

Paulerspury Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121986
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	314179
Inspection date	11 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Doris Bell

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	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	131
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Adam Wood
Headteacher	Melanie Hewat
Date of previous school inspection	4 October 2004
School address	High Street Paulerspury Towcester NN12 7NA
Telephone number	01327 811674
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Attainment on entry to Reception is broadly average in this relatively small school. All but Reception children are taught in mixed-age classes. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, while broadly average overall, fluctuates greatly from year to year. Almost all pupils are of White British background. None have free school meals. The school had a new headteacher two years ago and a new deputy headteacher last year.

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 with some outstanding features. Good leadership and management and good teaching result in pupils achieving well. Standards overall are above average. However, pupils make better progress in English than in mathematics. The school recognises this concern and is working with other local schools to improve the situation. Pupils' overall good progress starts with the good provision in the Foundation Stage.

Good care, guidance and support contribute greatly to the pupils' good personal development and well-being. Within this, pupils' spiritual, moral and social development, including their behaviour, is excellent. Cultural development is only satisfactory because pupils are less aware of the different cultures in British society than they might be. Pupils very much enjoy school and are exceptionally well aware of how to keep safe, fit and healthy. They leave the school as well-rounded individuals who have made a good contribution to the school and wider community. They are more than adequately prepared for their future. The vast majority of parents are very satisfied with the school, praising its achievements and describing it, for example, as a school that their children are 'excited' to attend.

Throughout the school, a well-planned curriculum, flexible to the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes, supports learning and personal development effectively. However, it does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical learning in different ways in different subjects. Challenging targets are set for pupils in Year 6 and staff direct and support pupils well in class. Overall, however, academic guidance and support are satisfactory. The school has only just started to set individual targets for pupils and not all pupils have a clear enough understanding of how to improve their own work. Teachers' marking is not always helpful in this respect either.

With the governors, the headteacher and deputy form a strong team that makes accurate judgements about the school's strengths and areas for development. The good improvement since the previous inspection and the determination of staff and pupils to do well all ensure the school's good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Exciting activities bring the curriculum alive for children in this age group. The sense of theatre created in one story-telling session, for example, grabbed the children's attention and they listened open-mouthed to the teacher. Staff make good use of the outdoor provision in all areas of learning and there is a good balance between adult-directed and child-initiated activities. As a result, children grow in confidence, successfully learning to share, take turns and listen to adults and each other. This is already evident in the current Reception class, where children have settled well, despite having been in school, part-time, for only a few days. Staff are vigilant about checking children's progress. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed, and communication with parents is good. However, teaching assistants are not yet being used to full advantage to support the children's learning.

The overall good provision contributes successfully to the children's good achievement so that almost all children exceeded the standards expected nationally by the end of the year.

What the school should do to improve further

- In order to promote pupils' greater achievement in mathematics, provide more challenging work for them, and give them time to correct and consolidate their learning and the confidence to use and apply it in different subjects.
- Improve assessment procedures, including marking and target setting, and give all pupils a greater understanding of how to influence their own learning.
- Increase pupils' awareness of the range and diversity of cultures in Britain today.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Different numbers of pupils in different year groups, some quite small, mean that standards fluctuate from year to year. Overall, however, they are currently above average and pupils achieve well. Standards in Year 2 in 2007 were well above average. In Year 6, the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was well above average in 2006 and 2007, and test results in 2007 were broadly average. Nonetheless, almost all pupils of all abilities made good progress. The analysis of pupils' work prior to the tests in 2007 confirms this. It also shows that several pupils were consistently working at levels higher than those they reached in the tests.

In 2006 and 2007, pupils in Year 6 did better in English than in mathematics. They do not systematically correct their mistakes in mathematics and therefore miss opportunities to consolidate their learning in this subject. Progress in mathematics is improving in other year groups as a result of what the school is now doing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils of all ages work and play happily together and look out for each other. They have a strong sense of self-worth, work hard and thoroughly enjoy school. Their attendance is good. While spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, the first three are excellent. Parents praise highly the 'values and ethos' the school promotes. These are evident in the pupils' excellent behaviour and good manners. They contribute greatly to the calm friendly atmosphere that is fostered by the headteacher and which is felt throughout the school. One parent commented that their child praised the headteacher's 'non-shouty' style because it created a 'peaceful atmosphere'.

While pupils know and respect other faiths and beliefs, they are not fully aware of the range and diversity of cultures in Britain today. Nevertheless, they care deeply for others and readily accept responsibility, for example, organising fundraising for different charities. Pupils take seriously their roles as school and class councillors. This has resulted, for example, in improvements to the toilets and additional equipment for use at playtime.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Relationships between pupils and adults are good and teachers have successfully helped pupils to settle into their new classes. Teachers successfully ensure that pupils' work meets their different ages and stages of learning. Pupils acknowledge this, saying that their lessons are

'interesting' and that their work gets 'harder and harder'. Teachers support pupils well in class, questioning them precisely, assessing their learning effectively and building on their answers. Occasionally, however, they do not give pupils enough time to respond fully and therefore miss opportunities to find out what pupils really know before moving on.

Teachers' marking is not always precise enough to help pupils understand how to improve their work, especially in mathematics. Pupils' work from last year shows that when they make mistakes, there is rarely anything to show them what they need to do to correct them. Nor is there any expectation that they will do corrections to show that they understand where they have gone wrong. The school recognises this and is currently tackling these issues.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is based on a carefully considered two-year cycle that effectively meets the pupils' learning needs, enhances their personal development and promotes their health and safety. Although links between subjects are not yet explicit, teachers do this naturally. Some good examples were observed where subjects such as history and literacy, and geography, literacy and science, were effectively brought together. Overall, literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are promoted well in different ways in different subjects. However, there are few examples of numeracy skills being promoted in the same way. The good provision made for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is acknowledged by their parents.

The school's good partnerships with parents, other schools, the parish, external agencies and the community enrich pupils' learning, as do the many additional opportunities provided for pupils in and beyond the normal school day. These include a good range of well-attended extra activities, visitors and visits, including annual residential visits for each of Years 2 to 6.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils described their school as a 'really happy place' where 'nothing was bad' and where teachers help them. This reflects the good personal care, guidance and support they receive. All safeguarding procedures are in place and pupils feel their teachers 'check well' that they are safe. Governors have a really good understanding of their responsibilities in this area. Academic guidance given to pupils about their work is satisfactory.

Pupils' progress is adequately tracked. The school introduced targets for individual pupils last year in English and intends to set them for mathematics later this year. However, while a few pupils could recall having targets, most are unsure about how they might influence their own learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and deputy set a clear direction for the school which staff and governors share. All are working successfully together to achieve the best possible outcomes for the pupils. Senior managers' clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses has resulted in a well-structured, regularly reviewed improvement plan. While some parents feel

their views are not taken into account, most are full of praise for how well the school works with them.

Governors have made good use of the relatively large surplus accrued in recent years to improve staffing and resources. This has provided the headteacher and subject leaders with time to check teaching and learning, which they have used well. Governors carry out their own checks and are well informed about the school's performance. However, while the school sets challenging targets for pupils in the Year 6 test results, it has been slow to set targets for individual pupils. Also, in successfully improving writing after the previous inspection, the school allowed mathematics to take a back seat. As a result, progress in mathematics has not been as good as progress in English. The school is now tackling both of these issues.

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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	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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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

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

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school yesterday. You told us that it was 'nice to come to school', it was a 'really happy place' and your lessons were 'interesting'. You are rightly proud of your school and what it does for you. You and your parents are correct in thinking that you go to a good school. Here is a summary of what we found:

- You make good progress and the standards you reach are usually higher than those found in most schools.
- Your behaviour is excellent. You are polite, friendly and very helpful to everyone. You understand really well how to keep yourselves safe, fit and healthy.
- You clearly enjoy learning very much indeed. You certainly work hard and try to do your best.
- You are taught well. Your teachers try hard to make sure that although most of you are in mixed age classes, you all get work that is at the right level for you. The curriculum is planned well to help teachers do this.
- The headteacher and governors lead and manage the school well and have your best interests at heart.

Even though Paulerspury is a good school, there are some things it can do better. We have particularly asked the headteacher and governors:

- In mathematics, to give you more challenging work, time to correct your mistakes and the confidence to use your mathematical skills in different ways in different subjects.
- To improve the ways in which your work is assessed and marked, and show you, through, for example, setting you targets, how to improve your own learning.
- To increase your awareness of the range and diversity of cultures in Britain today.

We wish you well and hope you will continue to do well and enjoy learning throughout your life.

12 September 2007



Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Paulerspury C of E Primary School, Paulerspury,
Northamptonshire. NN12 7NA**

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Yours sincerely
Mrs Doris Bell
Lead inspector