

St Paul's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117492
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	339017
Inspection dates	20–21 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Tony McColgan
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Allen
Date of previous school inspection	9 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons or part lessons and held discussions with governors, pupils and staff. They observed the school's work, its policies, teachers' plans and school improvement planning. The inspection team analysed 69 questionnaires from parents, 110 from pupils and 7 from staff.

Inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- The consistency of provision in Early Years Foundation Stage
- To what extent provision and pupils' performance in writing is being improved in Years 3 to 6
- Pupils' progress in science in Years 3 to 6 and the standards reached by the end of Year 6.

Information about the school

St Paul's Catholic Primary is an average sized primary school. Just over half of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. Other pupils come from a range of ethnic backgrounds, with other White backgrounds and White Irish being the next largest groups. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school with some good features. All pupils are equally valued and their personal development is a real strength of the school. A parent commented, 'A caring, supportive and positive atmosphere resonates through the school community.' Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning and appreciate the activities provided. Pupils are kind, considerate and relate very well to adults and their peers. Behaviour is often exemplary in lessons and around the school. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles by eating healthily and participating in regular exercise. They make a good contribution to the school and to the wider community. They readily take on additional responsibilities and raise funds for a variety of national and international charities. Attendance levels are above average.

Children enter the Nursery with knowledge and skills broadly expected for their age. In Nursery and Reception, they make good progress in their personal and social development. Their progress in most other areas of learning is satisfactory. However, recent assessments show that they perform less well in mathematical calculation and writing because there are insufficient opportunities to extend these skills. Improved planning in the Early Years Foundation Stage means that children's move from Nursery to Reception is a smooth one. Provision is satisfactory and more consistent than at the time of the last inspection. Throughout the school, pupils make satisfactory progress and standards by the end Year 6 are broadly average. Not enough pupils are reaching the higher than average Level 5 by the end of Year 6 particularly in writing and science. Positive action is being taken to improve provision and to raise pupils' achievement in writing. There are good examples of pupils writing for different purposes and applying their writing skills in other subjects. Early signs indicate that pupils' performance is improving. In science, opportunities for pupils to plan and carry out investigations are inconsistent and this hinders their progress.

Teachers have established very good relationships with their pupils and manage them well. Pupils are attentive and respond well to teachers' clear instructions, explanations and questions. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used successfully to illustrate main teaching points. In some lessons, assessment information is not used well enough to plan teaching and to tailor tasks to pupils' abilities and needs. In particular, tasks are not always challenging enough to extend the more able. Occasionally, pupils are not sufficiently involved in their learning when lesson introductions are too long and too teacher led.

Leaders and managers have successfully created a positive and welcoming atmosphere for pupils to learn and staff to work. A good partnership with parents has been established and parents are pleased with the care and education provided for their children. The headteacher and staff are successfully promoting good personal outcomes

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for pupils. The impact of leadership and management on teaching and pupils' progress is satisfactory. Self-evaluation is satisfactory and the school has a clear understanding of what it does well and what is needed to bring about improvements. Improvements are being made in writing and to the Early Years Foundation Stage. The headteacher and deputy are focussing their attention on improving teaching and learning. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good to accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards by the end Year 6 from average to above average, particularly in writing and science, by:
 - using assessment information more consistently to plan teaching and match tasks to pupils' abilities and needs
 - providing challenging extension tasks for the more able
 - providing regular opportunities for pupils to plan and carry out practical investigations in science
 - extending the good practice in teaching of writing
 - ensuring that pupils are fully involved in their learning and that lesson introductions are not too long.
- Increase the range and scope of activities in Early Years Foundation Stage to improve children's performance in mathematical calculation and early writing skills.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Across the school, pupils are making satisfactory progress. Assessments and the lessons seen, indicate that standards by the end of Year 2 are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. National test results, pupils' work and the lessons observed indicate that by the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. In the 2009 national tests in Year 6, no pupils attained the higher than average Level 5 in writing. Positive action is being taken to improve writing and there are early signs that more pupils are working towards higher levels. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive sound support from teaching assistants and make satisfactory gains in their learning. Both boys and girls are making satisfactory progress and differences in their attainment are not significantly different from the national picture.

In a well focused Year 4 lesson, pupils wrote interesting diary entries after good quality discussion with their classmates. Clear prompts were provided by the teacher to guide pupils' learning. They wrote in past tense and used time connectives and powerful verbs successfully. Their detailed and interesting sentences were organised well into

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paragraphs.

Past assessment data indicates that pupils have not made enough progress in science in Years 3 to 6. In a good Year 6 lesson, pupils investigated the stretching of a rubber band by adding mass. They made predictions, designed a fair test and measured and recorded accurately. Pupils selected and used a range of instruments and equipment competently. They made good progress in applying scientific skills. This good practice is not consistent across the school and pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities for 'hands on' practical work.

Pupils are courteous, friendly and considerate. In assembly, they appreciated the qualities of courage and perseverance. They reflected on the importance of working together, looking after the Earth and building a better world. Pupils feel safe at school and know how to protect themselves from dangers. Furthermore, they are confident that there is always a trusted adult they can turn to if they have a problem or if they are upset. At St Paul's, pupils are adequately prepared for the future and their economic well being. Their personal and social skills are well developed. They make satisfactory progress in acquiring and applying literacy and numeracy skills.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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How effective is the provision?

Teachers create a positive classroom atmosphere and have established high quality relationships with their pupils. They effectively share the purpose of the lesson so pupils know what they are expected to learn. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and respond well to their teacher's clear instruction and explanations. As the pupils said, 'Learning is fun' and 'We like the lessons'. Interactive whiteboards are used well to illustrate key learning points. Activities and tasks are not always sufficiently well matched to pupils' abilities and needs. In particular, the more able are not extended with challenging and demanding tasks. In the main, teaching assistants are used well to support pupils' learning, particularly those with special educational needs. Teachers use assistants less effectively when there are overlong introductions to lessons.

The curriculum promotes satisfactory academic progress for pupils and makes a good contribution to their personal outcomes. A range of strategies is being implemented to improve provision and to raise standards in writing, including through discussion, drama and writing in other subjects. The teaching of French contributes well to pupils' cultural and language development. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of clubs, visits and visitors. These are much enjoyed by the pupils and appreciated by parents. Popular clubs include art, athletics, board games, football, and rugby. The good quality care, support and guidance contribute well to pupils' personal development. The school provides good support to pupils and their families where they have social difficulties.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher with her staff has created a positive school ethos and has built good partnerships with parents. Most of the key responsibilities are shared between the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The new English leader is being well supported in her role and there is scope to increase the leadership skills of other staff. Through class observations, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have a clear overview of the quality of teaching. School improvement planning correctly identifies the main areas where improvement is needed to increase pupils' progress and raise standards. Leaders are systematically identifying actions to strengthen teaching so that it is consistently good.

Governors are supportive and more informed about pupils' performance than at the time

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of the last inspection. Governors are beginning to raise questions about pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. Statutory requirements are met and there are good procedures to protect and safeguard pupils. Equality is promoted well and discrimination is tackled effectively.

Community cohesion is promoted well. The school has a good understanding of the community it serves. Pupils show a good understanding of their own and different faiths. The curriculum and pupils' involvement in overseas charities promotes cultural development and global cohesion well.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Year Foundation Stage is satisfactorily led and managed. Children's attainment on entry is in line that expected for their age. The school has established good partnerships with its parents and children settle quickly. Adults establish very good relationships with the children. As a result, children feel secure, safe and grow in confidence. They thoroughly enjoy their learning and relate very well with their peers. They make good progress in their personal and social development. An interesting range of learning activities is planned around themes such as toys. The teaching of letters and sounds is given good attention. Role play areas are interesting and well linked to the main theme. Improved planning has led to greater consistency in the provision in Nursery and Reception. Children make satisfactory progress in most areas of learning, and by the end of the Reception, standards are in line with those expected. There are appropriate systems to assess and record children's attainment. However, this information is not always used fully to modify the planning of teaching and learning

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activities. For example, planning has not been adjusted to improve children's weaker performance in mathematical calculations and early writing skills.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

All parents and carers who returned the questionnaire are very happy with their child's experience at this school. They are especially pleased with the sense of enjoyment, safety and the leadership and management. The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views. While leaders and managers are successfully promoting good personal outcomes for pupils and building good partnerships with parents, the impact on teaching and pupils' progress is satisfactory.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Paul's Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 69 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 230 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	48	70	20	29	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	51	74	18	26	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	31	45	33	48	3	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	49	32	46	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	37	54	31	45	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	49	33	48	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	57	28	41	2	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	34	49	26	38	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	49	34	49	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	49	28	41	4	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	41	37	54	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	44	64	25	36	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	48	50	48	50	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



22 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Paul's Catholic Primary School, Cheshunt, EN7 6LR

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school and showing us your work. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit and would like to tell you what we found. Yours is a satisfactory school.

These are the school's main strengths:

You really enjoy school and your attendance is good.

Your school is a positive and pleasant place to learn in.

You get on really well with each other and your behaviour is good.

The school provides a good range of clubs and visits.

You have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and fit.

You feel safe and well cared for at school.

Your teachers and the other adults take good care of you and provide good support.

We have asked the headteacher and other teachers to make the school better for you:

Some of you could make more progress particularly, in writing and science by:

- being given harder work, especially for those of you who find learning easy
- having more practical investigations in science
- continuing with the school's work on improving writing
- being more involved in learning at the start of lessons.

Children in Nursery and Reception could be given more activities to help improve their work with number and their writing.

You can help by continuing to work hard especially in writing and science. Finally, thank you once again for all your help. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Derek Watts

Lead inspector

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