

St Paul's C of E VA Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135164
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	329044
Inspection dates	13–14 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Graeme Bassett

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	192
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	Graeme Anderson
Headteacher	Carolyn Cohen
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	High Street Rusthall Tunbridge Wells TN4 8RZ
Telephone number	01892 520582
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school. It draws most of its pupils from the immediate neighbourhood. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. The school opened in September 2007 following an amalgamation of the junior and infants schools situated on the site. Currently the school consists of the two original buildings. There is one class for the Early Years Foundation stage (EYFS) and skills on entry are below expected levels overall. The governors are responsible for the breakfast club organised for pupils in the school. The school has recently been awarded the following awards: Activemark, the Healthy School award, Eco Schools Green Flag award, Quality in Study Support (Quiss) and Investors in People status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. However, because of the outstanding leadership and management from the headteacher and good guidance of other staff and governors, the school is improving. This newly established school has only been in existence for 15 months following the amalgamation of the two adjacent schools. The headteacher has shown strong determination to bond these two schools together and the amalgamation is now successfully accomplished. The new school is now working competently. Staff, parents and children readily celebrate a strong sense of belonging to one whole school. The recently formed governing body carries out its responsibilities well and gives good support. The school is now growing in reputation within in the community and in popularity with parents. Several parents confirm that 'This school is really improving'.

The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory. The process involves all staff and the priorities in the school improvement plan are the right ones. Ably supported by senior teachers, the headteacher has instigated several developments to raise the quality of education. New initiatives established by leaders when the school opened have already resulted in pupils' personal development and well-being being good. The impact of the establishment of good pastoral care and guidance within each class is very noticeable. All pupils are fully involved in all that the school does. Consequently, most pupils' expectations are rising as each one tries to do better. The behaviour of nearly all pupils is good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are also good.

Currently standards, even though they are better than those seen last year, are slightly below average. Nevertheless, the achievement of most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is satisfactory. Some planned developments have not been in place long enough to show their full impact. Monitoring and evaluation by the senior leadership and middle management teams identify that pupils are not doing as well as they should, especially in writing. Decisive actions have been taken but, as yet, standards have only improved slightly.

The curriculum is satisfactory and pupils find lessons interesting, especially when they are taught in a more practical way through investigations. Some good examples of cross-subject links are being used, but opportunities are often missed for pupils to use their English and mathematics skills in other subjects. Although some lessons are good, there has not yet been enough time to fully reflect the developments planned by the school and teaching is satisfactory overall. The recently compiled assessment records to track each pupil's progress are detailed and reliably plot this over time. However, in several instances this information is not used sufficiently to ensure that the more able pupils reach the higher levels expected of them. The capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The EYFS is satisfactorily led and managed. When starting in Reception, the children's levels of skills are below the expected levels for their age. This is especially so in their communication, language and literacy and in their mathematical skills. Care, support and guidance are good, children settle quickly to the routines and their personal development and well-being are good.

Satisfactory teaching ensures that children are involved in tasks of their own choosing, as well as in activities guided by the teacher. Children make satisfactory progress and most work

securely within the goals set for them. Nevertheless, their writing and calculation skills are still below expected levels. Currently the tasks do not extend the challenge for the more able children and very few children exceed the expectations for their age. The care and support given to them in the breakfast club enhances their social development effectively.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement, particularly in writing, by ensuring that there are more curriculum opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills in other subjects.
- Improve teaching by ensuring that better use is made of assessment data in planning pupils' next steps of learning and particularly more challenging tasks for the more able so that these pupils reach higher standards.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory but standards are slightly below average. At the time of opening for this new school, standards were below average in most classes. Standards of most of the pupils in Year 6 were well below average. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 was well below the national average. Standards in Year 2 showed that pupils made satisfactory progress and that standards were below average in reading and mathematics but broadly average in writing. Currently standards throughout the school have improved because of the new initiatives that have been put in place since amalgamation. Whilst pupils' achievement is satisfactory, the standards in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics are slightly below average. This is because few of the more able pupils reach Level 3 and this restricts the school's overall performance. Standards in Year 6 are also below average in English, mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 is currently greater than last year in all three subjects but still below average. Improving writing is the main priority. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The development of pupils' personal development and well-being has formed the central thrust within each classroom. As a result, pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Most pupils show good levels of self-confidence and positive attitudes to learning. They develop good teamwork and show respect for each other and their teachers. They make good contributions to the school community, for example through the school council, acting as buddies to help others and through the Eco Group. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles. They comment on the healthy food they grow in the school and particularly for the need for regular exercise through the 'Huff and Puff' club. Pupils feel safe in school and know who to talk to if they need help. Pupils take an active role in the community, especially through links with the church. They have good understanding of the customs of other people in our multicultural society and community cohesion is good. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for their next school and for their future well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some aspects being good. Pupils enjoy their work because teachers know their subjects well. The planning of tasks is good but as yet, teachers do not make strong enough use of the assessment data to challenge the more able pupils. Teachers establish good, purposeful relationships with their pupils. They make good use of question-and-answer routines to help them assess how well pupils understand what they are taught. The use of interactive whiteboards enhances pupils' learning effectively. Teachers' marking is structured and positive and encourages pupils to respond to show they understand. The planning of topics is satisfactory but there are some missed opportunities for pupils to use their English and mathematics skills in other subjects. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, receive good support during lessons to help them understand what they need to do next.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is developing satisfactorily. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education forms a central focus and this is enhancing the pupils' personal development and well-being effectively. The leadership and management are ensuring the successful introduction of the renewed framework for literacy and mathematics. Curriculum planning does not include a wide enough range of tasks to ensure the more able pupils reach the higher levels expected of them.

The wide range of well-attended extra-curricular activities, including a residential visit, day visits and clubs, provides good opportunities that enhance pupils' personal and social development effectively. The breakfast club is a good example.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall, with pastoral care being sensitive and often excellent. All staff show care and concern for each pupil's personal development and well-being. All reasonable measures are taken to ensure pupils' safety and protection. There are good links with parents and with support services that provide extra help for those who need it. Parents are effectively involved in the work of the school. The televised bird box became the centre for everyone's interest first thing every morning, as eggs hatched and young birds grew up. The learning support given to families through workshops and support groups is outstanding. The support also given to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is often very good and this ensures that they make satisfactory progress. Throughout the school, ongoing assessments of individual pupils' progress in English and mathematics are made accurately. However, teachers do not use these data effectively enough to ensure that more able pupils are given guidance about how they can improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has formed good leadership and management skills within the staff. Responsibilities are distributed effectively and senior members of staff and middle management leaders provide good leadership. Each teacher, together with a governor, monitors a specific objective in the school's development plan and, working alongside the headteacher and governor body, they monitor and evaluate the school's performance well. The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Some subject leaders are new to their appointments but, nevertheless, clear action plans are established for all subjects and these are gradually raising standards and achievements. However, the targets set to raise standards and achievement are not yet robust enough to raise the standards of the more able pupils.

The governors are knowledgeable, well organised and fully committed to raising standards and achievement.

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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
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?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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

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	3

The quality of provision

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

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	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?	2
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	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**

14 November 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Rushtall St Paul's CE Primary School, Tunbridge Wells TN4 8RZ.

Thank you for helping us when we recently visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and finding out about your school. We found that your school provides you with a satisfactory education. It is improving and is now working well as a new school. You do some very exciting things and we were extremely impressed by the camera watch on the bird box. There is a good team spirit in your school and it is a happy place. Well done!

- These are the things that are particularly good in your school:
- Your headteacher provides outstanding leadership and management to the school. The teachers and other staff in your school work as a team and support your headteacher well.
- Throughout the school, staff have a clear understanding of how to make your work interesting and raise the standards of your work.
- The teaching is satisfactory and in some classes it is good, especially when teachers plan investigations and practical tasks for you.
- Your teachers give you good encouragement to answer questions and, because of this, your work is steadily improving. Your standards are slightly below average but you are making progress to improve.
- You are all developing good attitudes towards your work and towards each other.
- You have a good understanding about how to remain healthy and how to keep safe.
- You are very polite and the behaviour of nearly all of you is good.
- Staff look after and care for you well.
- There are still some ways in which your school could be better. We have asked your headteacher and governors to:
 - Raise your standards and achievement, particularly in literacy, by ensuring that you have more opportunities to use your skills, particularly in writing in other subjects.
 - Improve teaching by ensuring that your teachers make better use of the information they have about your progress so that they plan more challenging tasks, especially for those of you who find work easy.

Once again, thank you for your help. You can help by asking your teachers how you can make your work better.

Graeme Bassett

Lead inspector