



Inspection report

St Paul's CE Primary School

**Better
education
and care**

Unique Reference Number 100838
LEA Southwark

Inspection number 274270
Inspection dates 9 and 10 March 2005
Reporting inspector Ms C Rodney HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996 and was deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

Type of School	Infant and Junior	School address	Penrose Street
School category	Voluntary Aided <i>Diocese of Southwark</i>		Walworth London SE17 3DT
Age range of pupils	3 to 11 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 7703 4896
Number on roll	281	Fax number	020 7277 2873
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Cannon G Shaw
Date of previous inspection	October 2001	Headteacher	Mrs A Birleanu

Age group	Published	Reference no.
3 to 11 years	22 April 2005	274270

Introduction

When St Paul's CE Primary School was inspected in October 2001, it was judged to require special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. Her Majesty's Inspectors of schools (HMI) subsequently visited the school on eight occasions to monitor its progress, and reinspected the school in March 2005.

Description of the school

St Paul's CE Primary School is a larger-than-average primary school situated in Walworth. The school caters for 281 pupils, including 45 who attend the nursery part-time. One third of the pupils are from a white British background; just under half are of black African or Caribbean British heritage while the remaining pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Over a quarter do not speak English as their first language. The school serves an economically disadvantaged area; almost half the pupils are eligible for free school meals. A broadly average proportion of the pupils, 21 per cent, have been identified as having special educational needs, of which 2.3 per cent have a Statement of Special Educational Need, which is above average.

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Overall effectiveness of the school

In accordance with section 14 of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures, since it is now providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils.

St Paul's CE Primary School has faced very challenging circumstances for a long time, as a result of high staff turnover and several changes in the leadership of the school. The stability of the school has improved by the appointment of a substantive headteacher in September 2004 and the determined effort of the school and local education authority (LEA) to recruit and retain a core of committed teachers. This has resulted in the school providing a satisfactory education for its pupils. Standards are still below what they should be, but they are rising as a result of the attention given to improving teaching, which is satisfactory overall. The pupils in the nursery and reception achieve well overall. Pupils make sound progress academically and their personal attitudes and behaviour are mostly good. The curriculum meets statutory requirements, with ample opportunities for extracurricular activities.

Improvement since the last inspection

The inspection of October 2001 identified a number of weaknesses that the school had to tackle. The key issues were concerned with the standards, achievement in mathematics and science, teaching, leadership and management, attendance, meeting the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, the curriculum, health and safety, and child protection. There has been very good progress in relation to the leadership and management of the school and in improving attendance and punctuality. Whilst standards in the core subjects need to rise further, the school has made reasonable progress in dealing with the other issues.

Capacity to improve

The school is well placed to build on and sustain the recent improvements and its capacity for further development is good. The headteacher has a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the priorities that must be tackled. There is firmness and determination to improve the provision and meet the needs of all pupils. The clarity of the vision for the school's future is increasingly understood by the staff. Subject co-ordinators are better focused than previously on fulfilling their role as curriculum leaders and further training is planned. The governing body and the LEA are very supportive and constantly keep the progress of the school under review; their support is rightly to be extended. The governors are fully involved in identifying the school's priorities and in holding it to account.

What the school should do to improve further

The school's development plan recognises the areas where improvement is needed. However the key priorities are to:

- continue the drive to raise standards;
- continue to improve the quality of teaching;
- provide consistent support for pupils with English as an additional language.

Achievement and standards

The pupils in the nursery achieve well and those in the reception year reach satisfactory standards that reflect the expected levels for the Foundation Stage. Those at the early stage of learning English make a good start in the nursery. The pupils' progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 has been affected by the instability in staffing and the inconsistent quality of teaching over a period of years. However, the school's analysis of recent internal tests indicates that most pupils are making sound and sometimes good progress. Although standards are rising, the school's results in the 2004 national tests were well below average. In relation to the scores of similar schools, based on the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals, the results for English at Key Stage 2 were average, but all the other results were well below average. The teachers' recent assessments indicate that standards are rising, though inconsistently across the core and other subjects.

The school is aware that the shortcomings in provision have severely hindered the pupils' progress and has introduced booster sessions in English and mathematics to ensure that all pupils achieve their potential.

Personal development

At the time of the inspection in 2001 when the school became subject to special measures, the pupils' attitudes and behaviour were unsatisfactory. The high level of misbehaviour affected the pace and quality of learning. Since then, the school has taken effective action to develop a positive ethos for learning. It has worked hard with support agencies on managing the pupils' behaviour and established clear expectations for their conduct; as a result, the pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good overall. Systems to improve attendance are very good; however, while the rates of attendance have risen, unauthorised absence among a small minority of pupils severely affects the overall attendance rate, which was below the average for primary schools in 2004. Currently, it is broadly in line with the national average.

In lessons, behaviour is mainly satisfactory; it is often good and occasionally excellent, when clear guidelines are established for work and behaviour. Five pupils have received fixed-term exclusions resulting in nine exclusions in total this year but there are good

supportive structures to improve behaviour. The pupils' conduct around the site and in assembly is good; for example, they behave sensibly when lining up. Relationships with adults and between pupils are good. They respond well to group work and, with guidance, they use the time profitably. In lessons, the pupils are keen to learn; however, concentration wanes when expectations of work and behaviour are not clearly established.

Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The Christian ethos is strong and assemblies provide ample opportunities for the pupils to reflect on issues such as their local environment. The assemblies are a focal point for the pupils to take part in drama, singing and prayers. The pupils participate fully in activities and have responded well to the responsibilities given to them; for example, their roles as prefects, representatives on the school council or as play leaders. The school has a wide range of extracurricular activities including physical education and well-established links with local sports such as at the Oval and Millwall Football Club. Other activities include the school choir, booster classes, regular visits to museums and a local theatre, which has involved the Year 6 pupils taking part in theatre in education. The pupils join with the church and the local community; a planned community based arts centre at the school is to provide an additional creative outlet for the pupils.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the inspection in 2001. It was at least satisfactory or better in most lessons; it was good or better in two thirds and unsatisfactory in two. The teachers have worked hard to improve their planning, which is subject to intense scrutiny and monitoring. The match of resources and work the individual needs of the pupils has improved. This has resulted in most pupils making steady and often better progress in their learning.

The most effective teaching was well planned, with clear learning intentions, stimulating starter activities and structured development with a full review at the end using targeted questions. In these lessons, care was taken to ensure that all pupils made good progress; the pupils were clear about what they had to achieve. They worked purposefully and, in turn, the teachers sustained their interest by involving them in discussion, practical activities, feedback and modelling. In the unsatisfactory lessons, the work did not challenge the pupils; expectations of work and behaviour were not emphasised and opportunities were missed to assess and gauge the pupils' response and understanding. Furthermore, the teachers did not have enough strategies to manage unruly behaviour.

There are good procedures for identifying and supporting pupils who have special educational needs. Strong and productive links have been established with external agencies. The provision for pupils learning English as an additional language is undeveloped. The level of specialist support has recently been finalised; the school is aware that this requires urgent attention as the percentage of pupils with English as an additional language has increased each year.

The procedures for assessing the pupils' progress are sound and are being refined. Assessment data is used increasingly to set targets for individuals; more recently the school has begun to use the information to improve curriculum planning and provision such as booster classes.

The curriculum meets national requirements, a suitable emphasis given to literacy and numeracy, through focus groups in each class, and all pupils have individual targets in reading, writing and numeracy. The school is mindful of its diverse ethnic groups and integrates aspects of different cultures well into the curriculum; for example, Black History month.

The school caters well for the welfare, health and safety of its pupils; for instance, it has recently introduced a breakfast club and there is due regard to healthy eating.

Leadership and management

The school is very effectively led and managed. Under the very good leadership of the headteacher there is a clear vision for the future direction for the school, particularly improving standards. The headteacher ensures that the quality of teaching is given the highest priority; she displays firm management skills and has taken appropriate and decisive action to eradicate the weaknesses in teaching. The headteacher is ably supported by members of the senior leadership team. Since her appointment, she has worked well with the senior managers to establish rigorous systems and procedures. The headteacher has an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, as a result of the consistent and accurate monitoring of teaching and learning. There is a high level of commitment to improving provision; a positive ethos has been created and there is a shared sense of purpose.

The subject co-ordinators have a clear understanding of their roles as managers and leaders. They have taken responsibility for monitoring teaching and curriculum development in their subjects. This has increased their understanding of the progress and attainment across the year groups and what must be done to raise standards. The recently appointed co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage is providing good leadership and management.

The governors and diocese have an increasing understanding of their responsibilities. They are kept well informed and are fully involved in reviewing the school's progress. They are clear about the long-term development of the school and work very closely with the headteacher.

The support from the LEA has been consistently good. It has provided effective training, much support for individuals and helped to develop sound systems for monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the school's provision. The LEA's regular monitoring and feedback have provided the school with valuable information to re-order its priorities.

Appendix – Information about the inspection

St Paul's CE Primary School was inspected under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 by a Registered Inspector and a team of Inspectors in October 2001. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and, in accordance with that Act, the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

The school was visited by HMI in April and October 2002, in April, July and December 2003, and in April, July and December 2004 to assess the progress it was making to implement its action plan and address the key issues in the inspection report of October 2001.

In March 2005, three HMI returned to inspect the school for two days. The inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

During the visit 16 parts of lessons and two assemblies were inspected. The pupils' conduct was observed around the school and on the playground at break and lunchtimes, and samples of their work were inspected. Discussions were held with the headteacher, the LEA's link adviser, the diocesan adviser and governors, and informally with other staff. A wide range of the school's documentation was scrutinised. Account was taken of the evidence from previous monitoring inspections.

The inspection assessed the quality of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of October 2001 and the action plan prepared by the governing body to address those key issues.

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