

St Paul's Church of England Primary School

New Street, Gloucester, GL1 5BD

Inspection dates 11–12 November 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school is led skilfully by the headteacher, well supported by other senior and middle leaders and governors. They work well together to ensure good teaching and achievement.
- Governors have improved their contribution to the management of the school, and are confident in challenging leaders to further improve its performance.
- Pupils feel safe, behave well and are enthusiastic in their attitudes to learning. They work well together and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Teaching is good and, occasionally, outstanding. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and provide good care and safety for all.
- Pupils achieve well in every year group. They make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils in the early stages of learning English achieve particularly well.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage achieve well from the good provision they receive.
- School leaders help and encourage parents to work closely with the school for the benefit of their children.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of phonic skills (the sounds letters make) in Key Stage 1 are not good enough because not all teachers are confident in their teaching of these skills.
- Boys in Key Stage 1 do not make consistently good progress in mathematics. They lack skills in problem solving.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons. Five of these were seen jointly with the headteacher or assistant headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher, other staff with leadership responsibilities, four governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors discussed teaching and pupils' progress with class teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils' books and records of their progress were examined.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked with them about their reading experiences.
- There were too few responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire for parents, Parent View, to be taken into consideration. Inspectors examined the school's own survey of parents' responses, and spoke to a number of parents in the playground and in school. The inspectors considered 11 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- A range of documentation was examined, including the school's self-evaluation and development plans, and analysis of pupils' achievement and progress. Safeguarding arrangements, policies and records of checks made by leaders and external consultants on the quality of teaching were examined.

Inspection team

Rodney Braithwaite, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jennifer Taylor

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- About one in three of the pupils are White British. The remainder come from a wide range of minority ethnic heritages. The proportion who speak English as an additional language, about half of the pupils, is much higher than average. A number are in the early stages of learning to speak English when they enter the school. There are 22 different home languages spoken.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, about one in five, is higher than that found in most schools.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium, about two in five, is above average. The pupil premium is additional government funding provided for pupils who are looked after or known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The headteacher took up her post in September 2013. During the past year there have been a number of changes to the teaching staff and several long-term absences caused by illness. During the inspection several teachers were indisposed, and temporary teachers took their places.
- The school has a full-time Reception class and six single-aged classes.
- The school has a higher-than-average turnover of pupils starting at times other than entry into the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school provides a breakfast club and a number of after-school activities, including sports.
- The school has a wide range of developmental links to other schools in the Gloucester and Tewkesbury areas.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the phonic skills of pupils in the Reception class and in Key Stage 1 by making sure teaching focuses closely on developing pupils' reading, writing and spelling skills.
- Improve the achievement of boys in mathematics in Key Stage 1 so that it matches their good achievement in reading and writing, by improving their skills in the understanding of this subject, especially in problem-solving, so that all reach their full potential.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders have maintained good teaching and achievement despite high levels of staff absence, mainly from illness. Teachers new to the school, to teaching, or temporary staff have taken on additional classroom responsibilities, and are proving to be effective in improving the learning of pupils.
- The determination of the headteacher, governing body, and other leaders has successfully maintained good provision and care for pupils, including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The rigorous checks on teaching and learning by senior leaders and external advisers has aided the skills development of new teachers, including those new to the profession. Support for all staff has continued the upward trend of pupils' good progress and rising achievement.
- All leaders and staff share the headteacher's ambition for pupils' better achievement and determination for meeting the needs of all.
- Staff vacancies have given opportunities to new managers in the school at senior and middle level. All are seizing these and developing their responsibilities effectively. Senior and middle leaders new to their posts are carrying out their roles and responsibilities effectively. As a result, they have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are especially effective in identifying weaknesses and tackling them. Consequently, plans are in hand to deal with the weaknesses in the teaching of phonics in the Reception class and in Key Stage 1 and the attainment of boys in mathematics in Key Stage 1. However, the impact of these plans has yet to be realised.
- Teachers provide a rich variety of learning opportunities through the new curriculum. The curriculum reinforces pupils' good behaviour because learning is made interesting. Consequently, pupils' achievement across subjects, for example in art and physical education, is improving.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well and they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Senior and middle leaders are using the additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils to good effect. Consequently, the gap in attainment between these and other pupils continues to close.
- The additional sports funding is helping pupils to improve their skills in sport as well as gaining a better understanding of healthy lifestyles. Teachers are becoming more confident in teaching sport and resources are improving rapidly. Pupils also benefit from specialist coaching and more sports clubs after school.
- The school promotes equal opportunities for pupils effectively. This results in no discrimination and enables the school to be a pillar for multicultural cooperation in the local community.
- All statutory requirements for the safeguarding of pupils are rigorously met.
- The local authority provides regular support and guidance to the school, especially during the recent staffing difficulties. The authority rightly has high regard for the leadership of the school.
- The school has a good partnership with parents, many of whom, because of language difficulties, have been hard to reach. Parents are very positive about all aspects of the school, and they are pleased with the way the school has overcome recent problems.
- The school benefits from working closely with other schools in the Gloucester and Tewkesbury areas to develop the curriculum and teaching.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors play an effective role in the leadership of the school. Since the previous inspection, they have changed their structure to enable them to better challenge school leaders.
- All governors have taken part in extended training. They have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- Governors analyse pupils' performance data confidently and use this information when questioning leaders to account for the school's performance.
- Governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and what is done to tackle underperformance. They ensure the setting of targets for teachers is effective in improving teaching. They understand how the performance of teachers is managed and linked to their pay progression.
- The governing body monitors the spending of the pupil premium carefully, and accurately compares these pupils' progress and attainment to that of other pupils.
- Governors know how sports funding is allocated and ensure the school benefits. Pupils are developing improved skills in a variety of sports, have a better understanding of healthy lifestyles, and staff are

more skilled in teaching games and sport.

- Governors make sure that safeguarding arrangements meet national requirements. They monitor the safe keeping of pupils, ensuring that pupils are kept safe, and review school safeguarding policies regularly.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are enthusiastic learners, from the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards.
- Pupils say school is a happy place. They talk convincingly about having a good education for their future lives, 'so that we can get a job'. They are proud of their school, and believe strongly that, 'It is a good school, where we look up to our teachers.'
- They are conscious of the many different cultures and faiths in the school. One likened school to the stem of a large family tree with many different branches.
- Pupils talk fondly of their many enjoyable learning experiences at school, such as gymnastics, 'doing money in maths', reading to teachers and visiting the Natural History Museum in London.
- Many pupils quote the school's guiding principles: 'to be kind, stay safe and always try your best'. Their commitment to these ambitions contributes effectively to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils say that behaviour in school is good, although some talk of minor disruption in class, 'by some pupils, if they are bored'. Few are guilty of such conduct. Exclusions from school are rare. Parent and staff responses further indicate that behaviour is typically good.
- Attendance is much improved in the last year, and close to the national average. This is due to rigorous school procedures and interventions by the family support worker. Punctuality in arriving for school has also improved.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have great confidence in the staff, and name many who they say help them in times of difficulty. The school works very closely with external support agencies who help pupils and families at risk of not doing well. Pupils are very well cared for.
- Access to the school is secure. One pupil suggested, 'It is the safest place to be.' All new staff are carefully checked prior to their appointment.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of bullying, and they only report very minor incidents of 'pushing'. One pupil commented, 'I know the saying says "*names will never hurt me*", but words can hurt you, which we should remember.' Older pupils are well aware of the dangers of bullying through the internet, social media or mobile phones.
- Pupils pride themselves on the way all cultures mix together happily. No incidents of racism have been reported since the previous inspection.
- Parents and staff are rightly convinced that pupils are safe and well cared for in school.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching has improved and continues to do so. It results in sustained progress by pupils. Good teaching starts in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which successfully integrates children into school, many of who have little experience of pre-school learning.
- Improvement is driven primarily by the meticulous and effective checks on teaching by senior staff and the headteacher. Although many regular teaching staff were either ill or on long-term leave during the inspection, evidence of pupils' work in their books, discussions and displays confirm effective teaching has been maintained over time.
- Detailed records of pupils' progress are maintained by teachers, and used to plan the next steps in learning for all abilities, including the most-able. Through careful marking of pupils' work and verbal encouragement teachers encourage pupils to take better care and presentation of their work and to avoid careless mistakes.
- Pupils listen to teachers' instructions and settle quickly to work. Teachers' questioning encourages pupils' thinking and speaking skills, as seen when Year 6 pupils planned a writing text based around a Harry

Potter incident. Pupils' writing benefited from their secure understanding of metaphor, alliteration, personification and grammar.

- In the teaching of phonics and mathematics at Key Stage 1, teachers sometimes lack the necessary expertise to enable pupils to make the progress expected. In mathematics, teaching does not enable boys, especially, to develop their problem-solving skills well. Leaders have identified these weaknesses and included them as priorities in the school development plan, but it is too soon to evaluate the impact of this action to overcome the difficulties.
- Teaching enables pupils to develop their reading and mathematical skills well in Key Stage 2. However, this is not the case in phonics and some aspects of mathematics in Key Stage 1.
- Teachers work productively with competent teaching assistants, especially in providing support for the many pupils who find learning difficult.
- Literacy skills are promoted well across all subjects in Years 3 to 6. Pupils' work under headings such as 'Nature Detectives', 'Down Under', 'Once upon a Rhyme' and 'Gloucestershire' demonstrates good literacy skills.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils' achievement in the last two years have been on a consistently upward trend. Although pupils in Key Stage 1 are below average in reading and mathematics and average in writing, they are making good progress, other than in their understanding of phonics, which is a weakness. Attainment in the national phonics test in 2014 was below average, although an improvement on 2013. The school has recently introduced intensive training for the teaching of phonics, and new learning strategies for pupils.
- Pupils new to school have not had time to make good progress. Some have limited skills in speaking and understanding English. However, they make good, sustained progress in social and personal development and their understanding of number.
- Girls achieve noticeably better than boys at Key Stage 1, especially in mathematics. Initiatives to improve boys' mathematical skills and knowledge are at an early stage of implementation.
- Pupils make good progress in all subjects in Key Stage 2. In the national tests in 2014, pupils reached above-average standards in reading and mathematics. Pupils achieve slightly lower in writing. Overall, inspection findings confirm good progress across the key stage in all areas.
- The most able pupils achieve well. In 2014, more reached higher levels in reading than nationally, and attainment in writing and mathematics was almost as strong. Teachers' expectations and the challenge they provide in lessons enable the most able to achieve well.
- Disadvantaged pupils throughout the school make at least good progress from their starting points. These pupils made similar and, sometimes, better progress than their classmates, although their attainment was about half a term behind that of their classmates in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 in 2014.
- There remains a gap in standards between disadvantaged pupils in the school and all pupils nationally, but this is closing rapidly due to the effective support these pupils receive. Disadvantaged pupils' attainment in mathematics is similar to that of all pupils nationally and is above the national average in reading. However in writing their attainment is below average by about a term.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because of the effective leadership of the specialist provision to meet their needs.
- Pupils from the many minority ethnic groups and pupils who speak English as an additional language make particularly good progress, except in their understanding of phonics in Key Stage 1.
- All pupils settle quickly into school. Pupils entering the school in years other than the Early Years Foundation Stage integrate quickly and make good progress but, because of the short time they sometimes have in the school, do not always attain as well as other pupils.
- Pupils are keen readers and try to read as often as possible to adults at school and at home. Most pupils in Key Stage 2 make consistently good progress in reading.

The early years provision**is good**

- Leadership and management are good. Leaders are aware of the strengths in these classes and the priorities for improvement and are taking effective measures to accelerate improvement. The monitoring and evaluation of children's learning is effective. During the long-term absence of the leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the headteacher has taken responsibility for leadership, while the class teacher maintains successful day-to-day management of the children. As a result, children achieve well in most areas of learning.
- Many children join the Reception class with underdeveloped skills and abilities for their age. A growing number have skills well below those typical for their age in language and social development, and some are at the early stages of learning English.
- Children make good progress in most areas of learning, although their skills, particularly in language development and understanding of phonics, remain below those expected by the time they enter Year 1.
- Good teaching enables children to make increasingly good progress especially in reading, number work and personal development. Their 'learning journey' records reflect their good progress with the help of photographs, children's work and adults' comments. This is enabling parents to have a good understanding of the learning of their children, and the ways in which they can help them.
- Displays of children's work show that they experience many exciting learning opportunities. These are enriched by visits, for example to 'Birdland' or the local park. Their learning inside and outside the classroom creates in them a thirst for knowledge and endless curiosity, evident in their colourful and stimulating environment.
- Teachers and assistants work well together. They regularly check on children's learning and progress and use this information well in planning their future learning.
- Children feel safe and behave well. They develop a good sense of how to keep themselves safe indoors and out. They quickly learn new social skills, becoming confident in mixing with others, listening to adults and taking turns.
- The school makes considerable efforts to engage with parents and help them to share in their children's learning. Parents are encouraged to visit school regularly for workshops or call to discuss the progress of their children with staff, and any issues arising. They are delighted with the start their children make.

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	115605
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	448457

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	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Roberts
Headteacher	Steph Matthews
Date of previous school inspection	12 May 2010
Telephone number	01452 521872
Fax number	01452 385847
Email address	admin@st-pauls.gloucs.sch.uk

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