

# Pope Paul Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117496
<b>Local Authority</b>	HERTFORDSHIRE
<b>Inspection number</b>	312634
<b>Inspection date</b>	30 April 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Derek Watts

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	201
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Marie Donatantonio
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Helen Lines
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 March 2004
<b>School address</b>	Baker Street Potters Bar Hertfordshire EN6 2ES
<b>Telephone number</b>	01707 659755
<b>Fax number</b>	01707 659755

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector in one day.

## Description of the school

Pope Paul Catholic is a smaller than average sized primary school. About three quarters of the pupils come from a White British background. The remainder come from a range of other ethnic backgrounds including White Irish, any other White background and Black African. A few pupils speak English as an additional language but none of these are at an early stage of learning English. The proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and those eligible for free school meals are below average. Children's attainment on entry to the Reception class is above national expectations.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of Pope Paul Catholic Primary is satisfactory. Pupils' academic achievement and their personal development and well-being are satisfactory.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has only recently appointed a deputy headteacher, and the leadership of mathematics and science is being overseen by the headteacher until permanent appointments can be made. This is not an ideal arrangement because it places too much subject responsibility on the headteacher. The leadership team is in a developmental stage and senior leaders are benefiting from the Primary Leadership Programme initiative. They are becoming increasingly involved in monitoring and improving their areas of responsibility. Effective assessment, tracking and target setting systems have been implemented, so that teachers have a clear understanding of how well pupils are doing and pupils have a clear view of what they need to do to improve. While most parents are satisfied with the education and care provided, a significant proportion has concerns. The school has not been effective enough in seeking parents' views and taking account of their concerns and suggestions.

Satisfactory care, guidance and support contribute to pupils' sound personal development. There are numerous strengths in their personal development. Most enjoy school and this is reflected in their above average attendance. Pupils are usually friendly, polite and relate well to others. Most are well behaved but the behaviour of the current Year 6 declines when they are not taught by their regular teachers. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and have a clear understanding of the importance of healthy eating, keeping safe and regular exercise. Older pupils readily take on additional responsibilities to help others in the school. Pupils contribute well to the wider community by raising funds for well known charities.

Children in Reception get off to a good start because of effective provision and their attainment is above that expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1. Satisfactory teaching and learning and a sound curriculum in Years 1 to 6 enable pupils to make satisfactory progress overall. Pupils make good progress when they are challenged and tasks are well matched to their abilities. However, this good practice is not consistent. In a few lessons, pace and challenge are not high enough and the rate of learning slows. By Year 6, standards are above average overall. National test results show that pupils attain well above average standards in English and make good progress. This is a result of effective teaching in this subject and the good range of discussion and writing opportunities provided. Standards in mathematics and science are above average and pupils make satisfactory progress in these areas. The school is taking suitable steps to raise achievement in these subjects by improving the balance between knowledge and understanding, and investigative work. Pupils enjoy the good range of additional activities which enrich the curriculum.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that all lessons have suitable levels of challenge and that learning maintains a brisk pace.
- Strengthen the role of subject leadership by sharing responsibilities and ensuring that all leaders are effectively monitoring performance and taking action to bring about improvements.
- Implement effective systems and strategies to ensure that behaviour is consistently good or better throughout the school
- Improve the partnership with parents.

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 achieve satisfactorily overall. Children in Reception make good progress in all areas of learning. Standards in 2006 in national assessments for Year 2 were above average in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents satisfactory progress. In Year 6, standards are above average overall. They are well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. Pupils make good progress in English and satisfactory progress in mathematics and science. Those with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress. Pupils are reasonably well prepared for the next stage of education. By the time they leave they possess competent skills in literacy and numeracy and have sound personal and social skills.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Most pupils enjoy school and this is reflected by their good attendance and their positive participation in school activities. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are reflective in assembly and sing tunefully. Behaviour is generally good, however the inconsistent behaviour by the current Year 6 has caused concern to parents, pupils and staff. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and possess a good understanding of the importance of healthy diets and taking regular exercise. They make a positive contribution to the wider community by raising funds for well known charities.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with examples of good practice evident. Teaching in Reception is stimulating and there is an effective blend of direct instruction and activities that enable children to explore and learn independently. Across the school, teachers share the purpose of the lesson with the class effectively, so that pupils know what they are expected to learn. Teachers are developing their skills in the use of the recently installed interactive whiteboards. When used well, these reinforce key learning points in an attractive and visual way. When teachers use assessment information accurately, tasks are well matched to pupils' needs. As a result, pupils are suitably challenged and make good gains in their learning. In a few lessons, the level of challenge is not appropriate and the rate of learning slows. Not all lessons proceed at a brisk pace. For example, overlong introductions can slow the pace and flow of learning. The marking of pupils' work is constructive and helpful, particularly in English and mathematics. Comments indicate strengths in the work and provide guidance for improvement.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum promotes pupils' personal development satisfactorily and enables them to make satisfactory academic progress. In Years 3 to 6, pupils have good opportunities to write extended

pieces. They write in a range of styles and for different purposes. This provision contributes to pupils' good progress and the well above average standards in Year 6. The mathematics and science curriculum has been improved so that there is a better balance between investigative work and subject knowledge. The accommodation for the information and communication technology (ICT) suite is cramped and the computers are old and lacking updated software. There are plans to improve accommodation and provision for this area. There is a good range of additional activities which contribute to pupils' enjoyment and interests. Clubs include chess, cricket, football, netball and cookery. There is good provision for musical tuition. A good range of day visits and a residential week extend pupils' experience and knowledge. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good, with plans to further improve the outdoor play facilities.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

There are appropriate procedures to ensure pupils' protection and safety. However, the monitoring to ensure that these are consistently implemented is not always robust enough. The school's policy and strategies for promoting good pupil behaviour are not fully effective as behaviour is not consistently good throughout the school. Systems for assessing and tracking pupils' attainment and progress are effective, particularly in English and mathematics. Assessment information is generally used well to set suitably challenging individual learning targets in English and mathematics. As a result, pupils know what they are working towards in these subjects. This effective target setting is not so consistent in science and ICT.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are at a developmental stage, with the formation of a new senior leadership team. The school is aware of the need to appoint leaders for mathematics and science. Leadership and management are promoting educational provision satisfactorily and this is resulting in satisfactory pupil progress and personal development.

The partnership with parents is barely satisfactory. About three quarters of parents who returned the questionnaire are generally satisfied with the care and education provided. However, a significant number of parents have expressed concerns about pupils' behaviour in Year 6, and about safety procedures and communication. There is some justification for these views. The school has not been effective enough in finding ways of seeking the views of parents. As a result, a significant proportion feels that the school takes insufficient account of their suggestions and concerns.

Self-evaluation is satisfactory although the school is not always linking the quality of provision to outcomes for pupils. The monitoring of teaching and learning by senior leaders is accurate and the school has used self evaluation well to make informed improvements. Improvement planning correctly identifies the school's most pressing priorities. Appropriate action is being taken to raise achievement in mathematics and science in order to bring it into line with English.

Governors are committed and supportive. Governors and school leaders recognise the need to improve the partnership with parents. The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory and satisfactory value for money is provided.

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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	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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	3

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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

1 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Pope Paul Catholic Primary School, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire, NE6 2ES

Thank you so much for welcoming me into your school and showing me your work. I enjoyed my visit and would like to tell you what I found out. Pope Paul is a satisfactory school. Teaching and learning are satisfactory.

These things were strengths of the school.

- You clearly enjoy school and your attendance is good.
- Children in Reception get off to a good start.
- Standards in English in Year 6 are high and you make good progress in this subject.
- Most of you are friendly and polite.
- You show a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle.
- You get on well with other pupils and adults.
- A good range of additional activities and clubs is provided.

These are the things the school has been asked to improve.

- Sometimes your teachers could challenge you more and this would help you to make more progress.
- The leadership of different subjects needs to be shared among the teachers.
- The school should take effective steps to ensure that behaviour is consistently good in all year groups.
- The partnership with parents could be improved.

Finally, thank you once again for all your help. I wish you all the best for the future.

With kind regards

Derek Watts

Lead Inspector