

St Paul's Church of England Primary School Brinnington

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106108
Local Authority	Stockport
Inspection number	287417
Inspection dates	4–5 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Graham Martin

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	241
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs K Wikinson-Davies
Headteacher	Mrs Julie Bottomley
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2003
School address	Brinnington Rise Stockport Cheshire SK5 8AA
Telephone number	0161 4805403
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized Church of England school under the control of the local authority. It serves one of the most economically and socially disadvantaged areas in the authority and is in the highest band of school deprivation indicators. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is twice the national average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a little higher than the national average, while the number of pupils with a statement of special educational need is broadly average. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A small proportion comes from minority ethnic groups. Some of these pupils have a first language other than English. Skills on entry to the Nursery class are very low in comparison with those expected nationally. The school holds a national Healthy Schools Award for being a health promoting school and a local authority Achievement in Excellence award for food production and working practice. It has also been awarded a Reading Connects School award from the National Literacy Trust.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The inspection agrees with the school's own judgement that it provides a satisfactory education and satisfactory value for money. Good links with the community and other partners provide strong support in the school's drive to improve. Pupils' social and moral development is good and they behave well. They enjoy learning and make a good contribution to their school and the wider community.

Good provision in the Nursery class means that the children get off to a flying start. However, progress in the Reception class slows because teaching and learning are less effective. By the end of the Foundation Stage, a few children achieve the early goals for their learning but most are still working towards them. Provision in the Foundation Stage therefore is satisfactory on balance. Pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6, a reflection of the school's own recognition of inconsistent progress between classes. Progress in writing and in learning how to solve mathematical problems is inconsistent because some teachers do not use marking well enough to explain to pupils how to improve their work. Where marking is used well, as in Years 4 and 6, pupils achieve better. By Years 2 and 6, standards are close to average in reading and science but below average in writing and mathematics.

The school's curriculum is satisfactory. It has good features in the range of extra-curricular activities and the use of enriching opportunities, such as drama workshops, to cover teachers' planning and preparation time. Pupils enjoy this enrichment; this enjoyment adds value to their learning and social development. They do not, however, have enough opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. The majority of pupils attend well and enjoy coming to school. Below average attendance figures are, however, a reflection of poor attitudes to school by a small number of families which the school is working hard to change. The care of pupils' physical, social and emotional needs is good, with especially good pastoral care. This is a reflection of the school's mission statement that commits to the all-round development of each pupil. Parents say they are pleased with the quality of care shown for their children. Academic support and guidance is satisfactory because, while a start has been made on using assessment to set challenging learning targets, this is not yet used extensively enough to ensure that progress is consistently good in all classes. The procedures for safeguarding pupils meet current national guidelines.

There are good features in the school's leadership and management, which are satisfactory overall. The headteacher and deputy have strengthened leadership by setting up curriculum teams with defined responsibilities and clear lines of accountability. This has given middle leaders the skills to share the responsibility for school improvement, which is beginning to have a good impact on the school's overall effectiveness. Governors take their responsibility to hold the school to account seriously, though improved communication on some issues would help them to be better informed when making decisions. Resources are managed and used effectively to ensure that satisfactory value for money is obtained. The school makes good use of opportunities to acquire funding and expertise from other sources to add value to its delegated budget. Together with the strong local and community partnerships, this all gives the school good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality and consistency of marking, assessment and targets for learning to ensure that progress is good in all classes and that pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work, especially their writing.
- Improve opportunities for pupils to use their writing and number skills in other subjects and to use their mathematical skills to solve problems.
- Increase the attendance of a small minority of pupils.

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.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

In the Nursery class, a strong emphasis on the key skills of speaking, listening, reading, writing and number enables the children to progress well. Progress then slows in the Reception class and, while a small number of children reach the early goals for their learning, overall standards are below average at the start of Year 1. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, standards are a little below the national average and well below average at the higher levels in writing. Results in the 2006 national tests at the end of Year 6 dipped to well below average. The school's records confirm that this was specific to this group of pupils, largely as a result of significant numbers arriving late to the school, often with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The provisional results in the 2007 national tests for the current Year 6 indicate that standards are now close to the national average in English, mathematics and science, exceeding planned targets for 2007. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 remains, however, below average. Achievement is satisfactory overall and noticeably better when pupils' work is marked with challenging learning targets in mind. Standards in reading and science are stronger than they are in writing or in mathematics. The progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory and they are on course to achieve the realistic learning targets set for them because of good progress in English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory overall, with good features in their social and moral development. They make a positive contribution to the community through fundraising for a variety of charities, and willingly taking on individual responsibilities within the school. The elected school council helps pupils develop their skills in citizenship and has made a difference to the school by raising funds to purchase new play equipment. The playground committee have contributed their ideas for developing the outdoor environment, and show a mature concern that any changes made are not just for themselves, but for the benefit of generations to come. Behaviour is good around school and pupils treat each other with respect. They say that they feel safe in school and know how to be fit and healthy. Attendance is persistently below the national average. The school works hard to encourage full attendance, but more needs to be done with the small minority of pupils who do not attend regularly. Pupils really appreciate the contribution of adults to their welfare in school. Because pupils' skills in writing and mathematics are below average, their preparation for future economic well-being is satisfactory rather than good. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is

satisfactory with assemblies providing satisfactory opportunities for prayer and reflection. Although pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong, their awareness of other cultures is somewhat limited.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with some that is good. Consistently good teaching of communication skills for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is reflected in their good progress in English. Teaching is consistently good in the Nursery but lower expectations in the Reception class hinder progress. Some good teaching occurs in both Key Stages 1 and 2. In Years 4 and 6, skilled marking gives pupils clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their work and, consequently, pupils learn well. Where teaching is satisfactory, marking and feedback to pupils are not used consistently well enough to set them challenging learning targets. Therefore, pupils are not clear about what they need to do to improve their writing or how to use their good number skills to solve mathematical problems. Learning is slower in lessons where teaching is only satisfactory, leading to inconsistent progress, especially in writing and in mathematics. However, learning is enhanced when teachers use computers well to stimulate pupils' interests and where literacy and number skills are linked to topics in other subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and includes good features, particularly in relation to enriching pupils' lives. Specialist teaching for music and sport is very popular, increasing pupils' enjoyment of learning while developing a real sense of pride in their school community. Pupils benefit from a wide range of outside visits and visitors to school. Older pupils enjoy taking part in some very adventurous activities during their residential visit to an outdoor centre in Wales. There are strong links with the local high school, which provides specialist support for sporting activities and events.

The curriculum does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to practise their basic skills in mathematics and writing, and this means that they do not always achieve as well as they should. The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and while they make good progress in English, their progress in mathematics is less good. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall, and good in the Nursery. The children begin school life in a calm but vibrant atmosphere where they feel safe and secure. Provision for outdoor play is a real strength of the school and, even when the weather is poor, children have great fun splodging through the mud in Wellington boots and exploring the richness of the environment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school's care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory, with some good features. Pastoral care is good, and pupils feel happy, safe and valued in school. Parents rightly feel that their children are well cared for. One commented that the school 'develops confidence in each child according to their individual needs, with the underlying belief that learning should be

fun'. Procedures for child protection and health and safety routines are firmly in place and known by staff. Good links with outside agencies and the local high school make an appreciable contribution to pupils' well-being, and they are confident in moving on to the next stage in their education. The school's system for tracking pupils' progress means teachers have a great deal of information on which to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. However, systems for individual target setting are not as firmly established as they could be in classroom routines. This means that academic guidance is not yet as clear and focused as it needs to be to ensure consistently good progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides a good sense of direction and conveys her aspirations for the school clearly to staff and the community. There are evident strengths in the sense of purpose and teamwork of the headteacher and deputy headteacher so their leadership is good. Their skills and expertise complement each other, contributing well to a shared vision for the school's improvement. These are good features in what, overall, is satisfactory leadership. Emerging strengths in leadership include improved teamwork by middle leaders and sharing of workload. As identified in the school's improvement plan, further strengthening of the work of these teams is required to share accountability for school improvement more widely. What has been achieved so far, alongside good checks on the work of middle leaders, gives the school good capacity for future improvement, as seen in the better use of performance results to identify which aspects of pupils' learning need to be improved most. The headteacher and governors are responsive to parents' and pupils' views. For example, the school's format for reporting to parents has been improved as a result of parental feedback. Governors are supportive, they know the school well and play their part in helping to shape its direction. However, better communication with the school would help governors to be more effective in fulfilling their role of critical friend. Good links and well-established partnerships with other agencies and the community help the school to enhance its resources.

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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	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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
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.

Annex A

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	2
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	3
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

Inspection of: St. Paul's Church of England Primary School, Stockport,
SK5 8AA

First of all, thank you very much for welcoming us to your school. You were very friendly and helpful. We were very impressed with how polite and well behaved you all are. We enjoyed our visit and it didn't take us long to realise that you enjoy learning. Thank you for all the discussions we had that helped us to find out how well your school works. Your school gives you a satisfactory education and these are the reasons why.

- Your good behaviour and your friendship and care towards each other.
- How well your school uses the skills of other people to help it to improve.
- Your interest in the school's activities, your eagerness to learn and the way that you help to improve your school and the lives of others. We saw this in how you are keen to develop your school grounds for the benefit of children who will come after you have left.
- Your understanding of how to keep safe and live a healthy lifestyle.
- The way that your school cares for you as people. You told us that you appreciate how your school helps you to deal with any problems, worries or upsets.

There are three things that we would like you and your school to do better.

- Your teachers need to help you to use your number skills better when trying to solve problems in mathematics and to practise your literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.
- Some of your teachers could mark your work better to help you to understand what you need to do to improve it. We think that this could help to improve your writing skills, for example.
- A few of you who do not attend as regularly as you should must remind your families that you will fall behind with your learning if you are not in school.

Mrs Corlett and I would like to send you our best wishes for the future. We hope that you all carry on trying your best and enjoying learning.