

St Paul's Community Primary and Nursery School, Spalding

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120423
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	339690
Inspection dates	28–29 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Ruth McFarlane

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Judi Van Geest
Headteacher	Heather Beeken
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Seventy per cent of inspection time was spent looking at learning and 20 lessons or part lessons were observed. All the teachers present were seen. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at staff and pupil surveys, policies, minutes of meetings and lesson plans, reports from outside agencies and 78 completed parental questionnaires.

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

- how well assessment is used to meet pupils' needs
- the impact of strategies to adapt the curriculum to meet changing needs
- middle managers' impact on driving improvement.

Information about the school

This average sized school is located in a rural market town. A greater proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and in the early stages of learning English than is usual, and the number has substantially increased recently. These pupils are mostly from Polish or Latvian backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to the national average although there are fewer with statements of special educational needs. Difficulties are mainly dyslexia or from the speech, language and communication spectrum. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a 26 place Nursery and a 30 place Reception class. The school has won several awards for its provision including Healthy Schools and the Basic Skills Quality Mark. A children's centre is located on the site, run by other providers and not a part of this inspection.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

St Paul's is a satisfactory and inclusive school. There are a number of good features, including the care, guidance and support given to pupils which is based on the strong nurturing ethos evident in school. The senior leaders, including governors, are broadly accurate in their school self-evaluation, and have put in place the necessary steps for improvement.

In 2009, attainment in Year 6 was well below average. Based on pupils' generally low starting points this represented satisfactory achievement and progress. There are indications that the progress of all groups of pupils currently in the school has become more rapid at all levels. As a result, attainment in English and mathematics is showing a marked improvement. Children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is accelerating although its leader is new to the phase, so understanding of the requirements is at an early stage, and the outside area is underused. Throughout the school, pupils' personal development is satisfactory but attendance is low, despite the school's concerted efforts to improve it, and this compromises pupils' preparation for the future.

Although teaching quality is improving and a number of good lessons were seen, not all teachers make effective use of the assessment information that managers now provide. Because of this, lesson planning is inconsistent, and in those lessons affected by weak planning, tasks are not matched precisely to individuals' learning needs. The positive impact of the recently introduced theme-based and more relevant curriculum is not yet clear because activities to promote literacy and numeracy skills through other subjects are not clearly identified, and the depth of coverage for each subject is not checked. All partnerships are strong, whether to enhance the curriculum, to underpin the pastoral care, or to engage parents, who are thoroughly supportive of the school.

A number of features demonstrate that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve. Leaders maintain a focus on improving weak areas. Whilst this has not yet led to significant improvement in pupil progress over time, pupils' work and tracking systems show that pupils' progress is now on track to meet the challenging targets the school has set for itself. A number of initiatives are well under way to improve teaching and pupils' achievement. Leaders check regularly on the quality of teaching but feedback to staff is not sufficiently detailed to accelerate improvements. Some good classroom practice is evident but opportunities are limited for all staff to share this, and to observe excellent practice in other schools. Leadership roles are now more broadly distributed and this is having a positive effect upon the outcomes for pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attendance so that it is average by the end of the 2009-2010 school year.
- Raise attainment in English and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that all teachers use assessment information rigorously in planning so that lessons always meet the learning needs of each pupil.
 - mapping where literacy and numeracy skills can be taught through other subjects.
- Drive improvements forward more quickly by:
 - providing teachers with more detailed feedback and action points following monitoring activities
 - extending the best teaching and management practices within the school, and learning from others outside.
- Develop the effectiveness of the curriculum by:
 - improving leaders' understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and use of the outside areas of the setting
 - ensuring that the planning for themed aspects of the curriculum in Years 1 to 6 show the depth of coverage of each subject.
- 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

Pupils are making satisfactory progress in their learning. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, as they are suitably supported by teaching assistants within lessons.

Inspection evidence shows gradually rising attainment at age 7 and age 11 in the key subjects of English, mathematics and science. In most of the lessons observed, pupils, whatever their background or ability, were interested, and careful questioning by teachers helped pupils to gain greater understanding and build on their prior knowledge. On occasion however, pupils were not given work that challenged them, or spent too long on the carpet listening to their teacher, and consequently became restless. In these situations, the pace of learning slowed and progress was hampered.

Pupils say they enjoy school, in particular the creative aspects such as topic work and the range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils say that they feel reasonably safe in school and they say that strategies that help them feel secure include the buddies who help new pupils to settle. Incidents of bullying are rare and pupils say they are dealt with quickly. Pupils enjoy the opportunities to take exercise and are beginning to understand the need to eat healthily. All groups of pupils make a satisfactory contribution to their school and local community through, for example, working on the school's efforts to be

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

eco-aware or taking on leadership roles within school. Low attendance is now rapidly improving but still affects a few pupils' acquisition of the basic skills needed for their future, including literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills. Pupils' understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues is satisfactorily developed through various curriculum activities, visitors and assemblies, and pupils show curiosity about the world around them.

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	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory; however, there were a number of examples of good teaching observed during the inspection. In these lessons, teachers displayed good subject knowledge and employed various teaching methods that appealed to the range of pupils' learning styles. Good use was made of resources to stimulate pupils' interest, such as looking at camera shots to help pupils understand British institutions. No inadequate lessons were seen. The recent introduction of a system for assessing pupil progress is beginning to result in a close match of activities to pupils' needs. In weaker lessons, planning was not sufficiently detailed to deal with the needs of each individual

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

because assessment procedures were not always being implemented rigorously enough to identify these needs. Sometimes, sessions introducing topics were too long for pupils to remain engaged. Marking is often of suitable quality, with a balance of praise and improvement points, but in some classes marking is less effective and consequently does not help pupils to improve. Resources are generally used well and teaching assistants deployed appropriately to help learning.

Recent developments in the curriculum, through greater use of cross-curricular links to reinforce learning, have increased pupils' interest, for example in some excellent work observed linking technology and mathematics. Trips, visits, and extra-curricular activities such as sports clubs, contribute to variety in the curriculum. Personal, health and social education supports pupils' personal development and supplements the good pastoral care and the well-informed guidance and support offered. The school has worked successfully to enable the increasing number of pupils who speak English as an additional language to overcome barriers to learning and emphasis is given throughout the school to the values of respect and care. The learning environment is attractive and well cared for and displays in classrooms and corridors show a good balance of different subjects and demonstrate that pupils' work is highly regarded and valued. The good range of measures to raise levels of attendance, which includes working with outside agencies, has led to rapid improvement with those affected, but more recent absentees have kept attendance low overall..

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 school places emphasis on being a fully inclusive community that integrates and supports the ethnic mix that is present. Senior leaders monitor the progress of pupils and the work of all staff, identify appropriate areas for improvement and implement changes to address these. School leaders are aware that as yet not all actions are implemented rigorously and consistently and, as a consequence, the pace of change has not been as rapid as it could be. Subject leaders are becoming increasingly effective in monitoring their subjects but sometimes this is on too superficial a level to be of best use to improve skills. Governors are knowledgeable about the school and make a contribution to school self-evaluation. They have been instrumental in supporting the school in recent times and they are aware that there needs to be a more consistent focus on raising achievement. Partnerships with external agencies and other providers

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

enable the school to enrich its provision, for instance through extra support to improve attendance and behaviour. The school's work to promote community cohesion is satisfactory. Governors and school leaders accept that they should evaluate the impact of this work more carefully and plan actions which reflect the needs of the community. Resources are well managed and the school environment is well maintained. The school's policies and procedures for safeguarding are well managed and include rigorous checks on staff and volunteer suitability, recorded centrally.

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	2
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Inspection evidence shows that, based on their starting points, outcomes for children are satisfactory and improving. The children are happy and enthusiastic learners. Progress in key skills and in the development of personal skills is satisfactory because staff are caring, they pay attention to individual needs, and recently, teaching has improved. Some good examples of teaching were seen. Children enjoy taking responsibility for small tasks such as putting away toys and this helps them develop skills for the future. Staff help children to learn and develop through a range of interesting activities. Planning takes account of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework, but the outside area is not used or developed as well as it should be. Children's needs are identified and provided for, and their welfare is promoted satisfactorily. As a result, they receive a satisfactory balance of adult-led activities and those they choose for themselves. Activities are well supervised by adults and progress is carefully assessed. Recent changes are slow to be fully effective because

the manager is newly appointed and has class responsibilities in Key Stage 1. Day-to-day assessment is a strength, being carefully focused on the individual. A strong partnership is evident with parents, carers and outside agencies.

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

Parents who responded to the questionnaire are strongly supportive of the school. Nine out of ten are happy with most aspects. Parents feel the school keeps their child safe and encourages them to be healthy, and report that their child is happy at school. However, a small minority feel that the school does not deal with unacceptable behaviour well enough. Inspectors investigated the concerns and noted a range of initiatives in place to deal with any lapses in pupils' behaviour. These have already made a positive impact so that behaviour overall is now 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 Community Primary and Nursery School, Spalding 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 78 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 234 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	32	41	44	56	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	35	45	42	54	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	30	38	41	53	5	6	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	32	45	58	4	5	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	25	32	48	62	3	4	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	36	46	59	2	3	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	37	46	59	3	4	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)	22	28	49	63	4	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	29	53	68	1	1	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	27	47	60	6	8	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	23	49	63	5	6	3	4
The school is led and managed effectively	23	29	49	63	3	4	3	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	31	40	45	58	2	3	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.



Monday 1 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Paul's Community Primary and Nursery School, Spalding, PE11 2JQ

Thank you very much for the kind welcome you gave my colleagues and me I when we visited your school recently. It was a pleasure to be shown around by such friendly pupils and we really enjoyed seeing you at work in your classrooms.

Your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. This means some things are fine and some could be better. Records show that some of you miss school too often. Do try hard to attend on every school day because when you miss work it is hard to catch up.

You told us that you feel safe in school, and enjoy some interesting curriculum activities. You told us that staff care for you and they are interested in how you are doing. We agree. Your teachers mostly provide interesting lessons. Sometimes, however, you have to spend too long on the carpet and would prefer to be more active and challenged in all your lessons.

To continue to improve your school, we have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to help you to make faster progress by ensuring all teachers use the information they have about your progress to plan lessons which meet your needs more closely. We have asked your teachers to make sure they find every opportunity, not just in numeracy and literacy lessons, to help you improve these important skills. We have also asked that the school does everything it can to make sure teaching is as good as it can be, covering enough detail for each subject. For the youngest children, we have asked that the outside area is used more effectively.

You can help by always trying hard and striving to do your best.

Yours sincerely

Ruth McFarlane

Lead inspector

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