



St Paul's CofE Primary School, Leamington Spa

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125701
Local Authority Warwickshire
Inspection number 293336
Inspection date 5 October 2006
Reporting inspector Clive Kempton HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Upper Holly Walk
School category	Voluntary aided		Leamington Spa
Age range of pupils	3–11		CV32 4JZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01926 425361
Number on roll (school)	315	Fax number	01926 425480
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Patricia Brown
		Headteacher	Pete Farrell
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out in one day by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Paul's Church of England Primary school is a larger than average primary school. Over one fifth of the pupils live outside the catchment area and come from a wide range of social and ethnic backgrounds. When children join the Nursery class, many do not have the skills and knowledge expected of three and four-year-olds. Over one fifth of pupils are eligible for free school meals, above the national average. The number of pupils identified with learning difficulties and disabilities is well above the national average.

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 that is getting better and better, where every child is valued. One parent commented, 'the school excels in providing a friendly, happy and comfortable environment'. Another said that, 'the school is interested in the achievement and personal development of the children. It makes strenuous efforts to produce good citizens'. Everyone connected with the school holds the headteacher in very high regard. He is a visible presence and always stands at the school gate every day, knows every parent and every child by name, and as one parent commented, 'he is obviously proud to interact with all the children. This makes him a significant part of the positive image that St Paul's School has in the community'. These personal attributes are outstanding. A large number of questionnaires returned to the inspectors strongly support this positive view. His strong leadership has had the impact of unifying the staff and establishing an ethos of caring for the whole child. The deputy headteacher and others with leadership responsibilities are growing in their management roles and have a clear view of where improvements need to be made. However, choosing the right course of action to tackle issues such as the lack of higher levels in the Year 2 tests needs to be quicker, which is why leadership and management overall are judged to be good, and not outstanding. Pupils really enjoy coming to school and feel safe there. Nearly three quarters of them take up the opportunity to extend their interests and learning in a wide range of after school clubs including knitting, golf, constructing motorised models, and singing in the 'Gospel Gang' who perform to the school and the local community. At the end of their long day, pupils almost seem reluctant to go home, such is their enjoyment of the life of the school. Teachers, parents, grandparents and outside professionals contribute to this rich and varied extended curriculum. Pupils behave well and have good attitudes to their learning. They make a fabulous start when they enter the Nursery and make satisfactory progress through the infant classes. When they get into the juniors, they make good progress and by the time they leave the school in Year 6 have achieved standards that are above those expected for their age. Pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities are very well supported and cared for by the outstanding special education needs coordinator (SENCO). Their specific needs are quickly identified and good support is provided within school and excellent support from outside agencies that help them to catch up. The reason that all pupils make good progress as they move through the school is that the teaching is effective, every pupil is valued, and the good curriculum in school and the very rich curriculum after school meets the needs of individual pupils. However, things could be even better if pupils knew more about how to improve their work by having more regular, clearer targets, and if teachers' marking of work explained the next step in learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers set clearer, more regular targets and through their marking tell pupils how to improve their work.
- Ensure that management response to identified issues can demonstrate quicker impact on learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The pupils' good progress through the school results in standards that are above average by the time they leave. In the 2006 tests, Year 2 pupils achieved similar standards in English and mathematics to those expected nationally. Year 6 pupils achieved well above the national average in English and science and in previous years have done so in mathematics as well. However, in 2006, standards in mathematics were disappointing, below national averages. The school is clearly able to explain the dip in standards and has already put action in place to remedy this.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good with some outstanding features, such as the way they all learn to get on with each other both in school and in the playground. One pupil commented, 'this is a very helpful school with very helpful teachers'. The school's own questionnaire demonstrates that 95% of the juniors enjoy coming to school. The strong Christian ethos of the school permeates all areas of school life. Areas of reflection around the school allow pupils to have a quiet time on their own and write their own prayers. Some pupils take on responsibilities in school, help plant bulbs in the community through the environment club, and help out at lunchtime. These opportunities help pupils to develop skills that will equip them well for adult life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching throughout the school is good. Practical activities in lessons encourage pupils to work together and learn from each other, although there is insufficient teacher focus on targeting individuals with questions. Visits to many classrooms confirmed that work is purposeful, well planned and the pupils generally work hard. Teachers work hard as well to prepare interesting lessons and this is valued by pupils and parents: 'My child enjoys school and finds his teachers passionate about their lessons. This has made him more passionate about learning. He now comes home with a smile on his face'.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is well resourced and meets the needs of all pupils, although the school knows it needs to improve provision in the Foundation Stage outdoor classroom and is currently addressing the issue. The range of out of school activities

and those offered during the lunchtimes is outstanding and ensures that a large number of pupils get involved. Of note is the way that staff carefully target pupils who would benefit from particular activities and all enjoy participating. The annual school camp is popular and a small group of pupils won an international control technology competition in Germany. A parent commented: 'St Paul's is renowned for its extra-curricular activities organised by both staff and parents'.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding feature of the school. Every child really does matter at St Paul's and every effort is made to ensure that everyone feels special and well supported in their academic and personal development. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are quickly identified and get the support they need. Teaching assistants make a difference too and are well deployed to support identified pupils both within the class and individually outside the classroom. The headteacher's positive relationship with the parents enables every adult in the school to respond immediately to issues as they arise to ensure that individual pupils receive the support they need. A parent commented: 'All staff have been sensitive and caring towards the children, flexible in their approach to help the children achieve the best learning possible'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management across the school are good. The experienced senior managers are ensuring that new middle managers are well supported in their roles and in developing effective leadership skills. Together they have a good capacity to make further improvement. Governors are keen, committed, and increasingly involved in the school and provide good support and challenge to move the school forward. Since the last inspection, all key issues have been addressed and the management has secured a major rebuild of Key Stage 2 accommodation that provides spacious rooms, conducive to learning. The school knows itself well and evaluates its strengths and weaknesses accurately. School development planning addresses the right issues such as: insufficient pupils achieving the higher levels in the Year 2 tests; and the dip in mathematics attainment in Year 6 in 2006; but needs a stronger focus on choosing the right course of action to have the most immediate impact.

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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?	1
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	1
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

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?	1

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	1
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 all very much for the warm welcome you gave me and Mrs Walsh when we visited your school on 5 October. We enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and watching you learn. We thought you would like to know what we thought about your school and how it could get even better.
- Your parents all think you come to a super school and we agree.
- You all say that you enjoy coming to school and we can see why. You have a lovely school and the new classrooms in Key Stage 2 are really big and allow you lots of space to do all different kinds of work.
- You were all very well behaved and looked really smart in your school uniform.
- Your teachers really prepare interesting work for you to do in lessons because they care about you, enjoy teaching you and want you to do well.
- All the other adults in the school work really hard and help you too.
- Your headteacher is outstanding at running the school! He knows all your names and knows your parents well too. He makes sure you get the right help when you need it.
- You have loads of opportunities to get involved in clubs and have fun after school and at lunchtime. In order to make your school even better we have asked Mr Farrell and your teachers to
- Make sure that you all understand the comments that teachers write in your books and that the comments help you to do even better work
- Make sure that when they notice you could do better work, they quickly think of ways of helping you to improve.

Well done everyone and keep up the good work.