

St Paulinus Church of England Primary School

Iron Mill Lane, Crayford, Dartford, DA1 4RW

Inspection dates 7–8 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils say that they are happy in school and their eagerness to learn helps them to achieve well.
- Pupils make good progress across a broad range of subjects which link well within themes. Their achievement in English is good and it is outstanding in mathematics.
- Consistently good quality teaching motivates pupils well and they find learning interesting. Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together to ensure that pupils have the help they need to address any difficulties quickly.
- Relationships across this firmly established, caring school are strong. Pupils feel very safe and valued which contributes to their outstanding behaviour.
- Children settle happily in Reception and make good progress, particularly in their reading.
- Good leadership by the headteacher and governing body means that the school has improved both the quality of teaching and of pupils' attainment since its last inspection. It is therefore an improving school. The partnership with other schools is being used well to develop even higher quality teaching and achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding because teachers do not always set challenging work which expects pupils, particularly the more able, to find things out for themselves.
- Pupils are not routinely expected to respond to teachers' marking to show that they have understood the advice they are given.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons involving all teachers who were teaching during the inspection, many observed jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors listened to a sample of pupils read and talked to them about how the school helps them to develop their reading skills.
- Meetings were held with school leaders, representatives of the governing body, local authority, staff and a group of pupils.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a range of documents including those that show how the school evaluates itself and plans for future development, and pupils’ progress data. They scrutinised pupils’ work, information about how the school cares for and protects pupils, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and minutes of recent governing body meetings.
- Inspectors took account of 55 responses to the online Parent View survey together with other evidence submitted by parents and carers through letters and telephone calls, and questionnaires completed by 20 staff.

Inspection team

Helen Hutchings, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Anthony Hayes

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Paulinus School is an average-sized primary school, with children in the Early Years Foundation Stage taught in the Reception class.
- The large majority of pupils are White British. A number of other minority ethnic groups are represented, the majority of whom are from Black African backgrounds. Few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and children of service families) has tripled over the last three years but is below the national average. There are currently no children of service families in the school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is much lower than the national average, as is the proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school works in partnership with other schools through a local Anglican Schools' Partnership of nine schools formed in 2011.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that pupils make faster progress through the school, by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can do for themselves and giving them more investigational work so that pupils become more independent and curious in their learning
 - setting work at exactly the right level, particularly for those pupils able to reach the highest levels
 - giving pupils time and tasks to follow up on the written comments and advice given when teachers mark their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The school tracks pupils' progress rigorously and ensures that anyone likely to underachieve is given additional support at the earliest possible stage. Consequently, pupils make good progress, and this accelerates in pupils' final years in the school as they develop confidence in their learning and as a result of highly focused teaching which meets pupils' needs. The good, rather than outstanding, progress pupils make is because they are not challenged to extend their learning sufficiently through the school.
- Children join the school in Reception with skills and knowledge that are above those typical for their age. The good progress they make means that they start Year 1 with standards above those seen nationally. Children make particularly good progress in phonics (recognising the sounds that letters make), and high levels of adult support result in children developing their reading and speaking skills quickly. Standards in the Year 1 phonics screening are above the national average.
- The standards reached in the Year 2 assessments have improved well in the last two years, giving pupils a strong foundation for study in Years 3 to 6. The strong focus given to regular reading sessions and the regular support by volunteer adults mean that pupils quickly develop their literacy skills which supports their learning in other subjects.
- Pupils' good achievement and progress are reflected in high attainment in English and mathematics in the Year 6 tests. This means pupils are prepared well for secondary school. Because of a recent successful focus on improving attainment in mathematics, pupils now make outstanding progress in this subject; pupils use their skills confidently in real-life problems and in other subjects.
- Last year, almost half of Year 6 made more than expected progress from their starting point at the beginning of Year 3, which is higher than found nationally. In English, the proportion of pupils making more than expected progress is in line with that found nationally. In both subjects, currently pupils are on course to make even more progress, particularly at the higher levels.
- The school's commitment to and success in ensuring equal opportunities is seen in the even progress made by different groups of pupils. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and looked after children who receive support through the pupil premium, for example in small group work, achieve better than pupils nationally, based on the average point scores for English and mathematics in the Year 6 tests. Their attainment is similar to that of other pupils in the school, as is that of Black African pupils and those who speak English as an additional language.
- Similarly, the focused support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs ensures that they make good and increasing progress from their starting points.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching that is consistently good and at times outstanding contributes well to pupils' good achievement. Teachers make learning interesting and frequently fun. An example of this was seen when a teaching assistant dressed up and undertook the role of Roald Dahl's 'Mr Twit' to provide the stimulus for pupils to develop their understanding of how to write in the first person. Teachers regularly use the interactive whiteboard to illustrate learning, for example through the use of video clips and well-chosen computer programs.
- Lessons are effectively planned to build continually on earlier learning and to link work across subjects. This was seen in a lesson where pupils used the information they had found out about Florence Nightingale in their topic work to develop their chronological writing skills.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work closely to ensure that pupils who are experiencing difficulty are given prompt support. Teaching assistants are briefed well about their roles and some have been given additional and effective training to give specialist support, for example for

pupils who have autism. As a result, any potential discrimination is tackled well.

- In the very best lessons, teachers have clear expectations for the quality of pupils' work and explain exactly what they expect from different ability groups. This is more evident in mathematics lessons than in other subjects. For example, in a Year 5 lesson where pupils were consolidating their understanding of the relationship between 12- and 24-hour clock times, the starter activity was challenging because tasks were set at different levels; this encouraged some pupils to challenge themselves to attempt the most difficult problems.
- However, sometimes the work set for more able pupils is not hard enough and expectations are not sufficiently high. Although additional lessons in English and mathematics in Year 6 are making a difference in enabling pupils to reach higher levels, this level of challenge is not fully promoted in whole-class lessons and in other year groups.
- Teachers question pupils closely, ensuring that pupils justify the reasons for their responses. Teaching is particularly successful when teachers require pupils to work things out for themselves. Year 6 pupils' enthusiasm for this form of learning was seen in their eagerness when carrying out a science investigation about the relationship between shadow size and the distance of a puppet from the light source; pupils responded maturely to the open-ended task and quickly developed a working hypothesis. Sometimes teachers structure lessons too tightly which restricts pupils' ability to use their curiosity and to become independent learners.
- Teachers make good use of the locality to make learning interest; for example, its initiative in securing a National Lottery grant to develop a history project linked to pupils' discovery of a First World War grave in the local churchyard. Reception children make good use of the outside classroom, together with learning in the school's wooded area.
- Regular homework is supported well by parents and carers, and the marking of pupils' work helps pupils to know how they are progressing and how to improve. Consequently, pupils have a good understanding of what they have to do to reach the next level. There are particularly good examples in Year 6 where pupils follow up on the comments made by their teachers, for example by completing an additional short task which shows that they have understood the advice given. However, this practice is not consistent across the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils fully appreciate the importance of good behaviour and of how this ensures a strong family atmosphere and harmonious school community. Pupils treat each other with respect and behave impeccably around the school and in lessons, so that no learning time is lost. Teachers and other adults have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and manage it expertly.
- Pupils say how much they enjoy school and most parents and carers agree. Pupils' positive attitudes make a strong contribution to their learning. For example, they work together co-operatively, manage group work exceptionally well and persevere when learning is challenging.
- The school ethos, developed in lessons and in assemblies, is promoted consistently by all adults. Pupils are considerate of one another and thoroughly enjoy the many opportunities they have to support one another and take responsibility. For example, Year 6 pupils undertake duties conscientiously which contribute effectively to the school's calm and orderly environment, while other pupils represent their peers on the school council.
- In addition to lesson activities, whole-school events make an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Recently, a week devoted to encouraging a wider range of playground games reinforced pupils' respect for the school's equipment and the importance of playground friendship.
- Pupils know about different kinds of bullying and say that incidents of bullying are extremely rare. They are confident that occasional examples of unkind behaviour are sorted out quickly by adults. Pupils have an excellent knowledge of internet safety and how to stay safe online, and during the inspection, pupils in Years 5 and 6 refreshed their understanding in a lesson taken by police officers. School records show that behaviour is typically very good in lessons and around the school.

- Attendance is above average and has improved as a result of the school's rigorous promotion of the importance of good attendance and the procedures for checking and following up absence.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher leads the school with determination to ensure that the school continually seeks to fulfil its mission and values. Strong, cohesive teamwork and effective leadership are central to the school's continuing success and improving achievement.
- School leaders undertake accurate evaluation of the school's work and use this effectively to plan for improvement. The work undertaken to improve mathematics has been very successful. A similar approach to strengthen the teaching of English has not yet had time to result in significantly improved attainment and progress.
- The management of teachers' performance is systematic and rigorous. Teachers are not awarded pay rises unless their performance indicates that they have met targets for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Teachers have access to a range of professional development. They share good practice through the work of subject leaders and have begun to gain a wider perspective through recent work with the Anglican Schools' Partnership. For example, the school holds joint professional development days and teachers have measured the quality of pupils' work with teachers from other schools.
- The local authority and diocesan support for this acknowledged good school has been light touch, but has helped the school to keep its overall performance under regular review since the last inspection.
- The school's curriculum is frequently monitored to ensure its ongoing effectiveness and relevance to pupils' experiences. It is enriched well by a wide range of visits and visitors to the school. Involvement in local activities contributes to the school's sense of community, such as pupils' contribution to the internal design of a new local library.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are ambitious for all pupils to achieve well, academically and personally, in a safe and secure environment. They use local authority support to ensure that they keep up to date through training and, more recently, to support them in appointing a new headteacher. Governors have a good understanding of the school's key strengths, such as their knowledge of the quality of teaching and how good performance is rewarded, and what the data show about the school's overall performance in relation to schools nationally. They use this information effectively to allocate funding so that it has the maximum impact. The governing body has checked that the allocation of pupil premium funding, to set up additional small group work and to support school visits, is ensuring that those eligible start to narrow the attainment gap with other pupils. Governors ensure that the school is diligent in keeping staff and pupils safe and that safeguarding procedures meet requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	101454
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	402851

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Hurt
Headteacher	Marilyn Davey
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2008
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