

St Paul's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101326
Local Authority	London Borough of Barnet
Inspection number	376549
Inspection dates	10–11 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Margaret Goodchild

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 of pupils on the school roll	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jonathan Shaw
Headteacher	Tim Bowden (Executive headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	23 April 2007
School address	The Ridgeway Mill Hill London NW7 1QU
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed parts of 24 lessons and saw nine teachers. Meetings were held with staff, a group of pupils and two representatives of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, information about their attainment and progress, evidence of monitoring and self-evaluation, and documents indicating how well the school safeguards its pupils. They analysed 81 responses to the parental questionnaire, together with those from pupils and members of staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- To what extent does the Early Years Foundation Stage enable children to make as much progress as they could in all areas of learning?
- Do teaching and the curriculum provide sufficient extension for more-able pupils?
- How well is provision matched to the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language?
- Are the school's monitoring and self-evaluation systems sufficiently rigorous to drive school improvement, especially through improving teaching and learning?

Information about the school

St Paul's C of E is smaller than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils of minority ethnic heritage is well above average and an above average proportion speak English as an additional language. The second largest ethnic group after White British is Black African; the remainder of the school population is ethnically diverse. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average but varies considerably between year groups; the percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is average. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The school has National Healthy Schools status and the Active Mark award.

Following the retirement of the previous headteacher in March 2011, the deputy headteacher led the school until an executive headteacher was appointed at the end of the summer term. The executive headteacher is overseeing the school for two days a week until a new permanent headteacher takes up post later this month, when he will continue to provide support to the school.

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 that has sustained the many strengths found at the previous inspection. Parents and carers are strongly supportive of the school and most express satisfaction with its work. They particularly appreciate the family atmosphere and, in the words of one parent, the fact that it provides 'a nurturing, happy start to any child's school life'.

Achievement is outstanding, and attainment at the end of Year 6 has been consistently high in English, mathematics and science since the previous inspection. Pupils' highly developed basic skills and positive personal qualities mean that they are prepared exceptionally well for the next stage of their education. Learning and progress are good overall. Test results in 2011 show that the school's increased focus on middle attaining pupils enabled them to make outstanding progress in Years 3 to 6. At the same time, more-able pupils made satisfactory gains in their learning. Lesson observation shows that increasing the rate of progress of more-able pupils and matching work precisely to the next steps in their learning are key to moving the school from good to outstanding.

The curriculum is matched well to pupils' academic needs and fosters their personal development exceptionally well, especially through outstanding opportunities for enrichment. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and the school ensures that they develop an excellent awareness of healthy living. Pupils receive high quality pastoral care, and those who need additional help are supported well. Behaviour is good. Pupils are polite and courteous and their enjoyment of learning is evident in their well above average attendance. Teaching is good and many consistent strengths were evident in lessons seen. There are examples of outstanding teaching within the school but in satisfactory lessons and some that are otherwise good, teachers do not always use assessment information to match work closely enough to the prior attainment of different groups of pupils. At times, tasks are not challenging enough for more-able pupils and there are some missed opportunities to make pupils aware of how to improve their work. The Early Years Foundation Stage makes satisfactory provision for children in the Reception year because assessment information is not used to best effect in matching learning opportunities to children's needs, especially in writing.

The executive headteacher has been very quick to make his mark on the school and has already identified the most important areas for development. He is working closely with the newly-appointed permanent headteacher, in preparation for his

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official start at the end of this month. Together, they have introduced greater focus to the school's work. A good amount of monitoring takes place, including that by subject leaders, though information from lesson observation has not always been used to full effect to identify potential improvements in teaching and learning. Leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate: it is based on thorough data analysis and increasingly reflects the views of pupils, parents and carers. Combined with its positive track record in sustaining high attainment since the previous inspection, this indicates that the school has a good capacity for improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - making greater use of assessment information to match activities to children's prior attainment
 - ensuring children have regular, structured opportunities to develop their writing skills
 - increasing the challenge within child-initiated activities so that they promote children's higher order thinking and investigative skills.
- Ensure that all pupils throughout the school are making at least good progress by July 2013, through:
 - consistently matching tasks in lessons to the prior attainment of different groups of pupils
 - raising teachers' expectations for more-able pupils and ensuring that work is always sufficiently challenging for them
 - making sure that pupils are clear about how to improve their work
 - sharpening the way monitoring information is used to evaluate the quality of provision, especially in driving continuous improvements in teaching.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Children enter the school with attainment that is above national expectations for their age. Since the previous inspection, attainment at the end of Year 2 has been above average in reading, writing and mathematics, with a significant percentage of pupils gaining higher levels. Data indicates that progress accelerates in Years 3 to 6 so that attainment is high by the end of Year 6. Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language make equal progress to their peers. In fact, those of Black African heritage perform markedly better than similar groups nationally. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good overall and those with a statement for their special educational needs or at 'school action plus' often make outstanding progress.

In some lessons during the inspection, more-able pupils made less progress than the rest of the class because tasks or aspects of teaching were not challenging enough for them. In contrast, their progress was excellent where teaching was at its best. This was evident in a Year 6 science lesson, where the teacher talked to the whole

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class about the importance of ‘deep thinking’ and gave a group of more-able pupils the task of finding answers to a series of challenging questions. By researching independently, they gathered and presented information in readiness for ‘teaching’ the beginning of the next lesson to the class. They made outstanding progress, and the task motivated and absorbed them so much that they chose to spend much of their lunchtime finding out more information about the topic. In a history lesson in Year 4, more-able pupils made equally good progress as the rest of the class, exploring photographic evidence and developing their investigative skills as they prepared presentations on the artefacts found in Tutankhamun’s tomb. In both these lessons, teachers gave more-able pupils scope to use their independent learning skills in open-ended tasks that enabled them to show their flair and perseverance.

Throughout the school, pupils’ positive attitudes and good behaviour support their learning well. However, at times, pupils lack self-discipline in lessons and become too noisy when teachers do not explicitly remind them to work and discuss their ideas quietly. Pupils say that they feel safe in school; they are enthusiastic and apply themselves well. They take part in a wide range of sporting events and are ambassadors for healthy eating. For example, the school council devised a campaign to promote healthy lunchboxes and monitored its impact, rewarding wise choices with wristbands. The school’s work in this area is reflected in its Activemark award and Healthy Schools status. Pupils respond very well to the many opportunities to reflect and they show sensitivity in exploring ethical issues. Many are socially mature for their age and contribute a great deal to the school and wider community. Older pupils act as mentors to younger ones through the Young Leaders programme. Pupils have participated in toy testing for a national department store and worked on allotments at the local garden centre. In addition, they raise funds for a number of national and international charities. Vibrant displays show the extent to which pupils become absorbed in celebrating and learning about a variety of cultures, as well as sharing in a range of first-hand experiences which include art, music, drama and dance.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	1
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	2
Pupils’ behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2

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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The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers provide pupils with interesting activities that encourage them to take an active part in their learning. Lessons are often made stimulating through use of interactive whiteboards, photographs and artefacts. This helps to engage pupils' curiosity and bring learning to life. Lessons proceed at a good pace and teaching assistants are generally used well to support pupils who need additional help. Teachers usually plan their lessons in detail and prepare them thoroughly, but they do not always make sufficient use of assessment information in matching tasks to the needs of different groups. In particular, they sometimes underestimate what more-able pupils are capable of. Some marking makes clear what pupils need to do to improve but this is not always the case. Assessment information is used well, however, at a whole-school level, to match the curriculum to the needs of different groups. Pupils with additional learning needs are supported well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. Pupils who have particular gifts and talents have some good opportunities to take part in master classes and other activities that extend them. For example, the school has a very active chess club that has met with a high level of success in competition with other schools and there are many opportunities for pupils to learn a musical instrument and play in the school orchestra.

The school values pupils as individuals and they receive high quality personal support but it misses some opportunities to guide pupils academically. For example, they are not all clear about how well they are doing or which learning skills they would need to develop to increase their rate of progress. There are effective procedures in place to support children when they join and leave the school. Strategies to encourage regular attendance are well established and effective. Behaviour is managed well so that pupils learn in an orderly environment. The executive headteacher has identified the need to improve the way occasional incidents of challenging behaviour are managed and the school is revising its procedures accordingly.

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	2

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How effective are leadership and management?

The school's success in sustaining high standards during a period of leadership difficulties is testament to the dedication of the teaching staff. Building on this, the executive headteacher has undertaken a substantial amount of lesson observation in his short time at St Paul's and quickly gained an overview of the school's main strengths and areas for development. Careful analysis of performance data and work with the newly-appointed headteacher have also helped to clarify what needs to be done. As a result, there is quite a close correlation between the school's identified priorities and inspection findings. The school tackles discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity well. Although there has been some variation in the rate of progress for different groups of pupils, the school has thorough systems in place for tracking pupils' progress and uses these to good effect to identify those who need additional support. Leaders have more recently turned their attention to extending provision for more-able pupils and the recent appointment of a coordinator for gifted and talented pupils, with a remit also for the more-able, is a positive move. Pupils' views are taken into account very well through 'pupil conferencing', and an active school association provides some excellent support to the school, including through parents and carers leading cultural activities. The school keeps parents and carers well informed, including through weekly newsletters and monthly drop-in sessions.

The governing body provides good support and its members have a clear understanding of the way forward. The establishment of a strategy committee is helping to sharpen the way the governing body challenges the school and contributes to improvement. Its members fulfil their duties well in ensuring that pupils are safeguarded. Thorough systems are in place for checking the suitability of adults to work with children, and the school works closely with outside agencies in supporting pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Its good quality policies are easily accessible to parents and carers. The school promotes community cohesion well. It celebrates the ethnic diversity of its intake and plays an active part in the local community. A strong network of national links through the church and developing global links do much to extend pupils' understanding of other ways of life.

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	2

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tackles discrimination	
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	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make satisfactory progress in the Reception Year. While attainment exceeds national expectations in most areas of learning, it has been broadly average in communication, language and literacy in recent years. This is because some children have made less progress than they should in developing their writing skills. The school has recently identified this as an area for development. Children’s work so far this term shows that all groups need more frequent writing opportunities and more-able children are not always challenged enough. Planning is very detailed but gives insufficient emphasis to using assessment information to plan activities closely matched to the next steps in the learning of different groups. While there is plenty of opportunity for children to choose resources for themselves, both inside and in the new outdoor area, some activities provide limited opportunity for them to develop their higher order thinking and investigational skills. Children learn in a caring environment and staff promote their personal development well. Children also benefit from a wealth of enrichment opportunities and take part alongside the rest of the school in many stimulating events. There are some good and developing opportunities for parents and carers to find out about how well their children are doing, including through monthly drop-in sessions. The executive headteacher has quickly identified the need to strengthen aspects of provision and the Early Years Foundation Stage leader is working productively with the local authority to raise children’s achievement.

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

In an above average return, most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are supportive of the school. A few are dissatisfied with the progress their children are making, how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour, how it is led and managed and how their views are taken into account. Inspectors explored these issues and found that most pupils make good progress, though this is not

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always the case for the more-able. Behaviour is good and the school is in the process of tightening procedures for dealing with occasional challenging incidents. The school has been through a period of leadership difficulties but it is now led well and parental views are increasingly taken into account.

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 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 81 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 203 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	41	51	38	47	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	53	65	27	33	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	31	38	40	49	7	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	22	5	63	10	12	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	28	35	46	57	5	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	36	42	52	7	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	33	50	62	1	1	0	0
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)	20	25	50	62	6	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	31	43	53	6	7	0	
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	32	37	46	8	10	5	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	27	48	5	7	9	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	22	27	40	49	10	12	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	37	44	54	4	5	1	1

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 all 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



12 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Paul's CofE Primary School, London NW7 1QU

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed the time we spent talking to you, visiting your lessons, looking at your work and seeing all the interesting things you do.

We found that you go to a good school, and you told us that your teachers are 'helpful and nice'. Most of you make good progress, and attainment is high by the end of Year 6. This means that your overall achievement is outstanding. At times, those of you who are more-able could do work that is a bit harder so we have asked the school to make sure you are always challenged enough. We were impressed by how polite and courteous you are and we found that behaviour is good. The school provides you with some exciting activities, including many clubs and special events that make learning enjoyable. We were particularly interested to see all your work about different cultures on display. The adults in the school care for you very well and provide good support for those of you who need extra help. Teaching is good and teachers make learning interesting for you. To make teaching even better, we have asked your teachers to make sure they always match work to the next steps in the learning of different groups in the class and make sure you know how to improve your work. Children in the Reception class make satisfactory progress and so we have asked the school to make some improvements there. In particular, children need more opportunities to practise their writing and all the activities need to provide scope for plenty of learning.

Mr Bowden is doing a very good job in leading the school while you wait for your new headteacher to start. You can help them both by sharing your views about how the school could improve and always working hard. We wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Goodchild
Lead inspector

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