

# St Paul's CofE (C) First School

School Lane, Coven, Wolverhampton, WV9 5AD

**Inspection dates** 27–28 November 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Progress slows by Year 4 because teaching in Years 3 and 4 does not always support pupils' learning well enough. In some lessons, it does not prepare pupils sufficiently for what they are subsequently asked to do.
- Pupils do not get enough chance to develop their mathematical skills through investigating and solving real-life problems or in different subjects.
- The governing body does not ensure that the school development plan focuses on raising achievement faster.
- Marking does not always show pupils clearly enough how they might improve. Pupils are sometimes confused about what comments mean and they do not always get time to respond to them.
- Subject leadership does not pay enough attention to what is happening in all year groups to ensure that teaching results in progress that is as good as it can be across the school for all pupils.

### The school has the following strengths

- Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. They are well prepared for their work in Year 1.
- Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2, particularly in reading and writing. As a result, attainment has risen in Year 2.
- Pupils throughout the school use their writing skills well in different subjects. They mostly enjoy writing now because it has a purpose.
- Behaviour is good and pupils feel very safe in school. They enjoy their work. Attendance has improved and is now above average.
- Links with parents and the local community are good. Parents are very pleased with the improved communication between the school and them.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes. They visited 11 lessons, three of which were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Play and lunchtimes were also observed.
- Discussions were held with pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, staff, including those with management responsibilities, and the school's adviser from the local authority.
- The views of 28 parents were analysed through the Parent View website. Other parents' views were sought at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, including the school improvement plan and the school's self-evaluation form. They also examined the work in pupils' books.

## Inspection team

Doris Bell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Richard Boswell

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those who speak English as an additional language, is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and for children from armed-forces families, is well below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is below average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' achievement and progress.
- A before- and after-school club operates on the school site. It is privately run and therefore inspected separately.

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

- Make teaching consistently good throughout the school, and particularly in Years 3 and 4, by ensuring that teachers:
  - provide pupils with relevant up-to-date examples to prepare them better for the tasks that they are expected to complete
  - improve their marking, help pupils understand what marking comments mean, and give pupils time to respond to marking so they can make faster progress
  - show pupils how to focus on the learning that could be improved rather than on presentation when they mark each other's work.
- Raise achievement in mathematics by:
  - frequently giving pupils practical, investigative work to do that requires them to use their mathematical skills to solve problems
  - planning regular opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in different subjects.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management on school improvement by:
  - refining school development planning so that it focuses teaching effectively on raising the proportion of pupils making good progress
  - making sure that subject leaders have a better overview of teaching and achievement and how to improve them in all age groups
  - ensuring that the governing body plays its full part in holding the school to account.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Pupils do not make as much progress in mathematics as they do in English. This is because their ability to use their mathematical skills to investigate and solve mathematical problems, and to realise the importance of mathematical learning in real life, is under-developed. For example, pupils in Year 2 learned to calculate an hour earlier or later than a given time but not at the same time to realise the relevance of that knowledge by solving time problems related to everyday living.
- Progress is slower in Years 3 and 4 than in the rest of the school. For several years, pupils in Year 4 have started and finished school at the levels expected for their age. This shows achievement requires improvement because pupils, and particularly the more able, should have done better in relation to the levels at which they were assessed when they were in Year 2. Although progress is starting to get better, the pace of improvement at the end of Year 4 has not matched that seen at the end of Year 2.
- Children start school with skills that are broadly typical for their age. They do well in Nursery and Reception, and continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2, particularly in reading and writing. Attainment was above average in Year 2 in 2012.
- Pupils enjoy reading. They use their knowledge of letters and sounds (phonics) well to help them to read unfamiliar words, although some still struggle when they have to blend letters. In some sessions, staff skilfully combined phonics work with helping pupils to write, or to understand that what an author is saying can be interpreted in different ways. The results of the phonics screening test for pupils in Year 1 matched those found nationally.
- Pupils use their writing skills well in different subjects. This has helped to improve writing since the previous inspection. For example, Year 2 pupils explored all five senses as they talked, and wrote reports and letters to convey what Londoners must have felt like during the Great Fire. Conversely, Year 4 pupils struggled with the vocabulary associated with newspapers because they had not first explored how headlines and subheadings are used in real newspapers.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs requires improvement. Records show that the progress these pupils make varies considerably from year to year. Nevertheless, they and other pupils who need support, such as those eligible for the pupil premium, generally benefit from the extra help that they receive. This is beginning to close the gaps in their learning, as is evident in their improving progress, particularly in writing.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Although improving, there is not yet enough good teaching in Years 3 and 4 to increase the rate of pupils' progress to the same degree as in Years 1 and 2.
- Planning usually sets out what different ability groups are expected to do. However, more-able pupils sometimes have to sit through lengthy explanations at the start of a lesson before being given the harder work of which they are capable. This slows their learning. Sometimes, teachers do too much for pupils instead of encouraging them to find things out for themselves, make choices about their learning and take more responsibility for it.
- When marking written work, teachers usually include a comment to show pupils how to improve.

Pupils say they do not always understand the comments and are not always given time to respond to them. This limits the usefulness of marking. In mathematics, marking rarely includes development points. Pupils mark each other's work from time to time but they do not understand the importance of evaluating learning as opposed to presentation.

- Relationships are good. Explanations are usually clear and, in the best lessons, teachers show pupils, step by step, what they need to do to achieve success. This was particularly evident in a good mathematics lesson in Year 3, where pupils learned the steps needed to solve word problems correctly. Sometimes, as happened in Year 4, pupils are not given enough guidance, or the resources used are out-of-date and not meaningful enough to motivate them.
- Reading is taught well and teachers successfully encourage pupils to use their reading and writing skills in different subjects. They do not promote numeracy skills in the same way.
- While there are still some inconsistencies in Years 1 and 2, teaching there is now building more effectively on the good progress children make in Nursery and Reception. Consistently good teaching in Nursery and Reception gets children off to a good start with stimulating activities that cater well for their different stages of learning.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Nursery and Reception children quickly learn to follow routines and to behave well. Their good progress arises out of the positive relationships they develop with adults and the stimulating environment in which they work and play. Pupils from all age groups are very keen to learn.
- Attendance has improved and is now above average. The school has worked hard with parents to reach this point.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school and that the school teaches them how to keep themselves safe. Parents echo these views. Pupils are aware of the dangers they may face, including when using the internet. They are less secure about the dangers of using other technological equipment such as mobile phones. The school has run workshops for parents to raise their awareness of this but, so far, they have been poorly attended.
- Pupils know that bullying is wrong, and what to do should they experience or know of any. They say they learned their lesson particularly well after a pupil had been constantly teased and they saw how badly the pupil was affected. They understand that constantly pushing, shoving and calling other people names can have the same effect and they learn to respect, help and support others instead.
- The pupils' good behaviour and good levels of concentration ensure that, in most lessons, they persevere and complete the work they are given to do, even when it is less than exciting. Although they show that they are capable of contributing to their learning, or pursuing it in different ways by themselves, they are not given enough chances to do so.
- Pupils value the opportunities they have to improve aspects of school life. School and eco councillors, play leaders and monitors help to improve the school by, for example, seeking and acting on pupils' views, keeping pupils safe at break and lunchtimes, and stressing the importance of sustainable living.

**The leadership and management requires improvement**

- School improvement planning does not fully reflect leaders' ambition to raise achievement. The plan has the right priorities but does not focus them sharply enough on increasing the proportion of pupils making good progress. Some middle leaders do not have a clear enough overview of progress across the school or how to influence it. More has been done to secure consistently good progress in Years 1 and 2 than in Years 3 and 4. Nevertheless, the improvements seen since the previous inspection in all age groups show that the school has the capacity to improve further.
- The local authority has supported the school appropriately with self-evaluation, development planning, and the development of middle managers, although the school has more to do in these areas. Additional support for mathematics is also planned for the near future. The school's monitoring of teaching and learning is accurate, as is its evaluation of its own work. Monitoring leads to appropriate training for staff that is improving teaching and learning.
- Subjects are brought together in themes and topics but pupils' views are not sought in order to take account of their interests, make learning more exciting for them and allow them to take it in different directions. The school works hard to eliminate discrimination or stereotyping, and to make sure that all pupils can participate in everything it has to offer. It helps pupils to become reflective and caring, and to work and play together amicably. Religious education topics, links with a school in Kenya, and studies of different localities in Britain give pupils an understanding of different faiths and cultures at home and abroad.
- Safeguarding procedures, including those for child protection, meet current national requirements, and training is up to date for staff and governors. The systems for keeping pupils safe and free from harm are well established. They are currently being extended to include the safe use of different technologies, such as mobile phones and social networking sites in the home/school agreement.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance requires improvement because governors have not taken swift enough action to secure the same improvement by Year 4 that has happened by Year 2. Nevertheless, governors know what the school needs to do to bring this about. They attend relevant training that is helping them to fulfil their monitoring role better. They gain valuable first-hand information through visits to school and links with different subjects and classes. Governors support the headteacher in using information about teachers' performance to make decisions about salary increases. They know how pupil premium money has been used and where it is starting to close gaps in learning, for example, with one-to-one tuition, or through using support staff in different ways. They monitor all spending well.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	124245
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	406224

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary Controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	175
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	June Gibbins
<b>Headteacher</b>	Irene Kirby
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 May 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01902 790253
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