

St Peter's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126060
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	340907
Inspection dates	14–15 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Raymond Jardine

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Pentney
Headteacher	Mary Claffey
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 15 lessons taught by eight teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the chair of governors and school staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school documentation, including the school development plan, pupils' books, arrangements for safeguarding pupils, school policies, minutes of meetings and the school's assessment data. Inspectors analysed completed inspection questionnaires from 97 parents and carers as well as questionnaires from pupils and staff.

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

- the achievement of more able pupils, particularly in mathematics, to help determine how consistent and challenging is the teaching
- the impact that revised arrangements for assessing pupils' learning and progress, both in lessons and in relation to their targets, is having on their attainment
- the extent of the school's contribution to community cohesion and its impact on pupils.

Information about the school

This school is about average in size. Pupils come from all areas of East Grinstead as well as the surrounding villages. The great majority of pupils are of White British or other White backgrounds, and a few come from a number of other minority ethnic backgrounds. There are very few pupils for whom English is not their first language, although this number is growing. Few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. An average proportion has special educational needs and/or disabilities. The current headteacher was appointed in January 2009. The school gained International Eco-School status in 2010.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is now a good school that has improved key aspects of its provision, particularly relating to the curriculum and aspects of teaching. Pupils much enjoy their time at school and make good progress in a range of subjects. The school's ethos and values pervade its work. Staff provide high standards of care and pupils' spiritual, moral and social development are key strengths. Pupils are reflective, polite and considerate to others and their excellent behaviour contributes much to their learning. Staff support each other well and the headteacher is providing strong and determined leadership. Since her appointment, school priorities have focused sharply on encouraging more creativity and the involvement of pupils in their learning, improving the use of assessment to guide teaching and more rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress. Challenging targets have also been set for pupils and the school, reflecting its ambitions. The impact of these strategies can be seen in the momentum of improvement in key areas: pupils' good academic progress, their enjoyment in lessons, and a good curriculum. Middle leadership has contributed much to the drive to achieve higher standards and the momentum now established reflects good potential for further improvement. Parents are also very positive about their children's experiences at the school.

Pupils' achievements overall are good. English, science and religious education have been particularly strong subjects for some time because teaching quality is most consistently good in these subjects. The school has rightly been focusing on improving the mathematics curriculum and teaching in the subject. There is now much more emphasis given to pupils working for themselves, applying mathematical skills to real-life problems and to teachers' careful assessment of each pupil's progress to guide their teaching. Consequently, pupils' learning and progress in mathematics by Year 6 are now closer to that of other core subjects, including for the more able. Pupils have curriculum targets for their literacy and mathematics but they are not yet fully skilled at using these to help them review and improve their work. In addition, not enough is being done to help parents to be more involved with their children's learning. The headteacher recognises that parents need more frequent information on their children's attainment and involvement in these curriculum targets. The curriculum is stimulating and imaginative. Most teachers are adept at linking subjects through interesting themes and engaging pupils in challenging tasks that help them develop key skills such as collaborative work, writing at length for different purposes and conducting research. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education and future lives. Pupils contribute much to their school and local community and they readily take responsibility and initiative, for example, as playground buddies. Their understanding of

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and contribution to improving the environment and considerable charitable fund-raising reflect their respect and concern for others. Pupils learn about other cultural traditions and religious beliefs but their experience is limited. The school is rightly working to extend its contribution to community cohesion through establishing opportunities for pupils to gain more first-hand experience of the diversity of ways of life, both in Britain and other countries.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend the contribution that the school makes to community cohesion by helping pupils gain first-hand experience of the diversity of ways of life in modern Britain and other countries.
- Involve parents and pupils more fully in helping to raise standards by:
 - providing parents with more regular updates on their children's attainment and curriculum targets
 - encouraging pupils to make full use of their curriculum targets to review and improve their work and so become more independent learners.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils' attainment by Year 6 is typically considerably above average and overall progress is good, particularly in English and science. In the great majority of lessons, pupils tackle appropriately challenging work and the pace of their learning is good. Those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are assessed and provided for effectively in lessons and they do particularly well during their time in school. There are a few occasions when some pupils, usually the more able, are not challenged enough but improved assessment procedures are helping to reduce these. The greater emphasis now being placed on pupils being more engaged in learning for themselves is a key reason why pupils enjoy their learning and do well, including in mathematics. In a mathematics lesson in Year 6, pupils were engrossed in paired discussion about which purchase of mobile phone tariffs and deals would best suit different users. Their teacher provided a wealth of information for them to explore. The complexities of the calculations and challenging decisions to be made enabled them to apply their mathematical skills and gain insights at first hand about budgeting and how to achieve value for money. Pupils acquire good basic skills, particularly in English. They routinely write at length and for different purposes in many subjects: about their investigations in science, about life during the Second World War in history, and when expressing their feelings or writing their own prayer in religious education.

Pupils are proud of their school. Attendance rates are consistently above average and many pupils take advantage of the varied additional activities and clubs that are provided. The school council and eco-committee are influential in shaping school life and they work with other school pupils locally. Pupils grow vegetables in the school grounds and some also helped to create a garden in a local park through a community project. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe, including internet safety, and to

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live healthy and fit lives. Lunchtimes and other breaks are very social occasions and many enjoy the healthy choices from school lunches. Pupils have opportunities to reflect, through prayer and in other ways, and they are considerate of their actions on others. They report that they feel safe and that they have confidence that staff deal effectively with the rare behavioural incidents.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The large majority of lessons seen during the inspection were good or outstanding and the remainder at least satisfactory. Teachers use a common lesson planning template which helps them to focus on clear objectives and to plan activities that in most lessons are matched well to the range of pupils' abilities. Pupils are regularly monitored in their work during lessons, through questioning and checking written tasks. Teaching is consistently effective in motivating pupils. A strong feature of the better lessons is the imaginative contexts and tasks that sometimes engross pupils in learning. Years 3 and 4 pupils worked together to provide resources for their fossil museum. Pupils devised a narrative to explain types of fossils and how they come about, some drafted a factual

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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brochure about the museum and activities for children to do and others researched and produced a biography of Mary Anning for display. Pupils' much enjoyed practising their writing skills, making clay fossils, acquiring new scientific knowledge and learning about famous people from the past in a highly effective sequence of work. Such an example demonstrates the impact of the staff's efforts to make the curriculum more creative and pupil-centred.

Teachers' regular marking provides good guidance to pupils on how to improve. The introduction of new approaches to assessing pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy is having a marked impact on pupils' learning. Pupils also have curriculum targets that are displayed and to which pupils refer in class. This initiative is at a relatively early stage and pupils are not yet making full use of their targets to improve their work. Much improved arrangements for tracking pupils' progress in relation to their targets are now embedding into the staff's routine work. Regular reviews by class teachers, subject leaders and senior leaders to identify any emerging patterns or underachievement are now well established.

The curriculum meets most pupils' needs well and the school makes good use of the local and wider community to help bring learning to life and to enthuse pupils. There are many visits and visitors and full advantage is taken to integrate such experiences into the curriculum. Literacy and information and communication technology skills are integrated and developed well across subjects and the school is now working to ensure that numeracy skills are represented equally well. Pupils are acquiring good skills in working collaboratively and independently and many participate in the range of sports and clubs provided. Partnerships with other schools contribute further to memorable experiences, for example celebrating pupils' creativity through performance on the theme of 'Our World'.

There are high standards of care and welfare for pupils, including those who are vulnerable. The influence of the school's learning mentor in supporting such pupils is a strong feature. The school also works well with outside agencies and is involved with several programmes to meet individual pupils' needs and help overcome barriers to learning such as bereavement. Transition arrangements into the Reception class are well developed and effective. Additional learning needs for individual pupils are identified early by skilled and experienced staff who produce plans and targets for them.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

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How effective are leadership and management?

Parents and governors express full confidence in the staff and senior leaders. Steps have been taken to extend responsibilities among staff, for example by enlarging the senior leadership team, and this is helping to accelerate improvement. Another key driver of the school's improvement over the past year has been the accurate diagnosis of strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum and teaching and well-chosen priorities around which staff can work together. A more child-centred approach to teaching and much improved arrangements for using assessment information have been central to the gathering momentum of improvement now evident. The great majority of teaching is now good or better and senior and middle leaders are working hard to achieve even more consistency in some aspects of teaching across the school. Staff are ambitious for all their pupils' success and the promotion of equality of opportunity is strong. Teachers contribute to regular analyses of patterns in groups of pupils' progress and the school's performance is analysed in relation to other schools. Gaps in areas of the school's work have been closing, for example in mathematics, and staff are vigilant to tackle any barriers to pupils' involvement in school life. There are no incidents of racial abuse recorded at all. Safeguarding arrangements are good. There are thorough checks made on all adults working with pupils, child-protection arrangements are very secure and the school acts on pupils' and parents' concerns.

Governors carry out their statutory duties effectively and are well informed of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors help to shape the school's development but their monitoring of the school's work on its priorities is not yet systematic. Pupils from a range of social backgrounds contribute to a harmonious community and the school has a good understanding of its local community characteristics to guide its work. Plans for developing its contribution to community cohesion further are soundly based and include establishing links with schools and other institutions nationally and abroad. The school enjoys good relationships with parents and there are effective methods of communication, for example using the school's web-site, through e-mail and newsletters. They are regularly consulted through surveys and meetings and their views acted on. However, methods of helping parents to support their children's learning are not developed enough.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3

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The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress during their Reception year in all the areas of learning but particularly well in physical development and personal, social and emotional development. Currently, most children are exceeding the outcomes expected for the end of Reception. They enjoy a rich and varied curriculum with a good balance achieved of adult-led and child-initiated activities. The Reception area is well resourced, both in the classroom and outside. Inspectors observed children choosing from a good variety of activities around the theme of the treasures of God's world. Some painted pictures of their family while others wrote about what they thank God for. Children enjoy a free flow of choices in the classroom and outside. Children relate well to each other when at play and behave well. One reason why children do well in Reception is the good use made by adults of assessment information. For example, assessments have shown that children's knowledge and skills in calculation and in writing were relatively weaker on entry to Reception last year and so an emphasis has been placed on these areas in planning work for these children. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led by a leader who is very knowledgeable about the requirements of provision and children's welfare.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were pleased with their child's education at the school. The overwhelming majority agree that their children enjoy school, are kept safe and that the school is led and managed well. One parent

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commented that: 'There is so much more life in the school since the new headteacher has taken over.' Another commented: 'My daughter has thrived in a caring and disciplined environment.' Several parents commented that the school is helping their child to become independent. A few parents say that they would like more help to enable them to support their children's learning. Inspectors investigated and agree, as does the headteacher, who is planning to provide more information to meet this legitimate concern.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Peter's Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 97 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 206 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	69	71	26	27	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	68	70	28	29	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	30	31	61	63	4	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	34	54	56	7	7	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	36	37	52	54	6	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	37	38	44	45	12	12	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	39	55	57	4	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	48	49	43	44	3	3	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	50	52	36	37	6	6	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	50	52	36	37	6	6	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	37	49	51	8	8	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	54	56	39	40	3	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	63	65	32	33	0	0	2	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



16 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter's Catholic Primary School, East Grinstead, RH19 1JB

Thank you for the warm welcome that we received when we visited your school recently. I am now writing to let you know what we found out during our visit.

We think yours is a good and improving school. We noted how much you enjoy life at school and are proud to attend it. You make good progress in your learning, particularly in English, science and religious education, and reach above average standards by the time you leave Year 6. The staff have been working successfully to improve your learning in mathematics so it is now as good as other subjects. We saw how well you tackle mathematical problems such as when Year 6 made decisions on the best deal for purchasing mobile phones for different people. Most of the teaching we saw was good or better and you are also playing an important part in your learning by getting involved and working so well together. We were very impressed by your considerate and thoughtful behaviour around the school. Well done!

One reason why the school is improving is the effort that staff are making to encourage you to be more creative, sometimes through partnerships with other schools, and the many visits and visitors to school. Staff look after you very well. You have a good understanding of how to live safe, healthy and fit lives and the concern that you show for others is reflected in the considerable charitable funds that you raise. It was very pleasing to see pupils from different backgrounds getting on so well together and contributing to your local community by helping to improve both the school and local environment. We asked the school to improve some aspects of its work. The headteacher, staff and governors are working to help you gain first-hand experience of other communities and cultures that are different from yours, both in Britain and other countries. They are also going to provide your parents with more information about your progress and targets so that they can be more involved in helping you to learn. You can help too by making good use of your curriculum targets to review and improve your own work.

Yours sincerely

Ray Jardine

Lead inspector

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