

St Paul's CofE (C) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103988
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	308475
Inspection dates	24–25 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Sarah Conway

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	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bonita Bate
Headteacher	Pat Hall
Date of previous school inspection	20 March 2003
School address	Robert Road Tipton DY4 9BH
Telephone number	01215 572573
Fax number	01215 573931

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Paul's Primary School is a voluntary controlled Church of England school which is of average size. It draws its pupils from an area which is considerably less advantaged than average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. The great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. When children start in the Nursery, their level of skills and knowledge is very low, especially in their social and language development. The school is a registered provider of an extended school facility. It has Healthy School status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St Paul's C of E Primary School provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. Children enter the Nursery with very low skills for their age. Teachers help them to settle in quickly and they make good progress. Progress is inconsistent but satisfactory overall in Years 1 to 6. By the time pupils leave Year 6, standards are below average. The more able pupils do not make as much progress as they should. Pupils make better progress overall in mathematics and science than in English, especially writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because their work is tailored to their needs.

Senior leaders have a clear focus on improving standards. The school is part of the local authority's intensifying support programme in order to sharpen the focus on raised standards and achievements. Senior leaders have improved the quality of teaching, which is raising achievement and standards. There is a range of systems to monitor pupils' attainment but they are not yet used effectively enough to produce fully reliable school self-evaluation. Senior leaders analyse fully the test results and other assessments and use this information to target support for pupils. There is evaluation of the success of such support to raise standards but there is limited recorded tracking of pupils' progress.

Teaching overall is satisfactory. It is good in the Nursery, which enables children to get off to a good start. Although teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1, it is not as strong as in Key Stage 2. Teachers track pupils' current progress but there is inconsistency in the use of this information to ensure work is matched appropriately to pupils' needs, which hinders their progress. There is not enough opportunity in lessons for pupils to write independently and for extended periods.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are significant strengths in the school and receive careful attention from all staff. Pupils respond well because of the caring ethos and positive relationships between pupils and adults. They grow in confidence, behave well and take on responsibilities as they move through the school. As one parent commented, 'Both of my children are happy and content at school and show great enthusiasm for learning.'

The curriculum is satisfactory. The safeguarding of all pupils is good. Pupils know who to go to when they have an accident or are worried about something. Academic guidance is satisfactory and improving. Pupils know their targets in English and mathematics, and what they have to do to improve. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are guided well.

The school has had difficulty in recruiting suitably qualified teaching staff in Year 6, which has resulted in a considerable additional workload for senior leaders. Leadership and management are satisfactory and the school has made the necessary improvement since the last inspection. Governors support the school's work to make improvement satisfactorily, although they are not yet questioning the school about its performance with enough rigour. The school has satisfactory capacity to make further improvements.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the Foundation Stage get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes. Although many have not reached the levels expected of children when they leave Reception, they have made good progress. The good teaching takes full account of the needs of the children and there is a good balance of adult-directed activities and those which allow children to explore and investigate independently. There is a close match between the activities and

learners' needs. Children's personal and social development is fostered very well. The attractive and stimulating classrooms effectively promote children's learning and good use is made of the outdoor area. In both classes, teachers and their assistants work well together in a close-knit team and this contributes to children's achievement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good for all ages and ability groups in order to accelerate progress, especially in Key Stage 1.
- Improve the teaching of writing to ensure pupils make better progress in English.
- Make sure tracking and monitoring systems are used to identify key areas for improvement.
- Improve the capacity of the governing body to hold the school to account.

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

Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. Standards are below average by the time pupils reach Year 6. They enter Nursery with skills and knowledge that are very low for their age as they have very weak social and language and communication skills. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage, although many do not reach their targets by the time they leave Reception.

In Key Stage 1, whilst pupils make satisfactory progress, it is inconsistent. Standards at the end of Year 2 are well below average. The rate of progress made by pupils in Key Stage 2 lessons is improving and standards are below average by the end of Year 6. Improved progress in mathematics and science is contributing to an improvement in standards. More able pupils do not make consistent progress because their work is not matched consistently to their needs. Those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the expected progress because their work is suitably matched.

Pupils' standards in writing are low because they have had limited experiences of writing independently and for extended periods. The school is now addressing this satisfactorily through the recent introduction of 'Big Write' materials.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Behaviour is good and pupils generally enjoy their work and concentrate well. Occasionally, a few lose concentration when their teacher talks for too long. The school works hard to encourage good attendance and the current rate is broadly average.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and makes a significant contribution to the caring and friendly atmosphere that is present in school. Pupils work together amicably and have a well developed sense of fair play. They have a good understanding of cultural diversity through celebrations such as 'Afro-Caribbean' and 'Asian' weeks, and are aware of different faiths. Pupils respond positively when given responsibility, for example, as friends for those who need extra support at break times, or as members of the school council.

They have a strong social and community awareness and are involved in numerous local initiatives such as 'Tipton Litter Watch', as well as being keen fundraisers for many good causes.

Pupils benefit from a range of physical activities and events such as an annual 'Healthy Week'. Consequently, they have a good understanding of the need for healthy eating and exercise. This is reflected in the 2007 Healthy Schools Gold Award. Pupils play sensibly and safely, and demonstrate concern for the welfare of others. They learn about the world of work through a valuable 'Young Enterprise' programme, are able to work together constructively and make satisfactory academic progress. Consequently, they are soundly prepared for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Overall teaching is satisfactory, although it is inconsistent across year groups, particularly in Key Stage 1. Classrooms are attractive and welcoming spaces in which to learn, and relationships between pupils and teachers are generally good.

Teachers have sound subject knowledge. Teachers manage behaviour well and activities are clearly explained so that pupils know what to do. Progress is best where the pace of teaching is brisk and there is greater challenge, which more effectively meets the needs of all children, especially the more able pupils. Children in the Nursery benefit from particularly skilful teaching.

Teachers' planning is conscientious and very effective in addressing the social and personal development of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school sets individual targets and tracks progress against challenging targets designed to ensure pupils reach national standards. However, work is not consistently matched closely enough to the needs of all learners. In addition, pupils' targets are not revised quickly enough once they are met, which affects the progress of pupils who are capable of reaching the higher levels.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum covers all the subjects that it should and it allows the pupils to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding satisfactorily. There is an improved curriculum for science with appropriate programmes of work. School leaders recognise that more use can be made of information and communication technology to support learning in other subjects. A strength of the curriculum is the opportunity for pupils to develop skills in personal, social and health matters. Children in the Foundation Stage have a carefully planned curriculum that meets their needs.

There is a satisfactory programme of out of school activities that includes educational visits and a number of sports activities. The 'After School Club' and 'Breakfast Club' are well attended by pupils and greatly appreciated by those parents who make use of this extended school facility.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils feel safe and secure, and know that they can approach staff or make use of the school's 'Suggestions or Concerns' box if they have any problems. They say teachers deal effectively with any incidents of bullying. 'The teachers make sure we are safe and happy,' commented

one pupil. Child protection procedures are thorough, regular health and safety checks are carried out and risk assessments are undertaken when needed. Pupils' awareness is raised through a well planned programme for personal, social and health education and additional support is provided when necessary. For example, useful 'Anger Management' strategies have been explored with one year group. The school is actively involved in a multi-agency approach to support pupils and their families. In this, it has forged constructive and effective links with many organisations. In addition, good arrangements support the induction of children into the Nursery and the transfer to high schools at the end of Year 6.

Pupils' academic support and guidance are satisfactory. Pupils know their targets in English and mathematics and believe that they help them to improve. However, older pupils in particular do not have enough opportunities to judge their own work and identify their own targets. Targets are not revised quickly enough once they are met, which is affecting the progress of pupils who are on course to reach the higher levels. All teachers regularly mark pupils' work and provide encouraging comments. They also often include helpful feedback so that pupils know what to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Senior leaders know pupils well and make good provision for their personal and social development, which contributes to their positive attitudes to learning. The school's recent participation in the local authority's intensifying support programme has renewed the focus on improving achievement and standards. Senior leaders are now using challenging targets satisfactorily to raise standards. Current systems to track and monitor pupils' progress are not tied in to school self-evaluation rigorously enough. There is a positive impact from external support to improve teaching, in particular from the local authority. The leadership team monitors the quality of provision and standards satisfactorily. The governing body shares the leadership team's commitment to ensuring the school provides a safe and secure environment in which to learn. It does not do enough to hold the school to account, particularly over standards and achievement.

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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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
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	3
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	4
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	4
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

28 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Paul's C Of E (C) Primary School, Tipton, DY4 9BH

We enjoyed the two days we spent with you recently and we would like to thank you for being so welcoming and helpful. Many of you told us that you enjoy your learning. Here are some of the things that contribute to that enjoyment.

- Your school provides you with a satisfactory education.
- You are taught satisfactorily.
- You have a good start in Nursery and Reception.
- The progress you make is satisfactory and improves as you get older.
- You reach just below the expected standards in your work.
- You attend regularly and behave very well.
- Teachers and other adults look after you well.
- You know what is fair and you look out for each other.
- Your school is led satisfactorily.

To help the school get even better, we have suggested four things for it to do:

- ensure you have even more good lessons, especially in Years 1 and 2
- improve the teaching of writing to ensure you make better progress in English
- ensure the school has good systems to help it know what it needs to do to improve
- ensure governors help to make the school a better place to learn.

We know that teachers and governors are eager to make these improvements and that you will help them.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Conway Lead inspector



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