

St Paul's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114533
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	378881
Inspection dates	21–22 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Hilary Macdonald HMI

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	578
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tony Davis
Headteacher	Richard White
Date of previous school inspection	6 May 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. They observed 23 lessons and saw 21 teachers. Meetings were held with staff, pupils and with the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors observed much of the school's work and looked at documentation that included school improvement plans, monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, and tracking of pupils' progress. Inspectors looked at 116 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, and those completed by staff and pupils.

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

- How well pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are making progress in their lessons and in their current work.
- Differences in the rates of progress and attainment between girls and boys and other identifiable groups.
- How effectively the school evaluates its own performance.
- Leadership at all levels.

Information about the school

St Paul's Church of England Primary School is a much larger-than-average primary school that serves a mixed area close to the town and beyond. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly equal to the national average. These needs relate to learning, behavioural and language and communication difficulties. The school provides daily breakfast and after-school clubs which are open to all pupils

Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes in staffing, including at senior leadership level. The headteacher took up the post just over a year ago, following a period of secondment from another local school. The governing body has undergone reorganisation.

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

1

Main findings

St Paul's Church of England Primary School is a good and rapidly improving school where ambition is embedded, from the most senior leaders to the pupils themselves. Inspirational messages, thought-provoking questions, Christian values, artwork and celebratory displays are prevalent throughout the school. The environment supports and inspires learning and pupils talk articulately about their individual goals and aspirations. The school's success is due to highly effective senior leadership, efficiency of management, sensitive and continuous care and support, extensive work with families and the local community, and the good progress that pupils make as a result of good teaching and identification of need.

The recent successful drive to raise standards in writing has a high profile within the school. Pupil target boards, clarity of marking and displays in all classrooms clearly inform pupils about what makes writing good and what takes it from one level to the next. As a result, pupils have a keen awareness of the skills they are acquiring and the next steps to take. School leaders know the school's strengths very well and what needs to be refined further. Self-evaluation and monitoring are rigorous and accurate. Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The school has rightly prioritised the achievement of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and actions that maximise opportunities to further promote their language, communication and independence skills are being taken. The legacy of underachievement is successfully being eradicated and attainment at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 is broadly average, although some inconsistencies remain in the profiles of pupils' progress across classes. Significantly improving standards, demonstrated by the rising trend in Key Stage 2 achievement over a sustained period, as well as the improving achievement of those currently in the school, reflect the school's excellent capacity to improve further.

Throughout the year, many pupils leave and join school at different times. Despite this, families are warmly welcomed and pupils are helped to settle quickly. The help and care from support staff, for example at the daily gardening club, enable the least able and most vulnerable to participate fully and these pupils make similar progress to all other pupils in school. All pupils' needs and talents are recognised and careful analysis of data and specifically targeted intervention has resulted in few gaps in attainment remaining. A wide range of clubs and opportunities such as the breakfast and after-school clubs, dance club, instrumental tuition and 'Bright Sparks' gifted and talented club enhance pupils' school experiences. Levels of attendance are only just satisfactory and a small number of pupils fail to make adequate progress as they

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miss so much school.

Lesson planning is consistent throughout the school and ensures that pupils have the resources required to tackle many tasks independently and over sustained periods. Learning activities are well matched to the needs of the pupils; however, the role of teaching assistants or other adult helpers throughout the school is not always made clear. In the best lessons, pupils are given plenty of opportunities to be active and to discuss and reflect upon their own learning and that of their peers. However, this does not happen consistently. Pupils support each other well and their very good behaviour makes a strong contribution to their progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - using assessment systems accurately to ensure that activities are closely matched to the children's learning needs
 - ensuring that all adults are deployed effectively to maximise learning.
- Work with parents, carers and agencies to improve attendance and achievement, particularly that of the small number of persistent absentees.
- Further raise attainment and improve progress by:
 - ensuring that key skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are embedded throughout the curriculum
 - ensuring that the quality of teaching is consistently as good as the best, particularly in relation to providing opportunities for pupils to take a more active role in their learning
 - deploying all adults effectively to support learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' progress is accelerating throughout the school and data show that almost all groups of pupils, including the most able and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. Achievement is good overall as the oldest pupils are attaining at, or slightly above, nationally expected levels at the end of Key Stage 2. During the inspection, pupils were seen to achieve particularly well in English. Satisfactory attendance and average attainment indicate that pupils are appropriately prepared for the future, particularly for the next stage in their education.

Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent, and pupils report that they feel safe at all times. In discussion with inspectors, pupils were clear about ways in which the school keeps them safe and their own responsibilities in this regard, including appropriate use of the internet. Pupils know about the importance of healthy eating and exercise and pupils were observed to enjoy their healthy school lunches. Behaviour is very good. Consideration for others and an eagerness to participate underpin their learning and progress. Pupils are given many opportunities to reflect and consider others, and to extend their understanding of a range of moral and

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cultural issues and religious faiths through sensitive and inspirational school and class assemblies Opportunities to experience spirituality are particularly strong. All year groups are 'twinned' with another country and pupils in Year 1 were observed making collages and painting the Cuban flag. Photographs record these children learning to dance the Salsa. Pupils are keen and willing to contribute to school life and the community through being on the school council, acting as peer mediators or by taking one of a range of responsibilities. All pupils take part in fundraising and demonstrate care for others reflecting their well-developed sense of community and their place in the wider world.

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	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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good overall, with examples of satisfactory and outstanding teaching in both Key Stages 1 and 2. This confirms the school's own view that most teaching and resulting progress are good. All staff have accurate knowledge of the learning needs of pupils in their class. Classrooms are all well presented, and mathematics and English displays are used to support learning by displaying vocabulary, by offering advice or guidance on how to complete a task and by recording the main learning points of the week. In this way, pupils are enabled to extend their ability to work independently.

A range of assessment processes is used well. In one Year 5 lesson, the teacher reviewed and assessed pupils' understanding of speech marks at the start of the lesson and made adjustments to the original plan. In Year 6, all pupils were given

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

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opportunities to seek additional instructions should those provided not be clear enough. As a result, pupils clearly understood the task which was pitched at exactly the right level. In all lessons, teachers make clear to the pupils what they are learning and why, and what they need to do to demonstrate success in their learning. In some of the most effective lessons, such as in a Year 4 literacy lesson, pupils are given opportunities to pose questions to their classmates, to challenge their own and others' thinking and to review their own work. Regular marking in pupils' workbooks throughout the school provides clear guidance on targets that have been achieved and on what steps to take to improve further.

The curriculum meets the needs of all groups of pupils. Careful consideration is given when selecting topics or texts, so that girls and boys are equally motivated and excited. Some themes and topics allow pupils to practise and consolidate skills from more than one subject and contain a good proportion of practical and active elements to lessons. However, cross-curricular use of literacy, numeracy and ICT is not yet extensive enough. Whilst teachers make full use of ICT in lessons, pupils were rarely observed to use technology other than in the ICT suite.

The impact of good care, guidance and support is evident in the mature and welcoming behaviour shown by all pupils to inspectors. In the pupil survey, all pupils agreed that adults in school explain how they can improve their work. Careful consideration is given to planning for transition between classes and key stages throughout the school and the overwhelming majority of parents are positive about the care and support offered to their children as well as to them.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide inspirational leadership which is underpinned by a relentless determination to pursue constant improvement. Middle leaders play an increasingly significant role in raising attainment, including monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and providing guidance and support to colleagues. Improvement plans provide clear priorities and actions to address any perceived weakness in pupils' performance or in provision. Staff are held to account for their performance and appropriate training and support are provided as required. Evaluations of the progress made towards meeting targets or success criteria ensure that momentum is maintained and that improvements secured since the last inspection have been sustained and further built upon.

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Community cohesion is promoted well overall and the school has a sound understanding of its own context. The theme of equality lies at the heart of St Paul's school and incidents of discrimination are rare. All pupils have access to the full range of learning activities and few gaps in attainment remain.

Parents are well informed and participate actively in school life, for example during 'Working Together Days', contributing time to improve the environment. Information is shared via weekly newsletters and the school website (including a headteacher's blog) as well as through the newly introduced parent information pack. Parents' and carers' views are regularly sought and responded to. A recently introduced forum now contributes to reviews of policy and practice. Partnerships with the church and other agencies, particularly the Hastings Excellence Cluster and local sports partnerships, promote learning and well-being effectively.

The governing body plays a crucial and strategic role, holding the school to account with increased skill and rigour. The range of knowledge and expertise held by members creates effective systems for the organisation of the full governing body and the various sub-committees. Safeguarding arrangements are robust. Effective steps are taken to ensure the school is a healthy and safe environment and regular checks are made to minimise risk.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. From their very varied starting points, children make satisfactory progress in learning. However, by the end of the Reception Year, there continues to be a significant discrepancy in children's attainment, although skills are at broadly average levels

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overall. There is a good balance between activities that are led by adults and those that children choose for themselves, and children are supported sensitively with praise and guidance in their play, to develop their ideas and their language. Despite this, adults are not always deployed effectively to maximise children’s learning, nor are plans detailed enough to ensure that provision is specifically and accurately targeted to individual needs. Both the outdoor and indoor classrooms are enticing and have a good range of equipment and activities, including opportunities for reading and writing. Although this was very early in the school year, the youngest children were observed to feel safe, settled and happy in school and showed an understanding of the need for rules and routine. One child told an inspector that there were rules ‘so that nobody gets hurt’. Parents and carers are welcomed and encouraged to come into school and to participate actively in their children’s education. Leaders have a clear understanding of how to improve both provision and outcomes.

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

Parental views as expressed during the inspection are extremely positive. Parents, carers and pupils alike are unanimous in their views that school is a safe place to be. The vast majority of parents say that their child enjoys school, that teaching is good and that the school is well led and managed. Inspectors agreed with these views. Many positive parental comments were received, particularly concerning improvements noticed, quality of leadership, care and support as well as opportunities for gifted and talented children. One parent commented: ‘They have sparked enthusiasm, nurtured him and pushed him to do well. The school is a good community.’ Only a few negative comments were made and there was no pattern to the issues raised.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Paul’s 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 116 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 578 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	69	59	45	39	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	79	68	37	32	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	55	47	52	45	7	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	53	46	53	46	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	56	48	54	47	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	66	57	44	38	5	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	58	50	54	47	2	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)	58	50	50	43	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	46	40	61	53	4	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	34	66	57	2	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	28	65	56	5	4	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	63	54	49	42	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	74	64	37	32	2	2	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 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 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.

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.



25 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Paul's Primary School, St Leonards-on-Sea TN37 6RT

Thank you so much for the warm welcome that you gave to inspectors when we visited your school. It was wonderful to have the opportunity to meet and talk with so many of you, to look at the work in your books and see the many excellent displays in your classrooms and in the corridors around school that support your learning so well. We could see that your school takes good care of you and your families, and provides you with a good and improving education. You make good progress in lessons as your teachers make sure you are clear about what you are learning and the steps to success. Most of your lessons are interesting and exciting and are well planned so that you are all given the right amount of challenge with your work. In your school, you have lots of opportunities to take part in musical, sporting and artistic activities during or after school. One inspector enjoyed visiting 'Bright Sparks' and I particularly enjoyed visiting gardening club, where you are learning how to care for chickens as well as growing vegetables. Many things impressed us, including your very sensible behaviour, the way you work so well together and your singing in assembly! Everyone we spoke with told us how much they enjoy school and that they feel safe and happy.

To help your school improve further, we have asked your headteacher to make sure that everyone continues to focus on developing strong English, mathematics and information and communication technology skills, and that these are used in all subjects. Most of you attend school regularly, but a few pupils have too many absences and miss important parts of their learning. We have asked that the school works with these families in particular. As well as this, we have asked that the youngest children get off to an even better start in school, by making sure all the activities and games they play really help their learning. All of you can help by ensuring you come to school every day you possibly can and by continuing to approach all aspects of school life with the enthusiasm that you showed to inspectors on our visit.

Yours sincerely

Hilary Macdonald
Her Majesty's Inspector

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