

St Paul's Church of England Primary School, Leamington Spa

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125701
Local Authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	381111
Inspection dates	8–9 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Rashida Sharif HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	366
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Moss
Headteacher	Pete Farrell
Date of previous school inspection	5 October 2006
School address	Upper Holly Walk Leamington Spa CV32 4JZ
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. They observed 23 lessons taught by 16 teachers. They scrutinised a range of documents and held meetings with members of the senior leadership team, the Chair of the Governing Body, and nominated staff. They held informal discussions with other staff and a significant number of pupils during lessons and around the school. Inspectors read 229 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, in addition to considering the views of those pupils and staff who completed separate questionnaires.

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

- Inspectors considered pupils' attainment when they start at the school and their progress during their time there.
- They evaluated the impact of teaching on pupils' progress including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language.
- They explored the cohesiveness of leadership and management at all levels.
- They looked at how successfully the school has improved pupils' attendance.

Information about the school

The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. There is a small but growing number of pupils from minority ethnic heritages and a few of these who are at an early stage of English acquisition.

The school has gained a number of national and local awards, for example it has National Healthy Schools Status and the Eco Friendly 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: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Paul's provides pupils with a good education. It puts the pupils at the heart of everything it does. The school operates in an atmosphere of calm, warmth and understanding. All areas of its work are good, with a number that are outstanding. For example, its exemplary procedures to protect and safeguard pupils and its very high standard of care, guidance and support that ensure all pupils work in a safe and secure environment. Pupils appreciate the school's inclusive approach and the strong focus upon their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These positive features combine to engage pupils very well and support their outstanding behaviour in lessons and around the school. The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The provision enables children to get off to a good start in their education, although the school recognises that a small minority of the children's communication and language skills are relatively weak on entry into the Nursery. The school is committed to building upon its existing strong links with parents and carers as an aid to furthering the children's good achievement. Pupils, like their parents and carers, hold the school and its staff in very high regard.

Children make good progress during the Early Years Foundation Stage and through Key Stage 1. Progress slows slightly as pupils move into Key Stage 2 but accelerates in Years 5 and 6. By the end of Year 2, pupils reach standards above those normally expected in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress from their starting points because of the school's personalised approach. This strong commitment to equal opportunities also ensures that pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language make excellent progress.

There are clear improvements right across the school since the last inspection. Good quality teaching, which emphasises learning through strong and trusting relationships, is helping pupils to develop greater personal confidence and self-esteem. A small minority of lessons observed during the inspection were outstanding. However, staff are not complacent and realise that more needs to be done to maintain and improve further some aspects of teaching. For example, observations highlighted that a small minority of lessons lack pace and challenge for all pupils particularly those of middle ability. Occasionally, questioning techniques fail to ensure that pupils' responses are extended and lead to quality discussions between pupils. There is also some inconsistency in the effectiveness of how staff use assessment information to plan lessons that meet the needs of all pupils.

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Although the school's curriculum is good overall, there are some notable strengths for example, the impressive range of extra-curricular activities attended by nearly all the pupils. The slight drop in attendance in 2010 has been halted. Pupils' attendance is now above the national average. However, the school believes that by working together as a whole school community, it can improve attendance even more.

The school is led well. The senior leaders and managers have inspired the whole school community to share their high ambition for the pupils. They are striving to become an outstanding school and strong self-evaluation means that they understand well the school's current strengths and weaknesses. This high aspiration, together with improvements in areas such as pupils' personal development, indicates that the school has good capacity to continue to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding lessons so that pupils' achievement and attainment accelerate more rapidly by:
 - ensuring that all lessons provide good pace and challenge for all pupils of all abilities
 - teachers using pupils' responses to questions to develop key teaching points and drawing others into the discussions
 - using information known about pupils to match the work more closely to their needs particularly those of middle ability
 - working together as a whole school community to improve attendance.
- Strengthening children's communication and language skills in the Early Years Foundation stage.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage which continues into Key Stage 1. Pupils continue to make good progress overall in Key Stage 2 and by the end of Year 6, they achieve well and reach above average standards. During their time at the school, pupils enjoy their education, develop their confidence and personal skills to engage enthusiastically and willingly in learning activities that make a significant contribution to their good progress. In one of these lessons, for example, the teacher skilfully established the pupils' current levels of understanding on being able to calculate the perimeter of a rectangle, before giving them irregular polygons and other shapes. Pupils rose to the challenge and some completed the task before devising their own shapes to calculate their perimeters. By the end of the lesson, most pupils not only said how much they had enjoyed the lesson, but also had a clear understanding of how to calculate unusual shapes that they themselves created. Further activities provided during 'theme weeks' are all inclusive. For example, as part of the book week during the inspection the whole school community joined in by dressing up as pirates.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the small number of

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those from minority ethnic background make outstanding progress. This is because the school provides a range of well-planned intervention activities to help anyone who is not doing as well as they should. For example, the school has developed a Forest School, as an intervention tool to support those pupils who need extra help as well as the one-to-one tuition with specialist staff for those who are at early stages of learning English. The staff and the governing body are aware, however, that some aspects of English and mathematics need to improve further so that all pupils achieve standards that prepare them fully for the next stage in their education. Pupils’ achievements relate directly to the extremely high levels of care, guidance and support, pupils feeling safe and secure in school and the outstanding behaviour they show in lessons and around the school.

The school’s good curriculum and its work with outside groups ensure that pupils develop their appreciation of other cultures and faiths and are prepared well for their future economic well-being. There is also a regular well-planned programme of physical education and sport activities, which ensures that all pupils are physically active and have their awareness heightened of the consequences of eating unhealthy foods and being overweight. Pupils make a good contribution to the life of the school and are provided with an impressive number of activities during and after school. These are attended by almost all pupils. Pupils’ attendance is above average, as is their punctuality because they are keen to attend school.

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	2
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	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils’ behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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

How effective is the provision?

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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The quality of teaching and learning is good. Inspectors observed some outstanding lessons across the school. During these lessons, pupils made very good progress because they were completely clear about how their learning is developing, and teaching was pitched at exactly the right level for pupils of differing abilities. Teachers in these lessons demonstrated outstanding flair and imagination in their delivery, which completely engaged and absorbed all pupils in their learning. For example, everyone dressed up as pirates during the book week to help make reading and learning more interesting.

Teachers plan their lessons carefully to ensure that all pupils, particularly the higher- and lower- attaining pupils, are fully engaged in a range of activities. Those who are of middle ability do not, however, always receive the attention they need; consequently, they do not make the level of progress they should. Teachers adhere to the school's marking policy well and this ensures that pupils receive clear guidance as to how they can improve their work. Pupils are also given the opportunity to evaluate their own learning and that of their peers. This supports their good level of engagement in their learning.

The curriculum is well structured, meets statutory requirements and the needs, aspirations and interests of pupils. It also focuses on English and mathematics across the curriculum and this is contributing to pupils' good progress. A well-planned enrichment programme adds variety to pupils' learning and provides them with many different activities which enthuse them throughout the year. Consequently, all the pupils that the inspectors spoke to and those who completed the pupil questionnaires indicate that they enjoy their lessons and coming to school.

The school provides excellent care, guidance and support to pupils and their families. Pupils feel extremely well cared for and supported in their learning and aspects of their personal needs. Strong links with external agencies ensure that pupils receive prompt access to specialist services at times of need. They receive clear guidance on how to progress to the next level of learning, through the use of individual targets in reading, writing and mathematics. They say that teachers are very approachable, which makes them feel safe and appreciated for their contribution to the life of the 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?

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Leaders are determined to provide the best education that is possible for the pupils. The school, and particularly the headteacher, hold a special place in the heart of the community and parents and carers. He is ably supported by senior and middle leaders and the governing body, who are all equally ambitious for the school. They work very hard to ensure that the school sustains and continues its upward trajectory of improvement and are determined to tackle the school’s relative weaknesses. They know the school’s strengths and areas for future development well. Staff at all levels demonstrate a clear determination to continue to improve and feel proud to be a part of the school. As one member of the staff stated in the questionnaire, ‘I believe that the school is going from strength to strength with excellent leadership and a strong Christian ethos’. They have full confidence in the school’s senior leadership team. Priorities have been clearly communicated and expectations are high across the school. The skilled middle leadership team are taking greater responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the school’s work. Planning for improvements is thorough and provides a clear view of the ambition and drive for future improvements; especially, the school’s ongoing major priority of raising attainment. The range of strategies used to monitor teaching and learning is clearly focused, which enables senior leaders and managers to know how best they can help staff to improve their classroom practice.

Governance of the school is good and financial accountability is robust. The governing body, through its committees, is involved effectively in scrutinising and challenging the work of the school, which helps to bring about a greater focus on tackling known issues within realistic timescales. The school’s practice to safeguard pupils is exemplary. It has gone that extra mile to ensure that policies and procedures are robust, fully compliant and that all adults who work in the school understand and apply rules fairly and consistently in order to keep the pupils safe at all times.

There are good links with external partners, particularly for those pupils whose circumstances make them most vulnerable. These links are also making a positive contribution to the pupils’ personal, social, emotional and intellectual well-being. The links with parents and carers are very effective as demonstrated by the very high level of response from parents and carers who were overwhelmingly positive about what the school provides for their children. The school recognises the importance of promoting all aspects of equality and helps pupils to appreciate their own and others’ differences and similarities. As a result, the school presents itself as a cohesive community. Good links with other religious and cultural groups nationally and internationally helps pupils to appreciate life outside of their own school and home environment.

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

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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	1
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	1
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 Early years Foundation Stage provides the children with a good start to their education. They start in the Nursery with skills and personal attributes that are in line with those expected for their age, especially in some key literacy and numeracy skills, and also in personal, social and emotional development. The school is aware however, that the children's communication and language skills need to be strengthened before they move into Key Stage 1.

Teachers plan engaging learning activities that enable children to make good and sometimes outstanding progress. Teachers and other staff use observations and assessments effectively to support and extend children's learning and to identify areas for improvement. Children are engaged well in their learning and strong relationships are evident at all levels. The well-established routine enables the children to respond with confidence to all that is on offer. They enjoy the well-structured learning tasks and play together well. Staff make effective use of the outdoor area and stimulating indoor learning environment where children's work is displayed and referred to during discussion times. Staff work closely with parents and carers, who feel well-informed about their children's progress.

Strong leadership underpins the good and safe provision in all the classes. Effective communication and well-structured planning ensures a high level of consistency across the Early Years Foundation Stage with well-established links with Key Stage 1.

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

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Views of parents and carers

Over three quarter of the parents and carers completed and returned the questionnaire. This is an exceptionally high proportion compared with that seen nationally. Parents are extremely happy with the work of the school and hold the headteacher in particular with high regard. They are happy with their children's experiences at school and feel that the school keeps their children safe. Many wrote positive comments about the school, for example, 'There is a wonderful atmosphere in the school. It is like being part of a big, happy family.' Many other parents and carers made similar comments. All those who responded said that the school is led and managed well, and helps their children to lead a healthy lifestyle. The inspection findings support these views.

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 Primary School, Leamington Spa 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 229 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 366 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	186	81	41	18	1	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	195	85	32	14	1	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	142	62	83	36	4	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	151	66	73	32	3	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	155	68	72	31	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	146	64	73	32	6	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	157	69	66	29	3	1	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)	137	60	80	35	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	154	67	67	29	4	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	132	58	81	35	5	2	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	134	59	77	34	5	2	4	2
The school is led and managed effectively	192	84	36	16	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	183	80	40	17	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.



10 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Paul's CofE Primary School, Leamington Spa, CV32 4JZ

Following our inspection of your school, we would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome and for helping us. We very much enjoyed talking to you in lessons, in meetings and at lunchtime about life at your school. Thank you, too, to those who completed the questionnaire. Your responses were very helpful. You told us that you enjoy school, which we can see from your good attendance, and that you feel very safe. Many of you play an active role in the life of the school, for example, as members of the school and worship councils.

We found St Paul's to be a good school and in some areas outstanding, for example, in the care, guidance and support that you receive. We agree with you and your parents and carers that your teachers take exceptionally good care of you and know your needs well. We were particularly impressed with your outstanding behaviour both in lessons and around the school. You told us that you are very confident that any incidents of bullying are resolved quickly and sensitively. You have an excellent understanding of why it is important to eat healthily, despite some of you admitting to not always making the best choices. Your parents and carers tell us that they have extremely positive relationships with the school and that it regularly asks for their views.

Although many good and some outstanding things are happening, we have asked the school leaders and the governing body to help improve the overall teaching so that it is consistently outstanding. This will improve your achievement and attainment even more. We have also asked the school to help strengthen the communication and language skills for those children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Remember, you too can all help by making sure that you continue to attend school regularly and work hard.

I wish you the very best for your future.

Yours sincerely

Rashida Sharif
Her Majesty's Inspector

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