

St Paul's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106238
Local Authority	Tameside
Inspection number	309066
Inspection date	23 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Dee Brigstock

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	198
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr P Stevens
Headteacher	Mr K Toms
Date of previous school inspection	4 May 2004
School address	Turner Lane Hyde Cheshire SK14 4AG
Telephone number	0161 3682934
Fax number	0161 3682934

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues in depth: current achievement and standards, particularly of higher attaining pupils; pupils' personal development; care, guidance and support; and pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Evidence was gathered from visiting lessons; discussions with pupils, staff and governors; looking at pupils' work; and the school's own assessment data on pupils' progress. School documents and parental questionnaires were analysed. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but there is no evidence to suggest that the school's own evaluations were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is average in size and serves an area of average prosperity. The great majority of pupils are White British and very few pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average and fewer pupils than usual are entitled to free school meals. A small number of pupils are in the care of the local authority.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school which provides good value for money. Pupils grow into mature, thoughtful young people. Their excellent understanding of social and moral issues and their exemplary behaviour together with a good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy makes their personal development good by the time they leave the school. Pupils make good friendships in school and have positive attitudes towards sorting out minor conflicts. Members of the school council are proud of their role in making decisions on how to make the school better. For example, they initiated 'Toasty Tuesday' when they have toast at playtimes. Older pupils vehemently state that bullying is rare and that if it happened it would be sorted out 'straight away because teachers are really serious about it.' Pupils really enjoy coming to school although the rate of attendance is average rather than good. This is because of the number of parents taking their children on holiday during term time. The school's care of pupils is excellent but leaders are still in the process of embedding a new programme to guide pupils to understand issues around their personal development and understanding of relationships. For this reason, care, guidance and support are good overall rather than excellent as the school initially suggested.

Almost all pupils achieve well, often from low starting points. Achievement in Key Stage 1 is good, as it is for most pupils in Key Stage 2. However, some of the more able pupils in Key Stage 2 make satisfactory rather than good progress in mathematics and science. This is because they have too few opportunities to design and carry out their own investigations in these subjects. Standards in 2007 were well above average in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics; this reflects the standards in the current Year 2. In 2007, standards in Year 6 were above average in English and broadly average in mathematics and science. Current standards are similar but as these pupils started Year 3 with below average standards, this represents good achievement. Pupils in Year 6 are already working at, and some beyond, their targets for this year because the school is providing more challenging work for the higher attaining pupils. The progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those at an early stage of acquiring English, and those pupils in the care of the local authority is also good.

School leaders, including governors, through a rigorous monitoring process, identify relevant training courses to support teachers' professional development and have raised standards of teaching and learning to a good level. This training is particularly effective for staff new to the profession. Marking tells pupils what to do next to improve and pupils say that teachers help them if they get stuck, explain the learning and give them rewards for good work. Teachers use interactive whiteboards well to focus pupils' interest and demonstrate how their work could improve. However, teachers tend to control the way the higher attaining pupils approach and design some of their investigative work in science and mathematics. The school listens to pupils' views. Through questionnaires, pupils informed leaders that they thought the curriculum, which is good, could be livelier. In response, the school is introducing more topic work on the local area focusing on the work of a local artist, based on 'A Northern Saturday'. This has produced interesting artwork, which pupils clearly enjoy and is of very good quality. The curriculum is enriched well by a good range of extra-curricular activities, trips and visits that enhance pupils' learning well. The school has good links with the local parish and community, and pupils are involved well in helping to improve the local and wider environment. They make very good contributions to people less fortunate than themselves. The good progress that the school has made since the last inspection has resulted in higher standards of achievement and is

underpinned by the reflective and respected leadership of the headteacher. Governors are involved well in the school's evaluation of its performance and take an active role in promoting and measuring how well the school is meeting its priority targets in the school development plan. The good and improving quality of teaching has come about through accurate and helpful monitoring by leaders. Taking these factors into account, the school's capacity to improve further is good.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The Foundation Stage is satisfactory rather than good as the school judged in its self-evaluation. Provision in the Nursery is good. Children's learning activities are very well matched to their age and levels of interest and they find learning fun. The curriculum in Reception is satisfactory. This is because, on occasion, children's learning is overly formal and too heavily directed by the teacher. Attainment on entry into the Nursery varies widely from year to year but the school's new tracking system shows that, currently, children's attainment on entry is broadly as expected for their age. The school's assessments show that last year, children entered with less well developed skills and made good progress in writing and reading. They met the expectations for their age in these areas of learning. However, their achievements in creative development and personal development lag behind because they have insufficient opportunities to learn independently and make choices. Children's behaviour is excellent and they are happy in school. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The leader recognises the need to implement the new national Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for the higher attaining pupils to plan their own investigations in mathematics and science.
- Implement the new Foundation Stage curriculum to provide more opportunities for Reception children in particular to learn independently and make choices.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for giving me such a warm welcome when I visited your school recently. I thoroughly enjoyed chatting to you throughout the day and had a really good conversation with older members of the school council and other pupils. They were very keen to tell me about your school, your teachers and the headteacher. I was very impressed by your artwork around the school and really liked the work you have done on the local area. I agree with you that you go to a good school, have a good education and are learning well. I was really pleased to see how much respect you have for the staff and the headteacher.

Your learning is good because the teachers mark your work really well: they tell and show you how to do even better. You do not waste any time in classrooms because your behaviour is excellent. Your headteacher and other staff have good ideas on how to make your school even better. I have asked them to do two more things. First, to allow those who find learning easy to design and carry out more investigations and experiments in mathematics and science. Second, to plan lessons for the Reception class that let these children learn more independently and make choices, like they do in the Nursery.

You have all my best wishes for the future and I sincerely hope you stay as interested and positive as you are now.