

St Paul's RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102146
Local Authority	Haringey
Inspection number	307912
Inspection dates	10–11 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Norma Ball

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Rose
Headteacher	Mr Peter Keane
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2003
School address	Bradley Road Wood Green London N22 7SZ
Telephone number	020 8888 7081
Fax number	020 8889 1397

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized primary school is located in an ethnically and socially diverse area of north London. Over one-third of pupils are entitled to free school meals and this is higher than national average. Almost all the pupils in the school come from minority ethnic backgrounds and a much higher than average proportion have English as an additional language. Many are at the early stages of learning English. In all, 24 home languages are spoken, and the most common are Polish, Spanish, French and Twi. Over one quarter of pupils find learning difficult, this is higher than average. These include a range of difficulties from autism to speech, language and communication needs. The school holds Healthy Schools and Activemark awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This satisfactory school is improving. The large majority of parents are supportive of the school and all that it does for their children. One parent, typical of many, wrote 'My son enjoys school and we can clearly see his learning progress.' The parents and the community appreciate the approachability of the headteacher and his staff. Pupils achieve broadly average standards and progress is satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well together. They are implementing a manageable range of initiatives to improve standards. Some of these are already showing signs of success, demonstrating that the school's capacity to improve further is satisfactory. Imaginative changes have improved the management of different subjects. The governing body is now at full strength and is better able to act as a critical friend to hold the school to account. Leadership and management at all levels are growing stronger and more ambitious. However, not all leaders are sufficiently focused on raising achievement in English, mathematics and science.

There have been improvements in teaching resulting from the monitoring of performance by the headteacher and deputy headteacher, who have organised extra support to address weaknesses. Teaching is now satisfactory, but the proportion of good teaching is not high enough to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress. Progress is uneven across year groups because teachers do not have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially able pupils. The pupils' progress is monitored with increasing care but this assessment information is not used consistently to plan lessons to meet the needs of pupils of different ability.

The curriculum is satisfactory. Strategies, such as a focus on phonics (how combinations of letters in words link to their sounds) and developing creative writing skills, are helping to promote better progress in English throughout the school. Not enough improvements have been made yet, to ensure consistently good progress across the school. Pupils show good awareness of how to maintain a good healthy lifestyle, by participating in sporting activities and being aware of the value of the food they eat.

Pupils' well-being and personal development are good. They love their school and show real enthusiasm for learning. One pupil said, 'I like my school because every day I learn new and interesting things.' They are well cared for and show respect and confidence in staff. However, pupils are not clear about the targets they are given and the detail in the marking of their work is not good enough to help them understand how they can improve. Pupils show pride and diligence in the responsibilities they undertake. They are keen to raise funds for charities and join in local events. Their good personal development and the satisfactory standards they attain mean they are soundly prepared for the next stage in their education.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The Reception class provides a happy and safe environment for children to learn. They feel cared for and gain confidence because good routines are established. Children settle quickly into school, interact well with the class teacher and gain confidence. They are encouraged to be independent and also to share and play co-operatively in class and in the recently improved outside play area. Most children join Reception from a range of local pre-school groups. Though links have been made with these groups, they are not extensive or well developed. Children

join Reception with skills generally below those expected for four year olds. They make satisfactory progress overall and better progress in personal and social attitudes, physical and creative development. There is good emphasis on developing pupils' writing but progress in number work is variable. Staff work together as a well co-ordinated and directed team, closely monitoring the day-to-day progress that children make. The school establishes satisfactory links with parents at the induction sessions organised at the start of the year.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by making better use of assessment information to plan the next steps in pupils' learning ensuring that all pupils are fully challenged in lessons, especially the more able.
- Improve the quality and consistency of marking, making clear the next steps in pupils' learning so they appreciate how to make better progress.
- Ensure that all leaders and managers focus sharply on raising achievement in English, mathematics and science.

A small proportion of 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

Standards are broadly average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils enter Year 1 with standards that have improved in Reception but remain just below those expected for children of similar age. Progress in Years 1 to 6 is uneven because, in some lessons expectations of what more able pupils can achieve are not high. There has been a strong and successful drive to improve writing skills, especially for boys. In mathematics and science, a focus on developing problem solving skills and experiments is beginning to show improvement in progress. The results at the end of Years 2 and Year 6 in English, mathematics and science have fallen in recent years, representing a declining level of achievement. Evidence show that the decline has been reversed this year and standards are now broadly average at the end of each key stage. Results for pupils who find learning easy have shown some improvement and boys' writing skills have also improved. Currently, pupils are making satisfactory progress overall in lessons and are on track to raise standards further. Pupils with learning difficulties attain as well as their peers, as do those whose first language is not English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

St Paul's is a happy school that helps pupils develop confidence and a love of learning. Pupils show good care and respect to each other so behaviour is good. Attendance is steadily improving because of the school's careful attention to monitoring. Punctuality can be problematic due to the distances travelled by some pupils. They accept responsibilities with pride and genuinely want to help, for example, as shown by the caring links between Year 6 and Reception children. The school council is an active force and pupils know that their views are important. Pupils value deeply the many cultures within their school and the local area. They enjoy participating in local sports and charity initiatives, which improves their personal development. Pupils are sensitive and reflect thoughtfully about their own beliefs and those of others. This is because

a gentle and sincere Catholic ethos permeates the school and assemblies provide meaningful and reflective interludes.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The school's determination to improve the quality of teaching and learning is meeting with some success but there is still not enough good teaching to overcome rapidly the legacy of underachievement from previous years. Examples of good practice show the ability of teachers to plan interesting work for pupils and retain their interest through a lively pace and a variety of tasks. Good use is made of interactive whiteboards to support learning. The majority of pupils show a very positive approach to learning and a genuine desire to do well. They listen attentively, love to answer questions and share ideas in discussion. However, there is insufficient attention given in some classes to building on these positive attitudes to challenge pupils so they make much better progress. In a number of lessons, the expectations of what pupils can achieve is too low. Not all lessons cater effectively for the full range of abilities, leading to a lack of consistency in the challenge provided, particularly for pupils that are more able.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum ensures good coverage of subjects throughout the year. Recent improvements in linking subjects, and planned theme weeks such as science week, make learning more interesting. There is lack of consistent integration of the skills learnt in English and mathematics with other areas of the curriculum. The school values the links that it has made with schools internationally including video conferencing with schools in Madrid and Rome. There has been improvement in information and communication technology (ICT) resources and pupils have a growing range of opportunities to develop their ICT skills. Pupils' learning experiences are enhanced through a range of wider opportunities, such as working with artists and musicians in the community. School visits and a range of well attended extra-curricular clubs extend learning satisfactorily beyond the classroom.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Adults provide good pastoral care and know all pupils' social needs well. As a result, pupils feel secure and know that they can seek help when they have a problem. The school fully meets requirements for safeguarding pupils. It makes good use of a range of external agencies and local professional services to extend the support and care provided for pupils. The quality and consistency of guidance provided for pupils in their academic progress is only satisfactory. Pupils have targets for improving their work in literacy and numeracy. However, the quality of these targets varies, and discussions with pupils suggest that they lack clarity to help with improving their progress. There is a similar inconsistency and lack of rigour in the quality of marking. Pupils' work is marked regularly but it rarely identifies clearly for pupils exactly what they can do to improve their work and progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide a strong complementary partnership. There are satisfactory systems in place to check on the quality of teaching and to hold teachers to account for their pupils' progress but the monitoring of teaching and learning lacks frequency and is not sufficiently critical. Staff turbulence resulted in a failure by middle management to concentrate on raising standards. Staff are being encouraged to develop their leadership skills though the prudent development of two curriculum teams. The leadership of English, mathematics and science is now in the hands of senior and experienced staff and the results of this firmer control are already apparent in the improved progress made by pupils. Governors are supportive of the school and aware of its strengths and weaknesses. Whilst they are well informed, their monitoring and scrutiny of the work of the school does not offer enough challenge to push the school forwards.

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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

01 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Paul's RC Primary School, London, N22 7SZ

Thank you so much for giving us such a friendly welcome when we visited your school recently. It was lovely to see so many happy faces. You told us lots of interesting things. You said you loved your school and enjoyed your lessons. You work hard in most of your lessons and show a real sense of responsibility in the jobs you do around the school. It was lovely to see in assembly how grateful Reception children were for the way Year 6 pupils had looked after them through the year. We know that you are proud of the work you do as school councillors and particularly the improvements you have organised for the playground. You enjoy the clubs and sports activities and all of you have a good understanding of the importance of staying safe and healthy. Almost all of you behave well, listen attentively in lessons, and enjoy one another's company at playtimes.

We think St Paul's is a satisfactory school. That means it does some things well but there are some things that could be improved. Your headteacher and all the teachers work hard and teaching at your school is satisfactory. We have asked your teachers to make better use of the information they have about your progress. This will help plan activities in lessons and set targets that will make you think and work harder. We have also asked that, when your work is marked, your teachers make it clear to you how to improve your work so you make better progress. Finally, everyone who is responsible for your school has been asked to do the very best they can to make sure that you achieve as well as you can in English, mathematics and science.

We wish you all well at St Paul's and hope you continue to enjoy your school.

Yours sincerely

Norma Ball

Lead Inspector