

Canterbury St Peter's Methodist Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118707
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	313055
Inspection dates	7 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Eileen Chadwick

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Rogers
Headteacher	Carol Townsend
Date of previous school inspection	October 2004
School address	St Peter's Grove Canterbury Kent CT1 2DH
Telephone number	01227 464392
Fax number	01227 464474

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- Attainment on entry to Reception and the progress being made in Reception and Key Stage 1.
- Standards and progress in Key Stage 2.
- The impact of leadership and management on improving achievement.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, discussions with pupils and staff, a review of the assessment data the school uses to track pupils' progress, and analysis of pupils' work. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

Description of the school

The school serves the centre of Canterbury as well as the surrounding area. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The overall proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average but this does vary from year to year. These learning difficulties include pupils who have weaker literacy skills. The proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school other than at the usual time is broadly average although above average in some years. The school holds the Healthy Schools, Travel Plan and International Schools awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This school is outstanding. It lives up to its motto, 'Reaching high, working together'. Pupils' achievement in English, mathematics and science is exceptional and their personal development, including their behaviour, is first class. Pupils are given a very well-rounded education because the school also provides very worthwhile opportunities to develop their creative, practical and sporting skills. The great majority of parents justifiably hold the school in high regard. As one parent says, 'St Peter's is a great school, always striving to improve and children of all abilities are happy and well supported.'

Children make good progress in Reception and, by the time they begin Year 1, reach above average standards, including in literacy and numeracy. In recent years this area of the school has greatly improved because previous performance was reviewed rigorously and the steps taken improved provision. Good teaching is now paying off and standards are higher than formerly on entry to Year 1. The school is aware that a rise in expectations will be necessary as these children move through the school. Pupils' progress is good in Key Stage 1 and, by Year 2, standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics.

Pupils' excellent progress in Key Stage 2 leads to well above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Pupils of all abilities do extremely well and the large proportion reaching higher levels is indicative of how effectively the school has raised achievement. In many year groups, including the current Year 6, a significant proportion of pupils are later entrants who have not always achieved well enough in the past. They are often still in the process of catching up and the school has rigorous programmes to help them address any gaps in their skills and knowledge. Pupils' with learning difficulties and disabilities are extremely well supported.

The outstanding leadership of the headteacher is at the heart of the school's all-round rapid improvement. The deputy provides excellent support and senior leaders work closely, delivering a wealth of experience to the school. Governors are an asset. They have developed very thorough systems for evaluating the impact of initiatives on raising achievement and they are both supportive and challenging. The school's self-evaluation arrangements are exceptionally strong and well embedded. Senior and middle managers rigorously monitor teaching and learning and teachers are given good support for improving their teaching. Regular professional development ensures teachers are well trained and up-to-date. The headteacher has gathered and developed a team which shares her vision and sense of purpose and it is to everyone's credit that standards are high.

Teaching and learning are now invariably good and often outstanding. Teachers capture pupils' interest and bring learning alive by their excellent use of resources and whiteboard technology. They manage pupils very well and their high expectations bring out very good work habits in their pupils. Very thorough assessment systems and demanding target setting also have a large impact on improving achievement. Teachers and school leaders make very regular and informed checks on pupils' progress and provision is carefully directed at ensuring that pupils' targets are met or exceeded. Initiatives to raise standards in writing are having a good impact and there is a good balance between the direct teaching of

basic skills and developing pupils' creativity. Throughout the school, there are some excellent examples of pupils' imaginative writing. However, the school agrees that occasionally pupils' handwriting is so not well formed and that spelling limits pupils' writing in a few cases.

Pupils enjoy school a great deal and this is shown by their enthusiastic participation in the many after school clubs and by their good attendance. The school's outstanding care, guidance and support successfully develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Pupils say they feel safe and valued and really appreciate their friendly school, which has a strong sense of family. Pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enhanced through strong support from the Church and excellent partnerships with the community. Pupils of all ages develop their initiative and leadership skills by organising and managing events. For example, older pupils run some clubs for younger pupils, under the watchful eye of teachers. Pupils initiate and manage fund raising events in aid of charities and learn how to plan and manage budgets. The development of important personal skills such as team working and problem solving as well as their excellent progress in acquiring key academic skills prepare pupils extremely well for secondary school.

Links between subjects are excellent and make learning meaningful, exciting and relevant to pupils' lives. There is a strong focus on information and communication technology (ICT) and this is used very well to promote pupils' learning across the curriculum. The school takes maximum advantage of accessibility to museums and theatres. Visits, visitors to school and residential trips provide pupils with excellent first-hand experiences and stimulate pupils' social and cultural development. Exciting international links widen understanding of other countries and other children's lives. Pupils also have a wealth of opportunities for extra-curricular activities and sport. They develop a very good understanding of how regular exercise and a healthy diet help their bodies grow strong.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Parents appreciate the good induction procedures for helping children to adjust when they join the school. High standards of care and safety and well organised routines help children to feel secure from the start. They enjoy happy relationships with staff and rapidly develop good learning habits. Their happy smiling faces clearly show their enjoyment of learning. A good balance is struck between children learning for themselves and the direct teaching of basic skills by adults.

Although children's overall attainment on entry is broadly as expected, a significant minority have well developed mathematical skills. Children make good progress across all areas of learning. By the time they begin Year 1, their attainment is above average, including in reading, writing and mathematics. Teaching is well matched to children's learning needs. Assessment data indicated significant underachievement in the past but standards and provision have been substantially improved over the past two years. Teaching is good and there is excellent support for the minority who begin school with limited communication and/or personal skills. This leads to very nearly all of these children reaching the expected standards at the end of the Reception Year.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of good spelling and handwriting.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	School Overall
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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of boarding provision	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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

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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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

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

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.

Leadership and management

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	1
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

Annex B



7 May 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Canterbury St Peter's Methodist Primary School, Canterbury CT1 2DH

As you know, I visited your school recently to find out how well you are learning. Thank you for being so polite, friendly and helpful. You told me that you go to an excellent school. I agree with you and I am now writing to let you know about some of the things that I found out about your school.

- Your hard work is paying off and you reach high standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science.
- You have really good opportunities for sport and for developing your computer skills, and you do some good work in design and technology.
- Everyone in the school takes good care of each other and your excellent behaviour helps to make your school a happy one.
- You have some exciting opportunities to learn about other countries and to find out about other children's lives.
- You have very good opportunities to take part in lots of different activities in school and in the community.
- Your headteacher leads you all extremely well and all the staff and governors are working hard to make sure the school is always improving.

Here are the things we are asking the school to improve.

- Help the few of you who have trouble with spelling and handwriting to improve these areas of your work.

You can help your teachers by making sure you continue to work hard at improving your work. Remember your school motto, 'Reaching high, working together'.

Thank you again for helping to make my time in your school so very enjoyable.

Yours sincerely

Eileen Chadwick
Lead inspector