

St Paul's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110839
Local Authority	CAMBRIDGESHIRE LA
Inspection number	310436
Inspection date	18 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Glynn Storer

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jason Rampelt
Headteacher	Ms Cyndy Fiddy
Date of previous school inspection	10 November 2003
School address	Coronation Street Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB2 1HJ
Telephone number	01223 568840
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the pupils' progress in the Foundation Stage and throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. He looked closely at the impact of pupils' personal development and the care, guidance and support that the school provides on pupils' learning and achievement. The inspector considered the extent to which the curriculum had improved since the previous inspection and, in doing so, evaluated the impact of school leadership and management on school improvement. The inspector gathered evidence from classroom visits and from discussions with staff, pupils and governors. He also examined pupils' work and school documents, especially safeguarding information. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified. These have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

Description of the school

This average sized primary school serves a socially advantaged area close to the centre of Cambridge. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with minority ethnic background is above that in schools nationally. Whilst the number of pupils speaking English as an additional language is about average for a school of this size, the range of languages spoken is very wide. Children's attainment on entry is above that normally expected of four-year-olds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average but the proportion with a statement of special educational need is in line with schools nationally. The school has gained the Artsmark Gold, Activemark and International Schools awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Paul's CofE Primary is a good school. Pupils of all abilities, from the most needy to the gifted and talented, flourish in an extremely caring environment and as a result, achieve consistently high standards in both personal and academic development.

The majority of parents who replied to the inspection questionnaire hold the school in high regard. One wrote, 'The school has an excellent ethos. Respect for individuality is promoted and teamwork encouraged. The teachers are always available and ready to help.' Almost all parents agreed that their children enjoy school immensely and were pleased with the quality of teaching and the progress that their children make. However, a number of parents expressed concerns about the extent to which the school takes account of their views and saw this as a reflection on school management. Inspection evidence indicates that the quality of the school's partnership with parents is, in most respects, a strength. Along with excellent links with other schools and organisations, it provides staff and pupils with access to resources and expertise far beyond those normally available in primary schools and, in doing so, significantly improves pupils' learning and achievement. However, senior staff and governors are aware that there is scope to enhance the sharing of information with parents in advance of key policy decisions.

Standards are high. In recent years, pupils' scores have been significantly above average in the national tests and assessments for seven and eleven-year-olds. In 2007, the majority of pupils exceeded nationally expected standards by the end of Year 6 and several produced work of a standard normally expected of much older pupils. The work of pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 indicates that almost all are on course to meet the challenging targets that the school sets for them. Underpinning pupils' good achievement is the way that teachers personalise learning. Support for pupils who find learning difficult is effective, as is that for the increasing number of pupils who speak languages other than English. The efforts the school makes to cater for the needs of all pupils are outstanding and ensure that these pupils benefit from all that the school has to offer and make good progress alongside their peers.

Pupils achieve well because teaching and learning are effective. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils' behaviour and response and of their capacity to cope with challenging work. They use information from the school's thorough assessment regime to identify those needing additional support or challenge and to provide it. In the best lessons, teachers match pupils' work closely to their prior attainment, so that pupils of all abilities make the best possible progress. However, there are times when this matching is not sharp enough or when all pupils undertake the same task, regardless of prior attainment. At such times, the progress of some groups in the class slows. Teachers track pupils' progress carefully and use marking and other evaluations to give guidance and targets to help them to progress to the next level. Pupils know their targets, know how to achieve them and are well motivated to succeed.

Pupils' extremely positive attitudes, behaviour and response are also key factors in the high standards that they achieve. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school because much of the teaching is lively and engaging. Another reason is that an outstanding curriculum, which is much improved since the last inspection and considerably enhanced by educational visits, visitors and special events such as Science Week, and the current 'Bones' project, promotes excellence and enjoyment in equal measure. Pupil said that 'teachers make lessons creative and that, by linking subjects like English and art or maths and science, they make learning more interesting'. Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent. In this 'community', highly effective

pastoral care and personal guidance build pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Consequently, there is a strong work ethic; pupils work hard, are unafraid to 'fail' and readily rise to the challenge to do their best. Staff promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development to a high standard. Pupils are sensitive to things of beauty, act on a clear understanding of what is right and make a strong contribution to the school, local and wider community. Pupils' positive attitudes to diversity prepare them well for life in a multi-ethnic society. Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet current requirements. Pupils receive an excellent grounding in how to be safe and gain a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles. Positive attitudes and values, along with good levels of basic skills prepare pupils well for their on-going education and for their lives as young adults.

At the heart of the school's success is the leadership provided by the headteacher. She has high aspirations for the school and for the pupils. She has systematically rebuilt the senior leadership team. Although this team is still developing and its full impact yet to be felt, its members already take full responsibility for important aspects of the school's work. Their enthusiasm for the school rubs off on staff, builds morale and inspires enormous commitment. A major strength of the school is that everybody is pulling in the same direction. This is partly because they share the headteacher's vision, but also because improved school self-evaluation and management systems secure a good degree of quality and consistency in most aspects of the school's work. Governors are active in all areas of school life and provide good levels of support and challenge. Consequently, the school is considerably better than it was at the time of its last inspection and has a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Quality and provision have improved enormously since the last inspection and are outstanding overall. Parents are delighted. One wrote: 'My child's progress is amazing. He is enjoying reading books by himself and his maths skills have moved to the next level...and all this in a very relaxed and playful way.' This comment captures much of the essence of the excellent provision in Foundation Stage. Pupils generally enter Reception with levels of knowledge, understanding and skills that are above those normally expected of four-year-olds. They get off to a flying start because a caring and supportive atmosphere, a stimulating curriculum with ample opportunities for fun and imaginative play and highly effective teaching promote learning extremely effectively. A particular strength is the quality of on-going assessment that enables staff to match work accurately to children's differing stages of learning and development and so maximise the progress they make. As a result, children of all abilities achieve well and virtually all exceed the Early Learning Goals by the time that they transfer to Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teachers' use of on-going assessments in matching work closely to pupils' abilities and prior attainments.
- Build further on constructive partnerships with parents so that all are fully informed and know that their views are considered by the headteacher and governors when determining school policy.

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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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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	1
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

19 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Paul's CofE Primary School, Cambridge, CB2 1HJ

Thank you for your friendly welcome when I came to visit your school. I really enjoyed talking to you and seeing your work when I visited your lessons. I particularly liked the pirate ships that children in Reception were making and joining in the number 'treasure hunt.'

This is what I found out about your school.

- Children in Reception get off to an excellent start in school.
- Pupils in Years 1 to 6 thoroughly enjoy school.
- You work hard and, as a result, you make good progress and attain above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Your teachers plan lots of exciting things for you to do. They can do this because many of your parents and other visitors from outside school give 'expert' help.
- Your teachers and other adults take extremely good care of you, keep you safe and help you to improve your work.
- Ms Fiddy, the governors, staff and pupils are working hard to make your school even better.

In order to help you do even better, I have suggested two things that the school should do.

- Make sure that the work your teachers plan for you is just right, so that you always make the progress that you should.
- Make sure that all parents know that their ideas for making the school better are considered when the headteacher and governors decide what needs to be done.

I believe that your school will continue to go from strength to strength and you can all help by always doing your very best.

Thanks again and best wishes to everyone at St Paul's CofE Primary School.

Glynn Storer

Lead inspector