

Paulton Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109066
Local Authority	Bath and North East Somerset
Inspection number	309865
Inspection date	22 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Shirley Billington

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gary Yoxall
Headteacher	Julia Sloyan
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2004
School address	Plumptre Close Paulton Bristol BS39 7QY
Telephone number	01761 412354
Fax number	01761 412354

Age group	4-7
Inspection date	22 May 2008
Inspection number	309865

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the steps taken to improve standards in writing and increase the proportion of boys attaining higher levels; the use of assessment to set targets for improvements in pupils' progress; and the use made of information and communication technology (ICT) in subjects across the curriculum.

Evidence was gathered from observations in lessons and around the school and scrutiny of pupils' work and a range of documentation. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, governors and staff also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is slightly smaller than most primary schools. It has gained awards such as Artsmark and holds Healthy Schools status. It is currently working towards the International Schools award.

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. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of its work, appreciating the way that their children thrive, both academically and personally. A large number made comments such as 'teachers really go out of their way to ensure the children are treated as individuals' and 'I am so pleased with the way that my child is being taught and cared for at this school'.

Children start school with skills that are broadly in line with expectations. They make good progress in the Reception Year and the majority are working above expected levels at the start of Year 1. This good start is built on effectively and standards at the end of Year 2 are generally above national averages. There was a slight dip in 2007, when standards were in line with rather than above average. This was in part the result of several pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities joining the year group. However, in common with schools nationally, there was some variation in standards in different areas, with pupils doing better in reading and mathematics than in writing. Boys did less well than girls in writing, with very few attaining higher levels. Writing has been a focus for improvement during this year and the work done has had a positive impact. Pupils throughout the school are making good progress because they have a wide range of opportunities to write for different purposes. Standards in writing are above average for current Year 2 pupils, with an increase in the numbers of pupils, both boys and girls, working at higher levels. However, there is still a gap in the performance of boys and girls in terms of the proportion reaching average levels in writing. In reading and mathematics, standards are higher this year than in 2007 with no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

Good teaching ensures that pupils achieve well and are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Lessons are well focused and purposeful. Teachers make good use of a range of resources, including interactive whiteboards, to introduce key learning points and give pupils a good view of how to tackle the tasks they are given. Relationships are good and pupils are confident that teachers will help them if they have difficulties. Just occasionally, opportunities are missed to involve pupils in introductory sessions, which are sometimes too lengthy and dominated by the teacher talking. The school has accurately identified that there is scope to engage pupils more throughout their lessons.

The curriculum is good and enriched well by a wide range of visits, visitors and special events that pupils thoroughly enjoy. Art has a high profile, with pupils having good opportunities to use a wide variety of materials and a range of techniques to represent their ideas and understanding. Provision for ICT has been improved and pupils have good opportunities to use their skills in subjects such as science and geography. The curriculum for Reception children includes all the aspects that it should and there is good provision for some areas of learning. However, the outdoor environment, though recently improved, is still limited in terms of resources for creative development and opportunities for children to work together.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and, when given the opportunity, work well together in pairs and small groups. Attendance levels are broadly in line with the national average for primary schools because of absences caused by the usual minor illnesses experienced by very young children. Pupils know the importance of a balanced diet and being active, saying, for example, 'that's why we play games at playtime'. Year 2 pupils take on a range of responsibilities and are proud of what they do to help others. Opportunities for pupils to contribute their ideas on how the school might be improved are somewhat limited. This is, in part, because the school

council no longer functions while other strategies to seek pupils' views are being explored. Pupils are positive that most children are friendly and aware of what to do if they feel someone is behaving in a way that upsets them. The school's work towards an International Award ensures that pupils learn about life and traditions in countries around the world. A link with a school in Uganda is used well to raise pupils' awareness of a contrasting lifestyle and the difficulties faced by a community that lacks basic facilities such as ready access to water.

Pupils' progress is regularly tracked and there are good strategies for sharing information with parents. The 'memory books', with examples of individual achievement in English, mathematics, science and ICT, give a good overview of progress from the Reception Year through to Year 2. Samples of work are annotated and next stages in learning are identified. However, the wording used is aimed at adults and is not easily understood by pupils. Pupils themselves are not always aware of what these next steps are. Teachers' marking occasionally identifies what needs to be improved, but often comments are generalised and do not give pupils a clear view of what they need to work on.

The school benefits from good leadership and management. The headteacher sets clear direction and is supported well by a strong staff team. Regular checks are carried out to evaluate the school's performance through a range of monitoring activities, including lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work. Effective action is taken to bring about improvement where necessary and the impact of specific initiatives is regularly reviewed. This approach has successfully underpinned the rise in standards in writing seen over the past year. Governors are well informed and have a good level of involvement in day-to-day activities and in strategic planning. The school has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in all areas of learning. They do particularly well in their social and emotional development and in all aspects of mathematics. An increased focus on promoting speaking and listening skills, together with good opportunities to write independently, has resulted in many children making good gains in language and literacy this year. There is a good balance between adult led and child initiated activities, with children having good opportunities to work together on a variety of practical tasks in the classroom. This is more restricted in the outdoor area, where resources are limited. While children enjoy using wheeled toys such as tricycles, there is little to promote collaborative and creative play. A good induction programme ensures that children settle readily into school. Parents are positive about the start that their children get, making comments such as 'my child has had a very good year...it has been a wonderful start to her school life'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that boys do as well as girls in writing so that their achievement in this area is as good as in reading and mathematics.
- Ensure that pupils are aware of the next steps in their learning so that they have a clear view of what they need to do to improve.
- Improve provision in the outdoor area for Reception children to extend opportunities for creative development and collaborative working.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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	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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

25 May 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Paulton Infant School, Paulton, BS39 7QY

You may remember that I visited before the holiday to see how you are getting on. Thanks to all of you who explained what you were doing in lessons and what goes on around the school. Special thanks to the group of Year 2 pupils who gave me so much information and told me all about their special jobs. I was very impressed with how much you do to help the school run smoothly. I thought you would be interested in what I am saying in my report. Yours is a good school and your parents are very pleased with how well you do.

I could see that you really enjoy school and all the special events like arts week. You behave well and know how important it is to keep healthy and safe. All the adults working in school take good care of you. Your teachers make sure that you learn lots of new things so that, by the end of Year 2, you are really ready for the move to the junior school.

The people who run the school are always looking for ways to make your learning even better. This year there has been a lot of work to make your writing as good as your reading and mathematics work. You are doing really well with writing stories and making books – well done! Some boys told me proudly that they are 'writers of the month'. Boys have got much better with writing and are producing some super work, but there is still a little way to go before they do as well as the girls. I have asked the school to work on this.

There are two other things that I think the school needs to do. The first is to make sure that you know exactly what you have to do to make your work even better. I know that you enjoy a challenge! The second thing is to improve the outside area for the Reception children so that they can work together more and use their imagination to do things like pretending to be different characters in role play.

Thank you again for your help.

Best wishes

Shirley Billington Lead inspector

Annex B

25 May 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Paulton Infant School, Paulton, BS39 7QY

You may remember that I visited before the holiday to see how you are getting on. Thanks to all of you who explained what you were doing in lessons and what goes on around the school. Special thanks to the group of Year 2 pupils who gave me so much information and told me all about their special jobs. I was very impressed with how much you do to help the school run smoothly. I thought you would be interested in what I am saying in my report. Yours is a good school and your parents are very pleased with how well you do.

I could see that you really enjoy school and all the special events like arts week. You behave well and know how important it is to keep healthy and safe. All the adults working in school take good care of you. Your teachers make sure that you learn lots of new things so that, by the end of Year 2, you are really ready for the move to the junior school.

The people who run the school are always looking for ways to make your learning even better. This year there has been a lot of work to make your writing as good as your reading and mathematics work. You are doing really well with writing stories and making books – well done! Some boys told me proudly that they are 'writers of the month'. Boys have got much better with writing and are producing some super work, but there is still a little way to go before they do as well as the girls. I have asked the school to work on this.

There are two other things that I think the school needs to do. The first is to make sure that you know exactly what you have to do to make your work even better. I know that you enjoy a challenge! The second thing is to improve the outside area for the Reception children so that they can work together more and use their imagination to do things like pretending to be different characters in role play.

Thank you again for your help.

Best wishes

Shirley Billington
Lead inspector