

St Paul's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	123783
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	380730
Inspection dates	24–25 April 2012
Lead inspector	Phillip Minns

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	242
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Marable
Headteacher	Chris Partridge
Date of previous school inspection	14 October 2008
School address	Paul Street Shepton Mallet Somerset BA4 5LA
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Age group	7–11
Inspection date(s)	24–25 April 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Phillip Minns

Additional inspector

Charlotte Roberson

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 18 lessons taught by 11 teachers. Inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at samples of their work. Meetings were held with staff, pupils, and representatives of the governing body and the local authority. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a broad range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, records of pupils' achievement and progress, the school's monitoring information and safeguarding documentation. They scrutinised questionnaires completed by 96 parents and carers, 25 staff and 99 pupils.

Information about the school

St Paul's is an average-sized junior school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is in line with the national average and very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average, whilst the proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. The majority of pupils with special educational needs have behavioural, emotional or social difficulties. There is a breakfast club which is managed by the school. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The headteacher took up his post in September 2011 and is currently supported by an acting deputy headteacher.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. The school is moving forward securely on several fronts; past underachievement is being addressed and pupils are now making better progress and are on track to achieve average levels in reading, writing and mathematics. The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory rather than good because there is not sufficient good teaching to secure good progress for all pupils. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Pupils make satisfactory progress during their time in the school. Historically, rates of progress have been inconsistent but current assessment information confirms that most pupils are now making good progress. Although such improvement is encouraging, it is not yet securely embedded or consistent enough, especially for pupils in Years 3 and 4.
- Teaching is securely satisfactory and sometimes good. When teaching is at its best, pupils are actively engaged in their learning and teachers use accurate information from assessments to guide their planning. Pupils make slower progress when they are passive in their learning and when activities are not sufficiently matched to their needs and abilities. In these lessons, the management of pupils' behaviour sometimes slows the pace of learning.
- Considerable attention has been paid to improving behaviour. Pupils across the school feel safer and happier as a result of a more positive and consistent approach to managing behaviour and incidents. As a result, behaviour in and around the school is satisfactory.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory, as evident in recent developments that have led to an increase in the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Specific weaknesses identified in attainment and behaviour have been tackled effectively. Staff performance is managed satisfactorily. Although senior leaders have a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses, governors' understanding of pupils' attainment and progress over time is less well developed. This limits the contribution governors can make to strategic planning.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure pupils are actively engaged in their learning and have clear personalised targets and consistent feedback that helps them to improve their own work.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that at least 60% is good or better by the end of December 2012, particularly in Years 3 and 4, by:
 - using assessment information to match lessons accurately to pupils' learning needs
 - developing pupils' independence in their own learning.
- Improve the effectiveness of the school's leadership by:
 - ensuring all leaders focus more closely on holding teachers and support staff to account for pupils' progress and overall achievement
 - ensuring lesson observations, marking and analysis of work focus on pupils' progress
 - improving the governing body's ability to act strategically in driving improvement.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils enter the school with levels that are broadly average and make satisfactory progress, leaving Year 6 with levels of attainment expected for their age. Whilst attainment in mathematics has risen to match the national average, attainment in English during the same period has been declining. For the past three years, attainment by the end of Year 6 has declined because progress has not been sufficient, particularly for more-able pupils. Whilst attainment in reading by the end of Year 6 is average, fewer pupils achieve the higher levels than in other schools. Although the school has taken steps to address this, these actions are too recent to have had an impact on the school's results. However, inspection evidence confirms that staff are now beginning to address past weaknesses. In lessons, pupils work well and show that they listen and value the opinions of others. Whilst pupils are fully engaged in some lessons, expectations of pupils' participation are not always high enough and this limits their progress.

The focus on improving the quality of teaching has had a positive impact on the achievement of pupils. As a result, pupils currently in the school are making much better progress than in previous years and some pupils, particularly those in Years 5 and 6, are making good progress. The performance of some identified groups of pupils has also improved. For example, pupils for whom English is an additional language are already making more progress than the equivalent group last year. However, although senior leaders have worked swiftly this year to ensure that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, their achievement is still inconsistent, with pupils in some year groups making significantly more progress than others. This is because, too often, activities are not sufficiently matched to the needs of pupils to enable them to make good progress. Support for disabled pupils and those with and special educational needs, although

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effective, is frequently added on to the lesson rather than being planned as part of it.

Pupils enjoy school and feel that they are doing well, and parents and carers agree with them. This broadly reflects inspection judgements that progress is satisfactory overall.

Quality of teaching

Most parents and carers consider their children to be taught well. Although inspectors found that some teaching was good, overall teaching is satisfactory because it is not resulting in consistently good progress for all pupils.

When teaching is at its best, well-planned activities engage pupils quickly in their learning. Pupils understand what they are learning and why they are learning it. Behaviour is managed well by the teacher and there is an atmosphere of busy concentration in the classroom. In the best lessons, teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan lessons that closely match pupils' learning needs. Pupils are well informed about their learning so they are clear about their targets and how they will help them to improve their own work.

Where teaching is not as strong, teachers talk too much whilst pupils sit still and quietly for too long. In these lessons, pupils find it more difficult to maintain attentive behaviour. Frequently, pupils are not expected to take responsibility for their own learning and this results in teachers and other adults working very hard and pupils not working hard enough. When pupils are given the opportunity to be more responsible for their own learning, for example in a Year 6 science lesson, they are motivated and engaged and demonstrate good cooperation and collaboration skills. The quality of support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is satisfactory and there is clear evidence that recent actions have resulted in good progress for some groups of pupils. However, the effectiveness of the support is not evaluated sufficiently in terms of pupils' progress.

Work in pupils' books covers a range of subjects and there is good evidence of writing across the curriculum. For example, work in Year 6 covers a range of topics from the artist Banksy to John Lennon. The teaching of reading is satisfactory and the curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The work on bats in Year 3, that generated a moment of awe at the wonder of nature, was a good example.

Teachers put a lot of effort into marking and it is detailed and thorough in all classes. However, pupils do not always understand their feedback and so cannot use the information to improve their own work. Marking is also not consistently linked to the learning intention for the lesson and therefore provides little information to teachers as to whether the child has understood the learning in that session. Targets are in place for most pupils, but they are not precise enough to provide pupils with the detailed information they need to be able to improve their own work.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

Every parent who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school kept their child safe. Pupils feel safe in school and demonstrated a sound awareness of the different forms of bullying, including name calling, physical bullying and cyber-bullying. They are confident that bullying and other issues are dealt with quickly and effectively and are very pleased with recent changes in the management of their behaviour and safety. Many pupils went out of their way to tell inspectors how pleased they were that behaviour was improving within the school. Many described the school as now being a 'fairer place' and they put this down to their headteacher, who one child described as 'caring about us more than anything'.

Behaviour is clearly improving throughout the school, creating a calm and well-ordered atmosphere. Although there are still some incidents of challenging behaviour, the school has developed a clear and systematic approach to dealing with these. However, there is insufficient analysis of information, particularly concerning exclusions, that is aimed at further reducing incidents of inappropriate and challenging behaviour. Rates of attendance are above average and the school has a range of effective strategies in place to maintain these.

Leadership and management

The new headteacher, ably assisted by the acting deputy headteacher and other leaders in the school, has quickly established a clear vision based on high expectations for pupils' progress. The headteacher has accurately identified the school's strengths and the priorities for improvement. The impact of this can already be seen in the good progress pupils have made so far this year. The developments that have taken place are encouraging and have resulted in significant improvements in a relatively short period of time. This shows that the school has the capacity to improve further. Actions to improve behaviour management and provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are good examples of the effectiveness of the actions of senior leaders. Teachers' performance is also managed well to improve the quality of teaching further.

Effective systems to track pupils' progress and challenging targets are beginning to create a school with high expectations that is focused on good progress for all pupils. However, there has not always been a sufficient focus on assessing pupils' progress through lesson observations and teachers' marking. Although there are regular lesson observations to check the quality of teaching, monitoring is currently focused on what teachers do and not sharply enough on what pupils learn. This is particularly the case for pupils engaged in independent activities and those working with teaching assistants. The curriculum is broad and balanced and effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.

The governing body is committed to the school and governors fully support the current developments. However, they are not sufficiently focused on offering scrutiny and challenge to ensure that all pupils make sufficient progress.

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The school has appropriate systems to keep children safe and the school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements. The school promotes equality and tackles discrimination effectively, as is evident in the rapidly closing gaps in the performance of pupils in Years 5 and 6 against similar groups nationally.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



26 April 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Paul's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School, Shepton Mallet BA4 5LA

Thank you for your friendly welcome when we inspected your school and for telling us what you think about your school. We enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work. I thought you would like to know what we found out. You go to a satisfactory school that is improving all the time.

- You are starting to make better progress in lessons and more of you are reaching the levels expected for your age.
- Your headteacher and the staff are working hard to make your lessons better so that you learn more.
- Behaviour is improving and you told us you feel safe and that the staff take good care of you.

This is what we have asked the headteacher, governing body and teachers to do to make your school even better.

- Help you make even more progress by making sure you know how well you are doing and that you understand what you need to do to improve your work.
- Make sure that all your lessons are interesting and that you work hard in them so you all make good progress.
- Make sure that everyone in your school, including your governors, have high expectations for your progress and that they make sure you all do well.

You can help by always doing your best and asking for help if you don't understand your work. I wish you all the best and hope you continue to try hard and enjoy your learning.

Yours sincerely

Phillip Minns
Lead inspector

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