

# St Paul's Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 126182               |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Wiltshire            |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 315431               |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 30 April –1 May 2008 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Paul Sadler          |

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

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|   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                     | Primary                            |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Community                          |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 4–11                               |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed                              |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |                                    |
| School                                    | 271                                |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body                 |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Julie Blackwell                    |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Bob Buckley                        |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 6 June 2005                        |
| <b>School address</b>                     | The Oaks<br>Chippenham<br>SN15 1DU |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 01249 653041                       |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 01249 653041                       |

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

The school serves an area of mixed social and private housing. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Most pupils are of White British ethnicity and the great majority speak English at home.

The school is developing close links with a children's centre, built recently on the school site.

## **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 in which pupils achieve well. 'We have been really impressed with how much progress our son has made,' is a comment echoed by many parents. Most children start school with skills and knowledge below those expected for their age. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage, so that by the end, most attain the goals for early learning. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 to 6 and attain average standards in national tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6. Their progress in reading is especially good as this has been a major focus of the school's work in recent years and there is a well-targeted programme of additional help, based on careful assessment of the needs of each pupil. If a strategy fails with a particular pupil, others are used until success is achieved. In contrast, progress in writing is satisfactory. This slower progress is due to an overuse of worksheets and too little emphasis on teaching pupils how to structure good writing and to take pride in its quality. The school has identified this weakness and rightly plans to improve things as a matter of urgency. The emphasis on targeted help for reading, and the good support of teachers and teaching assistants, ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make equally good progress.

Pupils' personal development is good. They have an excellent understanding of how to lead healthy lives, and make an outstanding contribution to the community as members of the school council, keeping an eye on younger pupils in the playground and through performance and sport in the local community. Pupils' behaviour is good. They report that there is little bullying, and any which does occur is dealt with effectively.

The good teaching is characterised by lessons that are planned carefully to meet each pupil's needs. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used very well to enhance learning. A wide range of good strategies is used to teach reading successfully but the teaching of writing is weaker because successful ways of teaching pupils to write accurately, neatly and at length are not used to the full. Pupils are assessed frequently and given targets for the next steps in their learning, which most understand and use well to make good progress. However, the quality of the marking of written work is variable. Some, particularly in English, has helpful comments but other marking is more cursory. The good curriculum offers pupils a wide range of opportunities, both in and out of school, for example, in physical education (PE) and sport, music, modern foreign languages and ICT. Pupils are cared for very well. Many parents support the comment of one, who said, 'The teachers are really helpful and caring.'

A feature of the good leadership and management is the experience and effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels. There is effective monitoring and evaluation, which has identified areas in need of development, such as pupils' writing. Targets are used effectively to ensure that all pupils are challenged to reach the standards of which they are capable. The governing body uses its expertise well to support the school and to maintain the level of challenge. The school has excellent links with a wide range of partners, including parents and other schools. It has made good improvements since the last inspection and is well placed to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children get a good start at school. They begin school with levels of skill below those expected and most reach broadly average standards by the time they leave the Foundation Stage. Good teaching and support enable all children to make good progress, including both the more able and those who find learning difficult. As a result, the children achieve well, feel safe and have fun.

The children in the Foundation Stage are independent learners and confident speakers. Parents and children are very enthusiastic about the 'Leaf Award' scheme that encourages these qualities. Children show respect for each other and the adults who support their learning. The Foundation Stage provides a good balance of teacher-led and child-initiated activities, successfully promoting personal imagination as well as speaking and listening skills. The well-informed and enthusiastic staff ensures there are similar opportunities for the children in both Foundation Stage classes. The outside area is satisfactory and the school has planned well for its further development.

The Foundation Stage is led and managed well, and there are good links with a range of pre-school settings and with parents. Staff are well informed about the children coming to the school before they arrive, ensuring a happy, secure entry to the Foundation Stage. This care for the well-being of each child is fundamental to the ethos in the Foundation Stage.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of pupils' writing to ensure that they are able to write accurately, neatly and at length.
- Ensure a consistency of good quality marking, so that pupils are always clear on how they can improve their work.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

When children leave the school at the end of Year 6, they have attained average standards. The great majority of pupils have made good progress in the current school year, particularly in mathematics and reading. Pupils read with enjoyment and talk with enthusiasm about their books. In writing, progress is satisfactory. By Year 3, most pupils can write an accurate sentence but much of their work appears to be lacking in care, partly due to the use of scruffy worksheets annotated by the pupils. The school has recognised that writing is a priority and has made appropriate plans for its improvement. The children who find learning more difficult have good support, especially from teaching assistants working with individuals or small groups, enabling them to make good progress.

Achievement is good in ICT, for example, when Year 4 construct advertisements for products they have designed, and in PE, music and modern foreign languages. In geography, progress is good because of the challenging teaching. The school has attained high standards in local and regional sporting events.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy school and behave well, both in lessons and around the school. They are able to acknowledge and take responsibility for their own mistakes. Pupils' attendance has improved recently and is now good, and the school uses a range of effective strategies to improve it further. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as exemplified by their support for a disadvantaged child living in Pakistan and for other charities. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy, not only the need for exercise and a good diet, but in the case of older pupils through an understanding of sexual health and of the dangers of substance abuse. A child in the Foundation Stage was able to advise an inspector correctly on a healthy diet. Pupils have a good knowledge of how to stay safe, for instance, when using the Internet and they make good use of the school's help for example, by taking part in cycling proficiency classes. The development of the skills pupils will need in later life, especially numeracy, ICT and reading, is good, but the development of their writing is less effective.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching is planned well to meet the needs of the pupils. Those who need additional help, and the more able, who benefit from more challenging tasks, are usually given work that meets their needs. A good example involved Year 2 pupils learning about map coordinates, which is a challenging activity for seven-year-olds. Pupils know what is expected of them, for instance, when Year 1 practised phonic sounds, they used material from the previous lesson saved on the teacher's computer. Teaching assistants and other helpers provide good support, especially for reading. Teachers have good subject knowledge in almost all areas, but the teaching of writing does not use the full range of strategies that have proved successful elsewhere. There are some good examples of marking of pupils' work, which combines appropriate praise with help on how to improve. However, in other cases, it is cursory, or poor or incomplete work is praised inappropriately.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is broad and balanced, often providing exciting learning opportunities for pupils. Visitors and out of school visits add variety and enrichment. Pupils particularly enjoy the wide range of clubs the school offers. There is good provision in PE, where many children compete against other schools in a range of sports. Music, modern foreign languages and ICT also make a good contribution to the breadth of the curriculum. Pupils learn a lot from the practical way in which science is taught but their reporting and presentation skills are weak. The application of mathematics and literacy skills in other subjects is still at an early stage of development.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

From entry into the Reception class to leaving in Year 6, the children feel safe, secure and well cared for. Pupils are confident in talking to all members of staff and are adamant that every

member of staff cares for them as individuals. They appreciate the involvement by staff in their development, including giving up time to run clubs and talk with them when they feel under pressure from their peers. The school has been proactive in selecting and training volunteers as 'lifetime mentors', who add a huge amount of value to the care and guidance some pupils receive. Child protection arrangements are fully in place and the school meets all safeguarding requirements.

The academic guidance given to pupils is good because targets give them a very clear indication of how they can reach higher standards in their work. However, a small minority of pupils do not always understand the full extent of what they need to do to reach their targets.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Parents rightly believe that the school has a positive ethos that ensures their children are cared for well and make good progress. They praise the experienced headteacher and acknowledge his impact on bringing about school improvement. The team of leaders and managers is effective at every level. Shortcomings are identified and tackled with success, for example, in improving standards of reading, although on occasions actions are slow to be put in place, such as those to address the weakness in writing. Resources are used well to improve the school, for instance, in the good quality of the Foundation Stage. The school has developed excellent links with pre-schools, secondary schools and external agencies and is rightly taking a keen interest in the development of a children's centre close to the site. Data are used well to set targets and to analyse pupils' progress. The governing body is effective and uses the skills of its members well in support of the school.

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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 |
|---|----------------|

### 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?   | 1   |
| 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 <sup>1</sup> 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?                                  | 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   | 2 |
| The attendance of learners  | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners   | 2 |
| 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 |

<sup>1</sup> 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**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 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

16 May 2008

Dear Pupils

St Paul's Primary School, Chippenham, SN15 1DU

We very much enjoyed talking to you and seeing your work when we visited your school recently. Thank you for spending time with us. We found you to be confident, friendly children and able to express your views very clearly.

Yours is a good school. These are some of the most important things about it:

- You all make good progress and reach particularly good standards in PE, ICT, music and French.
- Teaching is good. Teachers make sure the work is not too easy or hard. Teaching assistants help you well.
- You know a lot about how to keep healthy by eating the right food and taking lots of exercise. You have a good understanding of right and wrong and of how to keep safe.
- You do a great deal to help other people, both in school and outside, such as by helping the child who lives in Pakistan.
- Your behaviour is good and we were particularly impressed by the way you listen to each other and comment on each other's work, and on how well you listen to teachers.
- You told us that you enjoy school a lot, especially all the different activities on offer, including trips and sport.
- Teachers tell you how to improve your work by setting you targets, which most of you understand well.
- The headteacher, other staff and governors lead the school well. All the staff play an important part in making St Paul's a good school.

We have asked the school to improve the way you are taught to write and to make sure that when your work is marked you are always shown how to improve it. You can help by politely asking for the teacher's help when you do not understand something.

Yours sincerely

Paul Sadler Lead Inspector

**Annex B**

16 May 2008

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Paul Sadler  
Lead Inspector