



Saint Paul's CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106453
Local Authority Wigan
Inspection number 287517
Inspection dates 22–23 February 2007
Reporting inspector Derek Aitken

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Warrington Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Goose Green, Wigan
Age range of pupils	4–11		Lancashire WN3 6SB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01942 243068
Number on roll (school)	206	Fax number	01942 826748
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr I Kelly
		Headteacher	Mrs A.E. Jackson
Date of previous school inspection	24 September 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is of average size. Pupils come from a variety of social backgrounds and the proportion taking free school meals is average. The vast majority of pupils are White British. A very small number are of mixed heritage, but none of these pupils is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average, but no pupil has a statement of special educational need. This month the school gained the Healthy School award. The headteacher joined the school in January 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with school leaders that this is a good school. In the last year changes have been made to promote pupils' welfare, linked to the school's successful pursuit of Healthy School status. Moreover, there has been a sharp focus on identifying priorities for improvement. The headteacher's high expectations, vision and insight into what is needed to move the school forward are charting a strong course for further development and ensuring that the school has the capacity for good improvement in the future.

Pupils achieve well. Children enter school with average levels of knowledge and skills for their age. They get off to a good start in Reception because their learning is lively, well organised and closely monitored. Pupils make good progress thereafter to reach above average standards by the end of Year 6 and do particularly well in mathematics. Support programmes are successful in enabling pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make good progress. Strategies for improving writing and stretching the more able in this subject are less developed. Consequently, standards in this skill, though satisfactory in Key Stage 2, are not as high as they could be.

The school is justly proud of the work it does to promote pupils' personal development. Pupils have a strong appreciation of right and wrong, help each other out willingly, and readily applaud the efforts of others. Very good relationships enable pupils to acquire good learning habits. This is reflected in the way they support each other in pair and group work. Good teaching is particularly effective in ensuring pupils' active participation in question and answer sessions and in reinforcing and developing their basic skills in English and mathematics. However, opportunities are missed to involve pupils in the assessment of their learning to enable them to become active participants in raising standards and recognising the progress that they make.

The school's good curriculum contributes well to pupils' learning. It supports their personal development especially well by fostering a strong team spirit while simultaneously nurturing individual aptitudes. Pupils are very aware of how to stay safe. They have exceptional attitudes towards health and show this through their food and drink preferences and strong participation in a range of sporting activities. Pupils also demonstrate a high level of expertise in music, both in singing and with instruments. The diverse opportunities pupils have to contribute to the community help them to become well-rounded young citizens. Children in Reception are well catered for overall, but inadequate outdoor facilities restrict opportunities for creative development. The quality of care, guidance and support is good. Pupils receive good pastoral guidance. They say that they feel safe in school and that their views are increasingly being taken into account. Parents and carers overwhelmingly support the work of the school and pay tribute to the quality of work done recently, for example in the area of health education.

Overall, the school has made satisfactory improvement since its last inspection. Standards by the end of Year 6 have risen and there have been successful enhancements to pupils' personal development. However, some key issues, such as cramped

accommodation for Key Stage 2 classes and the lack of outdoor play facilities for Reception children, have not been resolved. The school's evaluation of its work is accurate, but the impact of new initiatives has yet to be fully felt and the monitoring of teaching does not always place sufficient emphasis on pupils' learning. Partnerships with other establishments are good and continuously improving. The school offers good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in writing, especially for the more able.
- Develop good practice in assessment and the setting of individual targets for pupils so that all have a clear idea of how to improve their work.
- Improve the outdoor provision for Reception children to ensure that they have more opportunities for creative and imaginative work.
- Ensure that the systems for monitoring teaching have a sharp focus on its impact on pupils' learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

On entry to Reception children's skills and knowledge are at the levels expected nationally. They make good progress because lessons are stimulating and work is well planned to develop all aspects of their learning. By the time children join Year 1, the vast majority have attained the expected early learning goals. Thereafter all pupils build well on their earlier attainment. Test results at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in 2006 were above average overall, and have been consistently so for five years. Pupils reach well above average standards in mathematics in Year 6, because provision in this subject is particularly well developed. The improvement in standards in mathematics has enabled the school's results to rise faster than the national rate. Results in English were average at the higher level, due to relative weaknesses in pupils' writing skills. The school is now prioritising the need to raise standards in writing, particularly for higher attainers. However, it is too early to assess the impact of the new initiatives being implemented to this end. Well established methods to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, based on effective assessment, help them achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy their school, feel part of a safe and secure community and are keen to learn. This is reflected in their good attendance and punctuality. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their spiritual growth is outstanding, nurtured in very good reflective assemblies. However, in contrast, pupils' multicultural awareness, although satisfactory, is not as well developed. Pupils behave well and take part enthusiastically in sport and musical activities, reaching a particularly high standard in the latter. Their self-esteem

is also underpinned by the praise they receive for their efforts. In lessons pupils willingly share ideas and resources and show care and consideration for each other. Through the developing school council and other committees, pupils have good opportunities to play a significant role in decision-making. This is reflected in the hard work they have put in for the school to achieve Healthy School status. They are remarkably aware of the importance of a healthy diet and regular exercise. The above average standard they reach in literacy and numeracy sets them up well for secondary school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils make good progress because work is well planned and matched to their needs, and time is used effectively. Teachers' expert subject knowledge and careful explanations ensure that lessons get off to a good start. Probing questions and encouragement for all pupils to participate ensure that these sessions are lively and productive. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well, relationships are good and, as a result, pupils are responsive. Pupils concentrate well and their written work is accurate, because teaching is well designed to reinforce basic skills. Pupils have good opportunities to work independently and with others to develop their understanding and skills. Teaching assistants contribute well to pupils' learning. They work energetically to ensure that no pupil falls behind. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but both the quality of marking and the use of individual targets are not consistent enough to provide sufficient help for pupils to take the next steps in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets the needs of pupils well. Pupils acquire a firm grasp and understanding of English, mathematics and science. The curriculum is closely monitored to ensure that pupils make good progress at all stages. It is now being remodelled to give pupils more creative opportunities and to make better connections between subjects. However, this work is at too early a stage to gauge its impact. The Foundation Stage curriculum provides well for most areas of learning, but outdoor provision limits creative work. Older pupils know how to stay safe and make healthy life choices because these are prominent features in the work of the school and they are reinforced effectively across the curriculum. Pupils' musical talents blossom because all are taught to read music and play some form of musical instrument. Public performances by the excellent choir reinforce strong community links. A good range of visits and visitors provide first-hand learning experiences that link in well with pupils' work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Procedures for health and safety, child protection and the welfare of pupils are clearly established. Pupils are confident that any issues or concerns they have will be dealt with fairly and promptly. They trust staff and know who to turn to if they are troubled. Support staff are successful in increasing the confidence and self-esteem of vulnerable pupils. Good links with outside agencies ensure that barriers to learning are removed successfully. Arrangements to help pupils settle in Reception are underpinned by close liaison with pre-school providers, and older pupils are well prepared for transfer to secondary school. Parents and carers contribute well to their children's welfare at school, for example by ensuring a good standard of attendance and punctuality. They report that 'the staff are very helpful and always put the children's needs first'. Tracking systems are effective but day-to-day assessment does not consistently support pupils' progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher has enthused pupils and colleagues and is now 'growing' an effective management team. This is in no small measure a result of the opportunities that all staff have seized to develop professionally, become more accountable and exert a real influence on the work of the school. Subject leaders are highly experienced and have an adequate overview of what further action is needed to improve quality in their subjects. However, most have not been actively involved in monitoring teaching and learning, which has limited their capacity to evaluate closely the quality of learning in their subjects. The school's self-evaluation very accurately identifies strengths and areas that need to improve, and targets actions and resources appropriately to tackle them. The school development plan is based on effective analysis and, overall, provides clear guidelines for assessing performance and measuring progress. Performance management is established and increasingly linked to school development. Good induction arrangements enable new staff to settle in quickly and to contribute effectively. Governors provide a good balance of support and challenge for the school.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	2

The quality of provision

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

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
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	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

My colleague and I visited your school this week to find out how well you are learning. Please thank all the pupils for making us welcome and being helpful when we asked you questions. The 'other one' (!), as one little girl called him, was especially lucky in being able to talk to you at some length. He could see how responsible you are and how proud you are of helping the school gain its recent Healthy School award.

We judge that you are receiving a good education. We agree with you that the staff look after you well. The teachers give you lots of encouragement to take part in their well planned lessons. You follow the teachers' lead in being polite and considerate to others and support each other well in lessons. All of these things help you in your learning. We were particularly impressed by how well your mathematical skills are coming along. You are lucky to have such a good start to the day in assembly where everyone takes part and both your musical talents and your faith are fully celebrated. We also agree with you that many good things have been put in place by the headteacher to help you enjoy school even more.

There are a few things that we have asked the headteacher and the staff to do to make your learning even better. First, we want them to give you better opportunities to develop your writing skills. Second, we have asked them to make sure you are more fully involved in assessing your work, to help you learn faster. We have also asked them to check carefully how well you learn in class to ensure that the actions they take will, indeed, raise your standards. Finally, we have asked the headteacher to improve the play facilities for the younger children.

Thank you for helping us with the inspection of your school. You can help by always doing your best and by working hard with your teachers to make St. Paul's an even better place to be.