



St Paul's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116487
LEA Portsmouth LEA
Inspection number 279841
Inspection dates 3 May 2006 to 4 May 2006
Reporting inspector Michael Pye AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Bourne Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Paulsgrove
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Portsmouth PO6 4JD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02392375488
Number on roll	369	Fax number	02392214067
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Paula Medd
Date of previous inspection	10 October 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Frances Chapman

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Situated in a deprived area, this large Catholic primary school is accepting greater numbers of pupils from this locality. The majority of pupils are of White British background, although the numbers of pupils who are at an early stage of learning English is above average and rising. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is well above average, although the proportion of those with statements of special educational need is below average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'St Paul's is a very happy school. All the children are very well cared for and it has a lovely atmosphere'. This parent is correct, and inspectors agree with the school's evaluation that this is a good school. It also has outstanding features such as personal development, standards in years 3 to 6, and in aspects of leadership.

Standards and achievement are good. The school has a record of standards being significantly above the national average at the end of Year 6, but identified the need to raise standards in Reception and Years 1 and 2. The measures taken, such as improving teaching, have successfully addressed these issues in mathematics and reading. The school rightly recognises the need to further improve writing. The focus on academic progress has been accompanied by the school building on its existing strengths in pupils' personal development and care. The school makes use of a good range of external links to help care for pupils and support their learning. The excellent provision for pupil with learning difficulties and disabilities enables them to make very good progress towards their targets.

High quality self evaluation has enabled the leadership to clearly identify areas for improvement in circumstances where the nature of the school population is changing rapidly. For example, the overall quality of the Foundation Stage is satisfactory but necessary changes have been recognised and introduced. The curriculum has been improved and is now good and standards are improving. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher has set a clear vision for the school's development. There is a shared recognition that all staff and governors are accountable for school performance.

Standards in information and communication technology have improved considerably since the last inspection, and reflect a very good capacity to improve. The school gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase opportunities for speaking and listening and raise standards of writing in Reception and Years 1 and 2.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards in Year 2 were below average in the 2005 national tests, significantly so in writing. By the end of Year 6 pupils make good progress, and standards in mathematics, English and science have been significantly above average in the past five years.

Recent curriculum changes, improvements in teaching and the use of assessment information to track the pupils' progress are now having a positive effect in Reception and Years 1 and 2. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are satisfactory, with high attaining pupils doing particularly well in reading. Given the pupils' starting

point, progress is now good. The need to extend pupil's vocabulary so as to further improve their writing has been recognised by the school.

Pupils enter Reception with skills and knowledge below those expected of their age, but now make satisfactory progress. Many pupils have a limited vocabulary and this holds back progress in writing. Emotional, personal and social development is good.

In Years 3 to 6 pupils make good progress and standards in mathematics, science and English continue to be well above average by Year 6.

The majority of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and those at an early stage of learning English, meet challenging targets. This is the result of the very good individual support they receive and the effective tracking of their progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The personal development and well-being of pupils are outstanding. This is reflected in the very positive behaviour of pupils, who are polite, well-mannered and confident when addressing adults. In lessons and assemblies they show positive attitudes, concentrate well and respect other's opinions and achievements. The school is adopting increasingly successful measures to improve on the present satisfactory attendance rate.

Pupils' social and cultural development, and especially their spiritual and moral development, is excellent, reflecting the school's strong Catholic ethos. Pupils show an obvious enjoyment of school. They are confident about safe procedures through experiences such as 'Myself Week'. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and recognise the need to exercise and eat well, and consequently are very enthusiastic about the 'Grow it, Cook it' project. Many pupils make good positive contributions to their school, for instance as prefects, as well as making some contributions to their local community. By Year 6, pupils are well prepared for their future economic well-being. They have good ICT skills, work well in teams, and develop good financial understanding, through their experience of the Savers Union Bank and handling the school council budget.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good and at times it is outstanding. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties. Improvements in planning ensure that appropriate work is set for pupils of different abilities. In an outstanding lesson there were good opportunities for pupils to build on their range of vocabulary through describing their strategies for reaching an answer. In the best lessons there is an emphasis on varying the styles of teaching so as to ensure pupils enjoy their learning, are challenged and progress well. The practical nature of Science Challenge days, together with the good use of interactive white

boards, help to maintain pupils' interest. Teachers use questioning well although, on occasions, there are missed opportunities to probe pupils' knowledge and understanding more deeply. The effective monitoring of teaching and learning by senior managers has led to teachers using assessment data well to identify pupils who require additional support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and in many respects very good. It has been reviewed effectively and allows for pupils of different abilities to make progress. Innovations such as the 'Grow it, Cook it' project support healthy lifestyles and capture pupils' interest. Themes such as Science Challenge Week, are a strength. There is good provision for English and mathematics. The school has recognised the need to build in further opportunities for speaking and listening across subjects, particularly for younger pupils whose use of a range of vocabulary in their writing is limited. Considerable improvement to the provision for information and communication technology has been made, including opportunities to use computers in other subjects. Pupils react positively to the very good range of extra-curricular activities such as the multi-cultural, German and Italian clubs. Activities are frequently offered according to prior expressions of interest from pupils. There are excellent opportunities for reflection through assemblies, Circle Time and the retreat day in Year 6. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties, and for those for whom English is an additional language, is outstanding and contributes to their good progress.

In reception the curriculum is now good: pupils are able to choose activities and there is a good balance between teacher-led sessions and free-play.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

These are outstanding because of the schools' obvious investment in pupils' emotional well-being and the adults' comprehensive knowledge of their needs. Pupils feel valued and secure, and their self-esteem is raised. Contrary to the views of a minority of parents the pupils feel that any bullying is dealt with quickly. They feel safe. One pupil commented, 'You never feel afraid here'. Comprehensive tracking of individual progress helps to identify needs and the support required. This is provided by highly skilled staff and learning mentors, helped by very good links with outside agencies. Health and safety routines, risk assessments, and procedures to safeguard vulnerable pupils are very secure. Effective tracking of pupils' progress leads to pupils being well aware of what they need to do to meet their challenging targets.

The school works energetically to involve parents more closely through workshops and programmes such as 'Parent Power'. Parents are overwhelmingly appreciative, as reflected in this comment, 'My daughter and us, as her parents, have enjoyed seven years of exemplary care'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall and outstanding in some areas. Very effective self-evaluation has enabled the school in the past year to improve achievement in Reception and Years 1 and 2. The very good capacity to innovate and improve is also reflected in recent changes to the school environment, curriculum and resources, pupil behaviour and staff performance management. Parents are increasingly involved and the school and class councils give pupils a very clear say in school life. A wide range of interested parties contribute to school improvement planning.

The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding in providing a clear vision for the development of the school and, in particular, reacting to the significant changes in the nature of the school population. For example, the commitment to the management of pupils at an early stage of learning English and for pupils with learning difficulties is outstanding. The strengths in pastoral care have been effectively built upon. The school sets challenging targets for pupils' attainment. The vision is shared by all staff, and middle managers now exercise very effective leadership of their areas of responsibility. As one manager described it, 'the headteacher spots talents in people, and gives them the space to grow'.

The commitment of the headteacher and governors to equal opportunities is excellent, reflecting the Catholic ethos. Governors give strong support to the school, particularly through their involvement in the Healthy School initiative and their links with curriculum subjects. They are aware of the school's strengths and know what needs to be done to improve any weaknesses.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Pupils

You will probably remember our visit to your school. You were very eager to talk to us and tell us about your school, and in particular show us the school garden! Thank you. We listened carefully and feel, like you, that you are very lucky to belong to this good school.

Your head teacher and her staff are very determined to give you the best and to help you enjoy your school life. We feel they are succeeding because: * As a result of good teaching you do very well in reading, science and mathematics by Year 6* Those of you in Years 3 to 6 learn more quickly than pupils in most other schools* You feel safe and know that the adults care for you very well* The school is very well led and has some very good plans for the future* You behave extremely well, you enjoy school, and are prepared to work hard and improve your work* You know that your views are respected and are taken account of through the school and class councils* You react well to a good range of responsibilities, such as handling the school council budget and as prefects* You have an excellent understanding of how to live healthily.

Those of you in Reception and Years 1 and 2 need more opportunities to speak and listen and add to your knowledge of words to help you improve your writing. We wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Pye

Lead Inspector