



# St Paul's CofE Primary School and Nursery

Inspection Report

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education  
and care

**Unique Reference Number** 114543  
**Local Authority** Brighton and Hove  
**Inspection number** 289960  
**Inspection dates** 11–12 October 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Michael Weller

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 address</b>	St Nicholas Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Brighton
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		BN1 3LP
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01273 721001
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	218	<b>Fax number</b>	01273 701492
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	L Austin
		<b>Headteacher</b>	L Dupret
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 January 2002		

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<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
3–11	11–12 October 2006	289960

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is situated in the centre of Brighton. Its pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds and are drawn from across the city. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average and the percentage with learning difficulties is also slightly below average. About 25% of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Nearly 10% have English as an additional language. Quite a number of pupils enter the school other than at the usual time, some of whom have experienced difficulties in other schools. Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery is broadly at the level expected for their age.

The headteacher took up her post in September 2006 following the retirement of her predecessor who had led the school for 20 years. The deputy headteacher returned to the school in July after a year away.

## 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 good school. It is a happy, caring community with a strong Christian ethos. Pupils feel safe and well supported and almost all of them enjoy their time there. Most parents are very supportive and appreciative of what the school provides and the progress their children make. The school has made good improvement since its last inspection. Standards have risen and are above average in English, mathematics and science when pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6. The improvement in standards is a result of better teaching and learning. The overall quality of teaching and learning is now good and there are even some examples of outstanding teaching and learning. Pupils' achievement is good in relation to their capabilities and their starting points on entry to the school. Pupils' standards of writing at the end of Year 2 are lower than their standards in reading and mathematics. Fewer pupils than nationally reach the higher level for their age in writing at the end of Year 2.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. This begins in the Nursery and Reception classes where children immediately experience the school's good care, guidance and support. Personal development is fostered through strong links with the church and local community, through assemblies and through a varied and interesting curriculum. The curriculum is good and includes opportunities, for example, for pupils to learn Spanish in Years 3 to 6. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to write at length in Years 1 and 2. The development of early writing skills is also a relatively weaker area of children's attainment at the end of Reception Year.

All pupils are valued and the school takes care to ensure that their differing needs are met. Pupils learning English as an additional language, those who have learning difficulties, and those who have entered late after experiencing difficulties in other schools are all helped to do well. Although much good support is provided for pupils, teachers' marking and the targets they set for pupils do not always tell them clearly enough what they need to do to improve their work.

A good range of after school clubs, visiting experts, school visits and special projects, such as the development of a wildlife garden, all provide additional stimulus to which the pupils respond with enthusiasm. Pupils are helped to develop a good understanding of the importance of healthy eating and regular exercise. They are well prepared for their future lives.

Leadership and management are good. The school recognises its strengths and knows where it needs to improve. Given the accurate self-evaluation, and the steady rate of improvement since the last inspection, the school is well placed to improve further.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing at the end of Year 2 by increasing the opportunities for writing at length in Years 1 and 2 and giving more attention to writing in the Nursery and Reception Year.

- Ensure that teachers' marking and the targets they set pupils consistently help all pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards are above average by the time pupils reach the end of Year 6 and pupils' achievement is good. Children make good progress during their time in the Nursery and Reception Year. By the end of the Reception Year, almost all children reach the expected standards and a good number exceed them in most areas of learning. Although the children's writing is as expected for their age, they do not do as well in this area as in other areas of learning.

Children's good start is built on through steady progress in Years 1 and 2. Standards are broadly average at the end of Year 2 although they are relatively better in reading and mathematics than in writing. For the pupils most recently in Year 2, these standards represent satisfactory achievement because they had lower starting points than those now in Reception.

In 2006, there was a marked improvement, not only in the overall standards but also in the percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels at the end of Year 6. Pupils' progress is good in Years 3 to 6 and some outstanding gains are made in mathematics and science. The work of pupils now in Years 5 and 6 shows that the improved standards are being maintained. Throughout the school, pupils do well in speaking and listening. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties are well supported and achieve as well as others.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils respect and value one another and the adults in school. They reflect maturely on issues that concern not only themselves but also the wider world and are keen to help those less fortunate than themselves. Very occasionally in lessons pupils do not concentrate fully if the work is not challenging enough or when they are not directly supervised by an adult.

Pupils enjoy school a lot and say that 'it is a good place to be'. They have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy diet and regular exercise. Pupils are safety conscious in practical lessons and say that they feel safe at school. Active involvement in charity work, along with their good development of basic skills, results in pupils being well equipped for later life. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school community through class and key stage forums as well as through the well established school council.

The attendance rate is close to the national average. The school does all it can to promote full attendance but attendance figures are reduced by a minority of pupils taking extended holidays abroad or persistent unauthorised absence.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. They are stronger in the Nursery, Reception Year, and in Years 3 to 6 where there is some outstanding teaching leading to improved standards. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is well planned with effective support given to developing pupils' mathematics, reading and speaking and listening skills. Teachers have a clear understanding of the differing needs of pupils in their classes. Pupils with learning difficulties and those learning English as an additional language are well supported so that they make good progress. There are a few occasions in Years 1 and 2, however, when the pace of learning is slowed because too long is allowed for activities, pupils are not independent enough, or because expectations of pupils are not high enough.

In Years 3 to 6, lessons are lively and challenging and there is a brisk pace. Teachers have high expectations that all pupils will participate and succeed and pupils respond well. Planning is exceptionally thorough and classrooms are well organised to encourage pupils to work independently.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

Pupils benefit from a good and well planned curriculum plus a range of interesting activities that extend and enrich their learning. The learning opportunities are well matched to the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and there is good challenge for the more capable ones.

Effective planning across the curriculum has led to improved standards, for example in mathematics, with many pupils extending their learning through the use of problem solving and investigations. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 still do not have as many opportunities as they need to write at length in different subjects. Early writing skills also require more attention in the Nursery and Reception Year to ensure that children make as many gains in this area as in other aspects of learning.

Special weeks devoted to subjects such as science or art also help to broaden pupils' horizons and develop their talents. There are many school visits such as to local museums or the Royal Ballet. Visiting experts from music and drama groups or from the Sussex Wildlife Trust provide good, additional opportunities for pupils.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Staff know pupils well and are strongly committed to their care and well-being. Child protection procedures are securely in place. Vulnerable pupils are quickly identified and carefully monitored. The facilities within the school, such as the use of 'the haven' for pupils needing additional personal support, and the links with external agencies

are outstanding. Health and safety procedures are robust with regular checks made to ensure the safety of the site. Pupils trust and like the staff and know they can turn to an adult should the need arise.

Throughout the school, there is variation in how well teachers tell pupils what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils in Years 4 to 6 have a much clearer awareness of their targets than those in other years. The quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent. The most effective marking gives pupils very specific guidance on how to improve.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The leadership and management of the school are good. Although there has recently been a change of headteacher, and the deputy headteacher has been away from the school, standards have improved and this improvement is being maintained. Management systems are strong and flexible and senior managers are redeployed to cover changes effectively.

The new headteacher has a clear vision for improvement and already has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. She has already consulted widely in order to include teachers, parents, pupils, governors and others in putting together the new school development plan. Subject coordinators have a much clearer idea of their roles than at the last inspection and this has contributed to the school's improvement, especially in mathematics, science and English in Years 3 to 6. The school recognises the need to evaluate even more sharply how the provision impacts on pupils' progress, for example in writing up to the end of Year 2.

School governors are very supportive and have become more involved in checking curriculum initiatives and monitoring pupils' progress. Senior managers, governors and teachers work well together as a strong, mutually supportive team.

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## 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>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2

### The quality of provision

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

<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.

## Leadership and management

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

Thank you for giving us such a polite and friendly welcome to your school. Thank you too for sharing your work with us and answering our questions so helpfully.

We found that St Paul's is a good school and we know that this is what you think too. You told us that you enjoy school and that you feel safe and happy there. You behave very well. The standard of your work is good, especially by the time you reach Years 5 and 6. The youngest children are helped to settle well in the Nursery and Reception classes and are given a good start.

You told us that you have good teaching. We agree with you that your teachers help you to learn well. Most of you speak very confidently. We know that you have many opportunities to give your opinions and make suggestions. You are also very helpful to each other around the school.

You are lucky to have so many opportunities outside your regular lessons. We are impressed by the school visits, your choice of clubs and your wildlife garden. You have also clearly enjoyed and learned from events such as science days. We were very impressed by how many of you can speak Spanish.

There are some things we think the school could do better and you can help.

- The writing by the older children is very lively and interesting to read. We would like the children in Years 1 and 2 to enjoy their writing as much, and to be as proud of it.
- Some of you are unsure about what your targets are, or what you need to do to improve your work. We have asked your teachers to help you with this.

Thank you again for being so polite and helpful.