

**St Paul's Primary School
Shettleston
Glasgow City Council
23 September 2008**

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1. Background

St Paul's Primary School was inspected in May 2008 as part of a national sample of primary education. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages. It evaluated pupils' achievements, the effectiveness of the school, the environment for learning, the school's processes for self-evaluation and innovation, and its capacity for improvement. There was a particular focus on attainment in English language and mathematics.

HM Inspectors examined pupils' work and interviewed groups of pupils, including the pupil council, and staff. Members of the inspection team also met the chairperson of the Parent Council, a group of parents¹ and the local chaplains.

St Paul's Primary School is a denominational school serving the Tollcross, Sandyhills, Mount Vernon and Shettleston areas of Glasgow. The school is part of the St Andrew's Learning Community. At the time of the inspection the roll was 307. The proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals was well above the national average. Pupils' attendance was in line with the national average. The school had achieved local authority awards for health promotion and enterprise education and had gained a silver Eco-Schools Scotland award.

2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- Well-behaved pupils and their enthusiasm for learning.
- The values and commitment to Roman Catholic education which underpinned the work of the school.
- The successful introduction of personal learning planning and its impact on raising pupils' awareness of themselves as learners.
- Very strong links with parents and the wider community.
- The strong leadership of the headteacher and staff teamwork which had resulted in pupils receiving a positive experience in school.

3. What are the views of parents, pupils and staff?

HM Inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires issued to a sample of parents, P4 to P7 pupils, and to all staff. Information about the responses to the questionnaires appears in Appendix 2.

¹ Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

Parents were pleased with all aspects of the school. They thought that staff were approachable and they felt welcomed into the school. They liked the involvement they had in their children's personal learning planning. Parents believed that the headteacher had made significant improvements to the school since she had taken up post. Pupils were enthusiastic about school. They enjoyed their lessons, got on well with their classmates and felt that they had good opportunities to influence the work of the school. Pupils liked the way they were involved in personal learning planning. Teaching staff were very positive about all aspects of the school and they enjoyed working there. All staff felt that the school was well led.

4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?

Learners' experiences

The quality of the curriculum was good. Pupils benefited from a range of good quality, enjoyable experiences which helped them to make progress in their learning. The school had rightly placed an emphasis on improving pupils' literacy skills through active learning at P1 and through literacy studies from P3 to P7. Staff had worked together to successfully create some cross-curricular links and improve the contexts for pupils' learning. All pupils benefited from two hours of physical education each week. Across the school, teachers and pupils were beginning to make more effective use of information and communications technology (ICT) to enhance pupils' learning. This required to be further developed. Pupils from P5 to P7 were learning Spanish. Those in P7 had opportunities to practise what they had learned during an annual visit to Salamanca. Overall, the quality of teaching was good with several examples of very good practice. Most teachers gave clear explanations and instructions and provided pupils with constructive feedback which promoted understanding and helped pupils to make progress in their learning. There were weaknesses in teaching in some lessons, particularly when teachers did not effectively engage pupils in learning. Most teachers were committed to developing their skills and several had begun to share good practice through a newly introduced system of peer coaching. Overall, teachers used homework well to consolidate classroom learning.

Learners' experiences were good. Pupils were hard working and enthusiastic about learning. In most classes, teachers motivated them to learn. They were developing an understanding of their strengths as learners through setting personal learning targets. At the early stages, most pupils were active in their learning. Pupils were happy in school and they cooperated well with each other. They had very good opportunities to contribute to the life of the school through, for example, the school council and the eco committee. Pupils regularly supported charities at home and abroad.

Improvements in performance

The school had been successful in achieving and sustaining good standards in literacy and numeracy and had ensured that pupils made progress in learning.

The overall quality of pupils' attainment in English language was good. Standards in writing had improved. Most pupils had attained appropriate national levels in listening, talking, reading and writing. Across the school, pupils were confident in listening and

talking. In all classes, they listened well and responded positively to instructions and directions. Most were confident in group discussion. At the early stages, most pupils were developing a range of reading strategies. Across the school, most pupils were acquiring good skills in spelling and knowledge of language. By P7, most had developed appropriate reading skills and could read with good understanding and fluency. They were able to identify metaphors and similes, and could identify authors' main points when reading for information. A majority of pupils in P7 enjoyed reading for pleasure. They were able to identify favourite authors and talk about books they had read. At all stages, most pupils wrote well for a range of purposes which were often appropriately linked to other curricular areas. By P7, most pupils used ICT appropriately to edit and present their writing. Standards of presentation, length and the quality of written work were generally good but not yet consistent across the school.

The quality of pupils' attainment in mathematics was, overall, very good. There had been gradual improvements in standards over the past three years. Almost all pupils at the early stages had achieved these levels earlier than might normally be expected. These early gains had not always been sustained as pupils moved through the school. Pupils not achieving appropriate national levels were making steady progress, with support. Pupils in P1 were developing an understanding of mathematics using real life contexts. Across the stages, pupils gathered and presented information using an appropriate range of tables and graphs. Those in the eco committee had drawn bar graphs to provide information about successful recycling. However, overall, pupils had insufficient experience of using ICT to organise and display data. At the early stages, pupils were developing a very good understanding of simple addition and subtraction. Pupils at P3 were skilled when estimating and measuring length. By P7, most were competent in written and mental calculations. Across the school, pupils had a good knowledge of two- and three-dimensional shapes. At P6 and P7, they had a good understanding of symmetry, angles and bearings. Pupils were aware of the range of strategies they could use to solve problems, and most used these successfully.

Pupils from P5 were making good progress in learning Spanish. They had learned a good range of appropriate vocabulary and at P7 pupils conversed confidently with each other. A small number of pupils improved their knowledge of the language by participating in a Spanish choir after school. At all stages, pupils were making good progress in music. They listened very well in music lessons and were developing an understanding of rhythm and tone.

The school took very good steps to help pupils develop their wider achievements. Pupils at the upper stages willingly took on a number of responsibilities, including acting as buddies for younger pupils. They were proud of their achievements in the eco committee and in their charity work. Pupils had learned much about healthy living, environmental issues and developed their enterprise skills through their work in achieving local authority awards for health promotion and enterprise, and a silver Eco-Schools Scotland award.

The school had made very good progress in addressing the priorities in its improvement plan. The introduction of personal learning planning was having a positive impact on

pupils' learning. Overall, the school knew itself well and was committed to improvement.

5. How well are pupils' learning needs met?

The school met pupils' learning needs well. In most classes, tasks and activities were challenging and helped pupils to make progress. However, in one multi-stage class at the middle stages, pupils' learning needs were not being well met. All pupils were involved successfully in personal learning planning. The school had appropriate strategies to identify and review the progress of pupils who had additional support needs. Staff worked well with parents and partner services to meet the needs of these pupils. From P3 onwards, the school had appropriate arrangements for pupils for whom English was an additional language. At P1/P2, pupils with English as an additional language would benefit from further support to increase their understanding of English. The school had a variety of planning arrangements for pupils with additional support needs. While most staff were positive about these arrangements to support pupils' learning, not all pupils support staff were aware of the procedures. Others did not fully understand the terminology and the relationship between each of the plans. The support for learning teacher worked with individuals and groups of pupils to support them with their learning. The school needed to continue to refine the arrangements to meet the needs of those with additional support needs.

6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Care, welfare and development	The school had very good arrangements for pupils' care and welfare. Staff knew pupils well and placed a high priority on meeting their social, emotional and spiritual needs. All staff had received appropriate training in child protection and understood their role in relation to this. The school dealt very well with any incidences of poor behaviour, including bullying. Pupils were confident that staff would deal with any concerns they had. The school had very good arrangements to support pupils' transitions from nursery into P1 and from P7 to St Andrew's Secondary School.

Aspect	Comment
<p>Management and use of resources and space for learning</p>	<p>Overall, the management and use of resources and space for learning was satisfactory. The school buildings were in need of repair and redecoration. The roof leaked in a number of places and some windows required to be replaced. However, the buildings were well maintained by cleaning staff and teachers made very effective use of the spacious classrooms. Building security arrangements were appropriate. Pupils benefited from a large assembly hall, dedicated rooms for teaching ICT, music and Spanish, and attractive school grounds. There was limited access to the entrance hall for people with restricted mobility, but no access to other areas of the school.</p>
<p>Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality and fairness</p>	<p>Strong, shared values underpinned the work of the school. The school had a happy atmosphere which encouraged learning. Staff and pupils had very good relationships founded on mutual respect. Morale among teachers was high. They were motivated and most engaged willingly in professional development which improved the work of the school. Across the school, pupils' behaviour was very good. Pupils were polite and courteous to staff, visitors and to each other. Most staff had high expectations for pupils' attendance, behaviour and achievements. Pupils responded well to these expectations and most had developed high expectations of themselves. School assemblies provided very good opportunities for regular religious observance and celebrating achievements. Pupils were well prepared for the Sacraments and feast days were celebrated. Staff prepared pupils very well for the diversity of life in modern Scotland. Aspects of diversity, including anti-sectarianism, were taught through the curriculum and all members of the school community were treated with equity and fairness.</p>

Aspect	Comment
The school's success in involving parents, carers and families	The school had established strong and very productive partnerships with parents, the Parent Council and the local community. It regularly gathered and took account of the views of parents. Staff communicated very successfully with parents through a range of media including the school website and attractive and informative monthly newsletters. Parents were well informed about issues that affected their children including sensitive health issues. They had been very supportive of the school's development of personal learning planning. The school had productive links with a range of professionals from the local authority, including the active schools' coordinator and the modern languages tutor. Staff made good use of these links to benefit pupils' learning and achievement. The local chaplains visited the school regularly and were active participants in class lessons and prayer services.

7. Leading and improving the school

Appendix 1 provides HM Inspectors' overall evaluation of the work of the school.

St Paul's Primary School provided a good and improving quality of education for its pupils. Overall, teachers taught well and pupils were becoming successful learners who were increasingly aware of their own strengths and areas for improvement. The school improvement plan had correctly identified relevant aspects for improvement. These included improving teachers' skills in providing feedback. Pupils' achievements in English language and mathematics were good and the school was well placed to bring about further improvements.

The headteacher had been in post for two years at the time of the inspection. In her time in post, she had provided very good leadership for improvement and change. She had a clear vision for the school which she had successfully shared with staff and parents. She had used her strong interpersonal skills to create very positive collegiate working among teaching staff, who had worked together to develop aspects of the curriculum. She knew staff well and had encouraged individual teachers to take responsibility for specific developments in the school, including active learning at P1 and peer coaching among teaching staff. The headteacher was well supported by the depute headteacher, the principal teacher and the acting principal teacher. They carried out their remits effectively. Remits needed further development to take account of planned staff changes and the future needs of the school. The school was developing very good approaches to improving its work through self-evaluation. The headteacher monitored learning and teaching across the school and provided staff with clear feedback on their work and how they could further improve. Most staff reflected well on their own practice. They were involved in identifying the school's priorities for improvement and in achieving these priorities. Teachers were increasingly involved in mentoring and supporting each other to further improve classroom practice.

Main points for action

The school and education authority should take action to continue to improve pupils' achievements in English language and mathematics. In doing so they should take account of the need to:

- build on the good start made to share best practice in teaching for effective learning and, in doing so, improve further the quality of teaching;
- make better use of information on pupils' attainment in English language and mathematics to ensure that pupils make appropriate progress in their learning; and
- clarify the relationships between the various plans for pupils with additional support needs, to meet more effectively pupils' needs.

What happens next?

As a result of the good performance and the very effective leadership of this school, HM Inspectors will make no further reports in connection with this inspection. The school and the education authority have been asked to prepare an action plan indicating how they will address the main findings of the report, and to share that plan with parents. Within two years of the publication of this report the education authority, working with the school, will provide a progress report to parents.

Morag Gunion
HM Inspector

23 September 2008

Appendix 1 Indicators of quality

The sections in the table below follow the order in this report. You can find the main comments made about each of the quality indicators in those sections. However, aspects of some quality indicators are relevant to other sections of the report and may also be mentioned in those other sections.

How good are learning, teaching and achievement?	
The curriculum	good
Teaching for effective learning	good
Learners' experiences	good
Improvements in performance	good

How well are pupils' learning needs met?	
Meeting learning needs	good

How good is the environment for learning?	
Care, welfare and development	very good
Management and use of resources and space for learning	satisfactory
The engagement of staff in the life and work of the school	very good
Expectations and promoting achievement	very good
Equality and fairness	very good
The school's success in involving parents, carers and families	very good

Leading and improving the school	
Developing people and partnerships	very good
Leadership of improvement and change (of the headteacher)	very good
Leadership of improvement and change (across the school)	good
Improvement through self-evaluation	very good

This report uses the following word scale to make clear judgements made by inspectors:

excellent	outstanding, sector leading
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

Appendix 2 Summary of questionnaire responses

Important features of responses from the various groups which received questionnaires are listed below.

What parents thought the school did well	What parents think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoyed school and staff showed concern for children's welfare. • School reports gave helpful information about their children's progress. • The school dealt well with inappropriate behaviour. • The school was well led. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no significant issues.
What pupils thought the school did well	What pupils think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They enjoyed school and felt that teachers knew them well. • Teachers explained things clearly and told them when they had done something well. • Teachers expected them to work hard. • The school helped to keep them safe and healthy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no significant issues.
What staff thought the school did well	What staff think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school regularly celebrated pupils' successes. • There was regular discussion about how to achieve school priorities. • Senior managers worked well as a team. • The school was well led. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Around half of auxiliary staff felt that instances of indiscipline could be dealt with better. • A few auxiliary staff felt that communication in the school could be improved.

Appendix 3 Good practice

In the course of the inspection, the following aspects of innovative and effective practice were evaluated as being worthy of wider dissemination.

Personal Learning Planning

The school had introduced personal learning planning for every child this session to enable pupils to become more involved in assessing of their own learning and more aware of the individual challenges in their school work. Staff wanted to develop a variety of ways of promoting personal learning among pupils, while still taking full account of their age and stage. All pupils and parents were encouraged to recognise the crucial importance of them being actively involved in the learning process.

Staff started the process of personal learning with P1 pupils. They were invited to attend a personal learning planning appointment in early September with their parent. The purpose of this appointment was to discuss each child's progress to date and identify their next steps in learning in English language, mathematics and personal and social development. P1 pupils participated well in this discussion. They had already gained experience of sharing learning criteria and participating in plenary sessions during active learning workshops in their class. The first review of the P1 learning targets was carried out during the parents' evening in November. Again, pupils attended this meeting along with their parents. They completed the evaluation of their targets in partnership with parents and staff. The 'traffic light' system was used to monitor progress. This meeting informed the next steps in learning and a copy of their updated plan was again sent home for reference. These plans were reviewed again in March at the second parents' evening using the same format.

Personal learning planning was introduced for pupils from P2 to P7 in November. Targets were set by the child and the teacher. These were then used as a focus for discussion at parents' evening later that month. Class teachers discussed with parents the ways in which they could support their child and help to achieve the targets. Parents were asked to sign the plans and were given a copy to discuss with their child at home. The plans were then reviewed in March when children attended an appointment with their parents to evaluate their targets and identify their next steps in learning for Term 4. These new plans were evaluated by pupils and teachers at the end of Term 4 and the completed evaluations sent home to parents. The next steps in learning for session 2008-09 were identified and recorded. These will be discussed and passed on during exchange of information meeting in August 2008.

Staff, parents and pupils have positively evaluated the system of personal learning planning. Personal learning planning is viewed as a natural development within formative assessment and encourages pupils to self-evaluate their needs and participate in target setting to decide on their 'next steps' in learning. A key strength is the way in which staff, pupils and parents are engaged in a quality and focused dialogue.

How can you contact us?

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If you have a concern about this report, you should write in the first instance to our Complaints Manager, HMIE Business Management and Communications Team, Second Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA. You can also e-mail HMIEComplaints@hmie.gsi.gov.uk. A copy of our complaints procedure is available from this office, by telephoning 01506 600200 or from our website at www.hmie.gov.uk.

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