

St Paul's Catholic Primary School

Bourne Road, Paulsgrove, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO6 4JD

Inspection dates 23–24 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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 headteacher's especially strong determination to bring about improvement is matched with her very effective skills in enabling other leaders to fulfil their roles well.
- The deputy headteacher and the senior leadership team provide very effective support. Together with support from governors, this has ensured that teaching and achievement have improved and are now good.
- Systems for monitoring and improving teaching quality and pupils' achievement are very comprehensive and effective. Improvement since the previous inspection has been rapid. The school is very well placed to improve further.
- Nursery children get off to an excellent start and are very well prepared for their time in the Reception class.
- Throughout the school, pupils achieve well. Progress in reading, writing and mathematics is good. Attainment is rising and, overall, is broadly average.
- The additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used to very good effect. By the time they leave, most attain the levels expected for their age.
- Good teaching is evident across the school. Pupils benefit from a consistent approach in all classes, for example in the teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make in words). Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is good. Their relationships with adults and each other are very good. Pupils enjoy learning and work hard.
- The school's very caring ethos ensures pupils are kept safe and feel safe in school. Pupils say any bullying is rare and is always dealt with successfully.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and British values is excellent. Pupils are very well prepared for life in a democratic and diverse society.
- Governors support the school and hold leaders to account for the quality of education well. Through their good monitoring, they are well informed about teaching quality and the effect it has on pupils' progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough emphasis is placed on helping those pupils on the cusp of reaching the higher attainment levels to do so.
- Teachers do not always have the highest expectations and provide significantly challenging work which helps pupils to do their very best.
- Pupils do a little less well in writing than reading and mathematics, and their grammar, handwriting and spelling are not always well enough developed from a young age.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 17 lessons or parts of lessons, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the inspection team made a number of other short visits to group or individual activities. They observed reading activities, scrutinised a sample of pupils' written work and visited the breakfast club.
- Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body, staff including senior and middle managers, and the parish priest. A conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 13 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also spoke to a small number of parents bringing their children to school.
- Inspectors analysed the responses from the 45 confidential staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of documents including the school's records on current pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance. They looked at documents related to planning, monitoring and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Diane Wilkinson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Penelope Orme	Additional Inspector
Bruno Grzegorzek	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Paul's is a larger-than-average-sized primary school, with two classes in each year group. There is also a community nursery which children aged three and four attend part time which is run by the governing body. At the time of the inspection all Reception children were attending full time.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is around the national average. A few disabled pupils and those with special educational or behavioural needs receive part of their education at The Harbour Special School or the provision unit at Flying Bull Primary School.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is broadly average. An above average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is above average. This additional funding is to provide extra support for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and to children who are looked after.
- The school runs its own breakfast club, which was also inspected.
- The school has commissioned a national leader of education (NLE) from College Park Infant School to help support its monitoring and improvement work.
- There has been a considerable number of staff changes since the previous inspection. There have also been two new appointments to the senior leadership team.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement, by ensuring that:
 - greater emphasis is placed on helping those pupils on the cusp of reaching the higher attainment levels to do so
 - pupils do as well in writing as they do in reading and mathematics, and they use the correct grammar, punctuation and spelling from a younger age
 - all teachers have very high expectations and provide significantly challenging work that helps pupils to do the very best they can.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- A major reason for the school's rapid improvement since its previous inspection is the very effective leadership of the headteacher. She works tirelessly to ensure that the school provides a positive ethos and enables other leaders to make an effective contribution to improvement, particularly in the quality of teaching and the effective management of behaviour.
 - Other senior leaders play a very effective role, for example in setting up high quality systems for assessing learning in the new curriculum. They are also very effective in the coaching and support provided for improving teaching quality.
 - Staff and governors monitor all aspects of teaching and learning very regularly, providing an accurate picture of their quality. Weaknesses are swiftly identified and addressed through a range of effective professional development activities or extra support where needed. Formal performance management procedures hold staff to account well for the impact of their work.
 - The school has improved well despite the many staff changes this academic year. Very good support and training ensure others, such as subject leaders, aid improvement effectively. Leaders and governors are well aware of where improvement is still required and are already tackling these areas. The school is very well placed to improve further.
 - The school fulfils its commitment to promote equality of opportunity, foster good relationships and tackle discrimination very well. The monitoring of the progress, attendance and behaviour of pupils who also attend alternative provision is very good.
 - Well-planned programmes of work enthuse pupils and ensure they make good gains in their skills and knowledge. Pupils benefit from a broad range of activities, such as learning to play a musical instrument.
 - Revised assessment systems take exceptionally good account of new government curriculum requirements. These provide excellent information to help staff plan for future progress.
 - The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Links with the local church and very good collective acts of worship ensure pupils are highly reflective. The school strongly emphasises that religious commitment should be reflected in pupils' responsibility towards others.
 - Pupils' cultural awareness is very strong. Staff capitalise very well on the diverse backgrounds and experiences of pupils to create a tolerance of, and respect for, others. The school promotes British values such as democracy, fairness and the rule of law exceptionally well.
 - The additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is very effectively allocated to extra staffing, activities and resources, and the employment of a family support worker. This, together with attendance at the breakfast club has a significant impact on pupils' attendance, punctuality and attitudes to school. Their learning is very well supported in the range of extra learning activities provided during the school day.
 - The primary physical education and sport funding is used well to ensure pupils receive good teaching in physical education lessons and take part in a wide range of sports activities at lunch times and after school. Pupils' participation and enthusiasm have improved well as a result.
 - The school's very caring ethos ensures high priority is given to pupils' safety and well-being. Safeguarding procedures fully meet requirements and are effective. Vulnerable pupils and those who need extra support are very well cared for. Procedures for child protection are very good.
 - The school works well with parents to support their children's learning. However, a minority of parents expressed concerns about the behaviour of a few pupils. Inspection evidence shows that, where there are behavioural problems, pupils' behaviour does improve well over time, although not all parents are aware of the success of the school's strategies.
 - The local authority has provided very strong and effective support since the previous inspection and the school has made very good use of their advice. Keen to learn from the very best practice, the school also benefits well from the monitoring and advice of a national leader for education.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Governors are effective and strongly committed to improvement and to providing a high quality education at St Paul's. They hold leaders to account well, especially through the Achievement Champions group, which meets regularly to review pupils' progress. Governors' understanding of pupils' progress data is good. Through this they compare the school's performance well with others locally and nationally.
 - Governors are effectively involved in a range of first hand monitoring, such as visiting the school or

holding discussions with pupils. This is usefully backed up by clear evidence on teaching quality provided by leaders. As a result, governors hold the school to account well and carry out formal management procedures effectively. Salary increases are only agreed for good or better practice. They are also aware of what support has been provided to address underperformance in the past.

- Governors' commitment to the safeguarding of pupils ensures governors carry out their monitoring duties in this aspect well. They are strongly committed to the welfare of pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' moral awareness is very good. Pupils recognise the difference between right and wrong and know how they should behave at all times.
- During the inspection much of the behaviour observed in lessons and around school was exemplary. Very occasionally, due to excitement in learning, the noise levels in lessons become rather high. In addition, some staff and parents who completed the questionnaires or spoke to inspectors raised concerns about a few pupils' behaviour.
- Very effective systems are in place to support any pupils experiencing behavioural difficulties, including through the effective support provided by the alternative provision. Evidence shows that their behaviour improves very well over time.
- Pupils' attitudes to school have improved significantly due to the good teaching they receive. Lessons are rarely interrupted due to pupils' behaviour.
- Relationships with adults and between pupils are very good. In one lesson, when the teaching assistant needed to briefly leave a group of less able pupils, another pupil helped them organise their work. This is an example of pupils' strong willingness to help others.
- Attendance is now average and punctuality has improved due to the very effective support of the family support worker.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils report that bullying is rare and always dealt with effectively. The number of exclusions is decreasing as a result.
- Pupils' respect for others from different cultures, religions or backgrounds is excellent. The school is a very happy and harmonious place to be.
- Pupils are well cared for in school, including in the very well run breakfast club. Pupils and their parents report that the former feel very safe in school.
- Pupils are well aware of the many things that they can do to keep safe. They report that the school gives them many opportunities to learn strategies such as how to safely use social media sites on the internet.
- The school ensures that pupils who attend the alternative provision are safe and well looked after.

The quality of teaching is good

- Through the very many checks it carries out and strong procedures for coaching and support, the school ensures that teaching is at least good. Staff new to the school or profession are very well supported.
- This approach also helps to bring about uniformity in practice, such as in the effective planning which ensures that activities take good account of the levels at which pupils are working.
- Teaching of the special programmes to help disadvantaged pupils catch up ensures they now close the gap on their peers rapidly. Less attention is given to helping pupils on the cusp of reaching the highest attainment levels to do so.
- Staff create a very good learning ethos that encourages pupils to do well. They are good at questioning pupils to tease out their understanding and monitor learning well. Teachers often take the opportunity to draw together a group of pupils who find the work difficult and offer further advice. This approach ensures that all pupils learn well.
- Despite teaching having typically strong features, in some lessons teachers do not always have high enough expectations of pupils nor do they always provide challenging activities that inspire pupils to do their very best. For example, on occasions, some planned activities do not include how pupils can extend

their learning further when they learn quickly and rapidly complete the work set

- Teaching assistant's aid learning effectively. The marking of pupils' work is very good. It gives very effective advice on how to improve and teachers make sure pupils learn from, and correct, their errors.
- From the time children start in the nursery, high priority is given to children developing good oral communication skills. By the time pupils leave they express themselves well and explain their learning effectively.
- Important skills such as phonics and mathematical calculation are very well taught through a consistent approach. This ensures pupils build on and extend their skills well as they move through the years.
- The teaching of writing has improved well over the past year. However, it is only recently that sufficient attention has been given to improving pupils' handwriting, grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Good liaison with special schools helps ensure that pupils who spend some time there benefit from a consistent approach to their learning.

The achievement of pupils is good

- When children start in the nursery their skills are below those typically seen at this age. Due to the support of highly skilled nursery staff they make excellent progress. The large majority of children acquire the skills expected by the time they start in Reception.
- This excellent start is built on well. Reception children make good progress. Many of them are exceeding the levels expected for their age.
- Accurate assessment evidence shows that in other year group's progress is good and pupils achieve well. The school effectively helps pupils who find learning difficult to reach average attainment levels. However, less is done to ensure that a few pupils on the cusp of reaching the higher attainment levels do so.
- Attainment in Year 6 in 2014 was broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. School tracking shows that most Year 6 pupils are well on course to reach the levels expected for their age by the end of the year in reading, writing and mathematics. In reading and mathematics around 50% are well placed to exceed them.
- In writing, however, despite good improvement, past weaknesses mean too few pupils exceed the level expected for their age in Years 2 to 6. The quality of writing produced by Year 1 pupils is very high. Many are a year ahead of what is expected at this age. By Year 6, pupils write effectively in a range of formats such as newspaper style accounts or persuasive letters and use effective vocabulary to make their work interesting. However, on occasions, too little attention is given to ensuring pupils use grammar and punctuation correctly, write neatly and spell accurately until the older year groups. This limits attainment in writing.
- Throughout the school, phonics is well taught and attainment in reading is average by the end of Year 2. Good guided reading lessons ensure that pupils read well and comprehend the meaning of texts by the time they reach Year 6.
- A strong feature of mathematics is the excellent presentation of pupils' work in most classes. This aids their calculations especially well. Numeracy is a strength in all year groups. By Year 6, pupils use their skills well when working with measures and data; their capacity to solve mathematical problems is good.
- Good support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs ensures they achieve well, including those who attend alternative provision. Most reach the expected Level 4 in reading and mathematics. They also make good progress in writing, although fewer reach the expected levels in this subject.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils has improved rapidly since the previous inspection and they make good progress compared to pupils nationally. Some make better progress than their peers. The gap between them and their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics is closing well.
- In last year's Year 6 national assessments, slower progress made in the past meant that disadvantaged pupils were a year or more behind other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. However, this is no longer the case. Most now reach the levels expected for their age and the gap is closing rapidly.
- This is a highly inclusive school where pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, including those who speak English as an additional language, thrive. They consistently achieve as well as their peers. Most attain average standards and a significant minority exceeds them.
- The most able pupils achieve well and now consistently reach above average standards. As their progress accelerates, a few attain standards well above those expected for their age.
- Use of additional funding has improved pupils' skills in a wide range of sports such as rugby. Pupils make good progress in lessons, but there is too little evidence to ascertain the levels they reach in physical education.

The early years provision**is good**

- Children's achievement is good and attainment is improving as a result. At the end of Reception last year, attainment was broadly average. School records show that this is expected to improve this year. Children are well prepared for life in Year 1.
- Children make excellent progress during the nursery year because of the highly skilled teaching. Their achievements are very well recorded; the evidence is very effectively used to plan for future learning. During activities, staff are excellent at knowing when to encourage children to learn even more.
- The most important aspects of nursery children's learning are promoted especially well. Children become very confident at speaking and listening. Their behaviour is very positive and children get on very well with adults and their peers.
- Nursery children show a great enthusiasm for learning and sustain their interest in activities. They enjoy taking on responsibility and learn a lot about how to secure their own health and safety. Children's physical development is promoted in the outdoor area, for example riding wheeled toys, with very good consideration of others.
- Important reading, writing and mathematical skills develop very well. Nursery children recognise and count numbers up to five. They identify some of the simple sounds in words and correctly form a few letters in their writing. Strengths such as these prepare children especially well for the Reception year.
- Reception staff capitalise well on the excellent start, although not all children will have attended the school nursery. Staff have been especially successful in helping the very large majority of children to reach the levels expected for their age.
- Children develop really good listening skills, which support their phonic learning. Phonics is very well taught and ensures children now make rapid progress in reading, with increasing proportions exceeding the levels expected for their age.
- Attainment in writing is accelerating and more children are starting to exceed the levels expected. Children form their letters securely and very good phonic awareness supports accurate spelling.
- In other areas of learning, such as mathematics, most children achieve well. They work confidently with numbers to 20 and have a good understanding of measures. Their creativity develops well, including through role play.
- Children typically behave well, show the capacity to concentrate on their tasks and handle resources carefully. Relationships with adults and between children are excellent.
- Children's safety and well-being are given high priority, as is liaison with parents. Consequently, children enjoy coming to school and thrive in the caring and supportive environment.
- The early years leader's work has a very positive impact on the quality of provision, especially in the nursery class.

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	116487
Local authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	462378

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	385
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Barrell
Headteacher	Brenda Schouller
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 April 2013
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