

St Paul's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100838
Local Authority	Southwark
Inspection number	285897
Inspection dates	17–18 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Margaret Coussins

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 on roll	
School	308
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Canon Grahame Shaw
Headteacher	Mrs Annabelle Birleanu
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2001
School address	Penrose Street Walworth London SE17 3DT
Telephone number	020 7703 4896
Fax number	020 7277 2873

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Paul's is a larger than average primary school in an area of high social deprivation. Three-quarters of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds with the largest group being Black African. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is much higher than the national average. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is higher than average as is the percentage with learning difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St Paul's provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. The headteacher has successfully managed the school through a period of development over the last two years. As a result of her good leadership satisfactory improvements have been made since the previous inspection. After much instability, there is now a balance of experienced and newer teachers who form a stable staffing structure on which the school can build. All staff successfully promote an orderly and purposeful learning environment where pupils feel safe and well looked after. Satisfactory care, guidance and support effectively develop pupils' personal skills, particularly their confidence and self-esteem. Teachers use consistent approaches to praise and check behaviour and as a result most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school, particularly the older pupils.

Pupils enjoy their time at the school and parents are happy with what the school offers. Attendance is satisfactory and although the school is doing all it can to improve regular and prompt attendance, a small number of children are frequently absent and miss out on important learning. Particular strengths of the school are the visits pupils make, the visitors to school and the good range of clubs offered to pupils in Years 3 to 6. These not only enrich the curriculum well but also contribute to pupils' personal skills, enjoyment of learning and the ability to make good choices for leading healthy lifestyles. A group of pupils agreed and one pupil said, 'In the clubs, you learn things but in a fun way and they help us get along with each other.'

Pupils achieve satisfactorily from their well below average starting points. Children get off to a good start at school because of good provision and teaching in the Foundation Stage. By the time pupils leave the school, standards are average in English and mathematics and below average in science. Teaching and learning are satisfactory but work is not always challenging enough, particularly in science and teachers are not using enough strategies to help pupils who are just beginning to learn English. Teachers keep a close check on progress, but pupils are not always clear about how they can judge how well they are doing and whether they have achieved the targets set by teachers to improve their work.

The school has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses and realises that it could improve on the satisfactory education it currently offers. It has demonstrated that it has a satisfactory capacity to secure further improvement. The standard of pupils' personal and basic skills means they are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in science by providing more challenging work.
- Ensure pupils make more rapid progress, particularly those who are beginning to learn English, by developing a wider range of teaching approaches.
- Involve pupils more in evaluating their own progress towards achieving their targets.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are average. Children start at school in the Nursery or Reception Year with attainment which is well below average. They get a good start in the Foundation Stage although attainment remains below age related expectations at the end of the Reception year. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 and by the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average in English and mathematics. Standards are slightly lower in English, but the school's focus on letter sounds, guided reading and writing has effectively contributed to improvements. However, standards in science are improving at a much slower rate and remain below average. This is linked with insufficient challenge, especially for more able pupils. Support provided for pupils who are underachieving results in satisfactory improvement for most pupils, but there is still some variation between the year groups linked in part with turbulence in staffing in the past. There are no overall differences between the achievements of pupils from different backgrounds but pupils who have a limited grasp of English are not developing their fluency as quickly as they might because of limited teaching styles.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Revisions to the curriculum, including a focus on the arts, are helping to make learning more relevant and meaningful and giving all pupils a chance to succeed whatever their learning needs. This has a good impact on raising pupils' confidence and self esteem especially those who have low expectations of themselves. Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is satisfactory. There are strengths in spiritual and cultural awareness as a result of strong links with the Church and the work the school does to include and celebrate the cultural diversity of the school and wider community. The school council's anti-bullying campaign has helped to raise awareness that bullying is unacceptable. Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles and stay safe in and out of school. Pupils enjoy their involvement in community events and the duties they have around the school are taken very seriously. However, pupils say they do not do enough in school and would welcome opportunities to take on more responsibility. The personal development and well-being of children in the Foundation Stage are good. They are proud of their achievements and willingly discuss them with adults. Those preparing to move to the next stage are encouraged to share the playground with older pupils. The ease with which they do so is a measure of the confidence they gain through their time in the Foundation Stage.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils' attitudes towards learning are generally satisfactory. They are better when lessons require them to be active, responsible and independent and when teachers challenge them in their work. This was seen in several lessons where teaching was good. Lessons are usually well organised and activities are interesting but work does not always challenge all pupils or extend the skills of the more able. This is particularly the case in science. Opportunities for pupils to

share their ideas with each other help to improve their speaking, listening, thinking and explanation skills but this is inconsistent across the classes. One child commented, 'Sometimes we just have to copy things down and that's not so good because they don't make you think for yourself.' Teaching does not always help pupils make better progress, for example by demonstrating how to make writing more effective or by helping pupils who are at the early stages of learning English to understand the way language works. There is satisfactory support for pupils with learning difficulties and teaching assistants contribute much to the progress of pupils with differing learning needs. Teachers use assessment information efficiently to identify pupils for support and intervention.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with some good features. Plans to strengthen the links across subjects are well thought out. For example, writing a recount of a visit to a museum was linked appropriately with work in science in Years 1 and 2 and work on the Tudors was linked with art, music and drama in Years 3 and 4. However in daily planning, tasks are not always matched appropriately to pupils' starting points in mixed age classes. This reduces the impact of the careful two-year planning to raise standards. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good with a strong focus on personal development and literacy to give children a good start to their school life. The overall curriculum provided for pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory. However, the curriculum is not always adapted well enough to enable teachers to use a range of teaching approaches to meet the needs of those who are at an early stage of learning English.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils are looked after well. Children in the Foundation Stage are very well supported by dedicated staff who know each child well. Pupils' emotional needs are met by teachers and the effective work of learning mentors and teaching assistants. The school takes appropriate steps to ensure that pupils feel safe and well cared for. The required checks are carried out on adults who work in the school. The school works well with other services to ensure pupils' well-being. Those with learning difficulties and vulnerable children are quickly identified and effective measures are put into place to support them. Pupils are encouraged to do their best, but are not always given enough guidance on how they should improve their work in order to move rapidly to the next level. Teachers give pupils goals for their learning in some areas, for example, in writing, but pupils are not always clear about what these are or how they can achieve them. Pupils who find work easier than others are not always given sufficiently challenging targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory, but the leadership of the headteacher is good. This is because not all senior leaders are involved in monitoring the work of the school. School improvement planning is appropriately focussed on the most important areas for development. The headteacher monitors the attainment of individual pupils in each class and takes action based on the analysis of assessment results. This has contributed to improving results in English and mathematics although achievement in science is still relatively weak. Senior leaders provide

good support for colleagues through good teamwork, particularly for teachers new to teaching and to the school. Other teachers with leadership responsibilities are developing their roles well, but the full impact of their work has yet to be seen. Governors support the school satisfactorily through their work in committees. With the support of the headteacher, they are beginning to hold the school to account for the standards it achieves across subjects but they are not yet asking enough challenging questions about the achievement of the pupils.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

4 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Paul's Church of England Primary School, London, SE17 3DT

I am writing to let you know how much my colleagues and I enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for making us so welcome, for talking to us about your work and telling us what you think about your school. This is what we found out.

- Your school is giving you a satisfactory standard of education.
- You told us that you enjoy being at the school and we saw that you get on well with each other, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- Your behaviour is good and helps you learn in your lessons.
- You have improved your work in English and mathematics.
- We were very pleased to learn that you know how to stay healthy and stay safe in and out of school.
- Everyone in the school looks after you well and helps you to succeed.
- Your teachers work very hard to make sure you have opportunities to make visits, learn from visitors to school and attend lots of interesting clubs, which you told us you enjoy very much.
- Your headteacher does a good job in leading the school and making it even better.

These are the things we think should be better.

- You should have more challenging work to help you do better, especially in science.
- Your teachers should help you understand what you need to do to improve your work and how you can judge how well you are doing.
- The school should think of more ways to help children who are learning English do well in their work.

You can help by always doing your best, going to school every day and arriving on time so that you don't miss out on your lessons.

Thank you again for all your help and for being so friendly, polite and interesting to talk to.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Coussins Lead inspector