

St Paul's Church of England Primary School, Bury

Porritt Street, Via Huntley Mount Road, Bury, Lancashire, BL9 6LJ

Inspection dates 27–28 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress during their time in school, often from very low starting points.
- Standards are rising, particularly in reading and mathematics and are closer to average by the time pupils leave in Year 6.
- Children in Reception make a good start in their learning. They organise themselves well and become increasingly independent.
- Teaching is good. Teachers expect the best from pupils and, as a result, pupils are keen to learn.
- Pupils have a positive attitude to learning and care about each other. They behave well in lessons and around the school.
- Good quality support from well-trained adults for lower-attaining pupils enables them to achieve well.
- The headteacher, senior leadership team and the governing body are providing a clear direction which is leading to improvement in pupils' progress across the school and to better teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards in writing are lower than in reading and mathematics. Pupils' written work lacks accuracy in punctuation and spelling and is not always presented to a good standard.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding. In a minority of lessons, teachers' introductions are too long and the work provided does not always challenge the more-able pupils.
- Pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to undertake interesting and practical activities so that they are always fully motivated and engaged.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 11 lessons. Inspectors made a number of shorter visits to other lessons. Inspectors also listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Vice-Chair and four other governors, senior leaders and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at documents relating to safeguarding, the performance management of staff, the tracking and assessment of pupils' attainment and progress, records on behaviour and safety and the school's own checks on the quality of teaching. They looked at the school's spending of the pupil premium. (This is funding provided by the government to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority and the children of military personnel).
- There were too few views of parents registered on the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) for inspectors to take into account. However, the school's own surveys of the views of parents and pupils, were considered. The views of parents were sought at the start, during and at the end of the school day. Inspectors scrutinised 27 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Zahid Aziz, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Law

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Paul's Church of England Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The large majority of pupils is White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is broadly average. An above-average proportion of pupils speaks English as an additional language, although few are at an early stage of learning to speak English.
- A high number of pupils leaves or joins the school at times other than is usual.
- The school provides a breakfast- and after-school club which is managed by the governing body.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing by the end of Year 6 so that the proportion of pupils reaching and exceeding the expected levels are at least in line with those nationally by July 2013 by:
 - improving accuracy in pupils' punctuation and spelling skills and making sure their written work is presented to a good standard in all subjects of the curriculum
 - making sure that the more-able pupils are always provided with challenging work that makes them think hard.
- Strengthen teaching so that more is outstanding by:
 - making sure that the qualities of outstanding teaching within the school are identified, shared and adopted by all staff
 - making sure that teachers' introductions to lessons are not too long and allow pupils to get actively engaged as soon as possible
 - providing more opportunities for pupils of all ages to undertake interesting and practical activities so that they are always fully motivated and engaged.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children start school with skills and abilities that are much lower than those expected for their age, especially their communication and language skills. Children get a good start in the Reception Year and make good progress, especially in personal, social and emotional skills. They receive good support from adults. Activities are planned well and adapted to meet children's individual needs. Many children enter Year 1 with skills that have improved but are still below those expected for their age.
- Between Years 1 and 6, pupils make good progress from their individual starting points, especially the high proportion of lower-ability pupils. By the end of Year 6 pupils' attainment is close to average. Pupils' writing skills, however, lag behind their skills in reading and mathematics. Sometimes pupils' written work lacks accuracy in punctuation and spelling. Pupils do not always show a good standard of presentation of their written work, especially when they complete work in other curriculum subjects.
- Standards are rising. In Year 6 in 2012, for example, standards were higher than those reported in 2011. Lesson observations and the standard of work currently in Year 6 and in successive year groups, show that standards are set to rise further. Across the school however, standards in writing remain weaker. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment is much lower than expected nationally, particularly in writing. More-able pupils do not always make good progress because the work they are given is sometimes too easy and does not make them think hard.
- Pupils make good progress in reading. They make good use of the school library and enjoy reading in school and at home. Results of the reading screening test in 2012 for pupils aged six were above average. Pupils know what to do if they are finding it difficult to read words. They use their knowledge of how to link letters to the sounds they make to help them.
- The high number of pupils leaving and joining the school other than at the normal times can have a marked effect on the results in tests at the end of Year 6. Pupils who complete all of their primary education at the school do well. Similarly, the needs of new arrivals are assessed quickly. They receive the support they need to settle in quickly and learn well.
- The school carefully tracks pupils' progress every half term. Pupils who are not making enough progress are spotted quickly and support is swiftly put in place. The school uses the pupil premium funding well to close any gaps in the achievement of different pupil groups. This is why, for example, even by the end of Year 2 the gap in attainment in reading, writing and in mathematics between those pupils eligible for a free school meal and other pupils is much narrower than the gap between similar pupils in most other schools.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make at least good and sometimes excellent progress. The strong links with external agencies ensure that there is timely support for these groups of pupils.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good which results in pupils learning well. Teachers explain clearly to pupils what they are going to learn and how they can make their learning successful. Teachers regularly and accurately find out how well pupils have learned. They use this information well to help them plan future lessons. They plan well for the varying needs of most pupils, especially to ensure that the lower-ability pupils receive the support they need. Occasionally, teachers do not provide work that is hard enough for the more-able pupils and this slows their progress.
- In Reception, teachers create a positive learning environment to improve children's knowledge and skills. Children are given good opportunities to explore and investigate indoor and outdoor areas with a wide range of resources, which are organised exceptionally well. As a result, they develop into confident and eager young learners in a warm, secure and purposeful classroom.

- Where teaching is strongest, such as, in a Year 3 mathematics lesson, work was matched particularly well to the varying needs of all the pupils. More-able pupils were provided with a good level of challenge. They worked well independently, finding out how much money would be left after buying items from a shop. Others enjoyed shopping in the class grocery store, correcting misconceptions on the amount of change left over after buying a tin of corn.
- Teachers' marking is of consistently good quality and takes place regularly. Pupils check teachers' marking and their own work regularly and act on the advice given. As a result, they know how well they have done and what else they need to do to improve.
- Teachers use a variety of different teaching methods to improve pupils' skills. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher demonstrated to pupils, using a variety of fruits, how to follow a recipe for making a fruit smoothie. Each fruit represented a proportion of the required ingredient and this was used skilfully to illustrate how to work out fractions. As a result, pupils were really engaged and motivated in the task and their skills and understanding of fractions developed at a good rate. There are not enough activities of this practical nature used across the school. Furthermore, in a few lessons, teachers spend too long on introducing topics, leaving too little time for pupils to undertake interesting and practical activities for themselves.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour of most pupils around the school, and in lessons, is good. Teachers expect pupils to be on their best behaviour and they respond well. Only when lessons are less exciting, or when teachers talk for too long, such as at the start of lessons, do a few pupils begin to become disengaged and a few pupils have to be reminded how to behave well.
- Pupils are happy and feel safe. They enjoy being at school and at the breakfast- and after-school club. Adults around them are very keen to offer help and support. This was confirmed by parents, and as one said 'Teachers and adults are always ready to help'. The school site is secure and everybody looks after each other. Adults and Year 6 pupils are good role models to help the younger pupils to develop good personal and social skills. New joiners are welcomed by adults and the pupils alike. 'Adults and children look after me well' responded one pupil new to the school.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare but, if it does happen, it is sorted out quickly by the teachers. Most pupils have a good understanding of different forms of bullying, including how to keep safe when using the Internet, including the dangers of social network websites.
- Pupils are encouraged to stay safe and lead a healthy lifestyle. A focus on 'safe-cycling' and visits from fire officers helps pupils to be well aware of dangers beyond school.
- Excellent assemblies support pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils treat one another with respect, whatever their background or beliefs.
- Attendance has improved since the previous inspection and is now broadly average. Pupils arrive to school on time.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and the senior leadership team share high ambitions for the school and are improving the school effectively with the support of the governing body. As a result, pupils' achievement is good and standards are rising.
- Leaders focus clearly on improving the quality of teaching and are driving forward improvements at a good rate. Weaknesses identified in teaching in the previous inspection report, such as quality of marking and feedback in pupils' books has been successfully tackled. Both senior leaders and those responsible for the various key stages check the quality of teaching regularly, for example by observing lessons. Teachers are positive about how they are helped to improve their teaching, including the amount of professional development available to them. Leadership and management, however, have yet to ensure that the qualities of outstanding teaching are shared and adopted among all staff.

- Senior leaders have correctly identified the improvement priorities. This is based on an accurate view of how well the school and different pupil groups are performing, for example improving the achievement of more-able pupils. The progress made by every pupil is reviewed regularly and carefully so that if any pupil starts to fall behind this is tackled swiftly. This shows the school's commitment to providing equality of opportunity.
- Decisions made about teachers' salary progression are based on the quality of their teaching and the progress of their pupils. Teachers are set rigorous targets for their performance and this is managed carefully and progress towards achieving them is checked regularly.
- The curriculum offers a good balance between the various subjects and is adapted well to meet the needs of most pupils. Activities also include drama, dance and singing. This is further enhanced by the breakfast- and after-school club, which is much enjoyed by pupils. These activities contribute well to the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In assembly, pupils were heard singing with great delight. However, activities in lessons are not always motivating and engaging because there are not enough practical activities on offer.
- Partnerships with parents are very good. Parents are provided with opportunities to improve their own personal skills, such as using information and communication technology (ICT) and to support their children more effectively at home. Parents spoke highly of the school and agree that their children make good progress.
- The school works well with local authority. It offers effective support and has helped to bring about improvement since the previous inspection.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are closely involved in school life, visiting regularly. They have a good knowledge of the school's performance, are aware of the quality of teaching and they know what is being done to improve it. They play a full part in managing teachers' performance and make informed decisions about salary increases. Procedures for safeguarding meet statutory requirements. Governors ensure that the school's budget is tightly managed. They ensure that the pupil premium funding is used well to improve the achievement of those for whom it is intended by, for example employing extra teaching assistants. Governors undertake the professional training they need to carry out their roles well. They know, for example, how to review and interpret information on pupils' achievement accurately and compare it with that of others schools nationally.

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

Unique reference number	105332
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	402975

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	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Derek Burgess
Headteacher	Trevor Croasdale
Date of previous school inspection	10 December 2007
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