

St Peter's CofE (A) Primary School

School Lane, Caverswall, Stoke-on-Trent ST11 9EN

Inspection dates

28–29 June 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils make expected progress but too few make good progress or attain above age-related expectations.
- Leaders' expectations of what pupils can achieve are sometimes too low. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are not consistently challenged to make accelerated progress.
- Performance targets set for teachers are not precise enough to hold them to account and ensure that pupils make good progress.
- Leaders do not analyse work in pupils' books well enough to identify where there are weaknesses in teaching or assess the progress different groups of pupil make.
- Teachers do not challenge pupils well enough to ensure that they make good progress, especially the most able.
- Sometimes teachers do not allow pupils sufficient time in lessons to complete the main task. This limits the progress they make.
- Pupils are not confident in their use of grammar, punctuation and spelling and this affects the quality of their writing.
- Pupils are not encouraged to present their mathematics work neatly or explain their answers.
- Leaders in the early years do not take account of all information available when determining the starting points for children in Reception class
- Although girls achieve well in Reception class, boys do less well and do not reach the same standards.
- Governors acknowledge that they have not held leaders to account previously but they are now addressing this fully.

The school has the following strengths

- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) is effective. Most pupils reach the standards required in Year 1.
- The attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates has closed in key stage 1. Disadvantaged pupils in Year 2 attained better than other pupils nationally in 2014 and 2015.
- The school's efforts to improve pupils' handwriting in English has been effective. Most pupils have a neat and cursive style which they are proud of.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe. They are respectful and care for each other.
- Pupil's spiritual, moral, social, cultural development and their knowledge of British values are good.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment and thereby raise achievement by ensuring that teachers:
 - have higher expectations of pupils and provide greater levels of challenge, especially for the most able
 - allow pupils' sufficient time in lessons to complete the main task fully and to a high standard
 - equip pupils with effective grammar, punctuation and spelling strategies to improve their writing
 - teach reasoning skills well so that pupils can explain how they reach their answers in mathematics
 - ensure that presentation in mathematics is as neat as in English books and that younger pupils form their numbers correctly
 - provide activities in the early years which stimulate and engage boys so that they achieve as well as girls.

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - raising expectations of what pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities can achieve
 - setting measureable and challenging performance management targets for all teachers to raise achievement in all classes
 - developing the roles of subject leaders so that they identify weaknesses in teaching and assess the progress of all groups of pupils when checking work in pupils' books
 - ensuring that all forms of evidence are used to determine secure starting points for children in Reception class.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders do not have high enough expectations of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders have introduced a new assessment system to track the progress of all pupils, all classes and all groups. However, different criteria are set for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. For example, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are expected to have made less progress than other pupils over the course of a term. This automatically lowers the expectations placed on this group of pupils and they do not achieve as well as they should.
- The headteacher sets performance management targets to hold teachers to account. However, this is the first year she has set targets for staff and, as yet, targets are not sharply enough focused on accelerating pupils' progress across the school. Targets set are not precise, measurable, tailored to individual teachers' needs or linked to the achievement of pupils in different classes. The headteacher readily acknowledges that this aspect needs to be sharper and is an area that she can improve upon.
- The headteacher and subject leaders carry out regular checks on the quality of teaching. However, their monitoring does not take enough account of the work in pupils' books to identify where weaknesses in teaching and pupils' learning exist. Additionally, leaders do not use pupils' books to check the progress made by different pupil groups, for example, the middle- or lower-ability pupils, to determine how well they are doing and validate that assessment information collected is accurate.
- Since her appointment, the headteacher has accurately identified where strengths and weaknesses lie. She has set a clear direction for the school. She has introduced new systems, reviewed policies and begun to tackle weaknesses in teaching. There are positive signs of improvement in teaching and this in turn is beginning to bring about improved pupil achievement.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is honest and accurate. The school development plan is focused on the right priorities. It provides a clear structure with measurable milestones and sets out what, when and who will monitor actions taken.
- Staff are a united team and support each other fully. Those new to teaching are given good support to ensure that they reach the standards set for all teachers. Regular and good-quality training has been provided for teachers to help improve their knowledge and skills in different subject areas. The headteacher has also benefited from the support provided by a local, experienced headteacher, which has been funded by the local authority.
- The school curriculum provides an interesting and well-balanced programme of subjects. Interesting topics, such as 'Shakespeare' or 'the Potteries' help promote pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and also develop pupils' research skills. A good range of extra-curricular clubs, visits and visitors provide memorable and worthwhile opportunities to develop pupils' personal and social development.
- Leaders strongly promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Christian values underpin the ethos within the school and are taught well in assemblies, lessons and school services held in church. Pupils' musical and sporting talents are particularly well developed through additional teaching and attendance at clubs. Pupils respect, and have good levels of understanding about, people from different cultures and people who hold different beliefs. They are clear what British values are, particularly the rule of law and democracy. As a result, they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively. Additional teaching is provided by support staff to ensure that eligible pupils reach the levels expected for their age. For example, reading interventions are provided which have helped accelerate pupils' progress, particularly in key stage 1. As a result, there are no gaps in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and their classmates at the end of key stage 1.
- Additional funding to develop the teaching of physical education (PE) is used well. Staff have received training from specialist coaches in gymnastics, dance and games. As a result, staff are more confident and more skilled in teaching these areas. Exciting clubs and opportunities have also been provided, with pupils speaking enthusiastically about bubble sports, archery and cheerleading. Funding is also used to subsidise the Year 6 residential outdoor education trip for all pupils. This contributes significantly to their physical well-being and personal development.
- There were only a small number of responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, but the large majority who gave their views and those who spoke to inspectors are very pleased with the school and say that their children are happy and safe. Typical comments include 'all the staff are very approachable' and 'I moved my child from another school and it was the best decision I have made.'
- The local authority has monitored the school carefully since the previous inspection through 'core group'

meetings. The school adviser has an accurate view of how well the school is performing and has provided good support. A review carried out in March 2016 pinpointed precisely where improvements were needed. Their findings gave the headteacher and governing body a very clear overview which set them on the path to improvement. The local authority has also brokered and funded helpful support for the early years staff, mathematics leader, governors and the headteacher which has helped develop their leadership skills.

■ **The governance of the school**

- Governors commissioned a review in response to the recommendations made at the time of the last inspection. A further review is not required as governors have a much clearer understanding of their roles and are taking them seriously. The report produced by the local authority review has increased their determination and commitment to ensure that the school improves rapidly.
- Governors have significantly increased the level at which they hold leaders to account. They receive regular reports from subject leaders and visit the school to collect first-hand information for themselves. They are provided with a wide range of detailed but comprehensive information from the headteacher. Records of meetings checked show that governors ask challenging and pertinent questions about the information they are given.
- Governors have improved their knowledge and understanding of assessment information and where strengths and areas for development lie. They readily acknowledge that previously they did not understand the data presented. However, this is now presented clearly and is colour-coded so is very visual and easier to understand. Governors have attended training to help them understand published data so that they can check that school information is accurate.
- Governors have a good understanding about the quality of teaching within the school. They are clear that pay awards for staff will only be approved where there is evidence that pupils are making good progress. Governors have set challenging targets for the headteacher with the support of an external consultant.
- Governors have ensured that the budget is managed well and have undertaken safeguarding training to fulfil their statutory duties. They know how the pupil premium and sports funding are spent and what difference this is making to pupils.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The deputy headteacher manages this area well. She has ensured that all staff have been trained in child protection procedures and preventing extremism and radicalisation. Consequently, staff know what action to take if they have a concern about a pupil. Timely referrals are made to appropriate agencies as necessary if concerns are raised. Records kept are stored securely and robust safer recruitment checks are carried out on staff prior to their employment.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good in all classes and this has an impact on pupils' progress.
- In some classes, teachers' expectations are too low and the work they plan does not consistently challenge pupils well enough. For example, work in pupils' books showed that lower-ability pupils and the most able in Year 6 were required to remove the ending (suffixes) of words on a worksheet to find the root word, for instance 'artist to art' while pupils in Year 2 were doing similar work by adding suffixes to root words. The level of challenge for older pupils, especially the most able pupils, was therefore limited.
- Sometimes teachers do not ensure that pupils have sufficient time to complete the main task. This reduces the amount of recorded work pupils are able to produce and teachers do not have enough information to assess if pupils have fully grasped the concept being taught. Pupils' stamina to produce longer pieces of work is also curtailed, along with the progress pupils make.
- Although teachers identify some spelling and punctuation mistakes when marking pupils' books, overall, pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation are weak in most year groups. This hampers the quality of their written work. Pupils are unable to draw on spelling patterns to spell unfamiliar words and are not secure in their use of punctuation, for example the use of apostrophes or commas.
- Leaders recognise that teaching in mathematics requires improvement. Pupils do not present their work in mathematics as neatly as in English. Older pupils still have some gaps in their knowledge and understanding and younger pupils still reverse their numbers. Teachers are beginning to pose questions which enable pupils to explain their thinking, but most pupils are not yet confident in explaining how they reach their answers, because the 'reasoning' element in mathematics is underdeveloped. For example, pupils in Year 5 could halve a number and then halve it again to find a quarter, but could not explain why that method gave the same answer as dividing a number by four.

- Phonics is taught well from the outset. Pupils practise their phonics daily and learn to break down and sound out unfamiliar words. They read with increasing fluency and expression. Reading logs are shared with parents, who also add comments about their child's reading.
- Teachers model and teach handwriting effectively. It is practised regularly and most pupils' handwriting is neat and cursive and enhances the presentation of their written work. Pupils make huge efforts to join their letters in order to obtain a 'pen licence'. However, their lovely writing is not always transferred to their mathematics books and teachers do not remind pupils to present their work carefully.
- Relationships in all classes are good and pupils work well in pairs or small groups. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour effectively and consistently check on how well they are doing during lessons. Good use is made of teaching resources, for example coins, number lines or phonics mats, to support pupils with their work.
- Teachers plan activities which follow on from previous learning and are sometimes linked to real life. For instance, Year 6 pupils enjoyed a problem-solving activity in working out the cost of a residential visit for 30 pupils following their own recent visit to an outdoor activity centre for a week.
- Teaching assistants work in close partnership with teachers and make a good contribution to supporting individuals or groups of pupils with their learning in lessons. Many lead intervention programmes and are held to account by leaders for the progress pupils make.
- Effective booster lessons and interventions are provided for pupils who are at risk of falling behind. The additional support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants ensures that they keep up with other pupils in the school. Some interventions are highly successful. Records checked show that some pupils have made very impressive gains in reading, making more than a year's progress during a 10-week intervention programme.
- Teachers adhere to and follow the school's marking and feedback policy well. They provide comments which help pupils to improve their work. Pupils respond to these comments using purple pens, which show the teacher that their comments have been taken on board. Teachers are beginning to probe pupils' thinking and check their levels of understanding when marking their books, for example, a teacher challenged a pupil by setting the calculation $3 + 2 \times 5 = 25$ and asking 'What have I done wrong?'

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning but some pupils do not take as much care in the presentation of their mathematics as they do in their English. Skills such being a team player, independent enquirer, self-manager, reflective thinker, strong participator and resourceful learner are reinforced through the school's half-termly 'griffin attributes' introduced by the headteacher. Pupils keenly carry out tasks set in order to achieve the relevant badges, which they proudly wear on their uniforms.
- Pupils understand the importance of healthy diets and physical exercise. They bring healthy snacks to school and many play football at breaktimes or with hula hoops in order to practise physical skills. Pupils also enjoy the wide range of sporting opportunities offered through clubs and physical education lessons.
- Pupils enjoy taking on additional responsibilities in the school, such as becoming 'head boy or head girl', prefects or members of the school council or science ambassadors. Pupils take a keen interest in caring for the environment and enjoy gardening and science clubs, where they grow vegetables and carry out experiments.
- Pupils show good levels of maturity and very high levels of care for each other. For instance, when a pupil fell over at breaktime, she was instantly supported by other pupils, who checked if she was hurt and helped her back to her feet. The school's motto of 'Love Christ, Love Learning and Love One Another' permeates the culture of this school and shapes pupils into caring and considerate individuals.
- Pupils feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe. Pupils have a good understanding about internet safety and can explain what they should do if they receive an unpleasant email or text. Pupils are aware of different forms of bullying but are confident that if they report incidents, they are quickly resolved.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The behaviour and anti-bullying policy has been reviewed in consultation with parents and pupils and a new system has been introduced by the headteacher. All pupils understand the system in place which

uses green, yellow or red cards. A very small number of parents feel behaviour and bullying are not dealt with effectively, but most pupils and parents say that behaviour is good. As one parent put it, 'after an initial trial and slight tweak, the behaviour system and sanctions introduced are very effective.' Inspectors agree with this view, as records checked show that incidents which occur are low-level and dealt with appropriately. The number of incidents recorded is also reducing.

- Pupils behave well in lessons, around school and at playtimes, including when they are inside in wet weather. Pupils are polite and respectful to each other and to adults. They say 'please' and 'thank you' and often hold doors open for visitors. Pupils help to ensure that the school environment is litter-free and that areas are kept tidy.
- The attendance of most pupils is good. The overall attendance figure for the school is usually at least in line with or above the national average, but a small number of pupils have had a negative impact on the overall attendance figures this term. Leaders track pupils' attendance closely and do not authorise any absences unless pupils are ill or there are exceptional circumstances. They take appropriate steps to follow up cases where pupils are persistently absent.
- The breakfast club provides a positive start for pupils before school. Those that attend are able to choose a range of healthy food items and different activities. This prepares them well for the day ahead. Pupils are carefully supervised. They behave well and socialise freely with other age groups.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Since the previous inspection, pupils have not made consistently good progress from their starting points.
- Attainment at the end of key stage 1 remains broadly average. Attainment at the end of key stage 2 was slightly above average in 2014 but dropped to below average in 2015, especially in mathematics. Leaders have identified where improvements are needed and these are now being implemented. For instance, there are more opportunities for pupils to carry out problem-solving activities in mathematics and pupils respond to and act on advice provided by teachers in their work.
- Leaders use standardised tests to assess pupils' levels in reading and mathematics. Results from these tests show that most pupils are working at the right levels for their age but only a few are working above the average score. The school's own summary of these tests throughout the year shows that current pupils are making expected progress. This is verified by the work inspectors saw in pupils' books.
- The most able pupils make adequate rather than good progress. This is because work provided is not challenging enough. As a result, not all pupils achieve as well as they could. In 2015, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels (Level 3 and Level 5) was below average in reading and mathematics at the end of Year 2 and below average in reading, grammar, punctuation and spelling and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- In 2015, attainment for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was below that of other pupils nationally at the end of Year 6, but their progress was in line with other pupils nationally. The school's own information shows that the majority of pupils currently in the school who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making less progress than their peers. Leaders are aware that expectations need to be the same for all pupils and are planning to review their assessment system and raise expectations for all groups of pupils.
- Disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1 make good progress, especially in reading and writing, but pupils in key stage 2 make expected progress in line with others in their classes. In 2015, the attainment gaps at the end of key stage 1 had closed, but remained wide between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school and nationally at the end of key stage 2. This year, the pupil premium has been used more effectively to support disadvantaged pupils and, as a result, gaps in key stage 2 are closing.
- Leaders recognise that outcomes are not high enough and that progress for pupils needs to accelerate. They are taking appropriate action to ensure that teachers receive support and training in order to raise standards for all groups. Some elements are working successfully, especially in the early years and key stage 1, such as a rising trend in the early years and phonics, and improved early writing. Consequently there are encouraging signs that these can be built on as pupils move through the school. However, pupils who left the school in 2014 and 2015 at the end of Year 6 had gaps in their knowledge and skills and so were not as well prepared for secondary school as they should have been.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- Leaders carry out tests and checks to assess children's abilities when they join the school. However, they do not always use all sources of information available to accurately determine children's starting points. For example, some children can write their name when they start school but are assessed as being below their chronological age band. As a result, assessments for some children are too low and this skews the amount of progress they appear to make in their first year.
- Most children join Reception class with skills and knowledge which are typical for their age. They make expected progress, and the proportion reaching a good level of development is in line with the national average. However, boys attain less well than girls in most areas, including in reading, writing and mathematics. Gender gaps in attainment remain in the current Reception class and boys are therefore less well prepared for Year 1 than girls.
- Teachers plan interesting activities which build on and extend children's early skills and interests. They skilfully link activities around a theme. For example, some children cut out and placed in order the stages of a butterfly lifecycle, while others used hand printing to make caterpillar pictures. This contributed well to children's understanding of the world and creative development.
- Writing is very well promoted and closely linked to children's phonic knowledge. Most children are able to read and write simple words, such as 'pen', 'cat' and 'box' and are beginning to write simple sentences. Children are taught to join their letters from the outset.
- There is a good balance of activities which children choose for themselves or which adults lead. Teachers make good use of the indoor and outdoor spaces. Resources are used well, with children sharing equipment and taking turns.
- Evidence of children's work, together with teachers' planning, shows that there is good coverage of the different areas of learning.
- All adults ensure that children are kept safe and welfare requirements are met. Adults establish clear routines which children readily follow. Children behave well and enjoy the activities planned.
- Leaders have a good overview of where further improvements are needed. They carefully track and record children's achievements using an electronic assessment programme. Photographic evidence, together with examples of children's work and comments made by adults who observe them, all add to teachers' knowledge about what children know and can do as the year progresses.

School details

Unique reference number	124331
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10002533

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	192
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carl Robinson
Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge	Sarah George
Telephone number	01782 393118
Website	www.st-peters-caverswall.staffs.sch.uk
Email address	office@st-peters-caverswall.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16–17 January 2014

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The early years consists of one Reception class which children attend full time.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is similar to the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- The headteacher was appointed in April 2015.
- A breakfast club operates on the school premises and is managed by the governing body.
- The school website meets the requirements for the publication of information.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. They saw 14 parts of lessons, 10 of which were jointly observed with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher, other staff with leadership responsibilities and members of the governing body. Inspectors also spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 31 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the comments made. Inspectors also spoke to parents as they brought their children to school. Pupils' views were also considered by talking to pupils both formally and informally during the school day. There were no results on the pupils' or staff online survey.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, talked to them about their learning and reviewed the work in their books.
- Inspectors reviewed a number of documents, including the school's own evaluation on how well it is doing, the school improvement plan, data on current achievement, leaders' reports about the quality of teaching and learning, minutes of governors' meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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