

# St Paul's CofE (C) Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124299
<b>Local Authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	328103
<b>Inspection date</b>	27 April 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Krishan Sharma

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)	105
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Brown
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nicholas Bickley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 July 2006
<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>	Garden Street Stafford ST17 4BT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01785 356634
<b>Fax number</b>	01785 356634

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

St Paul's Church of England Primary is a small school. Due to the small number in each year group, the school is organised into four mixed-age classes, one of which mainly caters for children of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A large majority of pupils are White British and very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. At present no pupil speaks English as an additional language. A considerable number of pupils join and leave the school at times other than the usual starting and leaving points. A private provider operates a before and after-school club on the site.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

St Paul's Church of England Primary is a satisfactory school. Most parents are satisfied with the school's provision. One of them typically commented, 'The school provides a happy and safe learning environment, with excellent facilities.' The recent improvements in the quality of teaching, the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme and the use of data to track pupils' progress are beginning to make an impression. While the impact of these is yet to be felt fully, the early gains show that the school has developed a satisfactory capacity to improve further. The school has also dealt satisfactorily with many of the improvement issues raised in the last inspection.

Children make good progress in Reception, but this has not always been built upon in Key Stage 1 due to disruption brought about by frequent changes of staff. Occasionally, this has led to pupils making satisfactory, rather than good progress in Key Stage 1. The improving quality of teaching across the school is beginning to have a positive impact. Untypically, in 2008, Year 6 pupils achieved exceptionally low standards in all three core subjects. Currently, pupils achieve broadly average standards by the end of Years 2 and 6. Most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress, although the rate of progress is slower for the middle ability groups. The overall standards are, at times, depressed by the underachievement of these pupils and a sizeable turnover of pupils during the year. In general, achievement is stronger in English, particularly in writing, than in mathematics, which is a relative weakness.

The quality of teaching and learning remains satisfactory overall. More good lessons are now being taught and teaching is at its best in the Reception and Years 5 and 6 classes. Pupils enjoy being at school and attend regularly. Personal development is now good and is reflected in pupils' good behaviour and their positive attitudes. Most pupils are aware of the benefits of eating healthily and willingly take part in a range of physical activities. Pupils show care for others through raising funds for worthy causes. Their basic and personal skills prepare them satisfactorily for the world of work. The curriculum is satisfactory, but planning does not always cater sufficiently well for all groups of pupils. The good pastoral care is helping pupils to feel safe at school. Although they are given satisfactory guidance, marking and target setting are not consistently helping pupils to improve their work.

The leadership and management are satisfactory. The use of data is improving the tracking of individual pupils' progress. As yet, it is not used fully for analysing how different groups are performing. Subject leaders have limited experience and skills in monitoring work in their areas of responsibility. In general, monitoring of lessons and pupils' written work does not focus enough on the progress they make. The governors are supportive of the school. Currently, they monitor the work of the school mainly through their meetings. Other means of monitoring and evaluation are insufficiently used.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children arrive in Reception with skills and knowledge at levels that are typical of this age group. Leadership, management and teaching are good and are focused on children's learning and development. Consequently, they make good progress across all areas of learning. Adults provide a safe and secure environment for learning. They welcome parents into school. As a

result, children settle quickly and get off to a good start. As relationships are good, children enjoy engaging with the wide range of activities on offer. Detailed assessment provides an accurate measure of children's ongoing progress and enables the staff to plan the next appropriate steps for their learning. The curriculum ensures that children have a good balance of work to improve their academic skills and develop their independence. Adults work together well as a team and have high expectations of all children. Lessons have a good balance of whole-class sessions and group work. The new outdoor play area is still being developed, and its impact on all areas of children's learning is yet to be fully felt.

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

- Improve pupils' achievement in mathematics, particularly the application of their skills in solving more challenging problems.
- Refine teachers' planning and the use of tracking data to ensure that pupils, particularly the middle ability groups, achieve what they are capable of.
- Ensure that pupils receive consistently clear guidance from teachers about how they can achieve their targets.
- Strengthen all leaders' monitoring of pupils' progress in lessons and in their written work.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

By the end of Year 6, pupils reach broadly average standards in all three core subjects. The exceptionally low results at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2008 were untypical, with no comparable set of results for at least the previous six years. The school cites, with some justification, the significant turnover of pupils in this cohort since Year 2 as one of the key reasons for this decline. Standards remain broadly average by the end of Year 2. Most pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school, although recently it has been slower during Key Stage 1, especially when pupils entered Year 1 with average to above average attainment. The school has already taken steps to improve the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 and this has begun to have a positive impact on pupils' progress. Occasionally, pupils in the middle range of ability make slower progress due to a lack of challenge in the work given to them. Across the school, achievement in mathematics is relatively weaker than in English, because some pupils still lack confidence in applying their broader knowledge and skills to solving increasingly demanding mathematical problems. Pupils who need additional support with their learning make satisfactory progress.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their good attendance and attitudes. Consequently, they behave well and willingly engage with their work. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, and the school recognises that more needs to be done to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures. Pupils feel safe in school and are aware of how to conduct themselves safely. They are keen to take on responsibilities in the life of the school. The older pupils are keen to act as monitors and support younger pupils at playtime. The school council members are confident enough to hold discussions

with governors about the work of the school. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to live healthily. They enjoy the healthy choices available at snack times and lunchtimes and take part in the wide range of physical activities on offer. They show concern for others and raise funds to support worthwhile causes in both the local and wider communities. As pupils leave the school with satisfactory basic academic skills, it means that they are adequately prepared for their economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

As a result of the school's recent focus on improving the overall quality of teaching in the school, the proportion of good lessons has increased and no inadequate lessons were seen during the inspection. However, the uneven progress over time in pupils' written work indicates that the overall quality of teaching and learning varies. Teachers generally prepare their lessons well and clearly convey to pupils what they expect them to learn. However, their planning does not always meet the needs and abilities of all pupils in mixed-age classes. As a result, some of these pupils make slower progress. Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) well to explain and illustrate key ideas during introductions to their lessons. At times, these are too long and use up time that could be allocated for pupils to work independently. All staff have a good rapport with pupils who show good attitudes to work in response. Teachers make regular assessments to find out how pupils are progressing with their work and intervene judiciously to improve their learning. Teaching assistants support pupils who find learning more difficult well, and help them make satisfactory progress in line with their peers.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum, although it does not fully cater for the needs and abilities of all groups. The curriculum is adequately enriched through a range of out-of-school activities, including educational and residential visits and visitors who bring their specialist knowledge to the school. The provision of French and Spanish as modern foreign languages adds a European dimension to the curriculum. ICT has developed well since the last inspection and this is used extensively across the school by both staff and pupils both in the classroom and the computer suite. The school has taken effective steps to improve its provision for PSHE since a critical subject survey inspection in 2008. As a result, it is now good and is strongly contributing to pupils' personal development.

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

#### **Grade: 3**

Procedures for safeguarding pupils are securely in place. Pupils say that they feel secure and are confident enough to approach an adult if they have any concerns. Overall, parents' comments confirm that the school is committed to supporting all pupils' needs. Systems for tracking pupils' progress have improved and the instances of underachievement are beginning to be identified at an earlier stage. However, more work needs to be done to ensure that underachievement of groups of pupils is also identified and tackled with a sense of urgency. Pupils have individual targets to achieve, but their use is not yet consistently good enough to improve achievement

further. Teachers' oral feedback to pupils is good, but guidance given through marking is inconsistent and does not always show pupils how they can improve.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The current school improvement priorities represent the school's clear intention to raise pupils' achievement, standards and personal development. However, not all of the benchmarks proposed to measure their success are sufficiently robust. School self-evaluation is generally satisfactory, although the monitoring of teaching and learning does not always focus on the progress pupils are making in lessons and in their written work. The use of data in tracking pupils' progress is growing and is assisting the school in setting more challenging targets. The school recognises that more needs to be done in order to reduce their underachievement faster. Resources are adequately targeted to meet the identified school priorities. The school satisfactorily promotes inter-faith understanding and respect for different cultures. Pupils participate in a range of activities that bring a community dimension to the school's work. Governors are supportive of the school and are able to hold the school to account at their meetings. Even so, closer checks are needed to ensure that the school's weaknesses are fully explored through first-hand contact with the school.





## 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?	3
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	3

### 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?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

<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	3
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	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	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

28 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Paul's Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School, Stafford, ST17 4BT

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed meeting you and talking to you about your work. I am writing to tell you what we found.

- Children in the Reception class make good progress because adults plan rewarding activities for them.
- You attend school regularly and enjoy being at school.
- Those of you who represent your class on the school council enjoy taking on this responsibility.
- Your teachers and other adults in the school care about you and are willing to listen to you if you have any concerns.
- Your headteacher and staff want to make the school better and build on improvements already made.

We have asked the governors and the headteacher to:

- give you more opportunities to use and apply your skills to solve problems in mathematics
- make sure that your teachers check how well all of you are doing and plan work to ensure that all of you make the best possible progress
- make sure that all teachers mark your work in such a way that you know what to do to improve it
- improve the skills of leaders in the school to keep a close check on your work during lessons and in your books.

You can help by continuing to show positive attitudes to work and trying your hardest. On behalf of the team, I wish you and your friends the very best for the future.

Krishan Sharma

Lead inspector