

St Paul's Church of England Primary School, Langleybury

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117417
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	379415
Inspection dates	21–22 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Martin Beale

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	236
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Storms
Headteacher	Sarah Winter
Date of previous school inspection	18 October 2006
School address	Langleybury Lane Hunton Bridge Kings Langley WD4 8RJ
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 16 lessons, observing eight teachers. They held meetings with staff, groups of pupils, and the Chair of the Governing Body. Informal discussions were held with parents and carers as they arrived with their children at the start of the day. Inspectors observed the school's work, and scrutinised assessment information, pupils' books, records of pupils' progress and school improvement plans. Inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires from 106 parents and carers, 115 pupils and 20 staff.

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

- How effective is teaching, particularly in its challenge for the more able?
- How accurate are teachers' assessments of the pupils' attainment?
- What impact is the action being taken on improving writing?
- How effective and accurate is school self-evaluation as a tool to secure further improvement?

Information about the school

Most pupils are from White British backgrounds in this average-sized school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. Fewer pupils than in most primary schools are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a half-day Nursery class and a Reception class. The school has recently achieved Healthy Schools status and the Hertfordshire Quality Standard for Early Years. The headteacher has been in post for one year.

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

3

Main findings

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. It is a school in which pupils are happy and which has the overwhelming support of their parents and carers. There are several outstanding features, particularly in aspects of the pupils' personal development. Several recent staff changes including in leadership positions have slowed school improvement, although there are signs that new roles are bedding in and that the momentum has been regained.

Children in the Nursery and Reception get off to a good start in the new 'Iona Building'. They make good progress in an interesting environment where activities are planned to meet their interests and needs and adults take every opportunity to move their learning forward. This good start is not built upon consistently across the rest of the school. Progress is uneven because of inconsistencies in the impact of teaching on learning. Attainment fell in 2010 but recovered in 2011 and is above average by the end of Year 6, although this represents only satisfactory progress.

The most effective teaching seen was lively and grabbed the pupils' interest by engaging all groups in a wide range of well-chosen activities. However, this is not a consistent picture across the school. Shortcomings in assessment have given an inaccurate picture of pupils' attainment, making it difficult for teachers to plan lessons that meet the next steps in learning or to spot emerging underachievement. Furthermore, guidance through marking and feedback is inconsistent. Pupils often say they are not clear precisely what they need to do to improve and meet their targets. Targets are reasonably challenging but not built upon firm foundations of accurate assessment data to act as a tool to push up attainment.

Most pupils are highly motivated, hard-working and keen to succeed. They show growing maturity as they move through the school and have more opportunity to take on responsibilities. The curriculum has become more engaging by increasingly linking learning between subjects and promoting writing in interesting contexts. However, extended writing is not always being developed in a structured manner or quality writing modelled by teachers.

The pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected in the great consideration they show to each other and their often exemplary behaviour. They make a very significant contribution to school life through their various roles and responsibilities, and to the wider community, for example through their support for a school in Nepal. They have a very sharp understanding of the

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factors that will enable them to stay fit and healthy, as reflected in their Healthy Schools status. Pupils talk confidently about what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and the importance of a balanced diet and physical exercise.

Pupils are known and nurtured as individuals. Parents are very pleased with the careful attention the school pays to caring for their children and safeguarding their well-being. As a result, pupils feel exceptionally safe and understand how to recognise and deal with any risks they might come across. The pupils' great enjoyment of school is reflected in their high attendance levels. The school's work with parents and carers is highly effective in engaging them in their children's learning and providing them with information about their progress.

The school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement. Although the headteacher, senior staff and governing body have a broadly accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, inaccuracies in assessment information have hampered them having a sharper evaluation of how well the school is doing. The new leadership team has begun to identify key priorities but have not put them into sharply focused plans to improve achievement.

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?

- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching in order to accelerate progress by:
 - ensuring that all lesson planning clearly defines objectives for the pupils' learning
 - making better use of assessment information to plan lessons that meet the learning needs of all pupils
 - making targets for improvement sharper for the pupils
 - providing more effective feedback through marking on the steps pupils need to take to meet their targets
 - developing teachers' questioning skills.
- Bring greater accuracy to the assessment of the pupils' attainment in order to more quickly spot potential underachievement and aid more effective self-evaluation.
- Develop greater structure to the development of the pupils' extended writing and ensure that teachers consistently model examples of writing to which the pupils can aspire.

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The pupils' very positive attitudes to their work, their concentration on tasks and the sensible manner in which they work together, contribute significantly to their learning. This was seen when Year 1 pupils worked hard writing stories, showing great imagination and trying hard to make their work more interesting. Most pupils are highly motivated and keen to do well. They greatly enjoy practical activities and sharing thoughts on their learning in discussion with others. Pupils rise to challenges presented, but they lose concentration when teaching is not closely matched to the next steps in their learning. Teaching in focused withdrawal sessions enables pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to make similar progress to others in their classes. However, teachers do not always plan clearly how their lessons meet these pupils' specific learning needs.

Year 6 test results fell in 2010 but rose again in 2011 to above the average in both English and mathematics. Assessment data and observations indicate that this improvement is continuing and current Year 6 pupils are on track to meet their challenging targets. There are no significant patterns to any variation in progress of boys and girls.

Pupils are kind and considerate towards others and can discuss the importance of values in their lives. Through special events such as 'Multi-cultural week', they gain a deep insight into other cultures and religions. Pupils seek help from staff if they ever feel unsafe and value the 'Worry-boxes' and how they can talk through their concerns in class. Play leaders and peer mediators help to supervise the school at break times to make sure everyone feels safe. Pupils show great concern for the environment through their 'Eco club' and take action to keep the local area, including the churchyard, clean and tidy. Pupils take the lead in fundraising for a variety of local and national charities, and the money they have raised has also paid a year's salary for a teacher in Nepal. They greatly enjoy sports activities, including those organised for them at lunchtime or through the specialist physical education provision.

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	2
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	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1

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 extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Within a pattern of satisfactory teaching, there are strong features that move the pupils' learning forward well. For example, the teachers' confident delivery, good use of humour and modelling her expectations inspired the pupils to work hard in a Year 2 writing English lesson. The lesson catered for the full range of pupils in the class and through skilled questioning encouraged creative thinking. However, not all teaching is this effective particularly when questions are not used to check understanding or when planning is unclear about the outcomes for the pupils' learning. Marking is thorough and regular, but teachers do not consistently include opportunities for pupils to become more engaged in their learning by assessing their work and that of others or providing time for them to respond to their comments.

Teachers devote appropriate attention to developing basic skills and provide pupils with the opportunity to develop their writing in many subjects. Pupils have many opportunities to use their computer skills to support learning. Topics and themed events such as 'Book Week' and 'Science Week' provide interesting cross-curricular learning opportunities. Although this approach is not yet fully embedded its impact on the pupils' enjoyment and achievement is visible. Pupils say how much they value the clubs and other enrichment activities, many of which benefit from the input of specialists or links with local schools.

The school provides a warm and welcoming environment for all pupils, who have great confidence in the guidance they receive if ever they feel troubled. The circumstances of pupils and their families are known well so that support can be targeted to meet their particular needs. Close links with external agencies provide the additional expertise needed to tackle specific learning or health issues. Thoughtful transition arrangements help pupils move smoothly between classes and then onto secondary school.

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

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How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher’s vision for the school and her commitment to drive up standards is shared by all members of staff. Other leaders, although often new in post, are making a valuable contribution in the drive for improvement. Regular observations of teaching enable leaders to identify effective practice and where improvements are needed. Training and advice are provided, but teachers do not regularly have the opportunity to develop their skills by observing or working alongside experts.

The governing body fulfils its responsibilities satisfactorily. It has developed appropriate systems for monitoring school performance, but has not provided consistent challenge to the school’s leaders in order to bring about sustained improvements in standards. There are many opportunities for the voice of parents to be heard and channelled into decision-making. The governing body is rigorous in ensuring that the robust safeguarding procedures are applied and updated in the light of regular monitoring of their implementation.

Central to the school’s vision is the promotion of equality of opportunity so that barriers that might impede the pupils’ learning can be eliminated. The school’s cohesiveness is an indication of its success in tackling any forms of discrimination. The school has a clear understanding of its context and uses this to plan actions to promote greater community cohesion. Local and global links are strong but the headteacher has recognised there is scope for playing a greater role nationally. The partnership with home is very strong. Parents and carers along with the local community raised a considerable sum towards the ‘Iona Building’ project. Workshops on a wide range of issues such as e-safety and phonics have helped parents and carers to support their children at home.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for	3

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money

Early Years Foundation Stage

Close links with home, and familiarisation visits before they start, help to smooth children’s entry into the Nursery. This, the attention to each child’s needs and the warm relationships with the adults, help them to develop confidence quickly. Most children enter the Nursery with skills as expected for their age. They make good progress in the new classrooms and almost all reach, and several exceed, expected goals in all areas of their learning by the time they leave Reception.

The classrooms, both inside and outdoors are full of interesting and well-resourced activities that engage and retain the children’s concentration for long periods. The regular assessment of each child’s learning is used to plan activities that meet their interests and are designed to cover any gaps or meet the next steps in their learning. Sessions led by adults, such as when children are learning letter sounds, are taught well although at times support staff are not effectively deployed to focus on the learning of specific children. The adults in each class are skilled at knowing when to intervene to move the children’s learning forward and when to stand back to allow them to plan and develop activities themselves. As a result, children become independent and collaborate well when developing aspects of their learning.

The good practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage is reflected in the Hertfordshire Quality mark. Adults in the two classes work well as a team and encourage children in each class to take part in activities together. For example, Reception children modelled for the new Nursery intake how they could engage with the various activities prepared for them. ‘Learning Journeys’ are a valuable record of key moments in each child’s learning and development. They increasingly include evidence provided from home for Reception children but this is recognised as an area for development in the Nursery.

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 proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire than in most primary schools. The level of satisfaction is very high in response to all of the questions. Inspection evidence endorses their very positive views about the school particularly over the way in which their children are helped to adopt a safe and

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healthy lifestyle and the strength of the partnership with home.

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, Langleybury 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 106 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 236 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	88	83	18	17	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	90	85	16	15	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	59	56	47	44	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	68	64	36	34	0	0	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	77	73	29	27	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	79	75	27	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	78	74	26	25	0	0	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)	52	49	46	43	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	66	62	38	36	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	58	55	44	42	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	59	56	45	42	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	82	77	23	22	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	83	78	22	21	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.



23 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Paul's Church of England Primary School, Kings Langley, WD4 8RJ

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We saw that you work hard and are proud of the part you play in school life. Inspectors were particularly impressed by your confident answers to their questions, and your views helped us in making our judgements. These are the things we liked most.

- The headteacher, staff and governing body take good care of you and make sure you are kept safe.
- The curriculum provides many enjoyable experiences for you through your topics.
- Your exceptionally positive attitudes to learning, high levels of attendance and exemplary behaviour contribute significantly to the harmonious atmosphere.
- The school has formed very strong links with your parents and carers.
- You develop an excellent understanding of how to adopt a safe and healthy lifestyle and make substantial contribution to school and community life.

These are the three things in particular we have asked the teachers and other adults to do.

- Help you to learn better by improving teaching.
- Improve their knowledge of what you do well, where you need to improve and how quickly you are making progress.
- Show you more carefully how to plan your writing so that it is more structured.

You can play your part in helping the school to get even better by continuing to work hard at all times.

Yours sincerely

Martin Beale
Lead inspector

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