

St Paul's CofE (C) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124227
Local Authority	Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number	340520
Inspection dates	14–15 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Denise Shields

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ken Edwards
Headteacher	Mrs Sandra Hearson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons or part lessons and these included the observation of eight teachers. Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils, governors and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a range of documentation, including pupils' past and present work, assessment and tracking information, monitoring and evaluation records, and additional evidence of the support for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Inspectors also looked at whether the school meets statutory requirements with regard to safeguarding. A representative sample of questionnaires returned by pupils and staff and 51 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were scrutinised.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the attainment, learning and progress of all pupils in writing and mathematics
- the impact of programmes to accelerate pupils' progress
- the rigour of systems to track pupils' attainment and progress
- the rigour of the school's arrangements to monitor and promote regular attendance.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average sized school. Most pupils are White British. A much higher than average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils who are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average. A significant minority of pupils joins or leaves the school at times other than the start of the school year. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status, the Basic Skills Quality Mark and the Activemark and Eco bronze awards.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Outstanding care, guidance and support are at the heart of everything it does. Those pupils who are most vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive excellent help and encouragement, as do their families. Relationships are secure and friendly. Pupils are confident they feel extremely safe and there is an adult to turn to if required. Pupils who join the school partway through the school year say they settle quickly and make many new friends. The positive views of their parents and carers confirm this. The curriculum is good. Pupils comment, that they really enjoy the activities beyond lessons. A great many participate eagerly in these and, as a result, their confidence and self-esteem improves significantly.

All leaders and managers share a common vision for the school's future. Self-evaluation involves all stakeholders. It is rigorous and so leaders have acquired an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Improvement planning is sharply focused and leaders robustly evaluate the impact of actions taken to tackle key priorities. This has a positive impact on outcomes for all groups of pupils. Areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. As a result, the school demonstrates a good capacity for sustained improvement.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the quality of teaching and assessment is variable. As a consequence, children receive a satisfactory start to their education and make satisfactory progress. Indoors, the cheerful learning areas within the Early Years Foundation Stage are well resourced, but in the outdoor area the range of resources is more limited. In Key Stages 1 and 2 teaching is good and has improved significantly since the previous inspection. A number of outstanding lessons were observed during the inspection. Pupils' progress is tracked rigorously and the information shared widely so everyone has a clear understanding how well pupils are doing. This is a key factor that enables leaders to identify and quickly tackle any potential underachievement. By the end of Year 6, attainment is broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Attainment in reading is a strength because pupils have plenty of chances to practise and improve their reading skills. Pupils' writing skills are not as strong because they do not have enough opportunities to write in subjects other than English and there is no consistent approach to teaching handwriting skills. Taking account of pupils' need, ability and their varying starting points at school, progress for all groups is good. Pupils' personal and social skills are developed well and they enjoy and make a good contribution to the school and wider community. This represents good achievement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Raise standards in writing by ensuring that:
 - pupils have plenty of exciting opportunities to increase their eagerness to write in all subjects
 - a consistent whole-school approach to teaching handwriting skills is developed
 - the presentation of pupils' work is improved
 - marking consistently matches the quality of the best practice.
- Improve the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by ensuring that:
 - the quality of teaching is consistently good or better
 - a wider range of resources is available in the outdoor area, so that children can choose activities for themselves in all areas of learning
 - an effective and manageable system is in place to accurately assess and record children's progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Most pupils say they enjoy their lessons and learning is great fun. Many are well motivated, work hard and concentrate well on tasks. Pupils' behaviour is good. They are keen to help and support each other and most try their best at all times. When given the opportunity, they work cooperatively with a partner or in groups and readily share ideas and this helps them to become more confident learners. This has a positive impact on their achievement and enjoyment of learning.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils' learning and progress are good because of the good teaching they receive. Some pupils make huge improvements in their learning and have moved forward an entire National Curriculum level in a year, due to the good range of well-targeted 'catch-up' and support programmes, for example, those to accelerate pupils' progress in reading and mathematics. Typically, pupils' attainment is below average on entry to Year 1, especially in their early writing skills. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly average. Attainment in writing is not as strong because pupils do not have enough opportunities to practice and improve their writing skills. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make good progress and enjoy lessons because of the sensitive and carefully tailored guidance they receive from teachers and teaching assistants who help them with their learning.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. Pupils are proud of their school and respond well to its Christian values. They are polite, friendly and helpful towards visitors. Almost all pupils get on well with each other and have a good awareness of the need for racial tolerance. 'It doesn't matter what colour your skin is, it could be green, we're all the same inside', is a comment that typifies pupils' views. Pupils take on responsibility willingly. They make a good contribution to the school community as play leaders and members of the various committees. Pupils have a good

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knowledge of how to live healthy lifestyles. Attendance is average. Rigorous arrangements to monitor and encourage regular attendance have resulted in a significant reduction in persistent absence. Pupils' satisfactory basic skills, their good personal and social skills and average attendance give them a sound basis for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Relationships are very strong in all classes and pupils are not afraid to ask for help if they should need it. Almost all lessons are lively and humour is often used to good effect. In the very best lessons teachers' questioning is very effective and extends pupils' skills and knowledge rapidly. A very good range of strategies is used to fully engage pupils. For instance, pupils talk in pairs, work in small groups or have short fun activities to question each other; this successfully promotes speaking and listening. In almost all lessons the use of information and communication technology (ICT) or well-chosen resources captures pupils' interest. Well-targeted and effective support is given to those who need extra help with their learning. Sometimes, however, teachers

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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talk for too long and occasionally tasks are not always well enough matched to pupils' needs and abilities. In some classes teachers accept poorly presented work. Where practice is best, marking is helpful and provides constructive comments to help pupils improve but this is not consistently the case. Pupils say that discussions with their teachers help them to understand how well they are doing and how to improve their work. However, they are occasionally less certain how their learning targets might help them.

The well-planned curriculum is very carefully adjusted to meet the requirements of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Themed events, such as the art week or problem-solving days add depth to pupils' learning. Very good provision is made for the personal, social, emotional and health education of pupils. The range of activities beyond lessons is excellent and very well matched to pupils' differing capabilities and needs; pupils' attendance at these is exceptionally high.

Adults know pupils extremely well. There is excellent support for individuals and vulnerable groups, which has led to noticeable improvements in their behaviour, self-esteem and confidence. Very robust systems are established to monitor and secure regular attendance. The home/school links worker liaises very well with families to promote relationships, to encourage them to support their children's education and to clarify the importance of regular attendance. Arrangements to help pupils move from year group to year group and then on to secondary school are very good.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides strong but sensitive leadership. She maintains a clear oversight of the school and constantly seeks to improve the quality of provision and raise pupils' aspirations. She is supported well in her efforts by the effective team of senior and middle leaders. All staff work together successfully to secure improvement. A robust system to monitor and evaluate the work of the school is well established. It is used effectively by senior and middle leaders to drive improvement and ensure that targets set are achieved and more recently exceeded. The good governing body holds the school to account. Governors are not afraid to ask challenging questions and monitor the quality of provision well. The school complies with statutory requirements for safeguarding, health and safety, and child protection. Safeguarding arrangements are planned well and permeate all aspects of school life. As a result, any concerns are

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swiftly acted upon and very well-targeted support and guidance put in place for individuals.

The school promotes equality of opportunity and community cohesion well, and has good arrangements to tackle discrimination. The headteacher and staff have built good relationships with members of the local and wider communities, including partnerships with the church. Pupils' involvement in the local community is strong. The traditions and cultures of the few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is shared and celebrated. As a result, the school is a happy, harmonious community in which to work and learn. The numerous very positive views expressed by pupils and staff confirm this.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children enter the Nursery with skills that are below those expected for their age, particularly in their early communication skills. Adults promote speaking and listening skills well and so, consequently, children make good progress in this area. Their progress in developing early writing skills is not as strong. Close liaison with pre-school settings and with most parents ensures children settle quickly to school routines.

Children are safe and extremely well cared for and all welfare procedures are in place. There is a very strong emphasis on personal and social education. As a result, children have very trusting relationships with adults, play happily together and enjoy learning. Indoors, planned activities have a good balance between those children can choose for themselves and those led by an adult. Although the outdoor area is used continuously throughout the day, the range of resources is sometimes narrow and this holds back

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children's learning and progress if they choose to be outside. The quality of teaching is inconsistent, particularly when the Nursery and Reception classes are taught separately. As a result, children make satisfactory progress. Where teaching is most effective, expectations of what children can achieve are high and exciting activities are based around children's interests. Where teaching is weaker, activities do not always capture children's interest, their behaviour is not always managed well enough and so the pace of the lesson slows. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Teamwork is strong. Leadership generally has a clear view of how to develop the Early Years Foundation Stage further. Although regular assessments of children's progress and achievements are made, they are not always accurate. Arrangements are unwieldy and so information is not always used effectively enough to adjust future planning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Inspectors received questionnaire responses from approximately one-quarter of parents and carers. The very large majority of parents and carers indicate a positive view about all aspects of the school's work. Inspection findings support these positive views. A few parents and carers consider their children are not making enough progress and the school does not help them support their children's learning. Inspectors found that the school provides a range of opportunities and guidance for parents and carers to become involved in their children's learning. Inspectors judge pupils make good progress overall, although their progress in writing is not as strong. A few parents and carers consider the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found the school has effective procedures for managing pupils' behaviour.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Paul's CofE (C) Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 51 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 222 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	30	59	18	35	3	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	73	12	24	2	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	25	49	25	49	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	41	27	53	2	4	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	25	49	24	47	1	2	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	43	25	49	2	4	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	43	27	53	1	2	1	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	25	49	24	47	1	2	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	45	26	51	1	2	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	45	25	49	2	4	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	45	26	51	1	2	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	26	51	24	47	0	0	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	47	25	49	1	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



16 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Paul's CofE (C) Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent, ST3 2RH

I am writing to thank you for the warm and friendly welcome you gave the inspection team when we came to inspect your school. St Paul's is a good school and some aspects are outstanding. These are some of the things we found out.

- Adults take exceptionally good care of you and help you to stay safe and enjoy your learning. You say that staff teach you well and will help if you are sad or troubled and we agree.
- You all try hard with your work and make good progress especially in mathematics and science.
- You say you enjoy the visitors, visits and activities that you take part in and these help you learn lots of new things and we agree.
- Your headteacher and all the teachers work closely together and check the school's work carefully so that improvements can be made.
- Your progress is not as good in writing. We have asked your teachers to give you lots of exciting chances to practise your writing skills and to help you improve your handwriting. You can help, too, by ensuring your work is always neatly presented.
- The children in the Nursery and Reception classes have a satisfactory start to their education. They make friends, trust the adults who look after them and enjoy learning. These children make satisfactory progress. We have asked your school to improve some teaching so that it is good or better to help children make quicker progress and to make sure the children are given more outdoor learning activities so that the area is a more exciting place to learn.

I know you are all proud of your school and enjoy all the responsibilities that you have, so please keep working hard and always try your very best.

Yours sincerely

Denise Shields

Lead inspector

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