

St Paul's Church of England Primary School and Nursery

St Nicholas Road, Brighton, East Sussex, BN1 3LP

Inspection dates 9–10 July

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress in a wide range of subjects. They do particularly well in reading, where standards are consistently high.
- Consistently good teaching, with examples of outstanding practice in Years 5 and 6, ensures that lessons are interesting and challenging for all pupils.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are often exemplary and pupils behave well around the school.
- The curriculum provides pupils with an exciting variety of experiences that greatly enrich their learning and personal development.
- Leaders, managers and governors check pupils' progress meticulously throughout the year and take action promptly to provide additional support where it is needed.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a major strength of the school. Their appreciation of cultural diversity is excellent as a result of the school's local and international partnerships.
- Many pupils reach high standards in speaking Spanish by the time they leave.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A few pupils struggle to learn new ideas and skills in mathematics because they move on too quickly to different work.
- Leaders and managers do not have easy access to information about the relative achievements of different groups of pupils.
- The marking of pupils' work is better in English than in mathematics and varies in quality between classes.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 10 lessons, including one joint observation with the headteacher. They also observed a number of activities that provide additional support for pupils who need it, both in the classroom and for separate groups.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, governors, staff, groups of pupils, and a representative from the local authority. They also heard pupils read.
- Inspectors took account of the 75 responses to the on-line Parent View survey and the 15 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work. They also looked at the school's monitoring and self-evaluation documents, a range of pupils' work in books and on display around the school, and arrangements for keeping pupils safe.

Inspection team

Carole Skinner, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Clive Reynolds

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This average-sized primary school is situated in the centre of Brighton.
- The large majority of pupils are White British. A small minority comes from a wide variety of minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Approximately 15% of the pupils speak English as an additional language. Some children start school unable to speak any English, whilst others are bilingual. The number of pupils on roll has risen over the last three years. Currently, 15 different languages are spoken.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided to schools to support looked after children, children of service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average. In this school, there are no looked after children or children of service families.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported through school action is below average. The proportion who are supported through school action plus is also below average. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school offers 25 part-time places in its Nursery. Some of these children move into Reception whilst others go on to different schools. The Reception class also accepts children from other pre-school settings and is oversubscribed.
- In 2011, with the support of the Teaching Agency and the Spanish Embassy, St Paul's became the first bilingual school in the country for the teaching of Spanish.
- The school has links with schools in Mexico, Spain and Uganda and has received the International School Award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - making sure pupils who find mathematics difficult are given enough time to fully understand every new concept
 - eliminating the remaining inconsistencies in marking so that it is consistently helpful in English and mathematics, and clearly shows pupils how to improve their work and reach a higher level
 - making sure pupils have time to respond to teachers' comments and suggestions.
- Further refine the school's systems for tracking pupils' progress so that leaders and teachers can easily gain access to information about the relative performance of different groups of pupils.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make strong progress from starting points that are typical for their age, although there are wide variations in their language skills when they start school. Children make good progress in Nursery and Reception in all areas of learning because teachers build effectively on their existing knowledge and skills as they move through the year. Good progress continues throughout Years 1 to 6 because of the good teaching pupils receive and the well-planned curriculum.
- Standards are high in reading and pupils read a wide range of books with interest. The most-able readers demonstrate a high level of understanding and the ability to use the writers' techniques in their own writing. Standards in writing are above average and improving as a result of new approaches that give pupils more opportunities to discuss ideas and act them out before starting to write.
- In 2012, standards were below average in the Year 1 national check on phonics (the sounds letters make). The school was quick to respond to this by improving teaching and pupils have done much better this year. Those who did not do well last year, many of whom did not speak English when they started school, have made rapid progress this year and reached the standards expected in reading and writing in Year 2.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics because they have many opportunities to learn through practical, real-life activities, solving problems and investigating numbers and shapes. The current Year 6 has attained very high standards, with six pupils mastering advanced concepts that far exceed what is expected for their age. Nevertheless, a few pupils, who do not reach the level expected by Year 3, make slower progress because they do not spend long enough mastering basic mathematical skills and knowledge. As a result, they develop gaps in their understanding which hold them back as they move through the school.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium make good progress in reading and writing and reach standards in line with other pupils of the same age by Year 6. They are catching up with other pupils in mathematics because of the good support they receive but were still about a term behind in 2012. Nevertheless, the gap had narrowed significantly compared with 2011 and continues to do so. All pupils in Year 6 reached the standard expected this year.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because they receive high quality support from teachers and skilled teaching assistants. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well because teachers and assistants help them to learn English quickly and adapt activities to meet their needs.
- Pupils in all classes, including Nursery, learn to speak Spanish as an integral part of their lessons every day. For example, Nursery children confidently sang 'Ola, Ola, Buenos Dias' and recited the days of the week in Spanish. By Year 6, a number of pupils are working within GCSE levels.

The quality of teaching is good

- Lessons are well planned and often incorporate more than one subject. Teachers develop pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills effectively through a range of activities. For example, around the theme of Mount Everest, Year 6 pupils gathered information about the people who have died climbing the mountain. They chose how to represent the information, using spike and line graphs or pie charts, which they drew accurately. Pupils also wrote poems inspired by what they had learned.
- Children in Nursery and Reception achieve well because teachers plan an exciting range of experiences and opportunities to learn through play and exploration, often adapting their plans to follow children's interests. Occasionally, adults do not extend children's learning to the full by seizing every opportunity to ask questions and talk about their play.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils and set challenging tasks, especially for the more

able. Lessons move along at a brisk pace, which keeps pupils interested and motivated.

- Teachers make very good use of 'stunning starts' and 'fabulous finishes' to add extra 'zing' to lessons. This successfully engages pupils from the outset and keeps them engrossed. Great emphasis is placed on 'active' learning and making sure lessons help pupils to learn in the way that suits them best.
- Teachers make good use of the school grounds to take learning outdoors where it is relevant and helpful. In an outstanding Year 5 art lesson, pupils focused in the classroom on the work of a Dutch artist who was skilful in creating light and shade. They then experimented with the same techniques in the wildlife garden, aiming to capture the effects of the dappled sunshine on their chosen objects.
- In most lessons, teachers plan activities well to build on pupils' existing skills and knowledge. Occasionally, the work set for a few pupils who find mathematics difficult is not matched precisely enough to their needs because they have not fully grasped earlier work. This leads to gaps in their understanding that slow their progress.
- Teaching assistants provide good and often expert support, both in lessons and when teaching small groups of pupils, such as the higher-level mathematicians in Year 6. Occasionally, some assistants are not fully engaged in supporting pupils during the teacher's input to the whole class.
- The high quality marking seen in some classes is not yet consistent across the school, especially in mathematics. Pupils do not always have time to respond to teachers' marking or follow up suggestions to improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are very enthusiastic about lessons because they say teachers make them really interesting and enjoyable. Most are quick to settle in lessons and are eager to learn. They listen attentively and are keen to offer ideas and answer questions. A few pupils lack confidence but teachers make every effort to include them and encourage them to participate.
- Pupils say they have few concerns about behaviour at break times and say any incidents are dealt with quickly. They trust adults and feel safe at all times. Pupils understand about different forms of bullying, including verbal, physical and cyber bullying, and say that it rarely happens.
- Most parents who responded to the questionnaire agree that behaviour is good, but a few disagree. Inspectors investigated parents' concerns and found that the school has rigorous systems to ensure that any misbehaviour in lessons is dealt with promptly so that other pupils' learning is not affected.
- Pupils enjoy taking responsibility, for example as 'equalities ambassadors' who discuss issues such as racism, sexism and favouritism. Pupils are very respectful of cultural differences so that discrimination is not tolerated.
- In the last three years, attendance has been consistently above average. This year saw a marked increase in absences due to a combination of extended holidays and illnesses. The school is working with parents to encourage regular attendance for all pupils.

The leadership and management are good

- Over the past 18 months, the senior leadership team has renewed its vision for improving the school and has taken action to raise standards which, although still above average, had dropped from previously very high levels. They have identified the right priorities for improvement and staff and governors share their drive for excellence.
- Leaders have introduced effective strategies to improve teaching, especially in phonics and writing, which have had a good impact. Specialist teaching of higher-level mathematics has resulted in significantly higher standards for the most-able pupils.
- Improving teaching in mathematics throughout the school remains a priority, which the school is

addressing in partnership with a cluster of local schools.

- More rigorous systems for tracking pupils' progress have brought greater accountability for all staff, and senior leaders use this information to conduct thorough termly reviews where they discuss each pupil's progress with class teachers. Together, they identify any who have not made enough progress and put support in place to address any weaker areas. This ensures no pupils are disadvantaged.
- Although the tracking system gives leaders good information about each pupil's achievements in reading, writing and mathematics, they cannot easily access data about the relative performance of different groups to give a quick overview of the impact of their work.
- Regular checks on the quality of teaching and high quality training for teachers and teaching assistants help all staff to improve their practice. Feedback to teachers clearly identifies ways to improve and leaders set challenging targets for teachers to achieve each year. Salary increases are closely linked to teachers' performance against nationally expected standards.
- Leaders have devised a vibrant and imaginative curriculum that links subjects together very effectively and develops creative approaches to learning, reflecting the school's strong international partnerships with schools in Spain, Mexico and Uganda. Colourful displays celebrate the recent Diego Rivera day and pupils have also learned a lot through other special events. A wide variety of visitors, clubs and visits, including residential trips for older pupils, greatly enriches pupils' moral, social, spiritual and cultural development.
- The local authority has provided valuable support to the school this year with identifying ways to improve marking and set targets for pupils.
- The school works well with parents to support their children's learning, for example by running mathematics workshops. It makes the most of parents' skills and expertise, for example in running the Craft Revolution club. Most parents are pleased with all that the school offers, but a small minority feels that it does not respond well enough to their concerns.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have undertaken relevant training and have a good understanding of what the school does well and what it needs to improve. They have refined the way they gather information about pupils' progress and the quality of teaching, for example by inviting subject leaders to their meetings. Governors compare the school's performance with other schools nationally and set challenging targets for the headteacher. They have become increasingly effective in holding senior leaders to account, although records of meetings do not show clearly enough how governors question and challenge them. The governing body has a clear view of the quality of teaching and knows how teachers' performance is related to salary increases. Governors are given detailed information about how pupil premium funds are used and the impact of this on the progress of eligible pupils. They ensure that the school meets all statutory requirements, including those for ensuring pupils' safety.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	114543
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	401754

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	235
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Heather Wilkins
Headteacher	Linda Dupret
Date of previous school inspection	7–8 October 2009
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