

# St Peter's Independent School

## Independent School

### Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	928/6056
Unique Reference Number	122143
Inspection number	330791
Inspection dates	23–24 September 2008
Reporting inspector	David Rzeznik HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended.

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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

## Information about the school

St Peter's Independent School is a coeducational day school in Northampton. It opened in 1979 and is owned by St Peter's School Trust, which is a non-profit making body. There are 110 pupils on roll aged from 4 to 18 years. The intake is multiracial and of mixed ability. A very small number of pupils have recently arrived from overseas and are not fluent in English. No pupils have a statement of special educational need, although the school has admitted such pupils in the past. The previous inspection of the school was in November 2006.

The aim of the school is to '*provide a broad and balanced curriculum within a caring family-orientated environment so that each child reaches its full potential*'.

## Evaluation of the school

St Peter's Independent School does not meet all the regulations for independent schools, and in particular the overall provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is inadequate. This is primarily because safeguarding procedures are inadequate. The failure to properly safeguard pupils means that the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is inadequate.

The overall quality of education is satisfactory. The curriculum, teaching and assessment are satisfactory overall. Provision ensures that pupils make at least satisfactory progress academically and good progress in their personal development. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively. Pupils are happy, well behaved and enjoy coming to school. Improvement since the last inspection has been mixed. Accommodation weaknesses have been largely remedied, although the school is not clean and tidy in all areas. The leadership has not addressed effectively the shortcomings in a number of procedures and has not been robust enough in keeping abreast of revised safeguarding requirements. Fifty four parents or carers completed an Ofsted confidential parental questionnaire. Most are pleased with the quality of education provided.

## Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is broad and balanced. The curriculum for children aged under five (Kindergarten) is satisfactory and all of the required areas of learning are taught. Provision and support enable the youngest children to develop a positive self-esteem and respect for others. Indoor and outdoor activities are provided but the balance between the two is not yet quite right. A curriculum policy has now been produced and is of satisfactory quality. When the school was last inspected such a policy did not exist. Schemes of work are generally satisfactory and some are good. They are mainly based on national guidance or examination syllabi and provide teachers with a suitable structure from which to plan lessons. There are good opportunities for pupils to take part in physical activities, including swimming and athletics. The curriculum for information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory, but pupils do not use the skills they acquire in ICT lessons in all subjects. Drama is a strength and all pupils are encouraged to take part in productions. There is also a school choir open to all. Parents opt to pay for additional music lessons, and for their child to work towards English Speaking Board examinations, in which pupils have had considerable success. Visits and visitors suitably enrich the curriculum. For example, pupils said they enjoyed the trip to Duxford Museum and the afternoon spent entertaining war veterans and visitors. The previous inspection judged that insufficient careers guidance was provided for pupils of secondary school age. This weakness has not been remedied and arrangements for careers guidance and work experience are still not good enough.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory and ensure that pupils make at least satisfactory progress in their learning. There are pockets of good teaching, particularly in mathematics for the older pupils. Observation and assessment of the development of children under the age of five is sound and there are suitable activities for the children to do. The methods used develop children's self-confidence successfully and promote good attitudes to learning.

The good relationships evident enable learning to be carried out in a very positive climate. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and they manage pupils' behaviour well. Where teaching is satisfactory it is generally because teachers have not taken sufficient account of pupils' differing aptitudes, needs or prior attainment when setting work. Activities are sometimes not pitched at the right level so that individuals find work too hard or too easy. Despite this, regular and effective one-to-one support ensures pupils' access to the curriculum and deals quickly with any misconceptions or problems they encounter.

A range of sound assessment methods is used to determine pupils' attainment but the tracking of pupils' progress is not yet robust enough. Assessment information is not always used to plan lessons that are consistently challenging. At times teachers talk too much and do not provide opportunities for pupils to contribute their ideas or ask questions to consolidate their learning. There is a small number of older pupils who have English as an additional language. Their linguistic needs are not yet being

fully addressed in some lessons. Resources are adequate overall, however, library books are not properly classified and a significant number are not in good condition.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Spirituality is promoted well through religious education lessons and assemblies, and particularly the school's own culture, which encourages pupils to reflect frequently on their behaviour and their impact on the environment. The school's ethos is based on Christian principles but provision ensures that pupils gain a good understanding of other religions and cultures. As a result, pupils are tolerant and respect cultural diversity.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and say that it is a friendly place. Their attendance is good. They have very positive attitudes to learning and are keen to succeed. There is a strong moral dimension to the school's work. Its impact is good, so that pupils know right from wrong and their behaviour is good. Pupils play and work together well. This is particularly evident in school productions, including nativity plays and the annual Dickens and Shakespeare evening. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to take personal responsibility and for older pupils to be prefects. Links with the local and wider community are good. For example, the choir takes part in an annual civic carol concert and the school raises money for local and national charities. Pupils say that they would like more opportunities for their views and suggestions to be heard in order to influence developments in the school, and inspectors agree with them.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The overall provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is inadequate. This is because procedures to safeguard them are inadequate.<sup>1</sup>

The child protection policy is not up-to-date and is not comprehensive. It is not implemented effectively. Recruitment procedures and arrangements for vetting staff and governors are inadequate. There is a lack of clarity about the role of governors and trustees in the child protection process. While staff have been trained appropriately to fulfil their child protection responsibilities, the designated person has not been trained to the required level.

Satisfactory arrangements are adopted to promote pupils' welfare and health. Clear, written behaviour and anti-bullying policies are implemented effectively. Pupils say that behaviour is good and they are right. They report that they are free from

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<sup>1</sup> Concerns raised by some pupils and some parents before the inspection started are being examined by the appropriate bodies.

harassment, intimidation and bullying. On a day-to-day basis pupils are cared for well. The favourable staff-to-pupil ratio means that pupils are well supervised at all times. The school promotes a healthy lifestyle for its pupils, but many do not always adopt these principles, choosing crisps and sugary drinks at lunchtime. Some parents say their children could be encouraged to be more healthy and take regular exercise. Two staff dogs are kept in school. They are effectively supervised and are kept on leads, but they are not muzzled.

Attendance registers are kept in good order. The admission register does not fully comply with regulatory requirements because an emergency telephone contact number is not specified. There is a Disability Discrimination Action Plan and the school has planned well to increase accessibility, particularly in the design of new buildings. It will be drawing up another three-year plan to review the possibility of further improving access to the premises and the curriculum for those with disabilities.

## Suitability of the proprietor and staff

Staff recruitment procedures and the arrangements for vetting staff, governors and trustees are inadequate. Systems for recording vetting outcomes are unsatisfactory.

With two exceptions all staff have been subject to a check by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB), or List 99, to confirm their suitability to work with children. However, a number of staff have not been vetted at the required enhanced level. The chair of governors has not carried out all of the necessary checks on board members. The leadership is not robust enough in carrying out all of the required checks before staff, including those who have lived outside the United Kingdom, are appointed. The required single central register is not in place. This means that the necessary information is not kept and cannot be reproduced.

## School's premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation are satisfactory. Since the last inspection the accommodation for the Kindergarten and Preparatory department has improved significantly and the mobile classrooms have been removed. The new accommodation is modern, attractive and of good quality. The creation of a new medical room means that there is suitable provision for those who are ill. This regulation was not met at the time of the previous inspection. Specialist provision for drama, food and design technology, art and science is adequate. There is sufficient outdoor play space and the school makes good use of adjoining playing fields and the local swimming pool for physical education. There are insufficient storage facilities and this results in too many resources being left lying around in an untidy state. It also makes thorough cleaning difficult. The level and quality of cleaning has improved and some parts of the school are kept in a clean and hygienic state, but this is not the case with others, particularly the library, sinks in the science room and office areas.

## Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The prospectus provides parents and others with a wide range of information, including the history of the school and details of school rules and term dates. However, much of the information required is not supplied, and this recommendation from the previous inspection has not been addressed. Parents receive satisfactory reports on their children's attainment, progress and effort in the main subjects taught. Many opportunities are provided for parents and others to attend events such as sports day, school productions and parents' evenings.

## Procedures for handling complaints

The previous inspection judged that the complaints procedure did not meet all of the regulations. The identified weaknesses then have not been remedied and the procedure remains non-compliant. Written records are not kept of complaints and the headteacher was unable to confirm how many complaints had been made in the past year, and whether they had been resolved at the preliminary stage, or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing. A significant minority of parents do not understand the school's procedures for dealing with complaints.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of this phase is inadequate. This is because there is a failure to properly safeguard children. Child protection procedures and arrangements for recruiting and vetting staff are inadequate.

A small number of children enter Kindergarten with skills that are generally above those expected for their age. They make at least satisfactory progress in all areas of learning, and some individuals make good progress. Children's personal, social and emotional skills are developing at a good rate.

Staff use assessment information to plan and provide a suitable range of learning experiences appropriate for each child's stage of development. Teaching is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. An appropriate balance is struck between the teaching of basic skills by adults and children learning through independent activities. Learning opportunities occur in class and outside. However, the balance of work between the two areas is not yet quite right, with a much greater emphasis on class work. Staff recognise that the outdoor curriculum is not sufficiently well developed, effectively planned for or resourced. Children enjoy what they are doing, behave well and work independently, for example, washing utensils after making sandwiches. Staff provide a safe and secure environment, and the children are well cared for day-to-day. However, safeguarding measures at the whole school level are inadequate.

The quality of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Accommodation has substantially improved since the last inspection and the children are now taught in a modern building. Assessment procedures have been

improved in line with new requirements. Not all staff have written job descriptions, therefore, their roles and responsibilities are not formally specified. The complaints procedure is not comprehensive enough and a written record of complaints and their outcome is not kept.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ("the Regulations"), with the exception of those listed below:

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- provide appropriate careers guidance for secondary age pupils (paragraph 1(2)(g))
- ensure that all teachers take pupils' aptitudes, needs and prior attainment into account when planning lessons (paragraph 1(3)(d))
- ensure that assessment information is used effectively to plan teaching so that all pupils make progress according to their capability (paragraph 1(3)(g)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- improve the quality of the child protection policy to better safeguard the welfare of pupils, and ensure the designated member of staff with responsibility for child protection receives appropriate training (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- ensure that the admission register is maintained in accordance with regulations (paragraph 3(9)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff carry out checks to confirm their identity, medical fitness, right to work in the UK, previous employment history, character references, and where appropriate, qualifications and professional references and ensure that this information is taken into account in determining whether staff are employed (paragraph 4(2)(a))
- ensure that prior to confirmation of their appointment, all staff and others who work in school, have been subject to a check with CRB at the enhanced level, or List 99, to confirm their suitability to work with children (paragraph 4(2)(b))



- ensure that any person who has lived outside the UK has been effectively vetted, and that the proprietor has paid due regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State to ensure their suitability to work in school (paragraph 4(2)(c))
- ensure that the chairperson of the proprietorial body carries out an enhanced CRB, or List 99 check on all board members, and that appropriate checks are made to confirm their identity and right to work in the UK (paragraph 4B(4 and 5))
- ensure that the proprietor keeps a register which records for each member of staff in post on or after 1 August 2007 the checks made (and certificates obtained where relevant) of: their identity, qualifications (where required); whether an enhanced CRB or List 99 check was obtained and ensure that he/she is not working in contravention of section 142 of the Education Act 2002, and where appropriate establish an individual's right to work in the UK, and where relevant for those who have lived outside the UK, their suitability to work in school (paragraph 4C(2 and 3))
- ensure that the register records for each member of the proprietorial body in post on or after 1 August 2007 the checks made of: their identity, whether an enhanced CRB check, or List 99 check, was carried out and certificate obtained, and where appropriate establish an individual's right to work in the UK and ensure that the person is not working in contravention of section 142 of the Education Act 2002 (paragraph 4C(6 and 7))
- ensure that the register is capable of being produced in a legible form (paragraph 4C(9)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- ensure that all parts of the school are maintained in a tidy, clean and hygienic state and improve storage facilities (paragraph 5(n)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- ensure that parents, and parents of prospective pupils are provided with details of the proprietor's contact address and the telephone number of its registered or principal office (paragraph 6(2)(b))
- ensure that parents, and parents of prospective pupils are provided with the name and address of the chair of the board of governors for correspondence purposes (paragraph 6(2)(c))
- ensure that parents, and parents of prospective pupils are provided with particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for admissions, discipline and exclusions (paragraph 6(2)(e))
- ensure that parents, and parents of prospective pupils are provided with particulars of the educational and welfare provision for pupils with statements

of special educational needs, where applicable, and for pupils for whom English is an additional language (paragraph 6(2)(f))

- ensure that parents, and parents of prospective pupils are made aware that they may request particulars of the curriculum offered by the school (paragraph 6(2)(g))
- ensure that parents, and parents of prospective pupils are made aware that they may request particulars of policies relating to bullying, child protection, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour, and the sanctions adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving (paragraph 6(2)(h))
- ensure that parents, and parents of prospective pupils are made aware that they may request particulars of academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations (paragraph 6(2)(i))
- ensure that parents, and parents of prospective pupils are made aware that they may request details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year (paragraph 6(2)(j))
- ensure that parents, and parents of prospective pupils are made aware that they may request details of the number of staff employed at the school, including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications (paragraph 6(2)(k)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of procedures for handling complaints (standard 7) and must:

- ensure that the complaints procedure sets out clear timescales for the management of the complaint (paragraph 7(c))
- ensure that if parents are not satisfied with the response to a written complaint, there is provision for the establishment of a hearing before a panel appointed by the proprietor of at least three people who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint (paragraph 7(f))
- allow for parents to attend the panel hearing, and if they wish, to be accompanied (paragraph 7(h))
- provide for the panel to make findings and recommendations and ensure that these are made available to the complainant, proprietor and headteacher, and where relevant, the person complained about (paragraph 7(i))
- provide for written records to be kept of all complaints indicating whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage, or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing (paragraph 7(j))
- ensure that the procedure provides that correspondence, statements and records of complaints are to be kept confidential (paragraph 7(k)).

In order to comply with the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school must:

- improve child protection procedures and arrangements for recruiting and vetting staff to ensure that children are properly safeguarded

- improve the quality of the complaints procedure and ensure a written record of complaints and their outcome is kept.

# Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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## The quality of education

Overall quality of education			✓	
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils			✓	
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs			✓	
How well pupils make progress in their learning			✓	

## Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

## Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils				✓
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## The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?			✓	
How well do children achieve in the Early Years Foundation Stage relative to their starting points and capabilities?			✓	
How good are the personal development and well-being of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?		✓		
What is the quality of welfare, health and safety of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?				✓
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?			✓	
What is the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage including, where relevant, the quality of childcare?				✓

## School details

Name of school	St Peter's Independent School		
DCSF number	928/6056		
Unique reference number	122143		
Type of school	Primary and secondary day school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1979		
Age range of pupils	4–18		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 56	Girls: 54	Total: 110
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3,600-£3,900		
Headteacher	Mr Gerald Smith		
Proprietor	St Peter's School Trust		
Reporting inspector	David Rzeznik HMI		
Dates of inspection	23–24 September 2008		