

Paulerspury Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121986
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	359139
Inspection dates	13–14 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Andrew Stafford

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	130
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Glenn Collins
Headteacher	Sarah Whitlock-Pritchard
Date of previous school inspection	11 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons taught by five teachers and one teaching assistant. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's strategic plan, lesson and curriculum planning, procedures for keeping pupils safe and the data the school has collected on pupils' attainment and progress. The team scrutinised 112 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, and also spoke with a number of parents and carers.

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

- Inspectors analysed the consistency with which pupils make progress in English and mathematics across the school.
- They considered the way teachers use information gathered from assessments to help pupils make progress in their learning.
- Inspectors also evaluated the effectiveness of the strategies used by the school's leaders to raise standards.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than average, and located in a rural area. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in one Reception class. Pupils from Years 1 to 6 are taught in four mixed-age classes. The very large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is very low. The current proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, with most of these pupils having either speech, language and communication needs or autism. The school has gained a number of awards, including the Activemark, and has Healthy School status. The current headteacher took up the post in April 2011.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Paulerspury Primary School provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. Many elements are good. The inclusive and caring environment nurtures pupils' personal and social skills so they feel safe and clearly enjoy school very much, as shown by their above average attendance and good behaviour in and out of the classroom. Pupils develop healthy lifestyles well, as shown by their involvement in a wide range of physical activities, and acknowledged by Healthy School status. They are well motivated to learn and make a helpful contribution to the school community. One said, 'This is a happy place, people get on well together.' The partnership with parents and carers is good. They express a very high degree of satisfaction with the school and their child's experience. One wrote, expressing the view of many, 'The school has strong links with the community and values parental opinion and involvement. There is a very caring ethos among pupils and the older children help the younger children settle into school life. My boy has had a really positive start to his education thanks to the teaching he has received.'

Children get off to a good start thanks to good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, but the older pupils make satisfactory progress because of variations in the quality of teaching. In the lessons seen, it ranged from outstanding to satisfactory. The assessment system is improving, but teachers do not always make enough use of what they know about pupils' prior learning when planning what they need to learn next. This means that pupils are not always fully stretched in their learning. Furthermore, teachers provide too few opportunities for pupils to reflect on their achievement, which means that not all of them recognise clearly what it is they need to do to improve the quality of their work. Leaders are already planning to tackle this.

The good curriculum is enriched by a wide range of additional opportunities to extend pupils' learning, and has a positive impact on their awareness of the differences in our multicultural society. The school is at the hub of the local community. The 'Friends' take pride in the work they do to provide extra equipment for play and learning. The Eco-warriors work enthusiastically on recycling projects and their display board gives prominence to their work. The school is forging effective links with a large school that has pupils from different cultural backgrounds.

The school's capacity to sustain improvement is good. Self-evaluation is accurate and, supported by work with the cluster of local schools, leaders have identified the right priorities for development and are applying effective strategies to improve pupils' progress and the overall quality of teaching. For example, the action taken to resolve differences in attainment between subjects has led to an improvement in the quality of teaching in mathematics, so that pupils' achievement is now the same as in English. However, the monitoring of teaching, though regular, is not always sufficiently focused on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress to be fully effective.

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Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that the level of challenge and progress in lessons is consistently good, by:
 - setting work that closely matches the needs of each pupil so they are fully stretched
 - giving pupils regular opportunities to reflect on their achievement, so that they clearly recognise how to improve their work.
- Accelerate the pace of school improvement by:
 - firmly embedding the assessment system so that pupils' progress can be consistently tracked
 - extending the monitoring of teaching and learning so that it focuses more closely on the progress pupils are making.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Children start school with skills that are broadly at the levels expected for their age, but weak in reading and calculating. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls or those known to be eligible for free school meals. As a result of well-targeted support for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the progress of these pupils matches that of their classmates. Observations of lessons and pupils' work show that pupils make satisfactory progress in English and mathematics, and by Year 6 their attainment is broadly average. Improved teaching and strategies to engage pupils more effectively in these subjects are already having a positive effect.

Pupils respond well to opportunities that challenge them. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were engaged intently on mathematical analysis. Pairs had to decide what payment they had made to buy goods, based on the change that they had received. This task required them to discuss alternatives systematically. This extended their use of specialist vocabulary alongside their skills of calculation. All pupils have targets in English and mathematics that are reviewed regularly, and they talk knowledgeably about their progress towards meeting them.

Pupils value opportunities to gain entries in 'The Book' which praises particular achievements that are celebrated in assembly. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Older pupils act as good role models for younger pupils, particularly at playtimes, where they take shared responsibility for looking after younger pupils. Pupils develop a very good understanding of each other's backgrounds and why the school is such a cohesive and harmonious place. Pupils' awareness of different faiths and cultures is developed well through visitors. For example, a talk about the Hindu traditions and beliefs led pupils to say that any differences in people's backgrounds are respected and other cultures are viewed as being equal.

Pupils appreciate that the school helps them to learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, 'Bikeability' highlighted road safety, and other courses have highlighted the

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potential dangers in the use of the internet. There are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and develop leadership skills. The school council has been instrumental in getting equipment for the playground and making suggestions about how the school's 150th anniversary could be celebrated. Pupils show empathy for those less fortunate than themselves and willingly raise funds for charities. The school was extensively involved in Christmas celebrations in the village church, and plans to engage the village community in the forthcoming school fete.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
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?

Teachers work hard to make learning interesting. In lessons, teachers tell pupils what they will be learning and emphasise links with previous work. However, pupils are sometimes not fully engaged with their learning when activities go on too long and do not hold all pupils' interest long enough for the intended learning outcomes to be successful. Where teaching is good or better, pupils are challenged to think, the pace of learning is rapid and activities are planned to address all their individual learning needs. Effective use is made of ongoing assessment to plan lessons that build on prior learning and challenge all pupils. Pupils have time to consider teachers' written comments on how to improve their work and practise it before the next piece is tackled. In satisfactory lessons, these features, especially the use of assessment to ensure that pupils' learning needs are met, are less evident. Senior leaders have arranged for staff to have opportunities to train alongside

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colleagues in the cluster of local schools and this has led to recent improvements in the quality of teaching. In most lessons, teaching assistants are well deployed to support learning effectively.

The good curriculum includes extensive, if inconsistent, opportunities for pupils to develop their basic skills in different subjects. For example, science topics required pupils to measure and calculate and write about their observations of chemical reactions. Current events, selected from daily newspapers, are used well as a stimulus for writing, such as the impact of weather conditions across the country, which also contributes significantly to pupils' knowledge and understanding of environmental issues. All pupils enjoy their lessons in French, taught by a bilingual member of staff. Teachers from local secondary schools forge inter-school links which enrich and extend learning opportunities for pupils, particularly in sport, science and technology. The school ensures that all pupils have the same opportunities to take part in arts events. For example, prior to the inspection the school had successfully staged *The Tempest* and many written comments from the community applauded its success. Gifted and talented pupils are supported by class teachers and special activities are planned for them. There is a good range of after-school clubs, which are well attended. Enrichment activities such as residential visits, trips and visitors to the school contribute well towards pupils' personal development.

Parents are very happy with the support their children receive and the extent to which they are kept safe. The school is very inclusive and works effectively to support those pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Good links with support agencies and health professionals ensure that the needs of the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are met well. Pupils are well prepared for their move to secondary school by regular visits, curriculum events and induction days.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The new headteacher brings energy and enthusiasm to her work and has high expectations of staff and pupils. She works effectively with the strong senior leaders and has raised the profile of subject leaders. A combination of consultation on plans for improvement, staff training focused on key priorities and performance management ensures that staff across the school know exactly what leaders and managers are trying to achieve and what their own role is. As a result, teaching is improving. A thread through all aspects of the school's work is its commitment to equality and the elimination of discrimination. It considers carefully how well different groups of pupils are doing, and knows which may need additional support.

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The school's contribution to community cohesion is good as pupils appreciate and learn about life in a range of cultures and religions locally, nationally and abroad. Pupils' classroom studies of the plight of people experiencing recent earthquakes in New Zealand gave a different international perspective. The school is actively seeking the views of parents and carers to make sure it understands their particular needs. For example, recent newsletters have stressed that the new headteacher is enthusiastically striving to engage them in her vision for improving the school. Good partnerships with external agencies and other schools support pupils' learning and well-being, particularly through the links with four local secondary schools.

The governing body's collective enthusiasm is a significant driving force to bring about change. Many of its members are experienced, and their frequent visits to the school mean that they have good links with staff and subject areas, giving them an up-to-date and accurate awareness of the school's strengths and areas for development. The governing body ensures that statutory requirements are met well. All safeguarding procedures and policies follow recommended good practice, including those for ensuring safe recruitment.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Boys and girls make similarly good progress in all areas of learning because teaching is good. Children are well behaved and polite to each other and to adults, and their personal development is good. Parents and carers feel well informed about their children's progress and are happy with the advice they are given about how to help their learning at home. Children are very safe and well cared for in the classrooms and stimulating outdoor learning area.

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Teachers' good planning ensures that an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities promotes good learning. Children were seen to build on prior learning when they were in the hall doing physical activities. Adults led the exercise activities that required children to run around before getting on 'dry land' away from the shark. Safely seated, they could hear they increased levels of breathing and, 'My heart is beating faster', said one boy, showing children's good awareness of their bodies. Back in the classroom the children excitedly pointed out the teachers mistakes as she wrote a sentence on the board, showing how well they are developing the links between letters and sounds. The next activity had all the children singing to practise correct pronunciation of words. The session ended when Albert the puppet chose which children could go to play by getting them to give the correct number to make the sum up to ten. Children concentrated well and enjoyed their learning. Children's progress was noted by the teacher, and entered in the comprehensive learning journals, as part of planning for individuals' next steps in learning. In a free choice session outside, a group of children built a police station, chatting happily and improving their acquisition of language, their gaining of independence and their skills of collaboration. Occasionally learning slows when adult support is not used widely enough to extend learning.

The training provided for adults who work in the Early Years Foundation Stage is promoting their teaching skills well. Leaders are working particularly well to fine-tune the already good transition arrangements to Year 1 so that children's progress is uninterrupted.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A much higher than usual proportion of families responded to the questionnaire, and nearly half of the returns included written comments. Support for the school was overwhelmingly positive. Parents and carers are particularly happy with their child's experience at school. They confirm that their children enjoy school, are safe and are helped to have a healthy lifestyle. Most agreed that teaching is good. A very small minority felt their child is not making enough progress and that unacceptable behaviour is not managed effectively. Inspectors found that behaviour was good and that although in the past there had been isolated instances of unacceptable behaviour, they had been managed well. Inspectors found that progress is satisfactory and improving, especially for pupils whose past progress had slowed. A very small minority of parents and carers felt that the school does not take account of their suggestions and concerns. The new headteacher is seeking information from parents and carers as part of the dialogue to share the vision for school improvement.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Paulerspury Church of England 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 112 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 130 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	71	63	36	32	4	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	76	68	32	29	4	4	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	36	32	58	52	16	14	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	44	39	50	45	17	15	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	46	41	57	51	7	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	35	51	46	21	19	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	48	43	58	52	4	4	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)	42	38	47	42	17	15	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	46	41	55	49	11	10	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	33	48	43	18	16	5	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	35	31	57	51	15	13	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	35	31	59	53	6	5	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	47	42	55	49	7	6	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



15 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Paulerspury Church of England Primary School, Towcester, NN12 7NA

I would like to thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently and for talking to us about your school, work and play. You told us that you enjoy coming to school, and particularly mathematics lessons, arts activities and the extra activities that are provided for you after school. We found that you are polite to visitors and to each other and you behave well both in lessons and around school. You are willing to take on responsibilities and take part in fund-raising activities to benefit others less fortunate than yourselves. You work hard in your lessons.

You go to a satisfactory school. Children get a good start in the Reception year. By the end of Year 6, the progress you have made is satisfactory, and the standards you reach in English and mathematics are in line with those in most other schools. The partnerships the school has developed with the four local secondary schools extend your learning and give you opportunities to try out new sports and activities. Links with your parents or carers are good and you receive a high degree of care.

We have identified some areas of the school's work that need improvement to make your school an even better place. These are the things that we have asked your school to do:

- make sure that the quality of teaching is checked regularly, so that it always meets your needs closely and this leads to better progress
- regularly record and check the progress you are making in your learning
- give more time for you to consider what you have learned so that you are clear how you can make your work better.

You are already playing your part by behaving well, attending regularly and working hard in lessons. I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Stafford

Lead inspector

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