

St Paul's CofE Primary School, Stalybridge

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106233
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	377384
Inspection dates	7–8 February 2012
Lead inspector	Christine Millett

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 of pupils on the school roll	283
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Butterworth
Headteacher	Janet Hand
Date of previous school inspection	21 October 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Christine Millett
Geoffrey Lawrence
Patricia Cope

Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 18 lessons or parts of lessons given by 16 members of staff. They held meetings with groups of pupils, a member of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at work in pupils' books, school policies and plans, data tracking pupils' progress and records on safeguarding, health and safety and attendance. The inspectors looked at the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) but no responses were recorded. Inspectors considered the 79 questionnaires completed by parents and carers as well as those from pupils and staff.

Information about the school

St Paul's is larger than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A very small number are from minority ethnic groups. Almost all pupils' first language is English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average, as is the number of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. The school meets the current floor standard. The school has achieved a number of awards including Healthy School status, the Activemark and the International School Award.

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

- St Paul's is a good school. Pupils achieve well in a safe, nurturing environment where they feel safe and have confidence in adults to take care of them. The school's strong family ethos permeates school life and is a significant factor in enhancing pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and good behaviour.
- Children are provided with a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and this is built upon effectively throughout the rest of the school. The school has focused on improving attainment. This has been particularly successful in mathematics and writing where there are now well established whole school approaches. However, there are some inconsistencies in the teaching of reading across the school, most notably in the frequency with which pupils are heard to read.
- Attainment data are used well to monitor pupils' progress and ensure teachers know when pupils are underachieving. Intervention strategies enable disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to make similar levels of progress to their peers. However, the full impact of those used to bring about improvements in reading is not always monitored rigorously.
- Teaching is good. Pupils make particularly good progress in writing because teachers provide them with many interesting opportunities to write in different styles which are linked to the current topic. Teachers provide good feedback during lessons and in their marking, particularly in English, so pupils know what they need to do to improve their work. A good curriculum provides many first-hand learning experiences for pupils.
- Leaders and managers, including members of the governing body, monitor the work of the school and plan effectively. School self-evaluation is accurate. As a result, the priorities in the school development plan focus on the most important areas for improvement.

- Parents and carers are very happy with the school. Their comments were overwhelmingly positive. All said they would recommend the school to other parents.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop consistency in the teaching of reading across the school by:
 - ensuring pupils are heard to read more frequently
 - extending phonics training for all staff
 - monitoring the impact of intervention strategies more rigorously
 - providing guidance for parents and carers to enable them to support their children.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils achieve well. Parents and carers say that their children make good progress. Following a dip at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2009, attainment has risen consistently year-on-year. Current school data and work in pupils' books show that pupils' progress is good and that attainment is improving strongly. In recent years, the school has focused on developing mathematical skills and ensuring pupils have many opportunities for writing in class. As a result pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make good progress in these areas. Current school data show that pupils' attainment in reading by the end of Key Stage 2 is above average. Attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 is broadly average and improving convincingly. However, rates of progress vary. Progress is more rapid where pupils are heard to read often either in school or at home. In Key Stage 1, phonics (linking letters with the sounds they make) is taught systematically and successfully providing pupils with strategies to decode words and enjoy reading. Staff in Key Stage 2 are awaiting phonics training to ensure this good practice continues where necessary.

Pupils begin in the Reception class with skills that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. Their good progress during the Reception Year enables them to begin in Year 1 with a good level of understanding. In lessons, pupils show a positive attitude to learning and have good levels of sustained concentration. All pupils work well together and are clearly engaged and involved in their learning. In a Year 6 science lesson, pupils collaborated well in groups to investigate what yeast needs for 'growth' devising their own experiments to prove their hypothesis. Good discussions and application of learning skills enabled pupils to work well together and successfully plan and perform their investigations. Their effective use of scientific language and their well-developed understanding of devising a fair test enabled them to make good progress in their learning.

The school has successfully implemented strategies to raise attainment in writing. Pupils are provided with regular opportunities to write at length and use their speaking and listening skills to rehearse and explore their thinking prior to

completing written work. As a result, early writing skills have increased and attainment in writing by the end of Year 2 has significantly improved and is above the national average.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is effective because of the positive, caring relationships between all adults and pupils. These also contribute to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teaching assistants form good relationships with teachers and their pupils. They ensure that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are fully engaged. Teachers plan learning objectives and set out a list of criteria which pupils use to judge whether their learning has been successful in lessons. Teachers use assessment information to plan lessons. Pupils' work is regularly marked and marking is of a good quality. This is especially the case in English where pupils have a clear understanding of what they have achieved and are provided with effective guidance on how to improve their work. However, targets for pupils to work towards are not as comprehensively established in mathematics. Pupils self-assess through the colour-coded system which is used consistently throughout the school. They take pride in their work which, in the main, is very neatly written and presented. Teachers' good subject knowledge underpins a good curriculum. In the best lessons, teachers use questioning skills effectively to develop pupils' understanding. Lessons are planned to meet the interests of pupils and engage them in wider learning opportunities. The school is aware that there could be improvement in the teaching of reading and that intervention strategies to boost the progress of individual pupils could be monitored more closely. There is scope for more guidance to parents and carers on how to help their children make progress with reading. All parents and carers feel their children are taught well. One parent commented typically, 'Staff do a great job and my child loves coming to school every day'.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are typically considerate towards each other and are polite and courteous to adults. Their behaviour and their attitudes and knowledge of safety are good. This is recognised and commented on by parents and carers. Pupils make a good contribution to their school community and their views are sought and listened to by staff. Pupils say that they feel very safe in school and they can identify most of the actions that the school takes to ensure their safety. Pupils have well developed awareness of e-safety and how they should use the internet. They say that there is little, if any, bullying of any kind and that they know the actions to take if they have concerns. They are very aware of the need to respect others. Weekly awards focus the pupils' attention well on taking responsibility for their actions and working hard. They are given many opportunities to help the school community through the school council or Eco Council. Year 6 pupils are prefects and have specific duties, such as play-leaders or in the school office when staff are at lunch. They are excellent role models. The school's very positive learning environment reinforces the value of good behaviour and all pupils happily conform to this expectation in lessons, around the school and over time. Attendance is above average and punctuality is good.

Leadership and management

The headteacher leads by example and has developed an effective team of senior leaders who share her vision. Since the previous inspection, school leaders have been successful in developing tracking procedures that have enabled them to keep a close check on the progress of all pupils and to implement interventions for those pupils at risk of underachieving. It has been effective in improving pupils' writing and mathematical skills. These good developments show the school is well prepared to sustain further improvements. The governing body makes a good and influential contribution to school improvement, supporting and holding school leaders to account for the quality of provision. Staff are dedicated and keen to improve their practice even further and willingly participate in training.

The curriculum is good. It is well organised on a rolling programme, meeting the needs of mixed-age classes well. Themed events, such as 'Book Week' add interest and variety to the curriculum. Excellent displays throughout the school, in corridors as well as classrooms, reflect the diversity of the topics being studied. There is a wide range of visits and visitors that enrich pupils' learning, and participation by many pupils in sporting activities supports their healthy lifestyles. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. The pupils are reflective and demonstrate a very strong social and moral awareness, supporting many charities and showing a strong empathy for those less fortunate than themselves. There are established links with several schools overseas and the Year 6 exchange visit to France is a highlight of the school year.

School leaders, including the governing body, ensure the safety of all pupils through regular checks, and staff training ensures all are kept fully up to date with best practice. The governing body is rigorous in ensuring that site safety and risk assessments for all activities are in place. Development planning is based well on accurate data, with strengths in provision being built on and weaknesses systematically and effectively tackled. The school ensures that discrimination in any form is not tolerated and promotes equality in pupils' opportunities for success well. There are strong partnerships with neighbouring schools to drive improvement further. Parents and carers are extremely positive about the school. Good relationships with parents and carers are promoted through the parents' partnership, which enables parents and carers to share their views and contribute to the future developments in the school. The school holds Curriculum Quests, which are designed to help parents and carers support their children's learning at home. There is yet to be one aimed specifically at the teaching of reading.

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.
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.



9 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Paul's CofE Primary School, Stalybridge, SK15 2PT

Thank you for the very warm welcome we received when we visited your school recently. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit, particularly having the opportunity to talk to so many of you and to see you in lessons and at play. You and your parents and carers told us that St Paul's is a good school and we agree.

- Teaching is good and this helps you to make good progress.
- You get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and achieve well during your time in school.
- You attain average standards by the time you leave school and these are improving rapidly.
- You told us that you enjoy school and feel safe and secure.
- You think that behaviour is usually good, and we found that you behave well in lessons and around the school. You were extremely polite.
- You have good relationships with your teachers and you get on well with each other.
- The headteacher, other adults and the governing body are working hard to make the school as good as possible for you.

In order to help you do even better in your learning we have asked them to continue to develop your reading skills by:

- making sure you read as often as possible
- ensuring all adults know how to teach phonics well
- looking carefully to see how successful small-group work is
- letting your parents and carers know how they can help you with your reading at home.

All of you can help the school by continuing to try your best in lessons, coming to school regularly and always behaving well. We wish you all the best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Christine Millett
Lead Inspector

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