

St Paul's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106238
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	377385
Inspection dates	28–29 May 2012
Lead inspector	Vanessa MacDonald

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	226
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Wallace
Headteacher	Marie Flynn
Date of previous school inspection	23 April 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Vanessa MacDonald
Maureen Hints

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice by two additional inspectors. They observed 16 lessons or part lessons taught by 10 different teachers. The inspectors listened to pupils from four different year groups reading, and talked with them and other groups of pupils about their lessons and school life. In addition, inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders and a representative of the governing body. The inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised documentation relating to pupils' progress and to school management, including the arrangements to ensure safeguarding. They also analysed 37 questionnaires received from parents and carers and those completed by staff and pupils.

Information about the school

St Paul's is an average-sized primary school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and there are a small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average overall. The school meets the current government floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

The school has Healthy School status, Bronze Eco Award, Active award for Physical Education, Intermediate International School award and has been accredited with the Financial Management Standard in Schools. There have been significant staffing changes since the last inspection, including the leadership of the school. Currently, the headteacher holds the post in an acting capacity.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. The school is not outstanding because there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and not enough teaching is yet outstanding. Also, there are some aspects of leadership and management that are not as well developed. Most pupils, parents and carers are positive about the school and the way it prepares the pupils for the next stage in their learning.
- Pupils' achievement is good. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils continue to make good progress and by the end of Year 6 their attainment is above average. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make good progress because of well-targeted support.
- Teaching is good overall and there are some examples of outstanding practice. Teachers convey clear expectations of learning. Explanations, instructions and questioning promote learning and engage pupils well. Marking is regular and generally of good quality. However, in a few lessons the pace of learning is not always as fast, tasks are not always matched accurately to pupils' needs and, on occasions, pupils do not have enough opportunities to work independently.
- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, promote pupils' learning successfully. Senior leaders and managers monitor and develop the quality of teaching effectively, with performance management used well to drive improvement. The school has identified the need to develop middle leaders' skills to improve accountability and increase the progress of all pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are good. Most pupils display positive attitudes to learning and treat each other and adults with respect. They comment that they feel safe in school and that adults are there for them when they need help and advice. Attendance has improved in recent years and is now above the average for primary schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring all lessons move at an appropriate pace and pupils have time to complete tasks
 - ensuring activities are matched to pupils' needs taking full account of prior learning, especially for those of average attainment
 - ensuring opportunities for pupils to learn independently are extended.
- Strengthen leadership and management further by:
 - continuing to develop the skills of middle leaders in monitoring teaching and learning
 - increasing the use of tracking and assessment data by middle leaders so they can contribute more to the accountability for pupils' progress.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, respond well to teaching and make good progress. Most children enter the Nursery with knowledge and skills that are broadly in line with those expected for their age, though a significant number have weaker skills. They make good progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage because of good teaching and the interesting learning activities provided. Children talk enthusiastically and confidently about their learning. Nursery children, engrossed in their topic on mini-beasts, actively engaged in a range of different activities. In Reception they had great fun in trying to persuade the imaginary lion from a story to come out of the tree, with one child independently writing him a letter.

Attainment is improving year-on-year in Key Stage 2, and by the end of Year 6, attainment is above average for mathematics. English attainment in 2011 was well above average. Progress in mathematics is good. Attainment by the end of Year 2 has improved on the previous year and is average overall. Attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 is in line with the national average and at the end of Key Stage 2 it is above average. Progress in reading, particularly at Key Stage 2, is good because pupils are encouraged to enjoy reading and good links are made between reading and writing. Progress in reading at Key Stage 1 is improving through the teaching of letters and sounds. Pupils in Year 2 use a range of strategies to work out words and meaning.

Writing attainment is a relative strength and pupils are given clear purposes for writing. During the inspection, pupils in a Year 5 lesson, for example, were given the task of writing persuasive letters responding to the Prime Minister's views of children's use of technology. The majority of pupils effectively developed a good range of ideas and reasons, making good progress as a result.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because they receive effective guidance and support. The school has accurately

identified groups of middle-attaining pupils to receive additional intervention, which is having a positive impact on their progress. All parents and carers are satisfied with the progress their children are making and pupils also feel they are making good progress. Inspection findings concur with these positive views.

Quality of teaching

Much of the teaching is good and promotes good learning for pupils effectively. Pupils remarked, 'Teachers are helpful and explain things well.' There are examples of outstanding practice. In an outstanding Year 4 mathematics lesson pupils were actively and collaboratively engaged in solving word problems involving time. Pupils responded very well to the high expectations conveyed. Skilful questioning and appropriate intervention challenged the pupils and they made rapid progress across the lesson. They reviewed their own and others' learning extremely well. All the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire also thought that their children were well taught.

Teaching is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and there is a good balance of adult-led activities and those chosen by the children. Children have good opportunities to develop their skills and interest. In Nursery, children enthusiastically used their mathematical knowledge to compare the size of 'worms', having to find things bigger and smaller than the worm and being encouraged to successfully order them.

Teachers ensure lessons have a clear purpose, so pupils know what they are to learn. Teachers' explanations and instructions are clear and informative and engage the pupils well. Most teachers are good at using questioning to build up pupils' understanding and to share learning across the class. Teachers successfully promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assessment information is used well and interventions to support groups, particularly those of middle-attaining pupils are well focused to their needs. Marking is usually supportive and helpful. More recent changes have enabled pupils to see more clearly what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve further.

Senior leaders are working effectively to share the best practice and to eradicate inconsistencies in teaching across the school. Occasionally, pupils' learning is over-directed and the pace of lessons does not allow pupils enough time to complete tasks. Opportunities are missed for them to work independently and activities are not always well matched to the needs of pupils, particularly for those who are in the middle-attaining band. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are keen to learn, form good relationships and are considerate and respectful towards others. The behaviour code is consistently applied across school and fully understood by all pupils. Pupils' behaviour seen during the inspection was generally good in lessons and around the school and the school's records indicate that this is typical.

The majority of parents and carers who completed the questionnaire believe that their children feel safe at school and the vast majority believe that they are well looked after. Comments included: 'St Pauls cares for the needs of each child as an individual'. Pupils confirmed to inspectors that they feel safe and well looked after. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet. During the inspection, Years 5 and 6 learnt of the dangers of alcohol from an interactive theatre production on alcohol awareness.

The vast majority of parents and carers believe that the school sets high standards of behaviour. However, a very few expressed concerns about disruption to learning in lessons and how well bullying was dealt with. Inspection findings show that a few incidents of less positive behaviour and bullying have occurred. Records show that the school takes appropriate and swift action to deal with these, including reviewing its policy on behaviour and seeking the views of parents and pupils. Pupils show a good awareness of different forms of bullying. Attendance is consistently above average and has improved since the last inspection.

Leadership and management

The acting headteacher and leadership team share a determination to provide the best possible education for pupils. There have been recent changes and improvements to elements of teaching and the curriculum, which are having a positive impact on standards. There are clear procedures for the monitoring and development of teaching. All staff are involved in joint moderation, for example in writing. However, opportunities for subject leaders to develop their skills in a wider range of monitoring activities are not as well developed. There are suitably planned arrangements for staff development and these are well linked to whole-school improvement priorities.

Senior leaders use data to accurately track pupils' progress and to identify where action needs to be taken to ensure improvement. Other leaders do not yet use this as effectively to monitor progress in their subjects and classes. Self-evaluation is accurate, focused on clearly defined priorities. Members of the governing body have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. They are supportive and involved in monitoring the effectiveness of strategies to improve achievement and provision.

Recently, the school has developed a more thematic curriculum. There are good links between subjects, which add meaning and relevance to pupils' learning and the pupils felt that the changes and the associated visits were 'exciting'. There is a good range of enrichment activities to support the curriculum, including extra-curricular clubs, visits and a residential visit. One example is the whole-class teaching of violin in Year 5, with pupils enthusiastically rehearsing for a performance with the Halle during the inspection. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. The school effectively fosters qualities such as cooperation, consideration, responsibility and respect for others.

Safeguarding arrangements meet all statutory requirements. There are effective policies and procedures to protect pupils. Equality of opportunity is promoted well

and learning opportunities are provided that enable all groups of pupils to achieve well. Discrimination is tackled effectively.

Since the previous inspection the school has improved attendance and attainment, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2. There is a clear and good capacity to improve the consistency of teaching and to strengthen elements of leadership and management.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



30 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Paul's Catholic Primary School, Hyde, SK14 4AG

Thank you for your warm welcome when we came to inspect your school last week. We are particularly grateful to those of you who came to talk to us on Monday and Tuesday. We thoroughly enjoyed talking to some of you, hearing some of you read and seeing how much you enjoy your lessons, playtime and lunchtime with your friends.

You go to a good school. Teaching is good and you make good progress, reaching standards above those expected at your age when you leave the school. The staff provide a good range of subjects for you to enjoy. You particularly enjoy the opportunities provided in sport, music and through educational visits. These contribute well to your personal confidence and prepare you well for the next stage in your learning. Your behaviour is good overall and your attendance is above average. Your headteacher and all the school's leaders lead the school well and are determined to keep on improving your school.

Part of our job is to suggest how your school can improve even more. We have asked teachers to ensure that tasks are always carefully matched to your needs, and that your lessons should move at a pace that allows you to complete tasks and have more opportunities to work independently. We have also made suggestions to help staff increase the role they play in making the school even better.

Keep up your good attendance and keep listening to your teachers and trying to do your best. I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Vanessa MacDonald
Lead inspector

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