

# St Paul's CE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105945
<b>Local Authority</b>	Salford
<b>Inspection number</b>	336591
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 September 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sarah Drake

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	233
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Ken Hickman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Deborah Sandercock
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	October 2006
<b>School address</b>	Crompton Street Walkden Worsley Manchester M28 3HP
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 11 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils, as well as talking informally with staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation and pupils' work. They also took into account the responses to questionnaires completed by older pupils, staff and 149 parents.

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

- pupils' achievement, particularly that of higher attaining pupils, to determine whether the teaching is sufficiently challenging
- pupils' personal development, to determine whether it is outstanding, as the school judges it to be
- how effectively the school uses assessment information and self-evaluation to drive improvement forward
- the quality of provision and outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Information about the school

St Paul's is an average size school which serves a broadly average socio-economic area. The great majority of pupils are White British, with few who belong to minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language. Small numbers of pupils are eligible to receive a free school meal. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average overall although in some year groups it is higher than average. The school provides for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in full-time Nursery and Reception classes. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader joined the school in April 2009. The school has achieved many awards including: Healthy Schools, Activemark, Green Flag Eco-Award and the BECTA Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Mark. Its Investors in People status was renewed in January 2009.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

St Paul's is a satisfactory school which has some areas of notable strength. It is highly successful at guiding its pupils so that they develop into mature, personable young people who have a genuine interest in and respect for others. Their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensures that the school operates as a happy, highly cohesive community with a warm, friendly atmosphere. The care and support offered to pupils and their families are of high quality. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards learning are excellent but their academic achievement is only satisfactory, largely because too few attain the higher levels for their age in English, particularly writing, or mathematics. Pupils' outstanding personal development has been sustained since the previous inspection but the standards they reach and the amount of progress that they make have both declined since 2007 so that they are now broadly average. Teachers' planning takes account of pupils' different abilities and in lessons they ensure that everyone grasps the concepts being taught. Teachers do not always have sufficiently high expectations of the capabilities of those pupils who find learning easy and relish a challenge. The marking of pupils' work provides too few pointers as to how they can improve.

Pupils explain that they thoroughly enjoy school because there are so many interesting things to do and they have great fun. Their understanding of how to keep fit, safe and healthy is exceptionally strong. The curriculum is innovative and greatly enriched by many partnerships with other schools, the church and a range of institutions, with particularly positive benefits for pupils' personal development. For example, an assembly led by pupils with a connection with the church, which highlighted the Year of the Child, was extremely impressive and thought-provoking. Teachers and pupils use information and communication technology well in many subjects, an improvement since the previous inspection. Much work has been undertaken on adapting provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that it reflects current practice. Not all early years' staff are suitably adept at making the most of their observations of children's skills and interests, when engaging them in conversation or planning future activities. The provision for these young children remains satisfactory so that throughout their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage they make adequate progress and their skills are broadly as expected for their age.

Senior leaders, governors and staff are united in their vision that the school will provide pupils with a well rounded education based on shared values. The leadership is diligent in reflecting on all aspects of its work and in tracking pupils' progress. It

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has accurately identified writing and mathematics as areas for improvement. Leaders are less skilled at rigorously analysing the information that they gather in order to highlight precisely those areas of a subject requiring the most input and how this can differ between year groups. For this reason, there is satisfactory capacity for the school to improve.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- raise the standards achieved, particularly in writing and mathematics, by:
  - increasing the proportion of pupils who attain the higher levels for their age
  - ensuring that teachers make better use of assessment information to adapt activities to pupils' individual abilities, particularly the more able pupils
  - improving the quality of teachers' marking so that pupils are clear about what they need to do next to improve their work
- increase the rigour with which leaders at all levels analyse data, pinpoint the areas of relative weakness and use the information to take effective action
- improve the quality of provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - sharing good practice between the different year groups
  - making better use of observations and assessments when planning activities
  - ensuring that all staff capitalise fully on children's interests and abilities when engaging them in discussion.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

In 2006 and 2007 pupils achieved well academically and reached above average standards overall at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. In 2008, standards dropped and in 2009, although there have been improvements in reading and mathematics at Key Stage 1, standards in English and mathematics have fallen again in Key Stage 2. Over the past two years not enough pupils, particularly those capable of higher attainment, have made more than satisfactory progress. During the last school year, the percentage of pupils working at the standards expected for their age fell. In 2009, while around half the pupils reached or exceeded their targets in English and mathematics, the other half did not. Throughout this period, standards in science have remained above average because the school's emphasis on practical activities and experimentation helps pupils to develop good skills in these areas.

In lessons, pupils listen well to instructions, collaborate well and take care with their work. However, because the tasks do not always provide enough challenge for more able pupils, they do not always make the progress of which they are capable. For example, in a mathematics lesson, all pupils carried out the same exercise to confirm their understanding of equivalent fractions, the only difference being that higher

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attaining pupils had to count out more items. Rather than stretching such pupils' thinking and understanding to a higher level, this practical activity reduced the amount of time they spent on developing their skills. The support provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities enables them to work purposefully and make satisfactory progress alongside their peers.

In response to the school's strong provision, pupils grow into polite, self-confident, thoughtful young people who have a zest for trying out new things and take delight in all that their school has to offer. They are particularly proud of its eco-friendly status and are generous in their fundraising activities. Pupils appreciate diversity, maturely tolerate difference and are adamant that bullying and racism occur only rarely and fleetingly. Many take on responsibilities and they are keen to, for example, design a local playground or the school's cottage garden alongside adult professionals. The oldest pupils conduct their own risk assessments of activities and many pupils learn to cook food as they develop an understanding of healthy living. Their impressive social and personal skills set them up well for their future lives.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

## How effective is the provision?

Excellent relationships between the vast majority of pupils and teachers create a good working atmosphere. Teachers explain activities clearly and take care to ensure that pupils' understanding of key concepts is secure, often making good use of interactive whiteboards to help with this. Teaching assistants are suitably deployed to support those who find learning more difficult but teachers' expectations of what

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<sup>1</sup> 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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individuals are capable of are not always high enough. Lessons generally include a range of different activities, with good encouragement of pupils to discuss their thoughts in pairs and small groups. Sometimes, however, the pace flags or, as in a literacy lesson for younger pupils, not enough time is left for pupils actually to put pencil to paper. Pupils' books include many work sheets and evidence of copying of information, for instance about historical figures, both of which restrict opportunities for them to develop their writing skills. Teachers provide pupils with targets in English and mathematics but these are not related to the next attainment level and some are not renewed during the year. Marking mainly consists of ticks and a supportive phrase. It is seldom made clear why the work is 'good' or what pupils should do next in order to improve.

The curriculum provides a broad range of activities for pupils that enable them to develop skills in areas as diverse as woodwork and financial management. Wake and shake up sessions at the start of the day, together with 'fitbod' break time activities, ensure pupils have fun while remaining fit and healthy. The school grounds, which have been much enhanced through the school's partnerships with, for instance members of the local and business communities and the Japanese society, provide a wealth of opportunities for investigative work. Well-focussed individual sessions for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities enable them to make steady and, occasionally, very good progress. All staff offer pupils the high levels of care that help them to grow in self-belief and enable them to concentrate on their learning. There are good arrangements to ease the transition from one phase of education to the next. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their efforts and they are unstinting in their praise for the staff. As one wrote, 'They look after us, they help us, they listen.'

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher engenders great loyalty from her staff and pupils, all of whom appreciate her hard work and determination to provide all pupils, whatever their needs, with a good start to their education. The school successfully promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination. Secure systems identify broad areas of strength and those in need of improvement but the analysis of information is not sufficiently rigorous. Subject leaders implement actions, such as those designed to raise standards in writing, but do not, for instance, analyse pupils' work in depth to identify the strengths and weaknesses of different groups. This means

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that actions taken are not always as effective as they could be. Observations of lessons focus more on the activities than what the pupils are learning. Governors are very committed to the school and knowledgeable about its provision but they are not sufficiently searching in their questioning when holding it to account for standards.

The school is highly successful in developing partnerships with a wide range of other institutions and professionals to enhance its provision. Its excellent promotion of pupils’ social, emotional and life skills is recognised locally and further afield. Good quality safeguarding procedures ensure that pupils are correct to feel so secure in their surroundings. Excellent promotion of community cohesion means that pupils mix readily with those of different ethnicity or culture. They have a good understanding that, for instance, some people in Africa live in wealthy cities as well as in poorer communities. . The impact of these activities is closely documented and reviewed. The leadership is highly successful in its promotion of pupils’ personal development but satisfactory overall because it only adequately promotes their academic skills development.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the Nursery with skills that are broadly as expected for their age and by the end of Reception their attainment is also as expected in all areas of learning, although few achieve above this. After a long period of unsettled staffing, all staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage are working together increasingly well, with a strong determination to improve the quality of provision for children. A good start has been made on ensuring that the accommodation is suitably organised and well equipped and that all areas of learning are catered for indoors and outside. A new system for tracking children’s progress is being introduced and a sharper focus being

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placed on using observations and assessment of what children can do, to guide future planning. This is at an early stage of development and the activities are not always suitably adapted according to children’s different needs and abilities. All adults form good relationships with the children and staff also work closely with parents to ensure that important information is shared and built on to enhance the quality of children’s learning. This means that children settle well, enjoy themselves and are confident to share concerns with adults. The staff’s expertise in teaching young children is stronger in the Nursery than the Reception class. Here staff sometimes fail to capitalise fully on the opportunities provided by the many interesting activities that they organise or by the enthusiasms that the children themselves bring to the classroom. Overall, children make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
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

The vast majority of parents and carers are very positive about all aspects of the school’s provision. In particular, they praise their children’s happiness and the interesting activities provided both in and out of lessons that give pupils ‘a varied and busy school day’. Inspectors followed up the few negative comments made and, taking into account their own observations, pupils’ responses to the questionnaire and the school’s documentation, found no evidence that caused concern.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Paul's CE 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspector received 149 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 233 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	99	66	49	33	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	99	66	48	32	1	1	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	76	51	65	44	5	3	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	74	50	66	44	4	3	3	2
The teaching is good at this school	83	56	53	36	4	3	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	80	54	59	40	4	3	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	82	55	63	42	2	1	2	1
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)	65	44	67	45	3	2	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	68	46	70	47	1	1	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	70	47	70	47	3	2	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	54	36	84	56	5	3	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	79	53	62	42	2	1	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	87	58	56	38	2	1	3	2

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%.