

St Peter-in-Chains RC Infant School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 102148 |
| Local Authority | Haringey |
| Inspection number | 307914 |
| Inspection date | 18 September 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Sue Vale |

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

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| Type of school | Infant |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 4-7 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 139 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr A M Dickson |
| Headteacher | Miss M M L Falvey |
| Date of previous school inspection | 5 November 2001 |
| School address | Elm Grove London N8 9AJ |
| Telephone number | 020 8340 6789 |
| Fax number | 020 8340 3653 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues, achievement and standards, teaching and learning, leadership and management, personal development and well being and care, guidance and support. Gathering evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and documents. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with children, and the chair of governors also contributed to the judgements. The inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified albeit a little modest in some areas. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

St Peter's is a small infant school without a nursery. Pupils enter school with a range of pre-school experiences. Standards on entry are broadly as expected. Around a quarter of the pupils are learning English as an additional language. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average, as is the number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The school is situated in Hornsey, a relatively affluent area of Haringey, but draws on pupils from a wide catchment area because of its Catholic foundation. The school receives a number of mid-year admissions in all classes.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Peter-in-Chains Infant School is a good school with many outstanding features. Parents and pupils speak very highly of it. As one parent commented, 'the atmosphere is lovely, very friendly and caring'.

Pupils at the school achieve well above average standards during their time here. This is partly because leadership and management are outstanding. There is a strong commitment from all involved with the school to put the pupils' learning at the heart of all that they do. Leadership by the head teacher is outstanding. She has a clear vision for the development of the school and high aspirations of what can be achieved by all pupils. The school puts great strength on the teaching of basic skills in order to give pupils a strong foundation on which to build. The school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is in the main accurate albeit too modest on occasions. This is in part due to the head teacher's belief that more can always be achieved. The governing body is fully committed to the development of the school. They ask relevant and searching questions, are fully aware of the strengths and areas for development and are extremely supportive of all that the school does. Links with the Catholic community are very strong and permeate the daily life of the school.

Pupils achieve exceptionally well due to, a strong focus on learning and consistently good teaching. They build on the good start in Reception so that by the time they reach Year 2 the majority of pupils, including those learning English as an additional language are reaching well above national averages in all subjects. The results in 2007 show that more than half the pupils reached the higher levels in reading, with around a quarter reaching the higher levels in writing and a third reaching the higher levels in mathematics.

The personal development of pupils is also outstanding, as a result of the high quality of the care and guidance the school gives them. Pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well promoted through, a good curriculum, assemblies and special events, such as book week. Pupils behave exceptionally well, have a growing awareness of how to keep healthy through the work they are doing to gain healthy schools accreditation and know how to stay safe. Pupils are clear that they know that there is someone they can go to in school, if they need help. Attendance is much improved, since the last inspection, and is now above average. Teachers' high expectations of pupils and the encouragement they provide are helping to sustain high standards of behaviour. Pupils look after each other in the playground and play well together. As one pupil in Year 1 commented, 'we know about right and wrong things to do'.

Teaching is consistently good with some outstanding features. It is this consistency of approach to learning, throughout the school, that enables pupils to make such very good progress. Teaching is effective because teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They are clear about what they want pupils to learn and how to help them achieve to the best of their ability. Teachers are adept at making lessons interesting, although there are some missed opportunities for teachers to remind pupils of how to use skills learnt in literacy across other subjects. Pupils obviously enjoy their lessons. All pupils make gains in their learning because teachers are very clear in their explanations of what they want them to learn and are adept at asking questions, which move pupils on in their learning. In one outstanding Literacy lesson, on developing and extending pupils vocabulary, pupils were confident to ask questions about things when they were unsure of their meaning. The teacher expertly led the other pupils to

answer each other's questions. This results in pupils at this school wanting to learn, and being encouraged to have the confidence to help each other to find out more.

Pupils are fortunate to have very supportive and involved parents. Many parents feel that the school keeps them well informed about what is going on and about their children's progress. There are annual questionnaires for parents and pupils alike, and the school successfully acts on these findings.

Effective systems are in place to track pupils' progress. Teachers use assessment information well to match work to pupils' abilities, providing good support for those with learning difficulties where it is needed. A strength of the school is the support which teaching assistants give to pupils who are identified as needing more help. All pupils are set challenging targets. More able pupils are challenged to achieve as much as they are capable of, which is why so many reach high standards. Marking in books clearly identifies the next steps for development in pupils' learning.

The curriculum is good. It is planned to help pupils to develop their skills from one year to the next. The teaching of basic skills is very good. Teachers are increasingly planning links between different subjects to extend pupils' learning experiences. However pupils do not consistently transfer literacy skills from one subject to another. For example, spellings may be learnt and full marks achieved in a test, but when it comes to 'free creative writing' these learnt spellings are forgotten and not used in pupils work. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching in subjects such as music, which enhances the curriculum. The school works well with other agencies to provide extra -curricular activities, but many of these have to be paid for.

Many parents commented on the good quality care, which their children receive. As one parent commented, 'in the two years my son has been at St Peters he has blossomed into a confident and independent little boy'. Teachers and support staff are very sensitive to the needs of pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and those who are new to learning English receive very good support from teachers and teaching assistants to help them achieve as well as others. There are appropriate procedures in place for child protection. Standards have remained high for a number of years and the high expectations for all pupils to achieve as well as they can shows that the school has outstanding capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

It was not possible to inspect the Foundation Stage in great detail because many of the children had only been in school for 2 days. The new arrivals in Reception have settled very quickly into the daily routines. They are rapidly gaining in self- esteem and clearly enjoy coming to school. Children start in the Reception classes with broadly expected skills in most areas of learning, although there are gradually increasing numbers of children who start with more limited abilities in their language skills. During their time in Reception they make good progress, so that the majority of them reach the expected levels for their age at the end of the Foundation Stage, and a large proportion exceed these expectations.

What the school should do to improve further

- Teachers to consistently encourage the transference of literacy skills learnt in one subject to other subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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? | 2 |
| 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? | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 1 |

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 |
| How well 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

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|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 2 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 2 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 1 |

¹ 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 1 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 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 |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

1 October 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of St Peter-in-Chains RC Infant School, London, N8 9AJ

It was lovely to meet some of you when I came to visit your school. I really enjoyed myself.

I am delighted to say that St Peter in Chains Infant School is a good school. There are many things, which you do very well, and you are lucky to go to this school.

- You work hard and achieve very well.
- You reach very high standards in your work.
- Your teachers plan interesting lessons for you and help you to make excellent progress in your learning.
- The curriculum, which you follow, is fun and you do lots of interesting things.
- Your head teacher is outstanding and leads and manages your school very well.
- Your personal development and well-being are outstanding.
- Your teachers and other adults care for you very well.

Things you could do better:

Sometimes when you are doing your work you forget things that you have learnt in other subjects such as spellings. I have asked your teachers to help you to use what you know across all your lessons.

With best wishes,

Sue Vale

Lead Inspector