

Saint Paul's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106453
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	377404
Inspection dates	19–20 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Sarah Drake

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	Anne Mason
Headteacher	Alison Jackson
Date of previous school inspection	22 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 13 lessons taught by nine different teachers and held meetings with school staff, members of the governing body, groups of pupils, and parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation related to pupils' achievement and school management, including safeguarding. The inspectors took into account the questionnaires returned by 62 parents and carers, 22 members of staff and 114 pupils.

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

- The achievement of different groups of pupils to determine whether teaching is based sufficiently closely on the assessment of their individual needs.
- The effectiveness with which leaders have embedded practice that can withstand the recent staffing upheavals and continue to improve the school.
- The success with which provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage underpins pupils' progress throughout the school.

Information about the school

Saint Paul's C of E is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school. The great majority of pupils is White British and the proportions that speak English as an additional language or are known to be eligible for free school meals are below average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The proportion that has a statement of special educational needs, largely for pupils on the autistic spectrum, is high and has increased greatly since the previous inspection. The school holds many awards including Healthy Schools, Green Flag, Church School Partnership, International School Foundation Stage and Investors in People.

Over the past four months, the school has experienced significant changes in staffing. The deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher have recently taken up their posts in an acting capacity and two classes are being taught by temporary teachers.

A privately run pre-school nursery and out-of-school club operates on the school site. It did not form part of this inspection, but a report of its quality can be found on the Ofsted website.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This outstanding school provides high-quality education for its pupils within a warm, exceptionally supportive, environment. As one pupil said, 'This is an excellent school because all the teachers and senior staff work so well together, just like cogs.' By the end of Year 6, due to finely tuned assessment of individuals' needs and support of outstandingly high quality, attainment levels are consistently high. Pupils of all abilities make outstanding progress and achieve exceptionally well.

Children's skill levels when they join the school vary greatly from year to year, but are usually broadly as expected or below this. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, but the systems and provision there are not yet at quite the same exceptional level as elsewhere in the school. Outstanding partnerships with parents, carers and outside agencies, combined with excellent levels of care and a first-rate curriculum, ensure that all pupils, whatever their needs, thrive at St Paul's. The ethos of respect and inclusion means that the school promotes equality of opportunity in every aspect of its work and that, consequently, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils behave impeccably and show great understanding of those who can find social situations very challenging. They are very aware of how to keep themselves safe and healthy and contribute keenly to both the school and the wider community. The promotion of community cohesion is excellent. Pupils' mature personal skills, high attendance levels and enthusiasm for learning equip them exceptionally well for the future.

The success of the school is attributable to outstanding leadership by the headteacher. Her vision, determination and ability to bring out the best in staff and pupils alike have driven improvement, including the provision of consistently high-quality teaching. Excellent systems, whether to monitor pupils' progress or to ensure that they are safeguarded from harm, underpin all the school's actions. The senior leadership team possesses a range of complementary skills that creates an impressive whole. The governing body is also highly influential in securing improvement. The school has taken great strides forward since the previous inspection and demonstrates an excellent capacity to sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enhance the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, by:
 - ensuring that all staff involved with this Key Stage are fully aware of and adopt current best practice
 - making best use of observations and assessment of individuals' development of skills to identify the precise next steps they need to take in their learning
 - capitalising on opportunities arising during children's self-chosen activities to lead their learning through playing alongside and questioning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning and achieve so well because they find lessons interesting and that adults 'are always very helpful if you get stuck'. This gives them the confidence to volunteer answers eagerly, to think hard about their work and to be realistic when evaluating their own and others' efforts. Pupils listen very well to adults and each other and take great pride in the content and presentation of their work. During reading sessions, older pupils refer automatically to the school's innovative 'flip books', which help them to concentrate on specific different criteria which are tailored to their levels. Pupils know their targets for improvement and strive hard to reach them, ever eager to tackle the next challenge presented. Since the previous inspection, attainment levels at the end of both Key Stages have consistently been significantly above average and, in Key Stage 2, have been on a sharply rising trend. In 2011, the school exceeded its very challenging targets. Over half of the current Year 6 pupils are already working at or above the average level pupils are expected to reach nationally by the end of the year in reading, writing and mathematics. In response to the school's excellent support systems, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational needs, make particularly impressive progress. The progress and achievement of all pupils are outstanding.

Pupils' personal development is equally strong. They display sensitive empathy for others and develop a strong moral code. Pupils appreciate the beautiful singing of the choir and are highly creative, as demonstrated by the magnificent hats in the style of Clarice Cliff made by Year 3 pupils. They appreciate that their ideas contribute to school life, for example, through the introduction of a 'worry box' and the 'skip to be fit' sessions which have increased the amount of exercise taken in school. Pupils do not just refer to physical health and safety, but are well aware of the importance of maintaining emotional and mental well-being. They are thoughtful, polite and very able to back their opinions with logical reasoning. Pupils, justifiably, praise their school for its friendliness, helpfulness and family atmosphere.

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	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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?

High-quality teaching, which is based securely on warm relationships and rigorous assessment of individuals' needs, means that pupils are eager to learn and do so outstandingly well. Excellent subject knowledge, careful planning, clear explanations and skilful evaluation of pupils' understanding within lessons combine to ensure that no time is wasted since the work is adapted so accurately to pupils' different abilities. Teaching assistants make an outstanding contribution to pupils' learning. They use high-quality questioning as they support those with special educational needs and/or disabilities discretely or directly teach groups including the more-able. They also use their expertise in information and communication technology (ICT) to increase the opportunities for pupils to learn in different ways. The outstanding teaching encourages pupils to build on their prior learning in order to inform their thinking and to be precise when framing their answers, making good use of subject-specific language. Regular reference to pupils' targets and helpful marking, especially in English, keep pupils well-focused on what they need to do to improve their work.

Pupils, staff and the governing body have all contributed to the creation of a curriculum that inspires pupils' interest and entices them to develop their basic skills across a great range of different situations. Global concepts such as social justice, diversity and interdependence appear in medium-term plans, but have yet to be an integral part of daily lessons. Partnerships with others enhance opportunities for pupils greatly through the provision of, for example, specialist music and sporting tuition, and visits to places of interest. The heart of the curriculum's excellence lies in the way that it is so founded firmly on detailed analysis of individuals' specific needs, which leads to precise extra provision that culminates in pupils' outstanding progress.

Pupils, parents and carers are unanimous in their praise for the excellent care, guidance and support that the school offers to them. Simple, clear systems ensure that pupils behave extremely well, attend very regularly and are confident that staff will ease their concerns. The school is very aware of the impact of home

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

circumstances on pupils' ability to learn and so the learning mentor provides high-quality support not only for pupils, but also for their parents and carers to empower them to help their children. Outstanding diagnosis of and support for pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities, including dogged persistence in pursuit of outside help, enables such pupils to flourish alongside their peers and achieve outstandingly well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Incisive analysis of pupils' progress and the impact that all aspects of the provision have on this underpins the school's continual improvement. Skilful distillation of the evidence into summaries that are readily accessible means that decision-making is focussed sharply on the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Regular monitoring, clarity of expectations and access to high-quality training and coaching are all directed towards translating the school's vision, St Paul's Path, into daily practice. A generosity of spirit and a no-blame culture create excellent teamwork and a sense of shared responsibility. The governing body is highly effective because its members are regular, welcome visitors to school, developing a comprehensive understanding of its strengths and challenges. The leaders are prepared to take difficult decisions, always in the best interest of the pupils. Their strategic planning has proved seminal in helping the school to deal with unexpected staffing upheavals.

Safeguarding procedures are highly effective, with robust systems, regular training and swift response to any concerns raised. The outstanding attention paid to enhancing equal opportunities for all pupils ensures that, whatever individuals' potential vulnerability or needs are, all groups of pupils achieve exceptionally well. Careful analysis of the school's context and evaluation of its provision have led to extremely well-considered actions to promote community cohesion. At a local level, they includes pupils acting as litter-pickers and entertaining local residents musically; national links include visits to London to broaden pupils' understanding of British society; international partnerships in India and Kenya open pupils' eyes to their place within the global community. Excellent local partnerships are vital to improving the quality of teaching and to the strong provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are gifted and talented. The school is very responsive to parents' and carers' views, for example, it is improving the timing of reporting to them on their children's progress and has facilitated the development of the group 'By mums, for mums' to support those families whose children are on the autistic spectrum. Careful financial management and highly efficient administration ensure that the school runs smoothly and provides outstanding value for money.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children achieve well in the Reception class so that, by the end of the year, their skill levels are usually average for their age and sometimes they are above this. Good-quality partnerships with parents, carers and other early years providers, especially the on-site nursery, ensure that children are known well as individuals. This year's early assessment of the newcomers' skills, strengths and targets is impressive. The outdoor provision has improved greatly since the previous inspection and caters well for all areas of learning. Due to staff's warm welcome and effective use of praise, children enjoy their first taste of school. They are already beginning to form friendships and to understand routines and expectations of behaviour. Mostly, they concentrate well on activities, for example, creating 'worry dolls' to help them in times of need. The 'magic writing' books of those now in Year 1 show good progress in the development of early communication skills to underpin their future learning. Adults support children well when they are working in small groups. However, that is sometimes at the expense of them exploiting opportunities to lead children's learning through involvement and questioning when they engage in spontaneous activities. Staff value children's efforts and record their comments and actions carefully, but do not always use these records to best effect to identify swiftly and with precision the next steps in individuals' learning. Changes to staffing and the leadership structure mean that the new systems, which are based firmly on very good knowledge of current thinking combined with the many strengths already established in school, have yet to be embedded fully into everyday practice.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers hold overwhelmingly positive views of St Paul's. Typical of their comments are that 'it is an amazing school where my children's development is nurtured with all of their individual needs met'. Inspectors discussed specific concerns raised by parents and carers with the headteacher and are confident that either they have already been dealt with or they soon will be.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Saint 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 62 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	31	50	29	47	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	34	55	28	45	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	22	35	33	53	6	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	42	31	50	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	33	53	26	42	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	40	33	53	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	39	35	56	1	2	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)	22	35	35	56	1	2	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	40	34	55	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	39	27	44	6	10	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	29	31	50	5	8	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	25	40	31	50	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	48	30	48	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 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 is 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.



21 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Saint Paul's C of E Primary School, Wigan, WN3 6SB

Thank you very much for your warm welcome to the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We were delighted to hear how proud you are to belong to St Paul's and that you feel 'it's like joining a family'. Talking with you helped us to understand your school better. Here are some of the reasons why we have judged that it is truly outstanding.

All the adults in school look after you very well so that you feel comfortable to share any concerns and this helps you to concentrate on your learning. The teachers and teaching assistants organise very interesting things for you to do that offer you just the right level of support and challenge. All this means that you make excellent progress, however easy or difficult you find it to learn, so that by the time you leave school many of you reach very high standards. Congratulations! Also, you develop very strong personal skills such as caring for others, thinking about what you do, and trying to keep safe and healthy. Your behaviour is excellent and your attendance is high. More congratulations...and try hard to keep it that way!

Your school is so good because all the staff work together so well and the leaders have very good ideas about how to keep on making things even better. In the Reception class, you are already settling well and enjoying school and it's clear that those of you now in Year 1 made good progress last year. We have asked the school to make sure that all the systems to support the youngest children's learning are as strong as those in the rest of the school. We enjoyed our visit to St Paul's greatly and wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Drake
Lead Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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