

St Paul's CofE Infant School and SureStart Children's Centre, Tongham

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125148
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	328299
Inspection dates	24–25 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Keith Sadler

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	Infant
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	69
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	26
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Rebecca Kite
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Brown
Date of previous school inspection	5 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	East Ring The Cardinals Tongham Farnham GU10 1EF
Telephone number	01252 400222

Age group	4–7
Inspection dates	24–25 September 2008
Inspection number	328299

Fax number

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St Paul's is much smaller than most infant schools. Four-year old children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are taught in the Reception class. The school has an extensive range of childcare provision. There is a breakfast club, day-care and after school club operating every day for 48 weeks of the year. This is not managed by the governing body and is held in new accommodation that is attached to the school. In addition, there is a Children's Centre, which is managed by the governors of the school. This centre, which does not provide any childcare, offers activities and support for parents of children up to the age of five. In addition, the school leads and manages a number of projects on behalf of the West Surrey Foundation, which is a confederation of ten local schools. One of these projects is known as the Securing Educational Achievement through Relationship development for Children (SEARCh) group. This is for pupils aged five to eight who have been identified with emotional and behavioural difficulties. These pupils are taught for three sessions each week in a dedicated unit housed two miles from St Paul's school.

Almost all the pupils are of white British heritage and there are none at an early stage of learning English. About a third of the pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and this is double the national average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school has gained the following awards: Investors in People, Healthy Schools, Sports Activemark and the Nurture quality mark.

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 provides a good standard of education. The headteacher has a clear and incisive vision for the school that is linked to a determination that all pupils will succeed in their personal and academic development. This vision and resolve to improve are shared by all the staff and have led to a strengthening in the school's provision and the rigour of its self-evaluation. Resulting improvement projects have raised standards and quickened progress. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive and rightly comment on the strong family atmosphere that is created by the whole staff team. As one parent commented, 'The small, close-knit environment, along with the friendly and caring staff, has made my son's schooling hugely enjoyable.'

Pupils enjoy school. They have positive attitudes, behave well and they thrive in their personal development, which is good. This contributes well to the good progress that they make in both Years 1 and 2. Provision to support pupils who find learning hard and those that have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties is excellent and this enables these pupils to make good progress in their learning.

There have been significant improvements in pupils' achievement since the previous inspection and it is now good. From broadly average skills on entry to Year 1, they make good progress and, by the time they leave school, attain standards that are above the national average, in reading and mathematics. Attainment in writing is average. This is because although a greater than average number of pupils attain the higher levels in reading and mathematics, this is not the case in writing. Staff are keenly aware of this. The improvements in standards are because the quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum is now good. Teaching has improved and the weaknesses found previously have been removed. Teachers plan lessons well, make sure that pupils know what they have to do to succeed. They generally provide interesting and challenging activities that capture pupils' interest. In consequence, learning and progress are good. The good overall improvement in both provision and standards since the previous inspection demonstrates good capacity for further improvement.

Leadership and management are good. Teachers work closely as a team, and help and support improvements in provision by being directly involved in checking provision and standards in their areas of responsibility. There have been many changes in the governing body since the previous inspection and this has limited governors' effectiveness. Governance is satisfactory. Governors support the school well and have good plans of how they are to become more closely involved in the self-evaluation process. They recognise that they are not yet in a position to hold the school to account for its effectiveness.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enjoy their time in the Reception classes. For example, children enjoy talking about their birthday celebrations and learning about the months of the year as teachers use practical activities well. This is because children's learning and welfare are given a very high priority. They settle quickly into school life because parental knowledge is used successfully. Children's personal development is good because staff form effective relationships with the children and manage them thoughtfully. Their behaviour is good and they are very keen to learn. Children from all backgrounds play harmoniously together. They adopt healthy lifestyles effectively through eating a balanced diet and taking regular exercise.

Children achieve well and standards are average by the end of the Reception year. This is because staff help them to develop key skills successfully. Good opportunities are provided for activities that are both directed by the adults and for them to choose for themselves. Classroom resources are well organised. However, the outdoor space does not provide an attractive learning environment for children because it has not been sufficiently well developed to encourage children's learning across all the required areas. The staff's planning for the outside area is not detailed enough, and does not cover all the areas of learning. Assessment activities are carried out well. Children's learning and development are successfully recorded in all areas and are used well to plan future activities. The leadership of this stage of education is good. Teachers with responsibilities throughout the school carry out careful checks of provision and children's progress and this leads to appropriate key priorities for development to be identified.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the number of pupils gaining the higher levels in writing.
- Strengthen the outdoor provision in the Reception class and ensure that planning for outdoor activities covers all areas of learning.
- Improve governance by ensuring that governors become more directly involved in the school's self-evaluation processes.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. Children's attainment on entry to Reception is below that expected because of weaknesses in their speech, communication and social skills although in other areas they meet expectations. They make good progress in both the EYFS and in Years 1 and 2. Standards in national tests have improved considerably in the past three years and are now above average. In the 2007 tests, standards were significantly above average. Provisional 2008 results continue the upward trend. The number of pupils gaining the higher levels in reading and mathematics was above average, though this was not the case for writing. This is because there were weaknesses in pupils' sentence construction skills. However, a good programme has been put into place to improve this. In addition, the focus on improving pupils' letters and sounds skills is also benefitting writing, because pupils are now more independent. Nonetheless, current Year 2 pupils' standards are higher in reading and mathematics than in writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of pupils' personal development are good. The many pupils that have challenging behaviour are supported well, and are helped to develop their personal, social and emotional skills. As a result, behaviour, both in lessons and around the school, is good. The strong and supportive family atmosphere helps pupils to develop their confidence and self-esteem and to have positive attitudes to learning and school. This is reflected in the above average levels of attendance. As one Year 2 school councillor said, 'We go and play with children when they are on their own because we want everyone to be happy.' Pupils have a good understanding of the necessity to adopt healthy lifestyles and quickly recount key elements of healthy eating and the importance of physical exercise. They feel safe in school and have a good understanding of how to stay safe. Pupils relish the good opportunities to take responsibility such as membership of the influential school council, and they proudly

recount how they collect money for charities. Their good literacy, numeracy and social skills prepare them well for their move to junior school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Improvements in the quality of teaching and learning have led to an improvement in progress and achievement since the previous inspection. Teachers plan lessons well and are adept at making sure that activities are matched well to individual pupils' needs, particularly in reading and mathematics. Because teachers' behaviour management skills are good, relationships are positive and classrooms have a calm and productive atmosphere. The school's recent focus on strengthening pupils' learning is paying dividends. Teachers make lesson objectives clear and, in numeracy and literacy lessons in particular, identify success criteria. This enables pupils to understand what is expected of them. The school is now working on making sure that these success criteria are identified for all subjects. Specialist teachers and teaching assistants, both in the school and in the SEARCh unit, make a valuable contribution to the progress of pupils that have learning difficulties.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Much work has been done to strengthen the quality and range of the curriculum since the previous inspection. It effectively promotes pupils' academic and personal development. The key change has been in making schemes of work much more personalised for pupils in the school by linking subjects together to make learning more meaningful and real. Literacy plans are carefully woven into subject themes, such as when the school had an Olympics week, which culminated with a visit from Roger Black. Pupils talked enthusiastically about holding an Olympic medal and also writing about it! The science subject leader has successfully ensured that science programmes in Year 1 have also been integrated into topic plans, though this work has to be completed for the Year 2 schemes. Curricular provision in physical education and music is provided by specialist teachers and this too adds to pupils' enjoyment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Staff take outstanding care of pupils and their support is excellent. There are excellent procedures to protect and safeguard pupils and they fully comply with regulations. Many parents commented on the school's excellent provision to help them to support their children through the Children's Centre programme. All the adults ensure that children's emotional and personal development needs are well catered for. The SEARCh project supports pupils with emotional and behavioural needs well and strategies to support those pupils with moderate learning difficulties are very effective in accelerating their progress. Good changes in the way that pupils' progress is tracked now assures that any pupils that are in danger of slipping behind are quickly identified and given good support.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. There are good systems in place to check the quality of provision and pupils' progress. The resulting accurate information is used well to evaluate performance and set future priorities. For example, evaluation showed that there was a need to strengthen provision for pupils who find learning easier. The resulting school-wide project has made a positive impact on learning and the proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels has increased. The school is very responsive to the needs of the community and its excellent partnership with local community groups, as well as the local Federation of schools, ensures that the school's provision strengthens community cohesion.

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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?	1
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?	1
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	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?	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	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 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

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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

08 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Paul's CofE Infant School and SureStart Children's Centre,
Tongham, Farnham, GU10 1EF

I am writing to let you know what I found when I visited your school. Thank you for helping me so well and making me welcome. I can see why you enjoy school so much because I think yours is a good school. These are the things that I liked the most.

- You enjoy school, behave well and you want to do your best.
- The staff take extremely good care of you. They support you outstandingly well and those of you that do not find learning easy are given good support.
- The school makes sure that you are safe and very well looked after.
- Your teachers do a good job. Teaching is good and your lessons are made interesting for you.
- Your headteacher is doing a good job too. She is supported very well by all the other adults in the school.

All schools want to get better. To achieve this in your school, I have asked your teachers and governors to continue to focus on three things. The first is to make sure that more of you gain the higher levels in writing at the end of Year 2. The second is to make sure that the children in the Reception class have a chance to have as many different things to do outside as they do in the classroom. The third is to ask your school governors to make sure that they have a good understanding of how well you are doing in school, so that they can help the staff to make your school even better.

You can help by making sure you work as hard as possible, especially with your writing, whilst continuing to enjoy school.

Yours sincerely

Keith Sadler

Lead Inspector