

St Paul's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101325
Local Authority	Barnet
Inspection number	323449
Inspection dates	10–11 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Julie Winyard HMI

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	245
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Mark McAulay
Headteacher	Mrs Patricia West
Date of previous school inspection	4 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	The Avenue Friern Barnet London N11 1NQ
Telephone number	020 8368 4839
Fax number	020 8361 4240

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St Paul's is an average-sized primary school with a higher proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and with English as an additional language than is found nationally. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals and those identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is around average. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational need. Attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage is slightly below that of similar schools nationally. The school has gained the Healthy School and Activemark awards. Two Year 5 pupils won the Barnet mathematics competition in 2008 and the school won a silver award at a community gardening competition. The school has a breakfast club that is very well run and provides a healthy start to the day.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

In the words of one parent, 'I have had two children attend St Paul's CofE school. Both have been very happy. As a parent I am very pleased with the standard of education.' The inspection confirms this view, also held by the majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire, that St Paul's is a good and improving school. Another parent commented on the considerable number of staff changes over the last two years and said, 'It finally seems to be more of a team.' The school has been through a period of considerable turbulence in staffing since the last inspection. It is thanks to the good leadership of the headteacher, supported by the good governing body, that the school is now settled, is developing very well and has good capacity for further improvement. The role of middle leaders in some cases is good. However, because of the large numbers of new staff, the school is aware that this is an area for further development.

Standards at the end Key Stage 1 have been above average for the last five years. This is due to the good teaching the children receive and also to the fact that staffing in this part of the school has remained stable. Standards have also been above average at the end of Key Stage 2. However, the children have not made as much progress as they should have done because of the constant change in teaching staff they have experienced. With the appointment of a substantive, full-time deputy headteacher from September and other permanent staff in Key Stage 2, this situation has been remedied. Currently standards, achievement and progress are good in Key Stage 2 and pupils are well on track to achieve the challenging targets the school has set.

Teaching and learning throughout the school is good and teachers are very well supported by highly trained and effective classroom assistants. There is excellent management of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who make good progress and have achieved from their starting points. These pupils speak very highly of the additional help they receive and say they are much more confident learners because of this. The good curriculum also supports the good learning. Pupils say their teachers make learning 'interesting and fun!' The care and support all pupils receive is excellent. There are very robust systems in place for safeguarding and ensuring pupils' health and safety. However, academic guidance is variable between subjects and classes. Pupils say, 'Sometimes it is just ticks', so they are not always clear what they need to do to improve further. The school has plans in place to ensure that all marking is of a consistently high quality.

Because of the excellent care they receive, pupils' personal development and well-being is outstanding. This is particularly evident in the excellent behaviour in lessons, around the school and on the playground. In a school with large numbers of minority ethnic groups, the social cohesion is exemplary. Pupils work and play together in a way that shows respect for each other as well as for the adults they work with. Enjoyment of learning is evident in every lesson. Pupils' moral and spiritual development is also outstanding because of the strong Christian ethos of the school and the very close links with the local church. The school has taken effective steps to promote improvement since the last inspection.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The Early Years Foundation Stage is a treasure house of exciting learning activities. Both in the Nursery and Reception classrooms and the excellent outdoor area children are presented with an interesting and stimulating curriculum. For example, the role play areas provide excellent opportunities for pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the world. The exceptional teaching of both teachers and early years professional staff means that interventions happen at just the right moment to move children's learning forward. All staff have an excellent understanding of how to ask questions that challenge and deepen children's thinking and learning so that all children make good progress in all the areas of learning. Teachers' planning is also exemplary. For example, learning is systematically analysed every few days and activities adjusted to meet the needs of all the children. The children love learning and talk excitedly about the 'mountain of bubbles' they created when making bubble prints. They collaborate exceptionally well. For example, when working in a group building with Duplo bricks, one boy said when his brick tower got very tall, 'I can't reach, mine is so big. Can you help me get this up here because I am too little? We need to lift this together guys!'

Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding because of the excellent systems in place to ensure pupils' learning and welfare is paramount. Children work in an extremely safe environment. Their learning is assessed accurately, and there is a very good balance between child-initiated and teacher-led activities. Home visits ensure that children know their teacher before they start the Nursery; this means that they feel confident and settle down very quickly. The transition plans for entry to Reception and Year 1 ensure that this confidence continues and children make a very good start in Key Stage 1. There are excellent relationships with parents, who comment on the good progress their children make and how much they enjoy coming to school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve consistency in the quality of marking so that pupils know exactly what to do to improve their work and are given time to do this in lessons.
- Improve the quality of middle leadership so that it is consistently good in all subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter Year 1 with standards that are broadly average. They make good progress in Key Stage 1 and by the end of Year 2 standards are above average. Standards at the end of Year 6 are also above average. However over the last two years achievement and progress have been satisfactory because of the many changes in teaching staff, which has led to some underachievement due to lack of consistency. Currently progress from Year 3 to Year 6 is good and standards are above average. This is because there is a settled team of teachers. The school has also put in place a very rigorous and robust tracking system that enables them to rapidly identify any areas of underachievement and address these.

There is no significant difference in the standards, achievement and progress of different groups, for example girls and boys. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because their learning is monitored exceptionally well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils greatly enjoy school, as is shown by their above-average attendance. This is confirmed by the vast majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and their behaviour is exemplary. Assemblies and lessons that deal with subjects such as friendship, working together, tolerance and conflict have a very good impact on pupils' spiritual, moral and social development and help develop respect for right and wrong and for social responsibility. As one pupil commented, 'We are all one big family here.' Pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and enjoy a varied and well-organised physical education programme. They are confident that adults will deal effectively with isolated problems or friendship concerns. Through work in religious education, geography and history, they gain a very good knowledge and appreciation of worldwide communities. Pupils have many opportunities to take responsibility and school councillors contribute well to plans for playground development and have supported a variety of charities. These excellent aspects of their personal development, together with the good basic skills they attain, prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. In the best lessons teachers have exceptional subject knowledge and there is a high level of attention to detail, for example in how pupils can improve their work. All teachers have high expectations of behaviour and pupils' commitment to learning. This leads to an excellent working atmosphere in lessons. Teachers help pupils understand what they are expected to learn and make effective use of questioning and discussion to ensure that they have understood. Work is suitably challenging and reflects improvements in the quality of assessment since the previous inspection. While some excellent marking was seen, this is inconsistent across the school and does not always enable pupils to improve their work. Teachers and support staff work very well together and teaching assistants have a very good impact on pupils' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is highly successful in promoting pupils' personal, social and emotional development. There is a wide range of enrichment activities with opportunities for pupils to learn French, and to participate in sport, the arts and music. Residential visits and visits into the community add a further effective dimension to the curriculum. The whole-school themed activities such as 'Science Week' and the 'Black History' project, when the normal curriculum timetable is suspended and replaced by thematic cross-curricular activities, are particularly successful in capturing pupils' interest. The school is currently extending this more exciting approach to curricular planning in order to improve and add relevance to learning by linking subjects, as in the Year 4 project on the Second World War. As a response to the comparative fall in the numbers of pupils reaching the higher level in mathematics and science, the school is now planning more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their good knowledge to problem-solving activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Adults who work in school have a good commitment to the care, guidance and support of all pupils. The vast majority of parents agree with this view. As one parent said, 'My child is looked after well.' There are good arrangements for regular risk assessments and appropriate child protection procedures. The inclusion manager provides outstanding support for vulnerable pupils. The pastoral support and academic guidance for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for pupils who have English as an additional language is good. This helps them progress as well as other pupils. There are good support systems to aid the induction of new pupils and they soon make friends and settle to school routines. Pupils know their learning targets and are beginning to be able to assess their own progress towards meeting these targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The good leadership of the headteacher has ensured that the school has maintained high standards through a period of considerable change in teaching staff. The new senior leadership team is highly focused on improving progress and recently introduced pupil progress meetings, which are ensuring that all teachers are held to account for the quality of learning in their classes. The school knows itself well and self-evaluation is good, although in some areas such as personal development and well-being, it is a little modest in recognising its achievements. The governors give good support as well as challenge to the school. For example, they were closely involved in developing the new staffing structure, including the appointment of a full-time deputy headteacher. The quality of middle leadership is variable. This is because many of the staff are new to this role. The school is beginning to provide appropriate training for them so that they are able to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and standards, achievement and progress in their subjects. The school has forged good relationships with external agencies and this is particularly effective in ensuring pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive the additional expert support they need. Community cohesion is good. Within the school and local community the school's work is outstanding because it understands its community very well, for example in creating the shared parenting groups. However, the school recognises that further work is needed in developing wider cultural and global links, so that pupils develop an understanding of different communities within the United Kingdom and the wider world.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	1
The extent to which 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	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 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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**

24 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Paul's CofE Primary School, London, N11 1NQ

Thank you very much for the wonderful welcome you gave us. We were very impressed with how polite and helpful you are and with your excellent behaviour in lessons, around the school and in the playground. It was great to see how much you enjoy learning because your teachers do such a good job at making lessons fun and interesting for you.

Your headteacher and the senior leadership team are working very hard to make sure you do not have so many changes in teachers as some of you have experienced over the last two years. All the teachers work very well together as a team and we think you do, too, because you work so well together in lessons and play so happily together in the playground.

I particularly enjoyed meeting some pupils who get extra help with their learning. It was good to hear how much you value the extra help you are given and that you are confident that you are making good progress. It was also good to hear from the school council, who were very keen to tell us all the things they do for the school.

Our base room was very close to the school hall and just below the music room. We thought your singing and playing was excellent and it is great that you get so many opportunities to learn new skills through the many extra activities the school provides.

There are two things we see the school could do to make your learning even better.

- Improve consistency in the quality of marking, so that you know exactly what to do to improve your work and are given time to do this in lessons.
- Make sure all your teachers are equally good at providing you with exciting and interesting activities in the subjects that are their special responsibility.

With very best wishes for your future lives.

Yours faithfully

Julie Winyard

Her Majesty's Inspector