

# St Peter's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115167
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	326143
<b>Inspection date</b>	10 July 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Godfrey Bancroft

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.

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	393
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Howard Watson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr John Peoples
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 July 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Coxes Farm Road Billericay Essex CM11 2UB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01277 653770
<b>Fax number</b>	01277 633146

---

<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date</b>	10 July 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	326143

---

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

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

- What is the impact on children's learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage of the school's renewed focus on providing more child-initiated activities?
- What actions have been taken to raise standards in mathematics at Key Stage 1 and in science at Key Stage 2?
- To what extent do governors act as 'critical friends' and how do they gain the information they need to hold the school to account for the quality of its work?

Evidence was gathered from discussions with governors, the headteacher, staff and pupils. Inspectors observed lessons, playtimes and an assembly. They also analysed the school's assessment data, a range of other documents, including the school's self-evaluation and parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's assessments in those areas, 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 the majority of primary schools. The number of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is very low. The percentage of pupils who come from a minority ethnic group is below average, as is that for pupils who speak English as an additional language. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in two Reception classes. In most years their attainment on entry is close to that expected for their age. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than usual. The majority of these pupils have dyslexia or another form of moderate learning difficulty. There are very few pupils who have a statement of special educational needs.

The school holds several awards, recognising its work in a variety of areas. These include: the DCFS International Award, Healthy Schools, Geography Bronze Mark, Activemark, and the Eco School Bronze level award. The school is affiliated to the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust.

## 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 is an outstanding school in which pupils achieve exceptionally well and make excellent progress in their academic and personal development. Parents and carers are delighted with the quality of education provided and the Friends of the School give significant support through fund raising activities. One parent reflected the views of significant majority of respondents to the inspection questionnaire when she said, 'St Peter's is an excellent school. The children are polite, confident and respectful. They also do very well academically.'

Pupils' personal development, their well-being and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are all outstanding and provide the foundation for the excellent progress that pupils make. Attendance is well above average. Pupils enjoy learning and are clearly proud of their school. One pupil commented, 'I feel lucky to come to St Peter's. The outdoor classroom is fantastic.' This is the result of the exceptional care, guidance and support the school provides. All requirements to ensure that pupils are safe are fully in place. Pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons and around the school. They are well informed about the importance of eating healthily and taking regular exercise.

Consistently, year-on-year, standards by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics are above average. However, whilst standards in mathematics are above average, there is a tendency for them to lag a little behind those in reading and writing and pupils' basic number skills are not always developed to their full potential. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, a pattern of standards that are well above average is firmly established, with steady improvement evident over each of the last five years. The unvalidated test results for 2009 and the work in pupils' books show that standards are well above average, confirming that they have made outstanding progress and that an upward trend in standards is being maintained. Standards in English are often exceptionally high. Historically, at Key Stage 2, standards in science have not been as high as those in English and mathematics. Prompt action and a strong focus on investigative work have eradicated this problem and standards in science are now well above average. High standards are also evident in a range of other subjects, including music and physical education. The standards pupils attain, combined with their outstanding social skills, ensure they are prepared very well for the next stage of their education and provide a foundation for later life.

Ultimately, the high standards pupils attain are a result of the outstanding teaching and curriculum they receive. Lessons are invariably exciting, capture pupils' interest and contain activities that provide appropriate challenges for the full range of abilities. Excellent relationships with teachers and the consistent celebration of pupils' efforts and achievements ensure that pupils enjoy lessons and are motivated to do their best. They also lay the foundation for pupils to become confident learners. In each lesson teachers take care to make sure that pupils understand what is expected of them. They ensure that pupils are aware of their targets for attainment and involve them well in assessing and understanding their own progress. Valuable guidance is provided for pupils through marking that explains how they can improve their work. Pupils' academic and personal progress is tracked carefully. Any who are at risk of falling behind are quickly identified and effective help is provided. For example, the Gym Trail, which is greatly enjoyed by pupils, enables those who experience coordination difficulties to improve their skills. Any personal problems are similarly soon resolved and pupils are confident that adults will help them to sort out and difficulties that might arise.

Pupils' learning is enhanced exceptionally well by an excellent curriculum which includes a substantial range of additional activities, extra-curricular clubs and educational visits. For example, all pupils are taught and achieve exceptionally high standards in French. Their personal and social development is enhanced by going on residential school journeys, such as the recent Year 6 visit to France.

Leadership and management are also outstanding. Governors describe the headteacher as 'approachable and inspirational'. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is supported very effectively by an able and experienced senior management team. Subject leaders also do an excellent job providing helpful support for their colleagues and ensuring that high standards are maintained across many subjects. Governance is excellent. Governors, in partnership with the headteacher, set challenging, but realistic targets for attainment. Arrangements for staff and governors to accurately evaluate the school's performance and respond to any shortcomings are effective. Governors are hugely supportive of the school. The procedures that enable them to hold the school to account for the quality of its work, such as visits to lessons and discussions with senior managers, are effective. Whilst space is at a premium, resources are used wisely and the school is well equipped.

The school's contribution to community cohesion is a significant strength. Pupils participate in school and local community events with great enthusiasm. Their understanding of those who have other beliefs and faiths or come from different cultural backgrounds is developed very well. Links with schools in other parts of the world, such as France, China, where some pupils have visited, and South Africa play a prominent part in school life. Pupils are also very sensitive to the needs of those less fortunate than themselves. They raise significant amounts for charity. To this end the school council persuaded the headteacher to do a sky dive!

Improvement since the time of the last inspection is excellent. Communication with parents, an issue raised at the time, has improved and standards have risen in every subsequent year. The school is in no way complacent and its track record of raising standards year-on-year provides ample testimony of its excellent capacity to maintain improvement in the future.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

The Early Years Foundation Stage provision has recently been reorganised to provide a greater focus on child-initiated activities and this is having a positive impact by raising standards even further. The excellent management of this change, the stimulating learning programme and rich environment provided for the children captures their imagination in a lively and vibrant manner. As a result, the children are excited about learning and make outstanding progress. Children's behaviour is outstanding and they are confident in working in groups and as individuals.

All the adults work well together to provide a secure environment that allows the children to explore and learn. There is a good balance between adult-led and free choice activities with the adults quickly spotting areas where their intervention is required in order for the best progress to be made. The substantial outdoor area allows for a wide range of interesting and challenging activities to be undertaken. Support and guidance arrangements are also outstanding.

In most years children's attainment on entry is close to that expected for their age. However, staff have rightly noted that children's personal, social and emotional development in terms of independence and listening and sharing skills are not as well developed. The children's

knowledge and understanding of the world tends to vary from year to year and, whilst not below that expected, it does not always reach the high levels found in some years. The children make very good progress in all areas of their learning as staff build skilfully on children's prior learning and understanding, with a particular focus on independent learning, social development and counting skills. The quality of teaching is constantly good with outstanding features leading to outstanding progress. Assessment and tracking procedures are well established, accurate and detailed. The parents are kept informed of the programme of learning followed by their children. They have frequent opportunities to discuss their children's progress and to contribute to their learning.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Place even greater emphasis on the development of pupils' mental and oral skills in mathematics, in order to raise standards even further to match those found in reading and writing.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

### 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 <sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup>Grade 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

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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**

13 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter's Catholic Primary, Billericay CM11 2UB

You may recall that I visited recently with Miss Pentlow to inspect your school. Thank you for telling us about all the things you do at school and how much you enjoy attending. This letter is to tell you what we found. We are most impressed and think your school is amongst the very best. Many of your parents think so too, judging from the things they said in the questionnaires they completed for us.

You make excellent progress and the standards you attain in subjects, such as English and mathematics are much higher than in the majority of other schools. We also noted that you do very well in many other subjects, such as music and physical education. Your ability to speak French is most impressive.

All this comes about because the staff do an exceptionally good job and are dedicated to helping you to do your best. They make sure that you feel safe and enjoy school, particularly all the additional activities and school journeys that you have. They set work that challenges those of you who usually find learning relatively easy and are quick to provide help if any of you show signs of falling behind. Mr Peoples, the office staff and the governors are also very good at making sure the school works well and that you have all you need to learn successfully.

Even though your school is exceptionally good, Mr Peoples, the staff and governors are always trying to make it even better. With this in mind we are asking them to give even more attention to developing your mental and oral skills in mathematics. This is because, even though standards in mathematics are much better than found in many schools, they are not quite as good as in English and science.

I am confident that you and your school will continue to thrive. I wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Godfrey Bancroft

Lead inspector