

St Philip's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	126036
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	381174
Inspection dates	1–2 February 2012
Lead inspector	David Marshall

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	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kathie Hallam
Headteacher	Margaret Fraher
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

David Marshall

Additional inspector

Gail Robertson

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors spent five hours observing teaching, which included visiting 13 class lessons and a number of smaller teaching groups. In all, nine teachers were observed. In addition, discussions were held with different groups of pupils, three governors, the headteacher, all staff members and a number of parents and carers. The inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at information about pupils' performance and progress, the school development plan, minutes of governing body meetings, school policies and curriculum planning documents. In addition, questionnaires from 109 parents and carers, and others from staff and pupils were analysed.

Information about the school

St Philip's is an average size primary school serving the parishes of Arundel Cathedral and Storrington. The school is oversubscribed and operates a waiting list. The pupils come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds, although the school is predominantly White British. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is around the national average. The proportion of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is also around the national average. The school meets the government's current floor standards.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school where pupils' efforts are consistently recognised and rewarded. Pupils make good progress, are prepared well for the next stage of their education and achieve well.
- Although teaching is good and there are some opportunities to learn from observing each other, variations in the quality remain. Very occasionally, the pace of lessons drops and learning slows as a result.
- Throughout the school, the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) is thorough and consistent. The careful planning observed showed how well the pupils' confidence in, and skill at, reading is enhanced as they move up the school.
- The well-organised curriculum enables pupils to enjoy an extensive range of activities that promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well.
- Pupils enjoy their time in school and their attendance is consistently above average. Their behaviour and attitudes are routinely good and the school is zealous in ensuring that pupils are safe and secure.
- A small proportion of parents and carers are unhappy with some aspects of the communication from the school and feel they are not always listened to. Inspection evidence shows that the school enjoys supportive relationships with the majority of parents and carers and that communications are good. Nevertheless, leaders are anxious to resolve these concerns. The contribution of the Friends of the School association is greatly appreciated by all involved.
- The school has good links with schools and communities in other areas, including abroad. They have made good progress towards achieving the International School's Award.
- The determined leadership of the headteacher and governing body has kept the school moving forward despite some recent staff difficulties; this has led to improvements in the school since the time of the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the proportion of outstanding teaching by focusing on:
 - improving the pace of learning in some lessons
 - extending opportunities for staff to observe the best practice in the school.
- Make strenuous efforts to remedy the lack of confidence felt by some parents and carers about communication by engaging fully with their concerns.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils join the school with skills and knowledge that are similar to those typical for their age, but there are many variations from cohort to cohort. Throughout the school, all groups of pupils achieve well across a range of subjects. As the school records show, and inspection evidence confirms, all pupils, regardless of their ability, make good progress.

Effective organisation and careful assessments enable children to make good progress very quickly in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This solid start is built upon well so that, by the time they leave the school, pupils' attainment is above average. Pupils' standards in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 are also above average. This year's national assessments for pupils in Year 6 showed them achieving above average standards, especially in reading and in mathematics, and making good progress since their results in Year 2. The higher-attaining pupils were enabled to achieve high standards.

In mathematics, pupils' past work and work within lessons illustrate their growing confidence in basic and more advanced number calculations and problem-solving. This was particularly evident in an outstanding lesson in the Year 6 class where pupils at all levels were very well challenged and given opportunities to decide for themselves where to move on to next. Throughout the school, the pupils' work on display and in their books clearly shows the good progress they make in their written work and art.

Pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs also make good progress. This stems from the high priority the school gives to meeting their needs. By ensuring consistently effective help from well-qualified learning support assistants wherever it is needed, the lower-attaining pupils, and those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, make good progress. Any gaps between them and their peers are closed effectively.

Parents and carers expressed a high level of satisfaction in the progress their children make. However, some of them expressed concern about how well the school enables them to be involved in their children's learning.

Quality of teaching

The teaching observed on the inspection was never less than good, and occasionally outstanding. Teaching is good over time as staff prepare lessons carefully, matching the work well to pupils' different needs and linking different aspects of learning. They use learning resources effectively to assist the pupils' understanding. Teachers' good knowledge of the content they teach enables them to pose questions effectively and also answer pupils' questions fully. In the Year 3 class the way the pupils' study of Romans in history was linked effectively to mathematics and design and technology was enhanced by their discussions when in costume.

Staff provide welcoming, interesting and attractive classroom environments which support learning well. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the wide range of activities for the outdoor area enhances different aspects of the children's development, including interesting opportunities for their physical development. Lessons on the whole in the Reception class are very well paced with good use of time. Active learning helps the pupils to remember key skills, for example pupils make signs with their arms when learning letter sounds and position their arms across their bodies to demonstrate the correct sign for subtraction. Occasionally, across the school, learning opportunities like these are missed and the pace of the lessons drops, and as a result learning dips.

Throughout the school, staff have good strategies to manage behaviour. The skilled planning of opportunities for speaking and listening, including role play, keep the pupils focused. Teachers regularly use paired talk which supports their speaking and listening skills effectively and also their social development through negotiating ideas. This was very evident in the Year 4 class where the pupils' knowledge of different marriage services in discussion was a surprise to them all. Marking is helpful and supports the pupils' next steps in learning. Staff keep good records of pupils' progress and use them to ensure pupils are well challenged in most lessons.

The impact of the planned curriculum on the quality of teaching is clearly evident; communication skills are well developed through the teaching approach. Teaching of basic skills is good, applied across the curriculum, and contributes to the pupils' good progress. Learning support assistants are deployed well. Thanks to the very effective work of the special educational needs coordinator, extra teaching expertise for pupils who have difficulties in reading and mathematics is well utilised and helps specific pupils catch up. Learning intentions are shared well and staff are consistent in ensuring that the pupils know how to be successful in their tasks. Pupils often contribute effectively to this process and suggest extra pointers for success before they begin the activity. Parents' and carers' views that teaching is good are confirmed by the inspection.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural understanding very well. Throughout the school, pupils consistently demonstrate good standards of behaviour, positive attitudes to learning and well-developed social skills. This was very evident in a good English lesson in the Year 2 class on using different sounds.

The pupils were enthusiastic and sensible as they shared their ideas, allowed each other to talk and wrote their new words.

Pupils show very caring attitudes to each other and the environment as the Eco council work shows. There are very few reported incidents of bullying. There are clear procedures for dealing with any incidents. Pupils know there is always someone they can turn to in moments of difficulty. They acquire an outstanding awareness of how to keep themselves and others safe and how to live healthily. Pupils were keen to show how much they enjoy the responsibility of the school council or being buddies with pupils in other classes. The school council is justifiably proud of the input it has made to influence changes. As one boy said, 'We learn that some people are not as fortunate as we are – and we must help them all we can.'

Almost all parents and carers report that standards of behaviour in the school are good and agree that their children are kept safe and looked after well at all times.

Leadership and management

Good leadership and a focus on the correct priorities have resulted in significant improvement since the last inspection. The whole school commitment to do the best for the pupils, led by the exemplary guidance of the headteacher, is clearly evident in the strength of relationships and the staff's dedication to their work. Governors bring a wide range of skills to their planning and take specific responsibilities. They challenge and ask questions. Their visits to school keep them fully aware of the school's development. School self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate. The school improvement plan focuses clearly on raising standards even further. The rising results, the significant improvement since the last inspection, the commitment of staff and governors together with the clear vision of leaders indicate that the school has a strong capacity to improve further.

There are conflicting views among the parents and carers. A very large majority hold the school in high regard. They commented on the openness of staff, their children's enjoyment of learning, the way the school welcomes all children and the care shown by all staff. Inspection evidence supports these views. Inspection evidence shows the school enjoys good relationships with parents and carers whose views are always taken into consideration. Despite the efforts of the headteacher and governing body, there are a very small minority of parents and carers who have misgivings about the way the school listens and responds to their concerns. This is an issue that the school agrees it must resolve with urgency.

The good curriculum is well planned with a secure focus on key areas of learning. Different subjects are integrated together in a natural way. The range of extra-curricular clubs is really enjoyed by the pupils. They benefit from sporting opportunities which support their healthy lifestyles. The good use of the local environment enables the pupils to learn at first hand, such as work in the school's own garden. These activities assist the acquisition of pupils' knowledge and support their understanding well. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted strongly, and international links are a strong feature of the school's philosophy.

Excellent attention is paid by leaders and managers at all levels to ensure the highest quality of safeguarding for the pupils. This includes rigorous procedures for ensuring the care of pupils through the checks made on all adults who work in the school. Pupils' safety and well-being are paramount at all times, ensuring that the school is a very safe and supportive place to be. The senior leaders, supported well by all staff, are particularly effective in tackling discrimination should it occur and in ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils and across all aspects of the school's work.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



3 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Philip's Catholic Primary School, Arundel, BN18 9BA

I am writing to thank you all for making us so welcome when we came to the school recently. We did enjoy our visit. Yours is a good school with many strengths, and we agree with what you told us – it is a really fun place to learn. Here is a list of some of the things that we think are really good.

- The school looks after you extremely well and you make good progress in your learning.
- Children in the Reception class get off to a great start at school.
- You behave very well, get along with each other and feel very safe in school.
- You all have very good ideas on how to make things better and the teachers always listen to what you want.
- You really understand how to live healthily.
- The teaching is good and you find lessons interesting and really enjoy school.
- There are plenty of exciting things for you to do both in school and on visits.
- The headteacher and staff manage the school very well.

Even in good schools, there are some things that could be better. We have asked your teachers to make sure that no matter which class you are in all your lessons keep you actively involved at all times and are as good as the best. We know your teachers are all working hard to be the best they can be and we want them to learn from each other as well.

A few of your parents and carers said they are not too happy about how the school communicates with them, and how their concerns are dealt with. We have asked the headteacher, governors and staff to do as much as they can to make sure your parents and carers are happy with all the school is doing for you. In turn, you must all carry on listening carefully and take note of what your teachers say. Then you will all continue to make good or even better progress in your learning.

Yours sincerely

David Marshall
Lead inspector

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