

St Paul's Church of England Primary School

School Lane, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7PJ

Inspection dates 30–31 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
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:

- Achievement requires improvement because the progress of pupils from their starting points is not good enough.
- Teaching does not provide enough challenge, especially for pupils of average ability and those who are more-able, because pupils are too often undertaking tasks that are not sufficiently challenging.
- More-able pupils are not moved on quickly enough to more challenging work so that they can make the best possible progress.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to respond to teachers' written guidance to improve their work.
- The quality of pupils' written work is not of a consistently high enough standard.
- Subject leaders have yet to fully develop their skills in evaluating the quality of teaching and checking on how well pupils are doing.
- Leaders and managers, including governors, have not sufficiently addressed inconsistencies in pupils' progress to ensure the achievement of pupils is good over time.

The school has the following strengths:

- Leaders are now taking actions to improve the quality of teaching so that the progress made by pupils across the school is improving.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are effectively supported, leading to better progress being made by these pupils.
- The behaviour of pupils is good and they say they feel safe in school. Pupils are welcoming and work well together.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a good start to school because of the stimulating learning experiences planned for them.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons, all of which were seen jointly with senior leaders. The inspector listened to pupils read and looked at pupils' work in their exercise books.
- The inspector met with pupils and talked to them about their work. Meetings were also held with the Early Years Foundation Stage teacher, headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors. A telephone conversation took place with a representative of the local authority.
- Documentation covering safeguarding and the management of performance of staff, and records of behaviour, attendance and checks on pupils' attainment and progress were reviewed.
- The inspector took account of 36 responses from parents and carers to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and 15 questionnaires from staff.

Inspection team

Howard Jones, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes which include the Early Years Foundation Stage. These groupings change for phonics and some English and mathematics sessions.
- Most pupils are from a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils receiving support from the pupil premium funding, which is the extra government support for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and those from service families, is below average. In this school, it relates to pupils who are known to qualify for free school meals.
- When compared to national figures, the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs at school action or at school action plus, or who have a statement of special educational needs, is below average.
- In 2013, the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Two teachers were newly appointed to the school within this academic year, and a third joined in April 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better in order to raise achievement by:
 - ensuring the quality of pupils' writing is of a high standard
 - regularly checking the understanding of pupils of average ability so they are effectively challenged to achieve the higher levels
 - introducing challenge sooner for pupils of higher ability so that they make the best possible progress
 - ensuring that pupils act upon advice given by staff and make necessary improvements to their work.
- Increase the impact of leadership and management, including governors, by:
 - senior leaders sustaining their sharp focus on the monitoring of remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching
 - developing the role of subject leaders so they become more effective in evaluating the quality of teaching and checking pupils' progress
 - strengthening the role of governors to hold leaders to account by developing their skills to check how well the school is doing.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because progress over time has been inconsistent. Consequently, too few pupils have made more than the expected progress for their age in national tests by the end of Key Stage 2, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Achievement of more-able pupils has been inconsistent. The proportions attaining the higher levels have varied and their progress in 2013 was weaker, especially in reading and mathematics.
- Too few pupils of average ability are successful at the higher levels in their learning. This is especially so in mathematics and writing. Tasks set for these pupils are not regularly adjusted to move them onto to achieve the higher Level 5.
- There has been a gap in the attainment of pupils supported through the pupil premium when compared to their peers. Numbers in Year 6 restrict comparisons being made, but school evidence shows that across year groups these gaps are now narrowing in both English and mathematics.
- Attainment at the end of Year 2 was markedly above the national average in 2013. This reflected an improving trend for reading, writing and mathematics. However, the number of pupils meeting the expected standard in the 2013 Year 1 check of phonics (letters and sounds) was below average.
- Gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding are closing quickly for pupils in Key Stage 2. Pupils across all year groups are making rapid gains in their learning since September 2013. School evidence shows these improvements are being sustained for all groups of pupils.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has improved. Progress of these pupils is strong in reading and accelerating in all subjects because of the well-planned tailored support.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress. The majority of children enter Reception with skills above the expected levels for their age and, because of the range of activities they experience, they continue to develop their basic skills and are well prepared for the next stage in their learning.
- Pupils enjoy reading. Older pupils are confident in analysing text in a range of genres, as seen, for example, in pupils' work on myths and legends. They are enthusiastic about the range of books they read which include those by authors such as Anthony Horowitz and Michael Morpurgo.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching over time has not led to consistently good achievement. Consequently, pupils' learning and progress have not been good enough as they move through the school.
- Where teaching is weaker, it is as a result of pupils not being sufficiently challenged. This is especially so for average ability and more-able pupils whose learning is not checked regularly to ensure understanding and provide them with more challenging work when necessary.
- The quality of pupils' writing is variable across subjects. Pupils enjoy expressing their ideas in their work. However, there are not consistently clear expectations across the school which require pupils' written work to be presented to a sufficiently high standard.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to respond to teachers' written guidance. Teachers apply the school's marking policy to enable pupils to see the next steps they need to make in becoming more successful, but do not provide enough time for pupils to reflect on these and make improvements to their work.
- The quality of teaching has improved since September 2013 because leaders have taken steps to address weak teaching and ensure consistently higher expectations in teachers' classroom

practice.

- Teachers use questioning effectively. For example, in one Years 5 and 6 mathematics session, the teacher skilfully used questions which challenged pupils to think about how they could more accurately draw and analyse three-dimensional shapes.
- Pupils confidently use subject vocabulary in their learning. In one word problem session for Years 3 and 4, pupils talked about how they could deconstruct a question to better understand how to apply their skills to successfully solve number problems.
- When work captures their interest, pupils remain engaged in their learning, as seen in one Years 1 and 2 lesson where the planned use of resources and group activities successfully built on pupils' previous learning.
- Children in Reception are encouraged to develop and apply their basic skills. For example, in one session, adults used music to inspire children to develop their fine motor skills and extend their use of vocabulary. Children clearly enjoyed their learning and remained engaged throughout.
- Additional adults are successful in supporting disabled pupils and those with special educational needs through challenging work, well tailored to their learning needs. They are most effective during lessons when activities allow them to use their skills within groups or work with individuals. Here, pupils make good gains in their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are eager to learn and listen attentively to each other and to their teachers. Pupils work well together and there is a positive attitude toward learning within different settings.. However, the impact of these positive attitudes on pupils' progress is limited because the majority of pupils have not been consistently challenged by the work provided. Children within Reception have settled in well and enjoy using different activities to explore their ideas and are eager to attempt tasks which extend their learning.
- Pupils are polite and are confident to welcome visitors into their school. The lunch hall is orderly and calm and pupils play well together at break times. Pupils conduct themselves appropriately on public occasions such as assemblies and are happy to reflect on the Christian values evident within the school.
- Pupils take their responsibilities seriously, such as acting as play buddies and mentors for younger children. Children in Reception enjoy learning about different cultures such as the Chinese New Year. There is a strong sense of community and pupils participate in village festivals.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The safety of pupils is good. Pupils say they feel safe in school and that staff make every effort to care for their well-being. Pupils have a clear understanding of how to use the internet safely and say there is no cyber bullying of any kind. Pupils say there is no discrimination and everyone gets along very well with each other. There are no racist incidents, and bullying and name calling rarely, if ever, occur.
- Attendance is above average overall and pupils clearly enjoy coming to school. Most parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) confirm their child is happy and safe at this school.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Senior leaders have taken effective actions to address weak teaching and have brought about improvements in the progress of pupils across the school. However, achievement is not yet consistently good as a result of the inconsistencies which still remain in teaching and the progress of pupils in national tests. Subject leaders' responsibilities are not sufficiently devolved to ensure leadership at all levels is effective in sustaining improvements in teaching and pupils' progress.
- Checks by senior leaders on the quality of teaching are now more rigorous. Observations of teachers' classroom practice routinely cross-reference the progress pupils are making and the

standard of work in their exercise books. This monitoring is appropriately linked to teachers' pay and progression.

- Training for staff is appropriately related to improving the skills of teachers within the classroom. This has ensured that the high proportion of new staff have been managed to bring about consistent practice in improving pupils' progress.
- The promotion of equality of opportunity is increasingly effective, with teachers now having higher expectations of what pupils can achieve. The provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is well led so that additional approaches such as Lego therapy and booster groups for mathematics are used effectively as part of a range of strategies.
- The local authority has recognised the school's need to improve pupils' achievement. It has put in place a balanced measure of additional support to ensure the school sustains recent improvements in the progress of pupils.
- Sport has a high priority within the school. Pupils say they enjoy a range of activities which include netball, football and running. The school has a clear action plan to ensure the additional sports funding is being used effectively to extend the competency of teachers in this area, for example, training by sports coaches.
- There has been an emphasis on higher expectations in teachers' classroom practice since September 2013 and this is evident in some of the teaching observed by inspectors. However, the school has not yet had sufficient time to ensure the quality of teaching is consistently good.
- Subjects are planned to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. Reading and phonics sessions are securely in place. Children in Reception enjoy a variety of tasks which include 'write dance' to develop their basic literacy skills. There are additional activities for pupils, for example, a popular musical theatre club and opportunities to play musical instruments.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is comprehensive and reflects the school's religious values. Pupils participate in dance and recorder festivals and celebrate events such as American Independence day and enjoy residential visits to France.
- Safeguarding procedures are in place and the school has risk assessments which include, for example, educational visits.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are involved within the school and observe lessons. There is an active parent group, supported by governors, demonstrating strong links with the community. There are procedures in place for the performance management of the headteacher and to check teachers' pay and progression. However, the training governors have undertaken has not led to an accurate comparison of the school's performance with others' nationally and therefore, the level of challenge to school leaders has not ensured sufficient improvements in pupils' progress overtime. The school's budget is effectively managed and governors have ensured a comprehensive action plan is in place to oversee the spending of the primary sports funding so that the expertise of teachers will be enhanced in the delivery of physical education. The pupil premium funding has been targeted, for example, to provide additional resources to teach numeracy and governors check on the impact of this on the progress of individual pupils across the school.

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	118590
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	431420

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	109
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Strachan
Headteacher	Desmond Watson
Date of previous school inspection	9 March 2009
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