

St Peter's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116381
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	326377
Inspection dates	12–13 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Mike Thompson

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	323
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Susan Broadbent
Headteacher	Mrs Catherine Howells
Date of previous school inspection	8–9 February 2006
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons, met with representatives of the governing body, some members of staff and groups of pupils, and had informal discussions with some parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of evidence, including the systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress, the work that pupils had produced in their books, the quality of teachers' marking and the questionnaires completed by 107 parents or carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of the teaching provided for more-able pupils in mathematics in Key Stage 2
- the breadth of provision in subjects other than English, mathematics and science (the non-core subjects)
- the extent to which pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) as a tool for learning
- how well pupils understand what they need to do next in order to improve their work.

Information about the school

St Peter's is a larger-than-average primary school on the southern outskirts of Winchester. A large majority of the pupils are of White British heritage. There are a few pupils, about ten per cent in all, who have English as an additional language. The largest group of these are of Filipino heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below the national average. These difficulties and/or disabilities are wide-ranging and include dyslexia, physical disabilities and hearing impairment. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage comprises the Little Fishes Pre-school, managed by the governing body, which caters for children aged two years old and upwards on a part-time basis, and two full-time Reception classes for children aged four and five. In Key Stage 1 pupils in Years 1 and 2 are grouped into three mixed-age classes. The organisation in Key Stage 2 is similar, with three mixed-age classes for Years 3 and 4 and a further three mixed-age classes for Years 5 and 6. The school has gained a number of awards and accreditations, including Fairtrade status.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Peter's is a highly effective school. This is because its pupils achieve outstandingly well in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and in many key aspects of their personal development, and the school clearly demonstrates that it has the capacity to sustain the good rate of improvement evident since its last inspection.

During their Reception Year children make good progress overall, although provision to challenge the most able could be better. The children in the Reception classes do not experience as wide a range of investigative learning experiences as the children in Little Fishes because of the strong focus placed on ensuring that they have a good grounding in the basic skills in English and mathematics that equips them well when they move into Year 1.

Pupils make good progress as they move through Key Stages 1 and 2 and, by the time they leave at the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are consistently high. The school's outstanding performance is in no small part due to its pupils' strong work ethic, which stems from a very strong Catholic ethos and the school's success in developing its pupils as confident, caring and thoughtful learners. The pupils are bright and articulate. By the time they reach Year 6 they have highly developed social skills, work very well independently and within teams, and play a very full part in the day-to-day life of the school. Their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils' social awareness extends well beyond the school and is evident, for example, in a wide range of charity fundraising and their keen awareness of issues such as the principles underpinning the work of the Fairtrade Foundation.

Underpinning the pupils' good progress is good teaching and learning, which is often outstanding in the core subjects, particularly in Years 5 and 6. The impact of good teaching is further enhanced through good assessment and the setting of individual targets for pupils to achieve. The school's effective systems for tracking pupils' progress in the core subjects and the rigorous way in which senior managers monitor each individual pupil's performance ensure that good-quality help is provided for anyone who appears to be falling behind. The senior leadership team has extremely high expectations of staff and pupils and sets ambitious targets, based on rigorous self-evaluation. The constant pursuit of excellence, driven strongly by the headteacher and ably supported by the deputy headteacher, is an outstanding feature of this outstanding school.

A further factor contributing to the pupils' outstanding attainment in the core subjects and their excellent personal development is the good curriculum. It has many outstanding features, including the wide range of enrichment activities provided. However, it is good, rather than outstanding, because provision in the non-core subjects needs to be improved. In the core subjects the curriculum is outstandingly successful in helping to ensure high standards through, for example, the grouping of pupils by ability in Key Stage 2, the good-quality extra help provided for pupils who need it, and the greater expertise in teaching. The school is working to improve provision in the non-core subjects and to make better use of the limited time available by linking subject areas through topics. The governors have recently committed funding to help improve provision in ICT. At present, the pupils are not able to use computers on a daily basis because there are not enough of them.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Widen the range of learning opportunities for children in the Reception classes so that they develop skills as independent learners and so that more children exceed the goals expected by the time they move to Year 1.
- Develop stronger links between subjects and ensure that
 - the strategies used to promote pace, rigour and challenge in English, mathematics and science are similarly effective across the curriculum
 - pupils make better use of ICT as a tool for learning.

How good is the overall outcome for individuals and groups of pupils?

1

Inspectors were impressed by teachers' good skills in managing their pupils and in providing clear explanations about new concepts. In lessons pupils' impeccable behaviour and their excellent skills in working either independently or with their classmates help create the high-quality climate for learning that is evident in all classes. Pupils' excellent skills in reading, and their good comprehension, mean that written instructions are quickly understood. Their good skills in speaking and listening, underpinned by good vocabulary, help ensure that discussions in lessons are invariably of high quality. These strengths, when combined with pupils' excellent attitudes towards their studies, result in good learning.

During the inspection the inspectors took a particular interest in the learning of the more-able Key Stage 2 pupils in mathematics. This was because in 2008 the results of the national tests showed that the proportion of pupils who exceeded national expectations by attaining Level 5 had been sustained at very high levels in English and science, but had dropped slightly in mathematics. In addition, the school's own data showed that progress in mathematics was slightly slower than in the other two core subjects. Senior leaders immediately acted on this information and implemented a raft of initiatives designed to remedy the situation. These included the introduction

of 'rich maths tasks' designed to challenge pupils through investigations. Inspection evidence shows that these measures are having a positive impact. The more-able pupils are suitably challenged and make good progress.

By the end of Key Stage 1, standards are consistently high in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The school further improves on this high level of performance by the end of Key Stage 2 by ensuring that almost all pupils, including those with disabilities, make generally good and, in some instances exceptionally good, progress overall. It is able to do this because senior managers make effective use of a good ICT-based system for tracking the progress of individuals or groups of pupils, which has been developed by the deputy headteacher. By using this system, managers are able to predict the likely attainment of each individual at the end of Key Stage 2 with reasonable accuracy, and adapt the curriculum accordingly. The school has highlighted the need to improve the performance of a small group of able, but dyslexic pupils because, as higher-attainers, the needs of these pupils cannot be met through specialist help provided by the local authority. The inspectors looked closely at the performance of these pupils and found that in English they make satisfactory progress.

The impact of the school's outstanding support, guidance and care is evident in the pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Throughout the school, inspectors were impressed by the pupils' consistently high standards of behaviour and social skills. The school's Activemark and Healthy School awards reflect effective provision to promote pupils' good awareness of healthy lifestyles. Pupils' knowledge of how to keep safe is outstanding. They are given an excellent grounding in good citizenship and in contributing to the community through, for example, appointments as class captains, house captains, head boy and girl, or as members of the school council. On a day-to-day basis, the 'register runners', 'milk maestros' and 'PE shed quartet' in Years 5 and 6 also play their part. Although well aware of the lifestyles of people from a range of different cultures through, for instance, pen-pal links with schools in Germany and Ghana, pupils have yet to celebrate the traditions of the small but significant Filipino community within the school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	1
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	1
How well do pupils behave?	1
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	1

¹ Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

Pupils' attendance	2
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	1

The quality of the school's work

The inspection confirmed the school's view that the quality of teaching overall is most often good and has improved since the last inspection. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows that teaching in the core subjects is generally better than in the non-core subjects and is often outstanding, particularly in Years 5 and 6. This is because teachers generally have more expertise in the core subjects, particularly in 'layering' the challenges provided, so that the work becomes progressively more difficult. They also make good use of the structure provided by the National Strategies for literacy and numeracy. Teachers know their pupils extremely well and relate very well to them. In lessons the good dialogue between teachers and their pupils, based on the teachers' excellent questioning skills, often makes a significant difference to the quality of learning. Teachers manage their pupils extremely well, and have well-established routines that help the smooth running of lessons. They are generally skilled in providing challenges for pupils of different levels of ability. However, teachers do not always make clear enough precisely what they are looking for in their pupils' written work and sometimes spend too long on their introductions to lessons. In these instances the pace of learning slows. Overall, the curriculum is good; in the core subjects it is outstandingly effective in helping to promote high standards overall. However, with the right equipment and greater staff awareness it could be more effective in meeting the specific needs of some pupils. For example, provision for the more-able dyslexic pupils is satisfactory overall. The school has developed good guidance for staff to help them respond more effectively to the very specific needs of these pupils, but has not yet had time to implement this. There is also scope for improvement in the use made of ICT to help meet the day-to-day needs of these pupils through, for example, laptop computers to aid writing. Similarly, better use could be made of speech amplification equipment to assist the hearing impaired pupils.

The academic guidance provided for pupils is good. In lessons teachers are generally good at explaining new concepts and invariably provide excellent help for their pupils through individual support when pupils have difficulty in understanding. Practice in setting targets is inconsistent. Pupils generally know their clear individual targets for English; however, not all pupils were able to explain clearly to an inspector what their targets are in mathematics. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly, but do not always use comments well enough to point their pupils towards the next steps in learning and marking does not always link with pupils' individual targets.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	2
Effective assessment	2

An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	2
Support, guidance and care	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The driving force behind the school's success is the very high quality of leadership provided by the senior leadership and governors, supported by good leadership at other levels. The headteacher gives outstanding direction for the work of the school and has ensured that significant progress has been made in improving the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. As a result, pupils now make better progress and standards have risen. At the same time, the high quality of pupils' personal development and well-being has been sustained. This transformation has been possible because of the rigorous monitoring of provision, particularly in the core subjects, based on the data provided by the effective system for recording the periodic assessments of pupils' attainment. The governors make excellent use of their wide-ranging professional skills and managerial experience when closely monitoring the school's effectiveness and holding senior managers to account through lively and well-informed debate. Excellent attention is paid by managers at all levels to ensure the highest quality of safety and care for the pupils. There are, for example, rigorous procedures for ensuring the safeguarding of pupils through the checks made on all adults who work in the school. The senior managers, supported well by all staff, are also effective in promoting equality of opportunity for all pupils across all aspects of the school's work.

The school shows a clear commitment to promoting cohesion within and outside the school community. It has a good understanding of its own community through its strong links within the parish, although it has been slow to celebrate the cultural traditions of the Filipino families who comprise its largest minority ethnic group.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Communicating ambition and driving improvement	1
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	2
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	1
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	1
Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	2
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	2
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	2
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The very youngest children, who join the Little Fishes Pre-school with broadly typical

levels of skills for their age, get off to a flying start in their education. By the time children move from Pre-school to the Reception classes, their levels of attainment are generally better than expected at this age. In the Reception Year children make good progress and, by the time they move to Year 1, almost all children attain the goals expected at this age. For this reason standards are above average. Standards are not yet outstanding because the most-able children are not always stretched enough in some areas of learning; consequently not enough children exceed the goals expected at the end of the Reception Year. This occurs particularly in children's personal development, where the potential for independent learning among the most able is not fully exploited. In areas such as reading and writing, and in basic counting skills, the proportion of children who exceed the goals expected is above the national average. However, in calculation, knowledge of shape, space and measures, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development not enough children attain the highest level.

The provision in the Little Fishes Pre-school is particularly effective in developing high levels of children's independence in learning, confidence and creativity because of more advantageous staffing levels. The staff are skilled in providing a wide range of high-quality activities, both indoors and out, that challenge the children to make choices and to investigate, and are highly adept at picking up on and developing spontaneous learning opportunities. For example, the task of making a waterslide from different tubes and funnels provided children with many challenges in problem-solving, which staff skilfully developed through discussion and questioning. As a result, the children experimented with various lengths of tubes to construct different types of waterslides and used vocabulary learned from adults, such as 'level' and 'flow', when discussing their achievements. In the Reception classes staff are similarly skilled in providing activities that excite and interest the children. However, the approach to learning in Reception is more formal, as it prepares children for National Curriculum work in Year 1. Consequently, there is not as wide a range of activities for children as in Little Fishes and not enough use is made of the outdoor area for learning.

Common features of the Little Fishes and the Reception classes are the outstanding emphasis placed on ensuring children's welfare and the high-quality relationships evident between all staff and children. Consequently, the children feel very secure and enjoy their learning. The good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage overall is the result of the clear direction provided by the Reception-based key stage leader, who has been instrumental in the excellent development of provision in the Little Fishes.

How good are the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
What is the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
Overall effectiveness: how well does the setting/school meet the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2

Views of parents and carers

Overall, the large majority of parents are entirely satisfied with the school. The proportion of questionnaires returned was better than is found in most schools and, of these, most were generally positive. In one of the areas surveyed, relating to the way in which the school keeps children safe, all of the responses were positive. In a further four areas – children's enjoyment of school, the school's promotion of children's healthy lifestyles, the management of children's behaviour and the leadership and management of the school – 97% of the responses were positive. About half of the questionnaires had comments appended, the large majority of which were entirely positive. There were no common threads within those questionnaires containing negative comments, but almost ten per cent of the parents said that they would welcome more information about their children's progress. The views of the parents interviewed informally in the playground confirm the positive response in the questionnaires.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.

26 March 2009

Dear Pupils



Inspection of St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Winchester SO22 4JB

Thank you for helping my team of inspectors so much when we came to inspect your school to find out how well you are getting on. We particularly enjoyed visiting your lessons and talking to some of you. I would also like to say an extra 'thank you' to the pupils we interviewed. You showed us just how special pupils at St Peter's are!

I agree with your parents that you go to an excellent school. There is so much I like about your school that I cannot mention everything, so here is a list of the most important things.

- You make good progress in your work, and when you leave school at the end of Year 6, your standards of work are always high.
- Your behaviour is excellent, and you get on exceptionally well with each other.
- You told us how much you enjoy your work and appreciate your teachers. They are good at helping you to learn well in your lessons. We think that you learn particularly well in your lessons in English, mathematics and science, especially those of you in Years 5 and 6.
- You make good choices to keep healthy. I am sure that your excellent school meals have something to do with this!
- All of the adults in your school make sure that you are very well looked after.
- Your headteacher and all of the other people who help run your school do an excellent job.

All of the adults in your school want it to be even better. To help them to do this, your inspectors have suggested that the most important things to do next are these.

- Make sure that the children in the Reception classes have more opportunities to work by themselves and make their own choices. This will help more of them to become excellent learners.
- Make sure that more links are made between subjects, so that you can use the skills you learn in one subject when you work in another, and make sure that you have more opportunities to use computers in class to help you learn.

I am sure that you will continue to have great success in the future.

Yours faithfully

Mike Thompson
Lead Inspector

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