

St Paul's Cray Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101647
Local Authority	Bromley
Inspection number	323497
Inspection dates	8–9 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Natalia Power

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 controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	228
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	Rev Christopher Kitchener
Headteacher	Mrs Wendy Macallister
Date of previous school inspection	3 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Buttermere Road Orpington BR5 3WD
Telephone number	01689 821993
Fax number	01689 825835

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized school and its roll is increasing. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. Around two fifths of pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds, with pupils from Romany or Gypsy backgrounds forming the largest group. English is the first language of nearly all pupils. An above-average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Of these, pupils with moderate learning difficulties form the largest group.

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, strongly supported by parents. One commented, 'It really is like a community, not just a school.' Its roll is increasing as its reputation grows. It is an inclusive school, where pupils from all backgrounds are welcome and make good progress. Pupils feel safe and are kind to one another. They understand the rules and want to learn. The school caters very effectively for pupils' emotional needs. In this secure and peaceful environment, pupils develop good social and personal qualities. They behave well in lessons and around the school, and are considerate towards others.

The school cares for its pupils well, providing effective support so that pupils from all heritages make good progress. Pupils from Romany or Gypsy backgrounds make better progress than their national counterparts. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties do well at school because they are given good care and support. The school works in effective partnership with a range of external agencies and with local secondary schools to prepare pupils well for the next stage in their education. The curriculum has a strong focus on the basic skills, enabling pupils to gain a good grounding in reading, mathematics, science and the use of information and communication technology (ICT). However, pupils' writing skills are less developed, and the school recognises the need to encourage pupils to gain fluency by writing in subjects across the curriculum, not just in English.

Good teaching enables pupils to make good progress throughout the school. Children enter the Nursery with communication, language and social skills which are below those expected for their age. Children are taught well throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, and make good progress, though their knowledge and skills remain a little below those expected for their age. Pupils continue to make good progress through Years 1 and 2, reaching standards in line with those for the country as a whole. In Years 3 to 6 progress slows a little, but pupils nevertheless leave school with standards which are broadly average.

In the words of one parent, teachers 'really do care about the well-being of the children'. They tailor work effectively to pupils' differing abilities. Pupils are given good opportunities to share in setting their targets for the coming term. However, they sometimes lose sight of these targets, and teachers' marking does not always explain to them how to improve the quality of their work. The school recognises the need to ensure that all marking offers guidance on the next steps pupils need to take in order to make faster progress.

Leaders and managers know their school well and provide clear direction with a good focus on raising standards. They track pupils' progress effectively and use the information to provide effective specialist support for those who need it. They are gradually improving attendance, but need to do more to tackle the persistent absenteeism of a few pupils. The school has tackled the areas for development identified in the previous inspection by raising attainment in mathematics and improving the monitoring of teaching. It has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because teaching is good and because adults look after their welfare well. Children develop good personal qualities and play together well. Teachers and the knowledgeable and effective support assistants provide

a good range of activities to interest and challenge the children. Basic literacy and numeracy skills are promoted at every opportunity. There is a good balance between activities which are teacher-led and those which the children choose for themselves, and clear links are made between learning in the classrooms and in the outside activity areas. Classrooms are well planned and resourced and children's work is attractively displayed. Adults build up a clear picture of children's achievements through regular and well-targeted assessments. Provision is led well by a knowledgeable and effective coordinator who has a clear view of what needs to be improved. She is aware that, when the current development plan is revised, it should focus more clearly on standards and achievement and the transition to Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils have as many opportunities as possible to write fluently in all subjects to raise standards in writing throughout the school.
- Ensure through clearer marking that pupils understand how to improve the quality of their work.
- Work with parents to improve the attendance of a minority of pupils who persistently miss school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From their starting points pupils make good progress, leaving school with standards approaching the national average. Children enter the Nursery with language and social skills which are generally below those expected for their age. Through good teaching and welfare they make good progress, leaving the Reception Year with skills and understanding not far below the level expected for their age. Pupils continue to make steady progress in Years 1 and 2, reaching standards in reading and mathematics which are close to the average for the country as a whole, though lower in writing. Progress in Years 3 to 6 slows a little. Pupils leave school with mathematical and reading skills which are close to the average in the country as a whole, but lag behind in writing skills. The school recognises the need to create as many opportunities as possible for children to practise their fluency in a range of subjects and topics. Good support ensures that pupils with moderate learning difficulties and those from all ethnic backgrounds make good progress in line with others.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is good. The school is an orderly community because pupils have a mature view of the need for rules and the consequences of not keeping them. Pupils acquire good spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. They appreciate the importance of prayer and reflection and of worshipping together. Pupils enjoy school and consider it to be a friendly place where they are well looked after. Most pupils attend school regularly and promptly each morning. The school uses a range of strategies to improve attendance and has had some success, but there are still too many persistent absentees. Pupils have a good understanding of what is required for a healthy and a safe life. Older pupils readily accept responsibility as school councillors, prefects and playleaders. The good progress pupils make in acquiring basic numeracy and literacy skills and their good personal qualities prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan well to meet the needs of the wide range of abilities in their classes, ensuring that all pupils are able to make good progress. Teachers create a calm atmosphere and manage behaviour well, so that pupils are able to concentrate and achieve. Pupils enjoy their lessons and appreciate the support their teachers give them. In the words of one, 'Teachers are always welcoming and encouraging.' Teachers use questioning well, ensuring that pupils understand the work. Teachers introduce lessons well so that pupils are clear about what they will learn, and they involve pupils successfully in revising what has been learnt. Teaching assistants are well trained and provide effective support for individuals and groups. Though teachers mark pupils' work positively, offering encouragement, they do not always make clear how pupils can improve the quality of their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The strong focus on basic skills ensures that pupils make good progress, particularly in reading, mathematics, science and ICT. Though pupils write in English lessons, they do not have sufficient opportunities to gain fluency by writing at length in other subjects. Pupils learn effectively about the business world through taking responsibility for running a school shop. ICT is used extensively across a range of subjects and this enhances pupils' computer and research skills. Pupils are fortunate to have a rich and varied programme of clubs, which are well attended. They are taken on many trips and visits to places of interest, and these broaden their understanding of the world around them. Music is a strength of the curriculum and pupils have good opportunities to make music in school and in the community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school has a very caring culture, so that pupils feel happy and secure and ready to learn. They know they can go to an adult for help if they are worried. Pupils who may be vulnerable or distressed are supported and encouraged well. A good range of support groups are provided. For example 'Busy Bees' and 'Ladybirds' groups help to develop the social skills of younger pupils, and anger management and bereavement counselling are provided when required. Pupils who need extra help with their learning are identified early and given good support. Child protection procedures are robust. A good amount of assessment information is collected and this is used effectively to put in place help for groups and individuals who need extra support. Pupils have targets for improvement, but sometimes forget them over the period of a term, and the school recognises the need to offer better academic guidance on what pupils need to do to reach the next level.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is popular with parents. As one commented, 'She is always around and always has time to listen to you.' Ably assisted by her leadership team, she has created an ethos where

staff share the same clear vision for the school. Inclusion is an important part of the vision of leaders and managers, and they are effective in making all pupils feel valued. They understand their school and share in planning what needs to be improved. They recognise the need to set themselves and their pupils even more ambitious targets for raising achievement in writing. They promote community cohesion well, ensuring that pupils have a good understanding of the world around them and what they can do to make it a better place. Governors know the school well. They are ready to hold it to account and provide effective support.

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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?	2
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?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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/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?	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
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 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

22 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Paul's Cray Church of England Primary School, Orpington, BR5 3WD

You may remember that two inspectors recently visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing how friendly and polite you all are. You behave well in class and in the playground, and your school gives you many opportunities to take responsibility and play your part in making your school a good place to attend. You are fortunate to go to a school which takes you on so many trips and visits, giving you a good understanding of the world and what you can do to make it a better place. You bring music to the local community and this is a lovely thing to do.

All the adults look after you well and make sure you learn well and make good progress. You listen well in lessons and join in sensibly. If any of you have any difficulties, there is always an adult to help. We want you to do even better in your writing and have asked the adults to give you many more chances to write in all kinds of subjects to help you become fluent writers. We have also asked them to make sure you know exactly what to do to improve your work.

We know you enjoy school, because you told us that 'teachers make it fun to learn'. What a pity, then, that a few of you do not do as well as you could, because you miss too much school. Please remind your parents that every day is important and should not be missed.

We wish you the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Natalia Power

Lead Inspector