

St Paul's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131848
Local Authority	Oldham
Inspection number	315880
Inspection dates	26–27 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Jim Kidd

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	245
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr D Booth
Headteacher	Mrs J Caine
Date of previous school inspection	3 November 2003
School address	Hindle Drive Royton Oldham Lancashire OL2 5LU
Telephone number	0161 6249019
Fax number	0161 6241858

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	26–27 September 2007
Inspection number	315880

© Crown copyright 2007

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 two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average-sized school is situated on the outskirts of Oldham and serves a popular residential area. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. There are 20 pupils with statements of special educational need and most of them attend the two small classes for pupils with language disorders, funded by the local authority. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is well below average. Most pupils are of White British heritage and there are very few pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. There are significantly more boys than girls in the school. St Paul's holds the Toothfriendly Gold awards, is working towards Healthy School status and is developing an Education for Peace curriculum. It is proud of its strong links with the church.

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 which has made significant improvements since the previous inspection, notably in the quality of teaching and learning, in the standards pupils reach and in the progress they make. It has good capacity to improve further and provides good value for money. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of what the school does for their offspring and comment, 'St Paul's develops our children in a safe and secure environment and caters for the needs of each individual.'

Pupils are proud of their school and recognise that they, too, have an important part to play in looking after younger children and those who are experiencing difficulty. Teachers and teaching assistants are very good role models and provide high levels of care and support for their pupils, irrespective of their learning difficulties or levels of ability. As a result, pupils achieve well in both their personal and academic development. In the two small classes funded by the local authority, youngsters with communication and language difficulties are fully included in everything the school has to offer.

Children make a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes and are prepared well for the rigours of Key Stage 1. Good and sometimes outstanding teaching leads to pupils achieving well across the school reaching above average standards by the time they leave in Year 6. Their progress in reading and writing is particularly good but, although attainment in mathematics has improved over the past four years, pupils' progress in this subject is not quite as fast as in others.

The vibrant displays of pupils' work in classrooms, on corridors and in the main hall demonstrate just how much pupils enjoy their school. They attend regularly, behave well and are delighted to take on responsibilities to help the school run smoothly. They take full advantage of the many opportunities they have to evaluate the work of their classmates and offer them advice on how to improve with a sensitivity which belies their years. Relationships are, therefore, a major strength and pupils are delighted when their peers succeed.

Pupils have a keen understanding of the importance of living a healthy lifestyle and take full advantage of the many sports activities on offer. They speak positively of the trips they make, the archaeological dig, for example, and of the out-of-class clubs which help them feel part of the whole-school community. They have close connections with the church and take part in a wide range of events, designed to enrich their view of the world and to support charities at a local, national and global level. Their understanding of Britain as a multicultural society is, however, underdeveloped.

The school is led and managed well and the headteacher and senior team have a clear vision for future development. Staff at all levels are not complacent and, supported by a well-informed governing body, are utterly committed to both the personal and academic welfare of the pupils in their care. Significant improvements in standards since the last inspection, pupils' good personal development and the outstanding care, guidance and support provided for them demonstrate that St Paul's lives up to its motto: 'Love to Learn, Learn to Love.'

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and children achieve well in all areas of their learning. Well-resourced and stimulating provision in the Nursery and Reception classes enables children

to make a good start to their school careers. Staff understand the needs of young children well and plan exciting activities which stimulate their curiosity and desire to learn. Children's development is assessed regularly, systematically and thoroughly. The information provided enables teachers and teaching assistants to provide the challenge and support children need to learn effectively and to develop their skills. Excellent relationships and constructive guidance provide a secure foundation for children's personal, social and emotional development. They work and play happily together, follow school routines sensibly and readily participate in all the activities on offer. Leadership and management are good and are managed well and there is a smooth transition between classes.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics.
- Give pupils more opportunities to become more aware of the different cultures represented in Britain.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the Foundation Stage with skills that are broadly expected for their age. They achieve well across the school to reach above average standards by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. They respond positively to the challenging targets set for them and their progress in reading and writing is particularly good. However, progress in mathematics lags behind that in English and science, but standards in this subject are still higher than at the time of the previous inspection. An area for development four years ago, more able pupils now reach the standards of which they are capable and sometimes surpass their targets. In addition, such is the quality of support from both teachers and teaching assistants that pupils with learning difficulties, including those in the resourced classes, make the same progress as their peers and indeed often surprise themselves at what they can do.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy their school, are very proud of it and feel safe. As they say, 'our friends and our teachers make sure that we are kind to each other.' Attendance is consistently above average and pupils arrive in the morning punctually and with smiles on their faces. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong, exemplified by their good behaviour and reinforced by the thought-provoking assemblies they attend and by the school's emphasis on the concept of peace. A wide range of visits and visitors and the introduction of Spanish enhance their cultural awareness but their understanding of Britain as a multi-cultural society is limited.

Pupils are aware of the importance of healthy eating and of keeping fit. They take full advantage of the many sports activities on offer. Pupils in all years are encouraged to develop a sense of responsibility for others, including the school council, sports captains and monitors in all areas of school life. They also play a full part in church activities within the local community. They speak positively of the rewards systems and are pleased to tell visitors about the different aspects of 'Knights' and 'Stars'. The good progress pupils make in English, mathematics, and information and communication technology (ICT) prepares them well for their secondary school careers and also for life beyond formal education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good and there are examples of outstanding practice in Key Stage 2. Effective teaching in both Nursery and Reception encourages children to take responsibility for their own learning at such an early stage in their school careers. Warm relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are key features of the classroom: teachers and teaching assistants treat their pupils with the utmost dignity and mutual respect abounds. Appropriate levels of challenge are the order of the day and pupils respond positively to the sophisticated questioning techniques of their teachers, which encourage them to think more deeply about the subject matter. In the best lessons, pupils are fully engaged and express their views with confidence and sensitivity, shown in an excellent Year 5 literacy session, for example, in which pupils presented their ideas on 'The person I admire most'. Focused support for pupils with learning difficulties is a major strength and the talented team of teaching assistants has high expectations of what their charges can achieve. In a minority of lessons, teachers direct the learning too much, pace drops as a result and not all pupils are fully engaged in the activities.

The school is rightly proud of its enviable reputation in assessment. Marking is both detailed and informative, and pupils themselves enjoy evaluating the work of their classmates. Moreover, they are fully aware of how to improve their own standards because criteria for success are shared with them in each and every lesson.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets all pupils' needs well and there is an appropriate emphasis on basic skills and on promoting pupils' personal development. As a result, pupils make particularly good progress in literacy and ICT, and their emotional development is also enhanced. Learners have many opportunities to take responsibility, both in lessons and outside the classroom. These contribute to the purposeful atmosphere that is evident throughout the school. The curriculum provides well for pupils with learning difficulties. Pupils with communication and language disorders in the resourced classes, for example, make good progress as a result.

There is a wide range of out-of-class activities, including sport and music, and participation rates are high. The annual 'Artsweek' is a highlight of the school calendar and the classrooms and corridors are adorned with pupils' drawings and paintings. There is a good variety of visits and visitors, and all pupils learn Spanish. However, the school's work to promote pupils' awareness of the wider multi-cultural world is at an early stage of development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of pastoral care, support and guidance provided for pupils is outstanding and is founded on the excellent relationships between adults and pupils and among pupils themselves. Parents agree and add, 'We are grateful for the high quality of support our sons and daughters receive. It makes an enormous difference to the progress they make.' Child protection and procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety are well established and secure. Pupils rightly feel safe and very well cared for. Pupils, who find the work hard, including those in the two

resourced classes, are very well supported by teachers and other adults. The appropriate use of praise, including the popular merit systems, leads to pupils demonstrating positive attitudes, politeness and consideration for others. Pupils new to the school settle down quickly and they are also prepared fully for their transfer to secondary school at the end of Year 6.

Academic guidance for pupils of all abilities is very impressive. Pupils are regularly involved in assessing their own work and that of their classmates and are adept at identifying their own personal and curricular targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management, including governance, are good. The headteacher provides decisive leadership which is founded on creating a clear sense of direction and a good level of challenge for all. She delegates effectively and other managers are increasingly influential in their roles. School improvement focuses clearly on raising standards and achievement, and this is reflected in the marked improvement in attainment and progress since the previous inspection. Tracking arrangements to check on pupils' progress are comprehensive and any possible underachievement is identified rapidly. The school's excellent care for pupils is rooted in the emphasis on promoting pupils' academic and emotional development. The school runs smoothly and financial management is on an even keel. Governors provide the right balance of support and challenge to the capable school team.

Leaders set ambitious targets and are effective in achieving them. The quality of the school's self-evaluation is good. It is largely accurate and identifies priorities for development effectively. Leaders do not rest on their laurels and performance management is used well to drive improvement across the school.

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	2
The attendance of learners	2
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?	1

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 all so much for the wonderful welcome you gave to Mr Griffin and me when we visited your school recently. You were very polite and friendly and it was a pleasure to talk to you. I would now like to tell you what we think about your school.

St Paul's is a good school and you are right to be very proud of it. You behave well, attend regularly and the standards you reach in your work are higher than in many other schools. I have asked your teachers to help you a little bit more in mathematics so that you can do just as well in this subject as you do in reading, writing and science.

At St Paul's, everyone gets on with each other! Your teachers and teaching assistants look after you very well indeed and older pupils, the sports captains, for example, make sure that no one is lonely at playtime and lunchtime. You really enjoy the 'stars' and 'knights' merit systems and you like taking responsibility around school. Your assemblies are a joy to visit and you sing wonderfully! Many of you take part in the activities organised by the local church and you raise a lot of money for charity. I have discussed with your teachers how they can help you understand even more about the other cultures which are represented in Britain.

You make good progress in your lessons because the teaching you receive is good. Teachers ask you some difficult questions to make you think and they also make sure that you have chances to work out how well you are doing. You even give good advice to your classmates on how they can improve their work, too.

Your headteacher and all the other staff work hard to make sure that St Paul's is a happy school and they know exactly what is needed to improve it even further. You can play your part too by continuing to do your best in all your subjects.