

St Paul's Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121266
Local Authority	York
Inspection number	339907
Inspection dates	14–15 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Linda Buller

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	116
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Julia Hedley-Jones
Headteacher	Mrs Maggie Antoun
Date of previous school inspection	15 May 2007
School address	12 St Paul's Square York North Yorkshire YO24 4BD
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed four lessons taught by one teacher and three teaching assistants. Meetings were held with governors and staff, and discussions took place with a number of parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at data about children's progress and attainment, children's records of achievement, the school's planning documents, policies, procedures and records and the questionnaires completed by 37 parents and carers.

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

- the children's achievement in writing and calculation skills
- the impact of the teaching and the curriculum on outcomes for children
- how effectively the school identifies and establishes future priorities
- the effectiveness of provision for community cohesion.

Information about the school

St Paul's is the only maintained nursery in York and is located in a listed Victorian terraced house. Most children come from White British backgrounds, with a small proportion from other heritages. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is large in comparison with other schools. Twelve part-time places are resourced by the local authority for children with a range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children generally enter the nursery in the term following their third birthday and are able to stay for a maximum of five terms.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

The nursery provides an outstanding start to children's education. Relationships between staff and children are excellent. Children's achievement is very impressive and has improved from good at the time of the last inspection. As a result of the school's outstanding provision, children come on in leaps and bounds. They settle very quickly into nursery routines and develop as happy, confident learners who behave outstandingly well. The success of actions taken to improve outcomes for children confirms the school's outstanding capacity for continuous improvement.

Children love coming to school. There is much for them to do and enjoy, both in and outside. Staff ensure that activities are firmly based on children's interests; as a result, they become thoroughly involved in the varied range of learning opportunities provided and make at least good and at times outstanding progress. Small group work is the main used successfully to closely match provision to children's needs. In pastoral groups, teaching ranges from outstanding to satisfactory. Occasionally, opportunities are missed to build on children's responses and extend learning into areas beyond that which is planned.

Highly skilled and experienced staff provide specialist care and teaching for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Home visits before children start nursery and careful assessments of their learning provide staff with an in-depth knowledge of the needs of each child. Challenging targets for attainment are set and activities are tailored specifically to enabling these children to meet these targets and consequently, make outstanding progress.

Excellent systems of leadership and management inspire a united team of staff, who have a strong sense of purpose in helping all children to do as well as they can. The headteacher rigorously collects and analyses information on the progress of each child. She uses this information very effectively to ensure that activities are provided which lead to high standards. The next step is to use this information to pinpoint where the quality of teaching is most effective and where it can be further improved. The school has a secure understanding of the community which it serves. Learning opportunities that develop children's awareness of the different backgrounds, faiths and cultures in their own area are planned and delivered in ways that are meaningful to children of nursery age. Senior leaders recognise that children's knowledge of places further afield and the school's procedures to judge the impact of this work requires further attention.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching by:

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- making effective use of every opportunity to build on children's responses and extend learning into areas beyond those which are planned
- using the analysis of children's attainment and progress to pinpoint weakness in provision and set priorities for further improvement.
- Monitor more fully the impact of the school's work in promoting community cohesion beyond the local area.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

1

Children's achievement and enjoyment are outstanding. The large majority of the children who join the school have skills that are at the level expected of children their age. They quickly become eager, independent and imaginative learners and develop exceptional powers of concentration. As a result, they make at least good progress from their starting points and reach high standards in most areas of their learning by the time they leave the nursery. They enjoy identifying letters and sounds and are keen to try out these new skills in writing activities. Those with severe or complex needs develop the confidence and ability to communicate, sometimes through learning to sign.

In this safe and supportive environment, children develop excellent personal qualities. They play exceptionally well together, sharing and taking turns with equipment. Children use equipment and resources safely, their sense of security and trust in adults enables them to take calculated risks in their learning. There are moments of fascination and wonder throughout each day as they experience something for the first time or learn something new. Children's readiness to wash their hands, eat fruit and take part in physical activities shows an excellent understanding of good hygiene, diet and exercise. They know it is important to drink water and confidently help themselves to a drink at the snack table, carefully pouring the water from a jug without needing to ask an adult to help them. Children attend regularly and generally only miss school when they are ill. Through their positive relationships with each other, their support for friends and the praise they offer for each other's efforts, the children make an outstanding contribution to their nursery community. They are exceptionally well prepared for the next steps in their education. Their outstanding achievement and excellent levels of confidence and independence are firm foundations for their future learning.

These are the grades for children's outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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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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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

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

How effective is the provision?

Staff have a good awareness of early years practice and are highly reflective. Careful consideration is given to assessing the impact of planned activities on children's progress and using the information gained to plan their next steps in learning. Small groups of children of similar ability are targeted to work with teachers in order to challenge or provide additional support for learning. Group sessions led by key workers generally contribute very well to children's personal and social skills. When teaching is outstanding, staff are highly skilled in adjusting the way they engage with the children to meet their differing needs. Effective use of targeted questions develops new learning, especially speaking, listening and numeracy skills. Most of the time, staff build exceptionally well on children's own ideas, but occasionally, there are some missed opportunities to capitalise on children's learning.

The excellent curriculum promotes all areas of learning very well. Children are given the freedom to explore what interests them and to choose the resources they need for their tasks and become independent learners. There is a seamless transition between learning indoors and outdoors. Children have great fun outside, whether hunting for treasure in the sand pit, developing their physical skills when climbing and riding or using their imagination in the variety of areas available for role play. Learning stems from children's own interests. For example, following the creation by one child of a 'witch's cake' using twigs and leaves, staff successfully extended children's learning by baking real cakes, developing recipes, choosing and measuring ingredients, following instructions, predicting and recording how things such as chocolate change when they are heated. Pastoral care is excellent. Each child has a key person who knows the child and their

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family extremely well. Parents and carers strongly agree that their children are very well cared for at all times and given the guidance and support needed to make the most of their time. Very good use is made of links with outside agencies to support any vulnerable children and their families. The school plays a central role in ensuring those with complex needs leave the nursery with a statement of their needs; this ensures continued support and a smooth transfer into Reception classes.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The commitment and relentless drive of leaders and managers, including governors, to provide all children with the very best learning experiences, results in a highly inclusive ethos where all children enjoy equality of opportunity, irrespective of ability or background. Self-evaluation is accurate and rooted in rigorous analysis of the school's performance. Most aspects of the school's work have improved to an outstanding level since the last inspection but there is no complacency. Leaders and managers are committed to ensuring that the overall quality of teaching also moves from good to outstanding. Governors play a highly effective role in ensuring that all statutory requirements are met and in holding the school to account. They are well informed about the school's performance and use their wide range of expertise to provide valuable support and to question proposals. At the time of the inspection, safeguarding was seen to be given an extremely high priority with very effective procedures for child protection and assessing risk fully in place. Innovative and exemplary procedures are followed, such as those for the safe handover of children at the end of the school day. The school's promotion of community cohesion is good. Through effective partnerships, children enjoy a wide range of opportunities to engage with the local community and to celebrate diversity within the local area. There are excellent partnerships with other agencies and schools which not only make a valuable contribution to the outstanding progress children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make, but also by taking a leading role in the locality through the fostering of inter-agency work which promotes children's health, welfare and learning.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers are very happy with the education their children receive. Many positive comments were written praising every aspect of the school. One typical comment from a parent was, 'We are very impressed with everything about St Paul's as an early years setting. Our child has been recognised as an individual with individual needs and characteristics and he has benefited hugely from his time there.' Parents and carers wholeheartedly agree that the school keeps their children safe and prepares them well for the future. Inspectors fully agree with their extremely positive views and find most aspects of the school's work outstanding.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Paul's Nursery 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 37 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 116 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	32	86	4	11	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	31	84	6	16	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	25	68	11	30	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	81	6	16	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	30	81	5	14	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	70	9	24	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	78	7	19	0	0	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)	28	76	6	16	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	81	6	16	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	73	8	22	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	76	6	16	2	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	31	84	3	8	2	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	89	3	8	1	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 children's needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children.
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 children. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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 child in their learning and development.
Attainment:	in other phases of school, for example primary schools, attainment is the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. However, there is no national average for three- and four-year-olds. Therefore, in inspections of nursery schools, inspectors take account of expectations in the age-related bands of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
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 children 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 children.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which children are learning in nursery sessions and over longer periods of time.

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.



20 July 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of St Paul's Nursery School, York, YO24 4BD

Thank you for talking to me when I visited your nursery recently to watch you play and learn. I loved my time in the Nursery especially your concert where you really excelled in your singing and dancing.

Your nursery is excellent. Everyone takes very good care of you and keeps you safe. I think this is why you are all so happy to come every day. You are especially good at doing things for yourselves and at playing very nicely with each other. Adults in the school make sure you have lots of exciting things to do and explore, both in the nursery and in your outside area, which you clearly enjoy. Those of you who need extra help and support are looked after extremely well and quickly learn to do lots of new things.

There are a few things that can be even better so I have asked those who lead your school to continue to improve how you are taught and to help you to learn about children from different backgrounds, faiths and cultures in England and around the world.

I am sure that all the staff will continue to work hard to make the school an exciting and interesting place for you. You can do your bit by continuing with your excellent behaviour and hard work.

Thank you once more for helping me to find out about your nursery.

Yours sincerely

Linda Buller

Lead inspector

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