 'great headteacher'. Parents are confident that their children are making excellent progress and pupils agree with this. They are very enthusiastic about the school and it is seen as being at the heart of the community.

Standards are very high in English, mathematics and science. This has been the trend over the past years and looks set to continue into the future. Any pupil who is falling behind is quickly identified and very effective programmes of support are put in place, so that they can soon catch up with their learning. Other issues, such as the performance of boys when compared to girls, are analysed carefully. Last year the school noticed that girls did not appear to perform as well as boys in the national tests. Detailed analysis showed that this was not a trend and that generally the girls made just as good progress as the boys. This attention to detail has led to all pupils achieving excellently, whatever their ability. In other subjects standards are very high. In information and communication technology (ICT) pupils are very confident when using a range of programs and many exceed the expectations for their age. The school has a very good computer suite and is currently putting more computers into the classrooms to support learning in all subjects. At present, ICT is taught as a separate lesson and the school now wants to use pupils' skills and understanding of ICT in other subjects.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are excellent. They talk enthusiastically about how much they contribute to the school and are rightly proud of the money they raise for local and national charities. Year 6 pupils are so excited about learning that they wrote a letter to the inspection team because a school journey meant that they were unable to speak to them in person. Older pupils in the school are very keen to look after the younger ones and take on responsibility for playground games enthusiastically. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and safe and many undertake at least one of the many sporting activities on offer outside lessons. The school council has a budget and has researched such resources as lockers for all pupils. School council members tested a variety of these and bought the best for their school. As a result the corridors are neat and tidy with no coats or bags cluttering up learning areas. Pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education. Parents comment on how mature their children are and how confident they become. Behaviour in the school is exemplary. There is an atmosphere of mutual respect and courtesy. Pupils and parents comment on the strong link with the church and this has a very positive impact on pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' thirst for learning is reflected in the high attendance rates and very good punctuality seen in the school.

Teaching and learning are excellent and result in pupils making outstanding progress. Lessons are carefully planned and work is marked diligently so that pupils know how to improve. The purpose of each lesson is explained so that all pupils know what they are learning and teachers give very clear guidance on what is expected. Each lesson has success criteria, what all pupils must do, what some should do and, for the most able, what they could do. In lessons teachers refer to these and ask pupils to identify which of the criteria they have achieved. Pupils are very involved in their learning and are very enthusiastic. They listen attentively and produce very neat work that they are proud to show. Teaching and learning are greatly enhanced by the excellent curriculum. The school identified that multicultural education was a relative weakness and have made great strides in improving this. Through a well-planned approach to

community cohesion, pupils learn about other cultures and religions. Very good links have been made with other schools, both locally and internationally, giving pupils a greater understanding of education in other countries. The curriculum is enriched by a wealth of outstanding extra activities. Trips into the local area, residential opportunities and visitors into the school, support learning very effectively. Pupils and parents comment on the extremely wide range of clubs available. These cover sport, music, cookery, gardening and art activities. All are well attended and the school calculates that almost all of the pupils take part in at least one extra activity. Both parents and pupils are very pleased with the fact that all pupils, from Reception upwards, learn to swim in the school's own pool.

Great importance is placed on ensuring that pupils are safe and well looked after. Child protection procedures are robust and every care is taken when recruiting staff or other adults who come into contact with the pupils. Health and safety procedures are adhered to and the school is a very welcoming place. Pupils report that they feel safe and well cared for. The excellent care and support offered to all pupils is extended to academic guidance. Pupils know what they are aiming for in order to improve their work and are very enthusiastic about doing their best.

The outstanding leadership and management of the school have resulted in very high standards being maintained. All of the staff and governors are committed to improving the school further and have clear plans for moving the school on. The issue that was identified at the time of the last inspection has been tackled very effectively and the school has a very clear view of what it does well and what could be improved. The self-evaluation carried out by staff and governors is realistic and accurate. Pupils have an input into the school development plan and are very much a part of the development of the life of the school. The governors are excellent and are fully aware of the challenges they face in maintaining the very high quality provision. They are part of the target-setting process. These targets are challenging and play a significant part in maintaining high standards. All staff work together exceptionally well and demonstrate an excellent capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make an excellent start to school life. The school has very good induction systems that ensure children settle quickly into the routines and make outstanding progress in all areas of learning. By the time they join Year 1, most of the children have reached the expected goals for their learning and many exceed them. Early reading and writing skills are taught exceptionally well so that children are confident when writing simple sentences. Their knowledge of the sounds that letters make is very good and helps them begin to spell words correctly. Most children count accurately and are beginning to understand about addition and subtraction. Throughout the day there is an excellent balance of activities that children choose for themselves and those that adults lead. Relevant themes and topics excite children and support their learning very effectively. The story of 'Handa's Surprise' resulted in very imaginative role play and thoughtful pictures as the children explored the story and told it in their own words. The outside area is used very effectively. The rain does not dampen the children's enthusiasm for learning outside and they eagerly put on boots and plastic coats to investigate all of the activities offered in the garden area. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed excellently. Work is planned very carefully and based on the thorough assessments that take place regularly. Knowledgeable staff and an exciting learning environment mean that children are very positive about learning and all achieve excellently, whatever their ability.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure plans to incorporate ICT into all subjects are fully implemented.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
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?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

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	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 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

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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

10 June 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, South Weald, Essex,
CM14 5QN

Thank you for welcoming us into your school recently and for telling us all about your work. I am now writing to let you know what we discovered.

Many of you told us that your school is excellent and we agree. You make outstanding progress in your learning and you are very enthusiastic about your lessons. This is not surprising because they are interesting and fun. Teachers let you know exactly what they expect of you and the system of 'must, should, could' helps you to reach higher standards.

Your behaviour is exemplary and you are very polite and courteous. You look after each other with care and concern and take pride in all you do. Many of you belong to the very wide range of clubs in the school and a lot of parents wrote about how pleased they were with the opportunities you have.

I must take this opportunity to thank the Year 6 class who wrote a beautiful letter to the team explaining their views of the school. It was very good to hear all about the wonderful things you do and what you like best about school. I so hope that you enjoyed the experiences you had in York and that you were not too worn out with all the activities that were planned for you.

We saw the well-resourced computer suite while we were in school. It was very impressive. We talked to Mr Gunn and he told us that he is planning to put more computers into classrooms so that you can use them in other lessons. We think that this is a good plan and have asked him to make sure this happens when the new computers arrive.

Once again thank you for being so welcoming. We wish you all the best in the future.

Best wishes

Marianne Harris

Lead inspector