

# St Paul's CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105943
<b>Local Authority</b>	Salford
<b>Inspection number</b>	287373
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 April 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kathleen McArthur

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	186
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev Canon David Wyatt
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Carolyn Whiteway
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 February 2005
<b>School address</b>	Cross Lane Salford Lancashire M5 4AL
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 7366871
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 7431523

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This small school is close to the city centre in an area of very severe social and economic need. About two thirds of the pupils receive free school meals, which is much higher than average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion speaking English in addition to their home language is very low but has increased in recent years. A higher than average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There have been several significant staff changes in the past two years, particularly in the leadership. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher had been in post for one year and the deputy headteacher for two terms.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. Inspection findings agree with the school's evaluation that it is a satisfactory school. It gives satisfactory value for money.

In recent years, the school has been through a very unsettled period of staffing turbulence and interim leadership. There is a new leadership team in place. The new headteacher is providing good leadership. Actively supported by the governors and staff she has implemented a clear vision for improvement, securely based on effective systems. These are making a positive impact on teaching and learning and standards are beginning to rise.

Achievement is satisfactory. Children start Nursery with very low attainment, particularly in the vital areas of language and social development. Provision is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage. Great emphasis on language and social skills ensures children make good gains in these aspects of learning. Progress is less consistent in other areas of learning.

Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6. The staffing disruption over several years badly affected the achievement of pupils at Key Stage 1. Consequently, standards and progress here were inadequate. Furthermore, few pupils in either Key Stages 1 or 2 reached the higher levels (level 3 and level 5, respectively). A good start has been made to implement strategies for improvement. Achievement at Key Stage 1 is now satisfactory. In the current Year 2 pupils' standards are beginning to improve. In Key Stage 2, pupils make satisfactory progress overall. Standards are broadly average, but English is weaker, reflecting pupils' particularly low starting points here, especially in speaking and listening skills. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but inconsistent. In Year 6 high quality teaching ensures that pupils make good progress in all subjects. School data indicates that the more able pupils at both key stages are now on course to reach higher levels. The school identified that there is more to be done to ensure that teaching consistently challenges these pupils. Suitable support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those speaking English in addition to their home language enables them to make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Pupils are very happy in school, their behaviour is satisfactory and they say they feel safe and secure. Pastoral care is good and good relationships between staff, pupils and their families support personal and social development well. Academic guidance is satisfactory and pupils are becoming increasingly involved in setting their own targets. Pupils know the importance of looking after their health. They may represent their class on the school council and help others through fund-raising. A satisfactory curriculum provides suitable literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT) and social skills necessary for pupils' future economic well-being. Hard work to improve attendance has produced a small improvement, but attendance rates remain well below average.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Issues from the previous inspection have been appropriately dealt with. The school has made good use of the support provided by the local authority to implement systems that are improving teaching and learning and consequently having a positive impact on attainment and progress. The great majority of parents are pleased with all the school offers their children. School performance is evaluated honestly and accurately, and staff and governors are all well aware that there is still more to do to consolidate current improvements. Consequently, the capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Consolidate and build on strategies implemented to raise standards and accelerate progress in Key Stage 1 and for the more able pupils throughout the school.
- Ensure that children make consistently good progress across all areas of learning in the Foundation Stage.
- Improve rates of attendance.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage. They make good progress in language and personal and social skills due to good teaching in these areas. By the end of Reception most children reach or are close to the expected goals for their age in personal development, but few reach the expected goals in any other area of learning. Their language development remains a significantly weaker area, despite the good progress made.

Standards at Key Stage 1 were exceptionally low in the 2006 national tests. Considerable disruption in staffing in recent years adversely affected standards and progress in both the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. In addition, a significant number of less able pupils entered Year 2 during 2006, which further depressed standards. The headteacher has implemented rigorous strategies to reverse this trend by ensuring a stronger focus on reading and writing skills and intensive work on mathematics. There has also been an increased emphasis on one-to-one support for those pupils who need it. Assessment information shows that pupils currently in Year 2 are now making satisfactory progress and standards are starting to rise. Although beginning to be successful, strategies for improvement have not yet had time to show a sustained impact and there is still more to be done to consolidate this work. In Key Stage 2 progress is satisfactory and standards are broadly average and have risen over time. Progress accelerates rapidly in Year 6 due to high quality teaching. Pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to meet their targets at both the expected and higher levels.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils like their school very much. Behaviour is satisfactory, although a small minority sometimes struggle to follow the school's code of behaviour. The school is a safe environment where pupils feel their views are respected. They say bullying is not a problem, 'just the occasional falling out' and know they can seek help from any adult, or use the 'worry box' to report problems if they want to remain anonymous. Pupils understand the importance of a healthy diet and enjoy the physical activities on offer. School councillors have plenty of ideas of what they would like to do and pupils willingly undertake responsibilities in school. By the time pupils leave, suitable academic and ICT skills prepare them appropriately for their future, although some still have limited communication skills. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory. Most pupils demonstrate caring attitudes towards others. Many visits and the recent introduction of French into the curriculum widen pupils' cultural development. Attendance is well below average. Strategies implemented by the headteacher and governors have resulted in a very small overall improvement.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. However, there are inconsistencies across the school. There is outstanding teaching at the end of Key Stage 2. Here pupils respond well to the high expectations and challenging teaching that inspires them and counters any barriers to learning swiftly and powerfully.

There are some noticeable improvements, building well on the positive relationships that exist. Typically, the pupils listen well to their teachers. However, learning for some of the more able pupils has been hampered at times by activities that are not challenging enough. Assessment information shows that strategies in place to resolve this are beginning to make a positive impact. Teachers are starting to involve pupils more actively in evaluating their own learning. This is beginning to pay dividends in enabling pupils to understand how they can learn better. Improvements in both the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 include systematic planning, greater emphasis on basic skills for reading and writing in particular and some creative approaches using drama. These features are beginning to generate a good pace to learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those speaking English as an additional language are provided with support that enables them to progress satisfactorily.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum provides adequately for pupils' personal development. Basic skills in all year groups, including in the Foundation Stage, now have suitable emphasis. There are some good opportunities for pupils to learn how to support their community. Good links with the high school and the Education Action Zone are used appropriately to help prepare pupils for the next stage of their education. They are also used well to open up valuable opportunities for those who have particular sporting or artistic talents. Breakfast, lunchtime and after school clubs enrich pupils' experiences and include opportunities to learn French, try out chess and practise football skills. In the Foundation Stage, activities are provided which foster independence and conversation well. Satisfactory provision is made for children to explore and investigate but staff sometimes miss opportunities to interact with and extend children's knowledge and understanding in these situations. Consequently, progress is not as good as it could be.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that they trust the adults around them. This is because many of the staff know the families and pupils well and seek to promote features of pupils' personal development, such as their confidence and self-esteem. Suitable arrangements are in place for their protection and safety. The school tracks pupils' progress well and uses the information more effectively than in past years to accelerate progress for most pupils. Pupils are told what they need to learn next, how they could improve their work and what they could aspire to attain. This is beginning to improve their understanding of how they learn best. Support is satisfactory for pupils who are in the early stages of learning to speak English and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Support is best where teaching assistants feel confident in their skills and where external expertise is used to help pupils to cope with problems in their lives.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The new headteacher has quickly gained the full backing of staff and governors to establish a shared culture of school improvement. Her prompt evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is accurate and honest and has ensured the school has a very clear picture of what must be done to bring about and sustain improvements. She is well supported by the recently appointed deputy headteacher. Strategies introduced are starting to have a positive impact on attainment and progress, particularly in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. However, these are in the early stages of implementation and need time to consolidate before their full impact can be assessed. Subject management is satisfactory. Performance management procedures help all staff build on their professional skills and tackle areas for school improvement.

Governance is good. Governors actively support the school, for example by providing the free and much appreciated breakfast club. They are able to hold the school to account and are not afraid to face difficult decisions when necessary. There is a shared commitment to equal opportunities for all pupils and pockets of underachievement, for example in Key Stage 1, are being swiftly eliminated. The budget is carefully managed to support plans for improvement. The school makes good use of links with external agencies to support pupils and their families. Close work with the local authority has provided a basis for improvement, which the school is building and developing to good effect.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	4
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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**

I am writing to thank you all for making us so welcome when we inspected your school this week. You were all friendly and polite and told us many things you like about your school. We could see that you are good footballers! Your school has lovely grounds and lots of good outdoor play equipment. Please make sure you help the caretaker look after everything.

We found that your school has improved and is satisfactory. You have a good headteacher and governors and all the staff work hard to make sure you have interesting lessons, many trips out of school and lots of exciting things to do in your spare time. We were pleased to hear that you feel well cared for and your parents think so too. You are very lucky to have a free breakfast club!

You make satisfactory progress in school. However, some of the younger ones have not made as much progress as they could and very few of you reached the higher levels in your tests. We have asked the teachers to find ways of helping you all make good progress in everything you do and to make sure more of you reach those higher levels. You can help them by trying your best and working hard all the time.

We were sorry to learn that not everyone attends school regularly and some of you are often late. So, another thing you can do to help your school is to make sure you come every day and arrive in good time for your lessons.

We really enjoyed our visit, so thank you again. We hope you will continue to be happy at St Paul's School.