

St Paul's C of E Primary School, Stalybridge

Huddersfield Road, Stalybridge, Cheshire, SK15 2PT

Inspection dates 5–6 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Since the previous inspection, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement have declined and are inadequate in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Senior leaders have failed to identify the extent of the school's weaknesses or tackle poor teaching. Pupils' underperformance has gone unnoticed because systems to check on the quality of teaching and how well pupils are learning are inadequate. The school's plans are too weak to bring about improvement quickly.
- Governance is ineffective and fails to hold the school to account. Governors accept what they are told by senior leaders too readily.
- The early years provision requires improvement because teaching is not consistently good.
- By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are too low in writing and mathematics given pupils' starting points when they join Year 1. Progress varies widely between classes and subjects.
- The most able pupils, disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils underachieve. The use of the pupil premium is inadequate. Wide gaps exist between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and their peers in the school and when compared nationally.
- Teaching is inadequate because it is not securing the progress of which pupils are capable. Teachers' assessments of what pupils know and can do are sometimes inaccurate. Their expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low and work often lacks challenge, particularly for the most able pupils.
- The quality of teachers' marking is poor. Some work is unmarked. Pupils are unclear as to how well they are doing and fail to act on the advice they are given.
- Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning require improvement. Some pupils find it difficult to settle to tasks and concentrate, particularly when they lack direction or support.

The school has the following strengths

- Improvements in the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) have resulted in most pupils meeting the expected standard in Year 1.
- Standards in reading are improving. More pupils reached the higher levels of attainment in reading in Year 6 in 2014 than they did in writing and mathematics.
- Attendance is improving and is now above average.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe and well cared for by staff.
- School leaders make good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons or part-lessons in all classes and year groups, including one which was observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, members of staff, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 49 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and looked at the school's latest survey of parents' opinions.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including: assessment data, the school's evaluation of its work, minutes of governing body meetings, safeguarding documentation, reports from school improvement partners and the local authority, information about the management of teachers' performance, monitoring records and the school's improvement plan.
- Inspectors observed an assembly to which parents were invited.
- Pupils discussed their work with inspectors and read to them during their lessons.
- Inspectors reviewed 19 responses to the inspection questionnaire returned by staff.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at playtime, lunchtime, around the school and in lessons.

Inspection team

Clare Daniel, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Barbara Martin

Additional Inspector

Stewart Plowes

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The current headteacher was employed as the deputy headteacher at the time of the last inspection. On his subsequent appointment to the post of headteacher, an internal appointment was made from within the school's teaching staff to the post of deputy headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Urgently improve the quality of teaching, particularly in Key Stages 1 and 2, so that it is at least good, in order to raise standards and ensure that pupils achieve well, by making sure that:
 - teachers have a well-informed view of what pupils already know and can do, so that they plan work which builds on pupils' existing knowledge and skills and supports them in making rapid progress
 - all staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and of what pupils can achieve
 - all staff plan activities that will engage and challenge pupils, especially the most able, so that pupils maintain their focus, have good behaviour, positive attitudes, and learn quickly
 - all teachers have the skills necessary to make accurate assessments of the standards pupils are achieving and give feedback to pupils that evaluates their learning effectively
 - pupils' work is always marked, all pupils receive clear guidance on how to improve and staff check regularly that pupils are acting on this advice
 - disadvantaged pupils and those with disabilities and special educational needs are supported effectively, so that they make the progress of which they are capable
 - pupils are given more opportunities to develop and extend their writing and mathematical skills in different subjects and do not repeat activities they have already mastered.
- Urgently improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance by:
 - ensuring that the school's evaluation of its own work is accurate, based on rigorous checks on pupils' achievement, and leads to effective planning for improvement
 - making effective use of assessment information to check on all pupils' progress across classes and subjects
 - ensuring that leaders at all levels develop the skills to check on the quality of teaching with greater rigour so that any underperformance is quickly identified
 - ensuring that teachers are robustly held to account for the achievement of the pupils in their classes
 - providing all staff with high quality training so that they improve their subject knowledge and have a very good understanding of how pupils learn and make progress
 - providing further support and leadership development opportunities for the senior leaders responsible for early years and pupils with disabilities and special educational needs, in order to improve the achievement of children in the Reception class and pupils with additional needs across the school

- improving the school's procedures for monitoring behaviour incidents so that leaders analyse patterns of behaviour and support pupils more effectively
- ensuring that governors are well informed about the school's performance and have the skills necessary to hold the school to account effectively.

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

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Since the last inspection, school leaders have failed to maintain improvements that were reported at that time. As a result, standards attained by pupils have declined in Key Stage 1 and have been highly variable in Key Stage 2. The progress made by pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 is now inadequate, because systems for checking on the quality of teaching and pupils' performance are ineffective. Consequently, overall, both the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are inadequate.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's performance is inaccurate and is not based on a rigorous analysis of pupils' achievement. Leaders have not identified significant proportions of pupils who are making inadequate progress. As a result, plans for improvement are not sufficiently focused to bring about the rapid changes needed, especially in the quality of teaching. Two thirds of staff who answered the inspection questionnaire said that they did not feel the school was led and managed well. The school's ability to improve is weak.
- The leadership of teaching is inadequate. Teachers are not held to account adequately for their performance because leaders' checks on teaching focus too much on the content of lessons and do not clearly evaluate its impact on learning and progress. As a result, staff are not given clear enough guidance about how to improve the quality of their teaching. Almost a quarter of staff that completed the inspection questionnaire indicated that they did not feel that the school's senior leaders made adequate provision for their professional development.
- Middle leaders do not have a role in checking on the quality of teaching and do not contribute to the school's evaluation of its own performance. Their impact on influencing school improvement is, therefore, too limited. Middle leaders are aware of the standards achieved by pupils and have a minor role in school development planning.
- Teachers and senior leaders do not always ensure that assessment data are accurate and, therefore, they do not have a clear idea of the progress made by pupils or of the proportions of pupils working at the expected standard for their age. As a result, school leaders are not ensuring that all pupils have an equality of opportunity to succeed. The pupil premium is not used effectively enough to support the learning of disadvantaged pupils, so that they do well.
- The senior leader responsible for the provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is not involved in checking on the quality of teaching received by this group of pupils. Other senior leaders do this and as a result, the leader responsible for this provision does not have a sufficiently well-informed view of the quality of teaching these pupils receive. Staff expectations for the performance of this group of pupils are too low. As a result, their underperformance is accepted too readily and goes unchallenged.
- The curriculum fails to meet the needs of pupils well enough. Lessons are often too focused on the completion of tasks rather than providing pupils with high quality, well-planned learning experiences which build effectively on what they can already do. Pupils enjoy a significant number of enrichment opportunities through trips, visits and extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is promoted well and pupils have a strong sense of community responsibility within, and beyond, the school environment. Pupils have a range of opportunities to learn about British values including tolerance, respect, democracy, law and liberty through a range of well-planned activities throughout the year for example, international days, and involvement in the school council and enterprise events. Through this range of activities the school fosters good relations, promotes tolerance and tackles discrimination.
- The primary physical education and sport funding is used to ensure that pupils have increased opportunities to experience different sports, including through the provision of extra swimming lessons to all Key Stage 2 pupils and support for local cluster activities. The school is unable to demonstrate the impact of the funding on raising standards or on improving pupils' health and well-being.
- The local authority has not monitored the school's performance closely enough and, as a result, it has been unaware of the decline in achievement and quality of teaching.
- The school meets statutory safeguarding requirements effectively.
- Newly qualified teachers should not be appointed by the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is ineffective. Governors do not hold leaders robustly to account for the school's performance. Consequently, they have had little impact in bringing about improvement. Information that governors have received about the school's performance has not been accurate, because leaders have not evaluated the school's performance effectively.

- Governors have challenged the school's performance, particularly around standards in writing at Key Stage 2. However, they have been too easily satisfied that actions senior leaders have taken have been effective, without checking this thoroughly themselves. They are aware that arrangements are in place for the management of teachers' performance, but cannot provide evidence of how these have affected standards or improved teaching. Good teaching is rewarded through pay progression following teachers' appraisal. Governors have not addressed weaknesses in the quality of teaching effectively and, as a result, the progress pupils make is inadequate.
- Governors check on the performance of disadvantaged pupils who are supported through the pupil premium. However, they have focused on monitoring the performance of the group as a whole and so have not been aware of the proportion of pupils within this group whose progress and attainment are well below average. They have, too frequently, focused on providing experiences for pupils and have not maintained close enough attention on how the funding has raised achievement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Pupils' behaviour does not always have a positive impact on their achievement. Pupils and staff raised some concerns about behaviour and about the way leaders manage behaviour issues.
- Around the school and in lessons, pupils are mostly well behaved, friendly and polite. They usually demonstrate care and consideration for each other and mainly play well together. Most pupils were keen to speak to inspectors and express their views about the school. However, some low-level poor behaviour persists; for example, pupils were slow to line up quietly at the end of playtime.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are variable across different classes and subjects. When teachers' expectations are too low and activities lack challenge or are repetitive, some pupils find it difficult to settle quickly or concentrate on their tasks, particularly when they lack direction or adult support. At these times, their progress slows and their achievement is not as good as it could be.
- The school records more serious behaviour incidents well and has recently excluded a very small number of pupils in accordance with their behaviour policy. However, school leaders do not analyse patterns of behaviour effectively and, as a result, they do not have a sufficiently detailed view of how well the school's policies and procedures impact on improving behaviour.
- Pupils acknowledge that bullying happens on a few rare occasions in Key Stage 2 but say that they can rely on adults in school to help them manage such issues effectively.
- Most parents feel that the school makes sure pupils are well behaved and deals effectively with bullying. However, three quarters of staff who responded to the questionnaire felt that behaviour at the school is not good and that it is not managed consistently well, although the large majority felt that bullying was dealt with effectively.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and most parents and staff agree. Pupils have confidence that staff will support them if they have any problems or concerns.
- The appropriate information is shared with external agencies where pupils have been identified as most vulnerable. The school plays a leading role in making sure that these pupils' needs are met well. However, changes in how support is allocated to individual pupils are not always communicated effectively to staff by senior leaders, which occasionally causes confusion and ill-feeling.
- Staff make appropriate assessments of the risks associated with activities and the school keeps detailed records of accidents and reports these to the appropriate authority when necessary.
- Children know how to keep themselves safe, especially online, and are able to describe a range of e-safety rules, including alerting an adult if they see anything that worries them and not sharing passwords and personal information.
- Attendance is improving and is now above average. The school has robust and effective systems for monitoring pupil absence and works successfully to promote and reward good attendance. Punctuality is good.

The quality of teaching is inadequate

- As a result of inadequate teaching over time, pupils' achievement has declined in Key Stages 1 and 2 and is inadequate. The quality of teaching across the school is too variable and fails to ensure that pupils achieve well enough from their starting points. The teaching experienced by different groups of pupils is also ineffective and results in gaps in attainment and wide variations in their rates of progress.
- Not all teachers have the skills necessary to make accurate assessments about the standards pupils are achieving. Their view of what pupils already know and can do is not always accurate. Standards reported by teachers do not always match the work evident in pupils' books. As a result, teachers fail to plan work that builds well on pupils' existing knowledge and skills or set pupils targets which will challenge them to improve their skills at a good rate.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. Too often, planned activities fail to challenge pupils, especially the most able. On too many occasions, all pupils complete the same tasks or use the same methods. In some classes, the additional activities provided for the most able pupils in mathematics do not always extend and deepen their skills well enough. Pupils say that they often have to take part in activities with the rest of the class that they can complete easily before moving on to more challenging work.
- The quality of marking and feedback to pupils is inconsistent. Some effective feedback is given to some pupils, particularly older pupils. In these cases, pupils are clear about the standards that they have reached and what they need to do to improve. They also occasionally have opportunities to assess for themselves how well they are doing. This supports pupils to make good progress. However, too often, feedback pupils are given in lessons, or through teachers' marking in their books, lacks precision. Too many pupils remain unclear of how well they are doing. Some pupils indicated to inspectors they, 'did not need to know'. In some classes, pupils' work in their books from the current academic year remains unmarked. Where work is marked, too often pupils fail to act on the advice given. Pupils continue to make the same mistakes as a result.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is sometimes too weak to enable pupils to learn well. In geography in Key Stage 1, teachers' explanations and examples of how pupils were to record information successfully of their journey to school on a map were unclear. Pupils' understanding of how to create, use or read a map did not develop well enough and their learning was inadequate.
- Pupils are given too few opportunities to develop and extend their writing and mathematical skills in work they complete across different subjects. Too often, work that pupils have already covered, and proved that they have fully understood previously, is repeated throughout the year. Recent improvements in the teaching of reading are fragile.
- Although additional support is provided for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and for disadvantaged pupils, their progress is inadequate, because too little consideration is given to the precise focus of the support given. Its impact is not evaluated well enough. Additional funds to support these pupils are not targeted well enough and, as a result, too many pupils underachieve.

The achievement of pupils is inadequate

- In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils, including the most able, disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and the disadvantaged, make inadequate progress from their starting points at the end of Reception. Pupils' progress across the subjects and classes is too variable. Standards reported in national tests and assessments for pupils in Years 2 and 6 have declined since the last inspection. In some classes across the school, pupils achieve standards that are much lower than expected for their age.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have declined and in 2014, were at the lowest point in five years and were significantly lower than average overall, and particularly so in reading. This represents inadequate achievement from pupils' starting points at the end of Reception.
- Standards reached by the end of Year 6 have also declined since those reported in the previous inspection. In 2013, standards were significantly below average overall, especially in mathematics and in reading. Although standards improved in 2014, particularly in reading, they remained below average in writing and mathematics. This represents inadequate progress from pupils' starting points at the end of Year 2. School data and inspection evidence indicate that the performance of the current Year 6 cohort is likely to be similar to that in 2014. In some other classes in Key Stage 2, too many pupils are working at levels below those expected for their age.
- The most able pupils make inadequate progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. Too few reach the higher standards of attainment of which they are capable, including in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 1 and in writing, in the test for English grammar, punctuation and spelling and in mathematics at

Key Stage 2. This is because the quality of teaching is inadequate. Pupils are not challenged regularly in their learning.

- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs in Key Stages 1 and 2, like that of their peers, is inadequate. This is particularly the case in writing where almost half of these pupils across the school made less than expected progress last year. Extra support targeted at disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is ineffective.
- Disadvantaged pupils underachieve. By the end of Key Stage 2, the standards they reach are too far behind both others in the school and nationally. In Year 6 in 2014 for example, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils was approximately two terms behind other pupils in school in mathematics and one year behind in reading and writing. In comparison with other pupils nationally, they were one year behind in reading, writing and mathematics. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is inadequate. School leaders have failed to narrow the wide gaps in attainment for disadvantaged pupils.
- While achievement in reading is improving, for some pupils, inconsistencies remain. Outcomes of the Year 1 check on early reading skills in 2014 were very positive, with most pupils achieving the expected standard. This is a significant improvement on the previous year's results. In 2014, most of the pupils in Year 2 who had not met the required standard the previous year were successful when their skills were re-checked. In Year 6 in 2014, standards in reading were much higher than in 2013 and were broadly average. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment was greater than in writing or mathematics. Attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 was well-below average. Progress in some classes remains slow and standards in some classes are too low.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- The majority of children join the Reception class with skills that are below those typical for their age, apart from in mathematics, where their skills are typical for their age. Although children usually catch up quickly, so that by the end of the Reception year the majority have achieved a good level of development, too few children make consistently good progress in all areas of learning or exceed the early learning goals. As a result, achievement requires improvement.
- Disadvantaged children and those who are disabled or who have special educational needs are closely monitored and well supported. Most make at least the expected amount of progress from their starting points. The most able children are not challenged in their learning and often do not make the progress of which they are capable. Most children are well prepared to move into Year 1.
- The leader of the early years monitors the curriculum and ensures that children's interests influence the learning activities and themes provided both indoors and outdoors; however, she is not involved in checking on the quality of teaching. As a consequence, the early years leader does not have a well-informed view of the current strengths and areas for development of the teaching. Support and training have been intermittent and, as a result, there are elements of leadership which are not as robust as they might be, for example, the use of assessment to inform future learning and thorough self-evaluation of teaching and achievement.
- Teaching requires improvement. Focused activities are not always informed clearly enough by what the children can already do and are, therefore, occasionally repetitive and not directly linked to children's next steps in learning. Children's progress is not consistently accurately assessed and, as a result, opportunities for children to progress in specific areas are not always provided. Children sometimes complete the same tasks irrespective of their different skills. Opportunities to challenge or extend the learning of the most able are sometimes overlooked.
- The development of reading, writing and mathematics skills are given high priority; however, teachers' expectations of what the children can do are not always high enough. Opportunities to extend children's learning are sometimes missed because staff focus on completing the tasks that had been planned, rather than challenging children to achieve more.
- While the learning environment promotes basic literacy and numeracy skills well, the activities and resources provided, especially in mathematics, do not always encourage children's understanding of number skills. Children are provided with mathematical challenges to develop their addition skills, but there are no numbers or resources available in the classroom which would support their developing understanding of numbers beyond 20.
- Children are excited to learn and remain engaged for long periods of time; however, staff do not always use opportunities to extend their learning through play. They are occasionally too slow to interact with children while they are working independently and, as a result, opportunities to challenge and extend their learning are missed.

- Children work well together and also with the adults supporting them. They are very keen to talk about their learning and question each other confidently about what they are doing. Relationships are positive between children and adults. There are clear routines and staff have high expectations of children's behaviour which the children respond well to. Children are well cared for and both indoor and outdoor provision is safe.
- Opportunities to develop children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are well planned. Children from a range of backgrounds work and play together in a harmonious atmosphere and they learn about their differences and similarities.

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	106233
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	456158

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	306
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Ratcliffe
Headteacher	Simon Wright
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2012
Telephone number	0161 3382060
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	admin@st-pauls-stalybridge.tameside.sch.uk

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