

St Peter's Catholic Primary School

Sullington Way, Shoreham-by-Sea, BN43 6PJ

Inspection dates 12–13 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- St Peter's is a happy and friendly school. Pupils behave well, feel safe and enjoy school. They are polite and welcoming. Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics to reach average levels of attainment at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics has accelerated considerably since the previous inspection because the quality of teaching has improved.
- Phonics (the sounds that letters make) is taught very effectively across the school.
- Improvements in the way children are taught in Reception, particularly in the use of the outdoor area to support learning, mean that children are now making better progress.
- Teachers and leaders have an accurate view of pupils' achievement because assessments of pupils' learning have improved and are accurate.
- The interim headteacher and governors have focused rigorously on improving teaching. As a result, the quality of teaching is now good.
- Middle and senior leaders' roles have been strengthened substantially so that they are an active and successful force in driving improvements.
- Governors have developed their role and provide effective levels of support and challenge for the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not yet enough outstanding teaching to secure the highest levels of achievement.
- Pupils make slightly slower progress in writing than in other subjects.
- In a few cases, pupils are not given clear and consistent advice about how and when to use punctuation.
- Occasionally, pupils make slower progress because adults' expectations are not high enough and extra help is not always set at the right level.
- Pupils are not always given the time to read teachers' comments in their books and use these to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 13 lessons or part-lessons, including eight observations carried out jointly with the interim headteacher or one of the assistant headteachers.
- Discussions were held with the interim headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, members of staff and pupils. Meetings were also held with three representatives of the governing body, including the Chair, and with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 47 responses to the online Parent View survey in addition to letters received from parents during the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the 17 staff questionnaire responses.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and analysed a range of documents and policies, including the school improvement plan, information about pupils' progress, attendance records and safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in lessons, as well as a sample of pupils' work provided by the school, and listened to pupils reading.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Fran Ashworth

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a similar size to the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below the national average. (Pupil premium is additional funding provided by the government to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and children with a parent in the armed forces.)
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average.
- The proportion supported through school action plus or by a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school has a breakfast club, which is managed by the school and was included in this inspection.
- The interim headteacher was a local authority adviser for the school before her appointment in September 2013. She remains in post until September 2014. The process to appoint a permanent headteacher is under way.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that pupils achieve the highest levels, particularly in writing, by making sure that:
 - the work set for pupils, particularly the most able, is hard enough
 - pupils are given clear and consistent rules by teachers and teaching assistants about when and how to use punctuation in their writing
 - pupils are given time to read teachers' comments in their books and use these to improve their work
 - pupils are always expected to present their work neatly and with care
 - teaching assistants have consistently high expectations and extra help provided is set at the right level to move pupils on more quickly.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- In 2013, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 was average in reading, writing and mathematics, including the proportion attaining the higher levels.
- Children's skills and understanding when they join the Early Years Foundation Stage vary from year to year. In some years, their knowledge and skills have been in line with those typical of their age while in some years they have been lower.
- Children make good progress during Reception so that most achieve a good level of development and are well prepared for learning in Year 1. Information about children's progress shows that children are making better progress across all areas this year because the quality of teaching has improved. For example, more opportunities for children to write, particularly in the outdoor area, mean that children are practising writing skills more often and boys are more interested in writing. As a result, children are making faster progress in writing in Reception.
- Pupils are making better progress than before in mathematics because the subject policy has been reviewed and updated so that there is a consistent approach to teaching the basic mathematics skills. Sharply focused teaching for small groups of more able pupils means that they are making faster progress.
- Pupils make slightly slower progress in writing than in other subjects and this continues to be a priority for school development. For example, teachers now regularly plan lessons which teach pupils what they need to know to move to the next level, so that no time is lost.
- Pupils' progress in reading has accelerated. Improvements in the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) mean that pupils are developing reading skills earlier in their schooling. Extra help is provided in the older year groups for those pupils who have gaps in their phonics knowledge so that they are catching up with their classmates. The results of the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2012 were well above average, with a further increase in 2013.
- Pupils in receipt of support provided by pupil premium funding make good progress overall. In 2013, their attainment was about eight months ahead of that of their classmates in reading and in line with their classmates in writing and mathematics.
- Improvements in teaching mean that most teachers have high expectations of more able pupils. As a result, these pupils make good progress overall and more pupils are on track to attain the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 in 2014. However, occasionally teachers' and teaching assistants' expectations are not high enough, so that pupils are not always challenged to do their best at all times and their progress slows.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to that of their classmates overall. However, in a few cases these pupils make slightly slower progress when working in small groups because teaching assistants' expectations are not high enough.

The quality of teaching is good

- Most teachers have high expectations of all pupils and set work which is demanding and stimulating. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Year 6 made rapid progress in developing different sides of an argument because the teacher skilfully questioned pupils to check and explore their understanding and to provide further challenge. Occasionally, however, the work set for pupils is too easy, especially for the most able, so that they do not make as much progress as they could.
- In Reception, children thoroughly enjoy learning and are making faster progress this year because they have a wider range of good quality activities, including in the outdoor area.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Extra help in Years 5 and 6 for those pupils who need it is effectively addressing any gaps in their phonics knowledge.

- The school is rightly focusing on improving the teaching of writing. For example, pupils now have 'Steps to Success' in the front of their writing books. As a result, pupils are much clearer about what they need to do to reach the next level. However, there are small variations in the way that basic writing skills are taught. For example, in a few cases, pupils are confused about when to use punctuation, such as full stops and commas, in their written work because teachers' explanations are not clear or consistent enough.
- Pupils' handwriting has improved. The handwriting policy has been updated and pupils are now using handwriting pens to complete their work. Occasionally, however, teachers' expectations of pupils' work are not high enough, so that the work pupils complete in their books is untidy or unfinished.
- Pupils are making better progress in mathematics than at the time of the previous inspection because basic mathematics skills are taught well. Effective training means that teachers are more confident about teaching mathematics and know what pupils need to do to move to the next level.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly so that they know how well they are doing. Teachers' written comments tell pupils what they can do next to improve their work and move on their learning. Pupils' progress is most rapid when they are given the time to read and respond to teachers' comments. For example, a pupil in Year 6 had used the teacher's comments to improve her next piece of written work by remembering to break her writing up into paragraphs. However, this good practice is not always followed, so sometimes pupils are not given the time to use teachers' suggestions fully to improve their work.
- Teaching assistants usually provide good quality support for those pupils who need extra help, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, so that they make rapid progress. However, in a few cases these pupils make slower progress because teaching assistants' expectations of the amount and quality of pupils' work are not high enough.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are keen to get on in lessons and move between lessons sensibly and quickly so that no learning time is lost. There are strong levels of mutual respect between adults and pupils. Most parents who responded to Parent View feel that pupils are well behaved.
- Pupils are proud of their school and take on a wide range of responsibilities with maturity. Pupils' enthusiasm for school is reflected in attendance rates, which are consistently above average.
- The school's religious ethos provides a strong framework for teachers' and pupils' values. Pupils understand that there is often a range of reasons why others find it hard to behave consistently well and show a caring attitude these pupils. They told inspectors that the 'behaviour ladders' used in classrooms are helpful because 'everyone can see where their name is on the ladder'.
- Pupils know about different forms of bullying and understand how thoughtless words can upset people. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated and school records show that incidents of bullying are rare. On the few occasions when incidents have occurred, they have been well managed.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel very safe and trust adults to look after them. They appreciate improvements in the school's environment, such as the soft surface under the trim trail so that they are less likely to hurt themselves.
- Pupils know how they can help to keep themselves safe. Their understanding of e-safety is impressive and they sensibly and maturely discuss the risks associated with using the internet; for example, they know how to block inappropriate messages and to ignore any requests for personal information.
- The breakfast club provides a positive and sociable start to the school day for those pupils who attend. Pupils behave well during the club and relationships are good.
- Behaviour and safety are not yet outstanding because occasionally a very small minority of pupils misbehave in lessons or in the playground.

The leadership and management are good

- The interim headteacher's involvement in supporting the school prior to her appointment in September 2013 meant that she had a clear view of development priorities on her arrival in the school. As a result, she has been able to sustain and rapidly increase the pace of development.
- The interim headteacher has strengthened capacity for further improvement significantly. She has increased middle leaders' and senior leaders' responsibility and accountability for the quality of teaching and for raising pupils' achievement. For example, leaders have worked alongside teachers in the classroom to improve aspects of teaching.
- Middle and senior leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and pupils' progress by looking at pupils' work, completing paired observations of lessons and by discussing areas for development with teachers. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and development needs.
- The interim headteacher has effectively re-structured the subject leadership. Teams of leaders work together to review and develop key aspects of the curriculum such as reading, writing and mathematics. They make an effective contribution to plans for school development, with a clear focus in action plans on raising pupils' achievement. As a result, the school is well placed to sustain the drive for improvement.
- In the past, teachers' assessments of pupils' learning at the end of Year 2 have been over-generous and this has skewed the picture of pupils' progress across the school. Teachers' assessments are now secure, so leaders have an accurate view of how well pupils are learning across the school.
- The school is committed to equal opportunities for all pupils and as a result it is a cohesive, tolerant community.
- The range of subjects is broad and enhanced with a wide range of activities. For example, activities such as the residential trip in Year 5 make a positive contribution to the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to their enjoyment of school.
- Primary school sport funding has been allocated appropriately. For example, a specialist teacher is working alongside teachers in the school and new sports equipment has been purchased. The school's sports leader is scheduled to review progress at the end of this term.
- The local authority has provided valuable support for the school. For example, a review of the school was completed in September 2013 at the school's request. This strengthened the school's view of what was going well and contributed to plans for further improvement.
- Leadership and management are not yet outstanding because pupils are not yet achieving the highest levels of achievement
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has been restructured so that committees have a stronger focus on teaching and learning and is working more effectively as a result. Local authority training has helped governors to have a deeper understanding of how well the school is performing in relation to other schools nationally. The introduction of a 'virtual office' has improved communication between governors and with the school. For example, reports and analyses are now accessed by all governors very quickly and a discussion forum means they are able to ask questions of the headteacher about any aspects needing clarification. Governors have a good knowledge of how the school operates from day to day because they make regular and frequent visits and look at pupils' work. They are well informed about how additional funds are spent, such as pupil premium and primary school sport funding. They are able to discuss how pupil premium funding is helping pupils to make more progress. Governors receive comprehensive information about teachers' performance and know how pay is being used to reward good practice and support improvements. Safeguarding arrangements are robust and meet statutory requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	126041
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	431064

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Yvette Hart
Headteacher	Lorraine Warner (Interim Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	10–11 May 2012
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