

St Paul's Church of England Primary School, Bury

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105332
Local Authority	Bury
Inspection number	308833
Inspection dates	10–11 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Graham Martin

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	179
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr D Burgess
Headteacher	Mr Croasdale
Date of previous school inspection	7 July 2003
School address	Porritt Street via Huntley Mount Road Bury Lancashire BL9 6LJ
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Paul's Church of England Primary is a school of slightly less than average size. It serves an area that experiences high levels of unemployment and the associated socio-economic disadvantages. The proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal is nearly four times the national average. Nearly three times the national average of pupils has some form of learning difficulty and/or disability and the proportion of these pupils with statutory statements of learning need is nearly four times the national average. Children's skills on entry to the Reception class are well below the nationally expected level. The number of pupils for whom English is an additional language is in line with the national average, but this proportion is rising. Significant movement of pupils from school to school makes the stability of the pupil population much lower than average. The school has been awarded Healthy Schools status and the Activemark for its work to promote healthy lifestyles. It has recently been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark for the third time.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Its great strength lies in caring for pupils' social and emotional needs exceptionally well, which promotes outstanding personal and social development. Parents praise the quality of care given to their children. The headteacher, well supported by the governing body, provides outstanding leadership to the enthusiastic staff. Good teamwork sustains the school's work to raise standards. Parents are very supportive of the school. They appreciate its strong values, one summing up their views by saying, 'St Paul's is a friendly and welcoming school with a caring and loving attitude towards our children and their families.'

Standards are below average but achievement is good, given pupils well below average starting points. Poor speech and language skills in Key Stage 1 prevent higher standards being reached by Year 2. This has a continuing negative impact on writing skills in Key Stage 2, meaning that overall standards in English are lower than those in other subjects. Pupils' good progress comes about from good teaching, a curriculum that meets learning needs well and excellent care and support for pupils' social and emotional needs. Current Year 6 pupils are on line to meet realistic targets in 2008. All pupils, including those who experience barriers to their learning, make good progress.

Pupils enjoy school: reflected in good attendance by the majority; their outstanding behaviour; and positive attitudes to learning. Pupils readily grasp the benefits of living healthy lifestyles, choosing nutritious meals from a varied menu. They benefit from, and enjoy, good opportunities to take responsibility. Elected school councillors confidently offer suggestions to make their school better: for example, improved access to drinking water resulted from them canvassing ideas from classmates. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is exceptionally good. They enjoy excellent relationships. These reflect how Christian values saturate the school's work to provide a strong foundation for developing pupils' moral and spiritual awareness. Pupils benefit from good learning opportunities. Enrichment of their learning through visits, visitors, workshops and residential trips, such as those to York and Ironbridge, contribute greatly to their enjoyment of school. Pupils enthusiastically join up to an exceptionally wide variety of after-school clubs for sports and other interests.

Teaching is good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and adapt national guidelines well to meet pupils' learning needs. Excellent relationships between staff and pupils result in pupils feeling safe, secure and willing to be adventurous in their learning. For example, during a mathematics lesson in Year 6, pupils were confident at answering complex problems from previous national test papers. Work is marked regularly. Written and verbal comments celebrate effort and achievement, but not all marking explains clearly enough how pupils can reach the next level of learning. Interactive whiteboards and other information and communication technology (ICT) equipment are used well to engage pupils in their learning. Skilled teaching assistants work well with individuals or groups so that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress.

Leadership and management, including governance, are good. Accurate self-evaluation provides a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Staff successfully create conditions for pupils to grow personally and academically. Governors understand their role, working capably to meet statutory responsibilities. The school associates well with community partners to promote pupils' learning and well-being: for example, a local ground work initiative helps pupils

in their work to improve the school gardens. The school has improved well since the last inspection: it has good capacity to improve further and provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. It gives the children a good start to their education. Parents express gratitude that their children are helped to settle quickly because of the high levels of care the staff give. When children are first admitted the majority have skills that are well below average compared with those found nationally among four-year-olds. Careful checks of their skills and regular assessment of their learning helps the staff to meet their individual needs. This, combined with very good teaching, enables the children to make good progress, but only a few of them reach the expected goals in all areas of their learning by the end of the year. The staff work well as a team. Their careful and accurate observations of learning ensure that planned, teacher-led activities are well matched to the full range of children's needs and interests. In order to improve early writing skills, the staff have increased opportunities for children to write and have revised how they teach letter names and sounds. Close work with teachers in Years 1 and 2 to improve speech and language shows promise, but it is too soon to evaluate the impact on learning. The curriculum is broad and stimulating and resources are used well to provide valuable opportunities that cover all the areas of learning. There is a good balance between activities, both indoors and outside, led by teachers and those chosen by the children themselves, enriching the children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English in Key Stage 2.
- Improve the speech and language skills of pupils in Key Stage 1.
- Improve marking and academic guidance so that pupils in Key Stage 2 have a better knowledge of how to reach the next level of learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter Year 1 with positive attitudes to learning established in the Foundation Stage. They make good progress across Key Stage 1. The school has begun to provide intervention for lower attainers in English in Years 1 and 2, although it is too soon to evaluate the impact of these initiatives on standards. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2007 were similar to the national average in mathematics but below average in English and science, with standards in English being lower than those in science. Assessment data shows that in 2007 Year 6 pupils made very significant gains in their learning during Key Stage 2. This shows good overall progress from their very low average starting points on entry to Reception. Good intervention and support by adults enables pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make good progress. Those new to learning English also make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Their positive attitudes reflect their interest in and enjoyment of school. The attendance of nearly all pupils is good. Relationships are exceptionally good and pupils are consistently polite and show respect towards each other. They make excellent overall progress in developing their personal qualities. Pupils

understand the importance of maintaining a healthy life style, enjoying physical exercise and learning well how to keep safe. All pupils speak warmly of the help that staff offer at all levels and are reassured by the speed and efficiency in the way any inappropriate incidents are dealt with. All pupils are aware of who to go to if a problem occurs. Pupils are increasingly involved in decision making and are proud of their efforts in charity fund-raising and supporting local community activities. Working together well on local community projects effectively promotes pupils' awareness of the importance of economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The good quality of teaching and learning is evident in the good progress all pupils make. Teachers' secure subject knowledge leads to confidence in their teaching styles. Good attitudes to learning and well established lesson routines ensure pupils concentrate well. High expectations result in exceptionally good behaviour, enabling pupils to work independently and undisturbed. Lesson activities are closely tailored to the full range of pupils' needs. The good qualities of intervention programmes to overcome barriers to learning ensure that all pupils succeed, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils with particular learning needs are given learning tasks matched closely to their needs. These tasks are based on good analysis of data. Teaching assistants are directed effectively during lessons to ensure all learners remain occupied and succeed. Parents are increasingly encouraged to work as learning partners with their children through the 'Family Learning' and 'Keeping up with the child' programmes. These guide parents and carers in ways to help their children succeed. Marking is sometimes used well but does not always give pupils enough advice on what they need to do in order to improve further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provides pupils with a broad range of interesting and challenging activities. Pupils are enthused and enjoy their lessons, promoting good achievement. Pupils especially enjoy their French lessons. Careful attention is given to ensuring that the many differing needs of pupils are met well, including those with specific needs, encouraging exceptional personal development. Pupils represent the school in wider community activities and are very proud of their achievements in sport and music. Education for their safety and health is good. The extensive opportunities for enrichment are much enjoyed and the take up is high. Pupils take on responsibilities in the local community and enjoyed their contribution when designing gardens to benefit local elderly people. The school recognises that more could be done to develop skills across all subject areas: an action plan has been implemented for this, but it is too soon to judge the impact of the work so far.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils receive excellent pastoral care and support. The headteacher and staff know all pupils and their families well. Positive relationships between parents, pupils and staff help to create a happy, friendly environment. Procedures to safeguard pupils follow latest government guidelines and child protection procedures are in place. Pupils feel secure and are well supervised,

with risk assessments conducted whenever needed. Very strong provision for personal, social and health education contributes to pupils' growing understanding of their own personal development and health and safety. Arrangements for settling new pupils into school, and for transfer to secondary school, are good. The school works effectively in partnership with parents and other agencies to support pupils who may need extra help. Older pupils are becoming increasingly aware of their individual targets for improvement in reading, writing and mathematics, but this good practice is not used consistently well across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's leadership is outstanding. His guidance provides exceptionally good direction, helping the dedicated staff to drive improvement on. Good relationships and communication promote values intent on securing pupils' personal well-being and raising their attainment. Robust procedures for checking the quality of teaching and learning help to identify the school's strengths and to prioritise actions for improvement. The responsibilities of key leaders are defined clearly so that school improvement priorities can be met. Steps towards achieving these are shared with governors through regular audits and reports, enabling them to evaluate progress. Governance is good. The chair of governors speaks with pride about being associated with the school and has a very good grasp of the responsibilities of governance. Governors are well informed through regular, evaluative reports and presentations from staff. Good links with classes, together with the visits governors make, especially for celebrations and events, help them to make careful checks on the day-to-day running of the school. Their contribution is valuable in ensuring that the school has good capacity for further improvement.

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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?	2
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

We would like to thank you for welcoming the inspectors to St Paul's and helping us when we visited your school to see how well you are learning. We discovered a lot from watching your lessons, looking at your work and talking to the staff and a governor. We particularly enjoyed talking to you because you all have views about what it is like to be a pupil at St Paul's. You told us you have a good school. You are happy to attend St Paul's and your parents are happy for you to attend too. We agree: you do have a good school and you have lots of reasons to be happy there.

These are some of the things that we particularly liked about your school.

- Your teachers do a good job teaching you and helping you all to achieve well.
- We were impressed by your school's friendly atmosphere and the way you all get on well together. Your behaviour is excellent!
- You are tolerant, respectful and value other people. You make a very good contribution to your local community.
- You enjoy very good opportunities to develop your sporting skills at a high level of competition and you contribute well to community improvements.
- You have a really good understanding of healthy lifestyles and how to keep safe and you enjoy opportunities for taking responsibility.

The adults in school take very good care of you and want you to be well prepared when you move on to your next school. For this to happen, we have asked your headteacher and the teachers to make sure that you improve your English skills in Key Stage 2 and especially speaking skills for pupils in Key Stage 1. We have also asked your teachers to help you even more to understand what you need to do next in order to improve your work. For you, the important thing is to keep working and playing hard, safely and fairly. I will remember that you promised me to try to do all of these things!