

St Paul's CofE (C) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103988
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	355502
Inspection dates	30 November 2010–1 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Gerald Griffin

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Siddique Hussain
Headteacher	Anna McGuire
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 18 lessons taught by eight teachers. They observed assemblies, break times and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. Parents and carers at the school gate were spoken to informally. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work, progress records, teachers' lesson plans, school improvement plans, policies and reports. They analysed 90 pupil questionnaires, 22 staff questionnaires and 60 parents' and carers' questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well pupils make progress in reading in Key Stage 1.
- How well boys make progress in Key Stage 2.
- Whether teachers' questions challenge pupils sufficiently.
- The success of the measures to improve attendance.
- If improvement plans have sufficient rigour to ensure progress accelerates so that it is good for all pupils.
- The effectiveness of measures to improve progress in writing in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

This is an average sized primary school. Nearly all pupils come from White British families, with the remainder from a wide range of ethnic heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average with most of these having moderate learning difficulties. An above average proportion of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision comprises a morning Nursery class and a full-time Reception class. The headteacher has been in post since January 2010. The school has recently gained a number of awards including Healthy Schools Award and the enhanced Quality Mark for Inclusion. The before- and after-school care club is managed by the governing body and was also inspected.

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: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school which is improving strongly. Pupils grow into mature young people in the school's welcoming and stimulating atmosphere. They feel extremely safe and behave well. Parents are overwhelmingly happy with the school. Typically one told an inspector: 'My child is very well cared for, he enjoys school and is making good progress.' Inspection findings confirm this view. Since the last inspection attainment has risen and is now average. Progress has quickened and is now good. The school has sustained pupils' good overall personal development. The progress made by boys has accelerated and closed the gap between them and the girls. Teaching, the curriculum and leadership and management have all improved and are good. Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The leaders' drive to improve the school is clearly articulated and enthusiastically embraced by staff, and their plans are effective. The rigorous monitoring of the school's performance provides them with secure and accurate information for self evaluation. This record shows the school has a good capacity to improve further.

There are many signs that teaching is improving. The work teachers plan and their questions are challenging pupils well and ensure they work hard. Teaching makes good use of resources, such as interactive whiteboards, to engage pupils and develop their understanding. Teaching is not yet outstanding because the pace of learning sometimes slows during a lesson, typically when the difficulty of the work does not match precisely the needs of each pupil in the class so that they are always fully stretched. Children settle quickly and happily into the routines of school in the Nursery and Reception classes. Here, children's progress is satisfactory because teaching does not consistently ensure that the activities children choose to do are demanding or challenging enough. Furthermore, planning does not always make sufficient use of the outdoor classrooms to broaden children's experiences across all areas of learning.

The curriculum supports pupils' personal development well. It has been revised recently and now provides topics that pupils find exciting, relevant and enjoyable. As a result, pupils are keen to attend school very regularly, which is contributing to a rapidly improving rate of attendance. Staff use their detailed knowledge of each pupil expertly to provide an outstanding level of pastoral care. The school's targeted support for pupils whose circumstances have the potential to make them vulnerable is very effective.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sustain a rapid pace to learning throughout lessons by ensuring that the difficulty of the work for each pupil matches their needs closely so that their progress is even better.
 - Accelerate progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that it is good by:

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- providing work for children to choose that presents them with challenging next steps
- planning regular and frequent learning opportunities outdoors.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Attainment on entry to the school is low. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, enjoy learning and their achievement is good. The learning observed in lessons was good and some was outstanding. Pupils are keen to learn and take pride in their work. In a Year 4 English lesson, pupils were preparing an oral presentation to the class on an aspect of recycling. Pupils were keenly discussing their ideas in pairs, which helped them clarify their thoughts and understanding. They worked with a good level of independence. Their work showed that they made good use of computers and books to research their chosen topic in detail. Pupils enjoyed their task even though they found it hard. Later in the lesson they presented their findings clearly and confidently, and this boosted their self-esteem.

Pupils in Key Stage 1 are now making good progress in reading after a period in which it slowed. It has improved because the school has trained staff to plan challenging next steps for each child and has purchased books which pupils find enjoyable and demanding. Additionally, the school has been very successful in encouraging parents and carers to help their child read at home. The progress of older boys, which has been slower than that of the girls recently, has improved. This is because the school has raised boys' engagement by providing them with more opportunities to experiment, use educational games and to work on topics that interest them. The progress of most boys now matches that of the girls.

Pupils say that bullying is very rare and are confident that any cases would be dealt with immediately. They have a very well developed understanding of how to keep others and themselves safe, for example in using the internet. Pupils do their best to eat a healthy diet and take plenty of exercise, and this is reflected in the school's national award. Pupils are keen to take responsibility in and out of school, for example, as members of the school council and the local Police Youth Committee. Sound basic skills and rapidly improving attendance mean that pupils' preparation for secondary school and future work is satisfactory. Pupils reflect maturely on their feelings and actions. A strong moral code underpins their good behaviour and they co-operate well in groups. Pupils have an improving understanding of the diversity of British culture.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

In lessons, relationships are positive and pupils know precisely what they need to do because teachers' instructions are clear. Teaching provides many good opportunities for pupils to assess their own work and that of their peers. This, together with detailed marking and other feedback, is helping pupils understand precisely how they can improve their work. Well-trained teaching assistants provide valuable support to learning, particularly for pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities. For example, they help pupils with behavioural difficulties concentrate on their work and provide teachers with feedback on their progress.

Lively assemblies provide good opportunities for pupils to reflect on their behaviour and that of others. The curriculum is improving standards in the basic skills by providing opportunities for pupils to write at length and solve mathematical problems in all subjects, particularly geography and science. The wealth of popular clubs and educational visits broaden horizons and add to pupils' enjoyment of school.

Pupils very confidently approach adults with a problem, knowing that their worry will be quickly resolved. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive very sympathetic support. The school works very closely with outside agencies to ensure their needs are accurately assessed, and the individual learning programmes drawn up by staff closely match them. Parents and carers are fully involved in this process. Many support staff have been specially trained to provide pupils with expert support, such as

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bereavement counselling and this is reflected in the school's national award. The school's support for pupils has also had marked success in improving previously low attendance. Last year, attendance was average and it continues to improve strongly this term. Pupils who attend the before- and after- school care club are very safe and well-cared for. They are provided with a good range of stimulating activities and educational games, which they enjoy. The club provides its members with a healthy breakfast and nourishing snacks after school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The school's challenging targets and the new headteacher's unrelenting drive to improve the school are communicated clearly. Plans are rigorously followed through and strategies have had a good impact, for example in improving teaching, where leaders and external consultants have sharpened staff skills in providing challenging questions and planning work that especially appeals to boys. Middle leaders, many of whom are new in post, are already taking a good level of responsibility for standards in their areas. The governing body works tirelessly on the school's behalf. It has a clear understanding of data and this enables it to robustly challenge the school over its performance. The governing body successfully places a high priority on safety and safeguarding. The checks that the school makes on the suitability of adults to work with children are rigorous. Child protection procedures are robust, regularly updated and match current good practice. The governing body ensure that the out-of-hours care club meets current statutory requirements.

The school's commitment to equal opportunities and the success of its plans to reduce gender differences in progress show that its policies are having a positive impact. The school is a happy and harmonious society in which pupils from all backgrounds integrate well. The school's contribution to cohesion in the wider community is improving. For example, it is helping parents to access courses to gain qualifications in the basic skills. Links have been established with local schools in areas different to Tipton and a community in Jamaica to strengthen pupils' understanding of diversity. However, it is too early to judge the success of these ventures.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Learning in the Nursery and Reception classes is improving strongly, especially in children's personal development. Children behave well, readily share apparatus and help each other. Progress in writing, while broadly satisfactory, is slower than other areas of learning. This term the school has correctly provided children with more opportunities to make marks and to write. Children are very well cared for, very safe and enjoy school. Parents and carers are pleased with arrangements that ensure children settle quickly and happily into the routines of school and the advice they are given so that they can support their child's learning at home.

Teachers plan work that children find exciting and relevant. There is an appropriate balance of adult led and child initiated learning. However, progress is best when staff lead learning. For example, children under the teacher's supervision in Reception were making good progress in writing a different ending to a story they had recently read. Elsewhere, a group that had chosen to build racing cars were making satisfactory progress because they were not stretched sufficiently by the activity. While teaching makes good use of the good indoor resources to widen children's experiences, those outdoors are underused.

Leaders are successfully improving learning and progress is accelerating, especially in Nursery. The school has appropriate plans to provide staff with further training to develop their Early Years Foundation Stage teaching skills. The leader of the care club liaises closely with Early Years Foundation Stage staff to ensure that the activities compliment and extend the school work of children who attend.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers that returned a questionnaire was similar to that in most schools. Their comments say that their children enjoy school and are very well cared for. Many made positive comments about the changes made to the school in the last year, such as the way the school keeps them closely informed about their child's work and the good advice they are given on how they can help their children's learning at home. Inspection findings support these positive statements. A few parents and carers thought that the school did not manage behaviour well enough. The school has revised its behaviour policy this year to strengthen behaviour management. The behaviour seen during the inspection was good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Paul's CofE (C) Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 60 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 217 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	44	73	16	27	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	39	65	21	35	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	34	57	23	38	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	55	26	43	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	36	60	22	37	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	57	24	40	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	62	22	37	1	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	27	45	31	52	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	57	22	37	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	38	30	50	4	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	43	33	55	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	33	55	26	43	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	37	62	22	37	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



2 December 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Paul's CofE (C) Primary School, Tipton, DY4 9BH

Thank you for being so welcoming, polite and friendly when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit and having the opportunity to talk to some of you and to see you in lessons and at play. I especially enjoyed joining you for assembly. You are rightly proud of the school's happy atmosphere in which you all get on so well together. St Paul's is a good school and it is improving. Here are some of the things we found out.

You make a happy start in Nursery and Reception.

You told us you enjoy school and feel extremely safe and secure.

Your behaviour is good.

You readily accept responsibility both in school and in the local community.

You make good progress in your lessons.

You have good relationships with your teachers and you work hard for them.

The curriculum provides you with exciting clubs and visits, which you enjoy.

Adults look after you well and are always ready to help you.

The headteacher and staff are working together well to make the school better.

We have asked the school to do two things to help you do even better in your learning.

Make sure teachers keep you working hard throughout each lesson by providing work for you that is neither too hard nor too easy.

Improve the progress of children in the Nursery and Reception classes by making sure the work they choose to do is not too easy and giving them more opportunity to learn outdoors.

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

Yours sincerely

Gerald Griffin

Lead inspector

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