



St Paul's CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 102590
Local Authority Kingston Upon Thames
Inspection number 286436
Inspection dates 19–20 October 2006
Reporting inspector Christopher Gray

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Orchard Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Chessington
Age range of pupils	4–11		KT9 1AJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8397 3553
Number on roll (school)	210	Fax number	020 8974 2794
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Margaret Thompson
		Headteacher	Marie Marchand
Date of previous school inspection	10 March 2003		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is similar in size to most schools. Most pupils are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language. The headteacher was appointed in September 2006 along with four class teachers, three of whom are newly-qualified. The deputy headteacher also left in the summer. The post is temporarily filled by the deputy of another local school, for four days a week. The school is in the middle of a large rebuilding programme.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This school gives a satisfactory standard of education, and one that is clearly improving. Overall standards are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory, giving them a sound basis for future learning. Standards in writing had fallen throughout the school in recent years, especially among boys, but the school has analysed why and is working to raise standards. Children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress and most reach the goals expected of them by the time they enter Year 1.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They clearly enjoy school, especially when lessons involve making things. They are closely involved in the running of the school, through being prefects or school councillors. Behaviour is good and pupils know how to stay safe and healthy. They have a mature attitude to those with different views and traditions. One pupil observed 'We are all different in our own way.' Another added, 'If we were all the same, we'd be like a puppet that someone controls.'

Teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory. Older pupils know how to improve their work by using their targets or referring to comments in teachers' marking. 'If you don't do anything about your target', one boy said, 'it will end up staying a weakness.' In Years 1 and 2, higher attaining pupils do not always receive work which challenges them at their own level, and marking is sometimes too generous in giving praise where it is not due. The school's information and communication technology (ICT) suite has been out of use for six months because of the rebuilding works. In the interim, the school has taken stock of the opportunities given to pupils to use computers in all subjects. It has set an ambitious target to increase this use and has already achieved greater consistency in teachers' planning for pupils to use their skills.

Pupils receive a satisfactory level of care, guidance and support, with strengths in the welfare and personal support they are given. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are sensitively and effectively supported. The school undertakes regular assessment of pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science, but has identified that the system needs revising in order to track pupils' progress closely enough to spot and remedy quickly any underachievement.

The school's clear improvement is underpinned by the good leadership of the new headteacher and her deputy. Other senior and middle managers are mostly new to their roles and have yet to develop in them. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, but the capacity to make further improvement is good. This is clearly shown in the progress that has been made in all the areas that the new management team set as its priorities. Governors are a well-established body and give good support and challenge to the school's work.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing throughout the school, especially among boys
- Enable teachers in Years 1 and 2 to provide work which is more closely matched to pupils' needs, especially higher attaining pupils

- Develop the school's system of tracking pupils' progress, so that it can be used more rigorously in spotting where pupils are not making as much progress as they should
- Increase the use of computers in all subjects to raise standards in ICT

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Overall standards are average, though they are higher in mathematics and science among the oldest pupils. These pupils had reached above average standards in these subjects by the time they were at the end of Year 2. Standards currently achieved at the end of Year 2 are broadly average and have been so for the last three years, with the result that standards are currently lower in the juniors than they were previously. Given pupils' average starting points when they enter the school, this represents satisfactory achievement.

In Years 1 and 2, pupils' achievement is satisfactory, but higher attaining pupils do not always receive work which is hard enough. Standards in reading are good throughout the school, but those in writing do not match them. This is mainly because boys do markedly less well than girls. One boy was honest in confessing, 'I can do writing - I'm just lazy'. Another reason is that pupils of both sexes are sometimes careless in spelling or do not make enough use of joined-up writing. The school is tackling these issues and already this work is bearing fruit. Very good use of Advanced Skills Teachers from local schools is an important part of this. Its effectiveness was seen in an outstanding Year 6 English lesson, where pupils were writing biographies. One boy wrote in his introduction, 'If you want to find out about the first tunnel under a river or the largest Victorian ship, this is the biography for you.' (He had chosen Brunel.)

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They behave well and enjoy their time at school. As one child said, 'What I like best is that you make good friends and the teachers are kind and listen to you.' The strong Christian ethos encourages good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and pupils become confident, happy learners. Attendance is average. The school is working to reduce the number of term-time holidays which a few parents take.

Pupils have a good understanding of the need to live a safe and healthy lifestyle. One pupil said, 'Chocolate is full of sugar and gives you a short burst of energy but fruit helps give you energy for longer and it doesn't make your teeth bad.' They understand the need for exercise: 'PE lessons help make you fit and strong so you can run and climb up stairs without getting puffed.' Pupils are developing satisfactory basic skills, though their ICT and writing skills are not as good as those in reading and mathematics.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Pupils enjoy learning because teachers have good relationships with them and plan interesting lessons. A recent focus has been to ensure a visit each term, such as that to Bodiam Castle, which one girl said she would always remember. Another focus has been on the use of drama. A good lesson for Year 3 pupils began with interviewing 'characters' in the book 'Where the Wild Things Are', which enabled pupils to write sensitively about their feelings and emotions.

Marking and targets are used well in Years 5 and 6 to show pupils how to improve. In Year 6, pupils are expected to respond to comments made by the teacher. Pupils gave an example of one person who looked all though his book to make sure he was following the teacher's advice. Marking is not so consistent in other classes and does not give enough challenge to pupils in Years 1 and 2, especially higher attaining pupils. These pupils are sometimes given work in English and mathematics which is the same as that given to other pupils and which does not extend their learning sufficiently.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory in meeting the needs of most pupils. The school is responding well to boys' reluctance to write by widening the purposes for which pupils are asked to write. Greater use of pupils' ICT skills is a current focus. The curriculum has considerable enrichment from visits and extra-curricular activities, especially in sport and music, and these contribute well to pupils' creative development and well-being. Many links with other schools give good opportunities for participation in tournaments and matches. The school performs regularly in the music festivals in both Kingston and South London.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care and welfare aspects of the guidance given to pupils are good. Relationships between adults and pupils are very effective in establishing a good ethos for learning and make a good contribution to pupils' personal development and well-being. Child protection systems are robust and meet statutory requirements. Pupils who experience particular problems and those with complex learning needs are well supported to ensure they participate in all aspects of school life.

Assessment of pupils' attainment in reading, writing, mathematics and science takes place twice yearly. However, current systems for tracking pupils' progress from this information are not sufficiently rigorous to allow managers to ensure that all pupils are making the progress they should. Assessment is in the process of being devised

for ICT and some other subjects. Teachers set targets in reading, writing and mathematics, but the use of these is not consistent from class to class.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher's leadership is good and has enabled the school to carry out a swift and accurate self-evaluation. This is effective in enabling the school to tackle the right areas for development, though it is too soon for the long-term impact of this work to be evident. Senior and middle managers have been involved in this analysis and development planning, but a number are new to the role of subject leader and have yet to be involved in monitoring the effect on standards of their work.

The governing body is well-established and has done much to provide continuity in the school during a period of great change in staffing and buildings. They give good support and challenge the school's work well.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

You may remember that we visited your school just before the half-term holiday. We enjoyed our visit and you helped us by being so friendly and eager to tell us all about your school. Thank you for making us welcome.

Most of you enjoy school very much and all of you have favourite lessons. You like being given responsibilities and jobs around the school and feel you have a genuine say in what goes on. You enjoy the sporting activities on offer and particularly remember school visits, such as the one to the Isle of Wight.

Your school gives you a satisfactory standard of education. You do best in reading and your parents help you a lot with this as you grow up. Some of you could do better in writing, especially some of the boys. The school is helping you by giving you a wider range of things to write about, and we have asked them to continue this work. You can help too by making sure you always join up your writing, once you have learnt to do so, and by checking spellings you are not sure of in a dictionary. Building works have put your ICT suite out of action, but, once it is in use again, we have asked the school to give you lots of opportunities to use computers in different lessons.

Your new headteacher and her staff have made a good start in their new jobs, and many of your parents wrote to tell us this. One of the things we have asked them to do is to keep a closer watch on the progress you are making, so that they can give you help if you fall behind. We have also asked them to make sure that those of you in Years 1 and 2 who learn more quickly than others are given work which is hard enough.

We hope you continue to enjoy your time at St. Paul's, Hook.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Gray

Lead inspector