

# St Pauls' Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118590
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	326851
<b>Inspection date</b>	9 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jane Chesterfield

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	104
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	13
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Paul Harrison
<b>Headteacher</b>	Desmond Watson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	31 October 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	School Lane Swanley BR8 7PJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01322 664324
<b>Fax number</b>	01322 614939

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is much smaller than average and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is also below average. The proportion from minority ethnic groups is lower than usually found and no pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is just below average, and there is a smaller proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs than is found nationally. The school has gained a number of awards, including the Healthy Schools award and the Sports Active Mark. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is offered in the school's Reception class. The deputy headteacher and the Early Years Foundation Stage leader are currently on maternity leave.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Paul's is a good school where pupils achieve well and enjoy a well-rounded education. Parents think highly of the school and appreciate what it offers their children. One commented that the staff 'go to great efforts to find each child's skills, talents and gifts'. Other typical comments were: 'the school ensures children feel like valuable members of the community,' and 'every single child is valued'. The headteacher and his staff create a positive and purposeful working environment where pupils feel confident and able to flourish.

Pupils are able to learn well because they are very happy at school. They enter the Reception class with a level of skills which is slightly below that expected for their age, and make good progress, with most of them moving into Year 1 with skills that are at least in line with expectations. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and pupils reach standards which are broadly average, although their progress in writing and mathematics lags behind that in reading. Progress accelerates in Years 3 to 6. Standards at the end of Year 6 were above average in reading, writing and mathematics in last year's tests, and showed a good improvement on the previous year, particularly in writing and to a lesser extent in mathematics. The cohort made good progress in all areas from their starting points. This is because the school's tracking systems have improved considerably since the last inspection, so teachers are quickly able to identify if pupils are not making the progress they should and give them additional support. The current cohorts of pupils in Year 6 have made at least as good progress as their predecessors. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do well because of the extra attention they receive.

Other improvements in teaching since the last inspection have also had a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teaching is good overall, particularly in Years 3 to 6 and the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teachers now make good use of their assessments to plan work which meets the needs of all their pupils, and targets are well used to help pupils understand how to improve. Pupils are given good opportunities to reflect on their work and evaluate that of others. However, the quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent across the school, and so pupils do not always receive helpful feedback on their written work.

Pupils feel secure and very happy at school because pastoral care is good. One pupil said, 'The teachers are really friendly and we can talk to them about anything we're worried about.' All pupils are well known to adults and are well supported. Pupils' personal development is good as a result. They have positive attitudes and behave well, enjoying the range of the school's curriculum and making the most of the extra opportunities available. They are proud to take on roles in the school and the wider community. One pupil felt that, 'We can be trusted with responsibility,' and this is reflected in their consideration for and readiness to help others. Although pupils are eager to play their part in the school community, not all families support the school by ensuring that their children attend regularly or on time. Consequently, the level of attendance is below the national average. The school is rightly taking firm action to make sure that none of its pupils miss out on their education.

The school has moved on in leaps and bounds since the last inspection, thanks to the hard work of the headteacher and his staff. The school is well led. Senior staff are forward looking and ready to embrace change, and have the drive to make this happen. The school has shown that it has been able to make effective, rapid change to its systems and organisation, which are now

beginning to have an impact on pupils' achievement and standards. Its capacity for future improvement is good.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children get a good start to their education in the Reception class. They arrive with skills which are, overall, slightly below expectations for their age. They make good progress, moving into Year 1 with skills which are at least in line with expectations for most pupils. They make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development, their knowledge and understanding of the world, and their physical development. Children behave well and are eager to learn independently, because relationships with adults are good and they are well supported in their personal development. Good attention is given to their welfare at all times.

Facilities in the newly built Reception class are very good, and the outdoor area is particularly well used. Children enjoy a good range of well-planned activities which promote all their areas of learning, although they are not always encouraged to try out all of these. Teamwork between staff is good, and the teaching assistant gives excellent support to the class teacher. Although the Early Years Foundation Stage leader is currently on maternity leave, development planning and assessment systems indicate that the provision receives good direction, enabling it to run smoothly without her.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards in writing and mathematics in Years 1 and 2 by ensuring that pupils concentrate more fully on their work.
- Increase the consistency in teachers' marking throughout the school, so that pupils know how to improve their written work.
- Work with parents to raise levels of attendance so that all pupils are able to make the most of what the school has to offer them.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2, entering Year 3 with broadly average standards. They do better in reading than in writing and mathematics in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6, pupils make good progress, particularly in reading and writing, and standards at the end of Year 6 in English are consistently above average. This is because the school has worked hard to help develop pupils' speaking and listening and role-play skills, and to help prepare them for writing for different purposes and at length. Standards in mathematics at the end of Year 6 have been lower than in English, but have shown good improvement and are now above average.

Because of the small cohorts in each year group, the school has not been able to highlight any common areas of weakness in pupils' mathematical skills. However, its improved use of tracking means that individuals who are floundering can be more quickly identified and helped. This is why outcomes for pupils are now showing an improvement. The school has recognised that these improvements now need to be made secure in all classes.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The ethos of the school ensures that they have opportunities to reflect, and that they develop a good understanding of right and wrong and of how to treat others. Their awareness of other cultures has been widened considerably since the last inspection. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles, as the school's recent awards indicate, and a good knowledge of how to keep themselves and others safe. However, some of the younger children do not always behave sensibly when crossing the school site. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. The older pupils show mature and thoughtful attitudes to learning, though the younger ones are sometimes slow to settle when expectations for their behaviour are not made clear.

Pupils are very active in playing their part in the school and the local community. The school council is very keen to improve the school environment, for example in designing the new playground and restoring the zebra crossing on the school drive. Pupils take on responsibilities as librarians or buddies, run their own school newspaper, take part in sporting and school council activities with other local schools and raise money for national and international charities. Their good social, literacy and numeracy skills mean they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. While the attendance of most pupils is good, a very small number attend irregularly despite the best efforts of the school. This has a negative impact on their attainment and progress.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching is good overall, particularly in Years 3 to 6, and this means pupils learn well. Teachers plan well to meet the needs of their classes and make good use of teaching assistants to support particular groups. Pupils have good opportunities for independent learning and are expected to think for themselves. Teachers use questions well to keep pupils on their toes and give them the chance to discuss their ideas with their classmates. Pupils evaluate their own work and that of their classmates regularly, so they can decide for themselves how well they are learning. Teachers have good relationships with their classes and generally manage them well, so no time is wasted establishing order. Where teaching is no more than satisfactory, this is because expectations for behaviour are not made clear, so that the pace of the lesson slows down while children settle. This is the main factor that slows down progress in writing and mathematics in Years 1 and 2. Good support for reading in these years means that pupils do better than in writing and mathematics.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum has a good focus on literacy and numeracy combined with a good balance of other subjects. However, links between subjects across the curriculum are not yet well developed so that, for example, opportunities are missed to strengthen pupils' writing and numeracy. Pupils say they enjoy their learning, particularly in information and communication technology (ICT), which has improved immensely since the last inspection. Pupils are now able to use laptops in class to do research, for example in history and geography, and to explore different

ways of presenting their work, for example in religious education or French. The curriculum is enriched with a good range of clubs and trips which pupils appreciate enormously. They particularly enjoy the chance to do sport regularly and to go on residential trips in this country and in France.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pastoral care for pupils is good. The small size of the school means that all pupils are known to all adults, and this is valued by parents. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust. Pupils are well looked after during the day. There are good links with external agencies for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and their needs are well met. The school is well aware of the small number of pupils whose attendance is poor and it has been very active in working with external agencies to improve it. However, it has proved very difficult to gain the full cooperation of all families in making sure their children attend regularly.

There have been major improvements in academic guidance since the last inspection, and this is now good. Assessment and tracking are now used rigorously to inform planning, plot pupils' progress, highlight support needs and set pupils individual targets. The next step is to improve the quality of marking. Although there is some good practice, where teachers clearly indicate what pupils should do next to improve, this is not consistent across the school.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher and senior staff work well together and give the school good, clear direction. There is a constant focus on improvement, which is evident in the many improvements made since the last inspection. The school has made good progress in developing assessment and tracking systems to tackle underachievement effectively, and in raising pupils' awareness of how well they are learning. ICT provision has expanded, and pupils' absences are pursued with rigour. Management systems have improved considerably. The school development plan is now a succinct and manageable working document focused on priorities that are based firmly upon the school's good understanding of its strengths and areas for development. Subject leaders are developing their roles in evaluating the performance of the school, though the progress of this work is affected by staff maternity leaves.

The governors have a good understanding of their role and of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school is a focal part of the local community. It makes a good contribution to community cohesion and works hard to ensure that pupils from all backgrounds have the chance to do as well as they can in their education.

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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 <sup>1</sup> 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

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<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 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**

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Paul's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Swanley, BR8 7PJ

Thank you for being so helpful and friendly when we visited your school. We really enjoyed meeting you and talking to you. We agree with you that St Paul's is a good school and we could see that you are happy there. You are doing well in your lessons, because your teachers know how to make your work interesting so that you learn quickly.

We were impressed with your good behaviour in school and in the playground, and we saw how well you all get on together. The staff take good care of you, and those of you who need extra help are well supported.

The headteacher and his staff run the school well and know how to make it even better in future. We have agreed that they are going to make sure you all have the chance to make faster progress in mathematics and in writing, especially the younger pupils. Your teachers are going to make sure that, when they mark your work, they make it clear how you can improve it. The school is also going to work with your parents to make sure that all of you come to school regularly and on time.

You can help by making sure that you only ever miss school if you are ill. You can also help by telling your teachers if you find your work too hard or too easy, or if you do not understand their comments in your books. Well done to you all and best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Jane Chesterfield

Lead inspector