

St Paul's Church of England Junior School

Paul Street, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA4 5LA

Inspection dates 5–6 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- The school has made considerable improvements since the last inspection.
- Pupils are achieving well and make good progress from their starting points.
- Attainment by the end of Year 6 is average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching has improved and is now good. There are examples of outstanding practice.
- Teachers usually provide challenging and interesting work which engages the pupils.
- Pupils appreciate the good range of clubs and visits.
- Pupils show a keen interest in their learning.
- They behave well in lessons and around the school. In some lessons, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are impeccable.
- Safeguarding procedures are good and pupils feel safe and well cared for by staff.
- The leadership of the headteacher has been a key factor in the school's improvements. He has shown considerable ambition and determination in raising pupil achievement and improving teaching.
- He is well supported by senior leaders, subject leaders, staff and governors.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In a few lessons, tasks are not sufficiently demanding to extend the most able.
- The new library area is not yet fully resourced.
- Pupils' handwriting and presentation are not consistently good in all classes.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 24 lessons. Some of these were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, and a representative from the local authority, a local leader of education, governors, parents and carers, and pupils.
- The inspector took account of the 25 responses to the online survey (Parent View).
- Pupils were heard to read and discussions were held with them about their reading.
- Questionnaires from 28 members of staff were analysed.
- The inspectors examined school policies, information about pupils' attainment and progress, teachers' plans, pupils' work, safeguarding procedures and the school's improvement planning.

Inspection team

Derek Watts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Mark Anderson

Additional Inspector

Jeanne Simpson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-sized junior school.
- Most of the pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- An above average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and other groups.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that, in all classes, teachers set tasks which are sufficiently demanding for the most able
 - removing inconsistencies in pupils' handwriting and presentation.
- Increase the amount of books and other learning resources in the new library area.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' achievement has improved since the last inspection. All groups of pupils are achieving well. They make good progress from their starting points, which are usually below average on entry to the school.
- During the past three years, attainment by the end of Year 6 has risen from well below average to average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Strong leadership, sharper assessment, the careful checking of pupils' progress and improved teaching have contributed to pupils' better achievement.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of good teaching and the specific individual and small group support they receive.
- In 2013, Year 6 pupils supported by the pupil premium attained lower standards than the others in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils were about 12 months behind the others in all three areas. Using a range of strategies, including one-to-one teaching and small group teaching, support for pupils eligible for the funding has improved. In the current Year 5 and Year 6 there is very little difference in performance between these two groups.
- The most-able pupils are usually provided with work which challenges and extends them. In 2013, an average proportion of Year 6 pupils attained the higher National Curriculum levels. However, in a few lessons seen, tasks provided are not sufficiently demanding to extend the most able to reach their potential.
- Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening because teachers provide well planned opportunities for them to discuss their learning and express ideas and opinions.
- In reading, pupils have acquired essential and more advanced skills. They apply their reading skills well in studying topics in areas of geography, history and science.
- Pupils make good progress in writing. They write for different audiences and purposes. Pupils in a Years 3 and 4 class made exceptional progress as they wrote a persuasive letter to the Chair of Governors praising the work of the headteacher. They used adventurous vocabulary and emotive language to great effect. Pupils apply their writing skills in a range of subjects and topics. For example, pupils in Year 6 wrote clear accounts of life in Victorian times. However, handwriting and presentation of work are not consistently good in all classes.
- In mathematics, pupils make good progress in acquiring and practising mathematical skills. They apply these skills well in solving problems. For example, pupils in a Year 6 lesson made exceptional progress in planning an Anglo Saxon visit. They planned a timetable to ensure that all pupils during the day participated in all seven activities on offer including archery, dance and basket weaving. They timed the activities carefully and took account of changeover times.
- In science, pupils in Years 3 and 4 showed a good knowledge and understanding of different rocks and how these were formed. They made good progress in designing and planning an investigation to find out which rocks absorbed. For homework, recently, these pupils produced impressive three-dimensional model volcanoes.
- Pupils are developing healthy lifestyles and physical fitness through physical education and the range of additional sporting activities provided, such as athletics, basketball, football, netball, and rugby.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and this has contributed to pupils' faster progress and improved attainment.
- In all lessons, pupils know what they are expected to learn because the teacher effectively shares the purpose of the lesson with them. Teachers' clear explanations, instructions and demonstrations promote learning well. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively to illustrate

key learning points.

- Teachers provide good opportunities for discussion and use questioning skilfully to check pupils' understanding of new learning. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to acquire and practise numeracy skills. The teaching of handwriting and the promotion of how pupils should present their work are less consistent.
- There are examples of outstanding teaching. In a highly successful mathematics lesson in Year 6, pupils were eager to begin with mental calculations. The teacher's lively approach and secure subject knowledge inspired the pupils. Excellent explanations and questioning promoted pupils' learning very well. Pupils made rapid progress as they applied different methods to solve challenging problems.
- In an outstanding writing lesson in Years 3 and 4, the teacher generated lively debate about the question 'Do schools need a headteacher?' Pupils discussed this with enthusiasm and presented interesting points for and against. The teacher provided very useful feedback on their responses. The teacher's demonstrations of good writing and the promotion of interesting vocabulary helped the pupils in drafting a letter in support of their headteacher.
- Teachers check pupils' attainment accurately. In most cases, assessment information is used well to plan teaching and provide interesting tasks which challenge and engage the pupils. As a result, pupils make good gains in acquiring knowledge, deepening their understanding and applying skills.
- In a few lessons, tasks are not demanding enough for the most able. When this happens, these pupils do not make the progress they are capable of.
- The teaching and support for pupils with disabilities and special educational needs are good. Teaching assistants are well deployed and work closely with the teachers. They make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly those who need additional help with literacy and numeracy.
- The setting of personalised learning targets for pupils has improved since the last inspection. Pupils have clear individual targets to guide their learning in reading, writing and mathematics. They know how well they are doing and how to improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Since the last inspection, pupils' behaviour and safety have improved from satisfactory to good. The headteacher and staff have created a positive school ethos where all staff expect pupils to behave well and do their best. Pupils respond well to these clear expectations.
- Pupils show enthusiasm and a keen interest in their learning. They are eager to participate in lessons and in the additional activities provided. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning and their good behaviour contribute well to their good progress. In a few lessons, pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour were exemplary and the pupils make outstanding gains in their learning.
- Just occasionally, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are less than good when the teaching is not fully engaging.
- Throughout the school, pupils are friendly, polite and supportive of others. They take on additional responsibilities such as serving on the school council.
- In an interesting assembly, taken by a member of the local clergy, pupils were inspired by illustrations of old artefacts such as a plough, an apple peeler, stethoscope and an old washing mangle. There were interesting discussions about what these items were for. The visitor skilfully moved the pupils' thinking on to our purpose and place in the world. They were attentive, fully engaged and well focused on personal reflection.
- The school has good procedures to keep pupils safe. Almost all parents who completed the online survey agreed that their children feel safe at school and are well looked after. Pupils themselves confirmed to the inspectors that they felt safe and well looked after.
- Discussions with pupils show that they have a clear understanding of bullying, including persistent name calling and cyber bullying. When asked if there was bullying in the school,

typical replies were, 'I don't think so.' 'No, none.' 'Very little.' The pupils assured the inspectors that the headteacher and staff soon sort out any problems. The school's records show that incidents of unacceptable behaviour are rare.

- Parents are supportive and pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance levels are average.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has shown considerable ambition, determination and enthusiasm in improving the school. His vision to raise achievement and improve teaching is shared by other leaders, staff and governors.
- Teamwork among the staff is strong and comments about the school's journey of improvement from the staff included, 'Over the past two years, this school has improved dramatically.' 'As a staff member, I feel valued and well led.'
- The checking of pupils' progress and the quality of provision is accurate and thorough. As a result, leaders and governors have a clear overview of the school's strengths and development points. The findings of self-evaluation are used well to inform planning and action to bring about improvements.
- All senior leaders and subject leaders are effectively engaged in checking pupils' performance and improving their areas of responsibility. Reading, writing, mathematics and special educational needs are all effectively led and managed.
- The development of teaching has been a key priority. The quality of teaching and learning is regularly checked by the headteacher, key staff and external support. There are effective and thorough procedures for the appraisal of staff performance. Targets to improve teachers' practice and skills are clearly identified. Good support and training are provided where needed.
- The local authority has provided good support when required. It has a clear overview of the school's current performance and how the school has improved in recent years. A local leader of education has worked closely with the school for two years and has made a valuable contribution to strengthening teaching and pupils' transition from infant to junior school.
- The curriculum provides an interesting range of learning activities. There are no signs of discrimination in the school and all pupils have access to the full range of activities provided. Pupils appreciate the additional clubs and educational visits. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. The school has a new and spacious library area, but the range of books and other learning resources is currently limited.
- The recently allocated primary sports funding has been used well to extend pupils' physical and sporting activities. Visiting coaches and specialist teachers are used to provide new experiences for pupils and to extend the skills of the staff.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to raise achievement of eligible pupils. One-to-one tuition, small group teaching and intervention sessions by senior staff are all having a positive impact.
- The response to the online survey, Parent View, and discussions with parents and carers indicate that they are pleased with the care and education provided. The headteacher and staff are well regarded. Parents welcome the recent changes and improvements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has improved considerably and there is now a much stronger governing body than at the time of the last inspection. Members of the governing body bring a range of useful experience and skills to the school. They show a clear understanding of pupils' attainment and progress and how these have improved. Governors know that most of the teaching in the school now is good or better. They have a good understanding of the school's performance management arrangements and ensure that promotion and pay awards are based on pupils' progress. They challenge the school about how the pupil premium is spent and check the impact of this funding on the progress of pupils eligible for it. Governors have attended a range of useful courses to improve their effectiveness. All safeguarding procedures meet requirements.

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	123783
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	431090

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	285
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Marable
Headteacher	Chris Partridge
Date of previous school inspection	April 2012
Telephone number	01749 343250
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